

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

February 22, 1999

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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to present our performance review of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD).

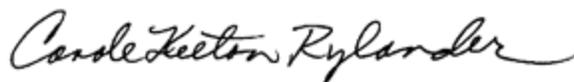
This review, requested by MPISD's superintendent, Charles R. Wright, and members of the Board of Trustees and endorsed by Senator Bill Ratliff, is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's operations by identifying problem areas and recommending innovative improvements. To aid in this task, the Comptroller's office contracted with WCL Enterprises, a Houston-based consulting firm.

We have made a number of recommendations to improve MPISD's efficiency, but we also found a number of "best practices" in district operations. This report highlights several model programs and services provided by MPISD's administrators, teachers, and staff.

Our primary goal is to help MPISD hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that every possible tax dollar is spent in the classroom teaching the district's children. This report outlines 83 detailed recommendations that could save MPISD \$5.3 million over the next five years, while reinvesting \$4.1 million to improve educational services and other operations.

We are grateful for the cooperation of MPISD's administrators and employees, and we commend them and the community for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities offered to the children of Mt. Pleasant.

Sincerely,



Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In fall 1998, the Comptroller's office conducted a performance review of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) as part of a program created by Texas lawmakers in 1991 to identify cost savings and improve operational efficiency in Texas public school districts. This executive summary describes changes in the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR), exemplary programs in MPISD, and the MPISD review's major findings and recommendations, with related costs and savings.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander, who took office in January 1999, consulted school district officials, parents, and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports in an effort to make the Texas School Performance Review more valuable, even vital, to the state's more than 1,000 school districts. With the perspective of having served as a teacher, and later a school board president in her own career, the Comptroller has vowed to steer TSPR to being more accountable to local school districts and the communities they represent.

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

Recognizing that less than 52 cents of every state education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander emphasizes an approach that will give local school officials the ability to move every possible dollar to the classroom. In addition, no longer will school districts' best practices and exemplary models be left buried inside individual TSPR reports. Instead, Comptroller Rylander has ordered best practices and exemplary programs to be shared quickly and systematically among all the state's school districts, and with anyone who requests such information. There is simply no reason for a district that has smartly solved a problem to keeping the solution to itself. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as an active clearinghouse of the best and brightest ideas in Texas public education.

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

- ensure that students and teachers receive the support and resources needed to succeed;

- identify innovative options for addressing core management challenges facing the district;
- ensure that administrative activities are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a manner that spurs education;
- develop strategies for ensuring continual assessment and improvement of processes and programs;
- understand the link between functional areas of the district and determine ways to provide a seamless system of services;
- challenge any process, procedure, program, or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and
- put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages test" by determining if better, cheaper goods or services can be obtained from private sources in a way that benefits students and taxpayers alike.

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

Detailed information can be obtained from 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 Mt. Pleasant

TSPR began its review of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) October 8, 1998. As in previous reviews, TSPR came to Mt. Pleasant in response to a local call for assistance. In August 1997, Mr. Charles R. Wright, the MPISD superintendent, and members of the MPISD Board of Trustees requested a review; the request also was endorsed by Senator Bill Ratliff of Mt. Pleasant.

With the help of WCL Enterprises, a Houston-based consulting firm, the TSPR team held public forums at Frances Corprew Intermediate School and Mt. Pleasant Junior High School. To obtain additional comments, the review team interviewed district employees, school board members, students, parents, business leaders, and representatives from community organizations. In addition, the team collected comments from letters to the Comptroller's office and calls to the Comptroller's toll-free hotline.

The team also conducted focus-group sessions and personal interviews that yielded valuable comments from current and former district employees, parents, community leaders, and students. Written surveys were sent to district personnel; TSPR received responses from 25 central

and support staff, 66 parents, 55 campus staff, and 242 teachers. Details from the surveys, public forums, and focus groups appear in Appendices A through F.

In addition, TSPR consulted two databases of comparative educational information maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)-the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). For the review, MPISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes based on similarities in size, location, student enrollment, and property values. The selected peers were the Athens, Corsicana, Greenville, Kaufman, Kilgore, Liberty Eylau, Paris, Terrell, and Texarkana Independent School Districts (ISDs). TSPR also made comparisons with averages among districts in the TEA's Regional Education Service Center (RESC VIII), to which MPISD belongs, and the state as a whole.

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller, TSPR, and WCL Enterprises wish to express appreciation to the MPISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent Wright, and district employees, students, and community residents who helped during the review. Special thanks are due to the superintendent's secretary, Ms. Susan Norfleet, who acted as MPISD's liaison by arranging for office space, equipment, and meeting rooms and otherwise accommodating the review team's needs.

Mt. Pleasant ISD

MPISD serves a 230-square-mile area of Titus County 115 miles east of Dallas. The city of Mt. Pleasant, county seat of Titus County, has a population of approximately 13,000. The county economy is based on farming and manufacturing. The major employer is the Pilgrim's Pride Company, which employs more than 5,000 area residents.

As of 1998-99, MPISD operates seven schools, a Child Development Center, and an alternative education campus serving 4,463 students. The district is served by RESC VIII, also located in Mt. Pleasant.

During 1997-98, 57 percent of MPISD's students were minority members and 56 percent were economically disadvantaged. MPISD's student enrollment increased by 5.2 percent from 1992-93 to 1997-98. Student performance on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) is mixed. While some groups and grade levels are improving, overall scores remain generally below state and regional averages.

During the 1997-98 school year, MPISD employed approximately 650 teachers, administrators, and support workers. The district's annual operating budget was nearly \$19.5 million.

In all, TSPR found MPISD to be a school district faced with surging student enrollment, driven by an increasing Hispanic student population. The growth has translated into pressures both to add and upgrade school buildings and meet the needs of a more diverse student population. During its five-month review of the district, TSPR developed 83 recommendations to improve operations and save taxpayer dollars.

The MPISD review identified potential savings of \$5.3 million that could be realized by fiscal 2003-04. TSPR's recommendations also identified investment opportunities of more than \$650,000 in fiscal 1999-2000 and total investment opportunities of \$4.1 million through fiscal 2004. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings less recommended investments) are projected to reach \$1.2 million by fiscal 2004.

The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered the minimum that can be realized if all of TSPR's recommendations are implemented.

The total estimated savings and costs associated with TSPR's recommendations are listed at the end of the executive summary. It should be understood that many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct financial impact, but nevertheless would result in improvements over existing conditions.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" in MPISD. Through commendations in each chapter, the report highlights model programs, operations, and services provided by MPISD administrators, teachers, and staff members. Other school districts throughout Texas will be encouraged to examine the exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet local needs. The TSPR commendations include:

- Two MPISD efforts focus on students at risk of dropping out of school, but they are available to *all* students on each campus—the Maximum Achievement Learning Lab (MALL) and Accelerated Schools teaching strategies. On every campus, the MALL is funded by a combination of Title I, compensatory, local, and state technology allotment funds. Since the MALL was created and the Accelerated School approach initiated, student TAAS scores have

increased, especially among economically disadvantaged and African American students.

- MPISD's Campus Intervention Team (CIT), established in 1996-97, provide intervention strategies for any student not performing well in class, having difficulty reading, or exhibiting behavioral difficulties. According to principals and teachers, in 75 to 80 percent of the cases, individual student needs can be handled on their home campus by modifying their particular educational program.
- The Titus County Special Education Cooperative serves 807 students from four school districts, including MPISD. MPISD also participates in the Mt. Pleasant/Paris Regional Day School Program for the Deaf involving 33 students in a nine-county area, and the Tri-County Cooperative for the Visually Impaired, which serves 27 students in three counties. By using cooperatives, MPISD provides its students high-quality services at a reasonable cost.
- The Titus County Special Education Cooperative receives more than \$100,000 in annual reimbursements through the federally-funded School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program. Under SHARS, school districts are allowed to enroll as Medicaid providers and apply for Medicaid reimbursement for services determined to be medically necessary and reasonable to provide children with disabilities under the age of 21 the benefits of a free and appropriate public education.
- The Mt. Pleasant Scholarship program, created in 1987, offers *every student* who graduates from Mt. Pleasant High School scholarships at Northeast Texas Community College. Every student who graduates in the top 10 percent of their class is eligible for paid tuition, books, and fees. All others are eligible for paid tuition and fees. More than 1,200 students have received scholarships.
- MPISD's energy management program, begun in 1991, uses performance contracts to replace heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, retrofit lights, and install equipment to monitor and control building temperatures. In these performance contracts the vendor guarantees that the cost for equipment will be paid with savings from reduced utility bills. Since 1991, MPISD has reduced energy costs by \$1.3 million, saving \$191,000 per year.
- Through a centralized accounting of activity funds, collected from various school-approved money-raising activities, MPISD reduces risks of poorly accounting for the dollars. The accounting method strengthens the district's internal controls and fosters efficient budgetary operations.

- An established budget and tax rate planning calendar allows for effective control of MPISD's budget preparation process.
- The East Texas Educational Insurance Association, a workers' compensation insurance pool, spreads the risk of workers' compensation costs among 180 member school districts, including MPISD, limiting the amount the district must pay in any year.
- The district's purchasing code of ethics, adopted more than 10 years ago, ensures that its purchasing activities provide the best support possible for students, staff, faculty, at less cost to MPISD taxpayers.
- A computerized cash management system ensures confidentiality in the MPISD free and reduced-price meal programs, saves time, reduces errors, includes a complete database of student patrons, and produces accurate reports on the number of meals served.
- A telephone hotline at Mt. Pleasant High School allows students, teachers, and community residents the opportunity to anonymously alert district officials to any alleged violation of district security or discipline rules, without fear of reprisal.

Chapter by Chapter: Key Findings and Recommendations

District Organization and Management: MPISD's superintendent announced his plan to retire at the end of 1999-2000. To prepare, MPISD's board must develop a profile of the ideal superintendent based upon district priorities. The profile will be useful in seeking and selecting a superintendent, and will also clarify district priorities and increase the board's overall effectiveness.

As MPISD has grown, the existing organization resulted in some unclear lines of authority, duplication of effort, and varying levels of supervisory responsibility. By reorganizing the central administration along functional lines, with one deputy superintendent over business and operations and another over instruction and curriculum, the central administration could be more effective and efficient. Annual savings are estimated at \$75,000 by eliminating a deputy superintendent position.

Educational Service Delivery: MPISD faces two significant challenges: lower than average teacher salaries contributing to high teacher turnover, and smaller than average class sizes, especially at the secondary level. By consolidating low enrollment classes at the secondary level, the district can avoid filling seven new teaching positions each year at an annual savings of nearly \$200,000. The savings, and savings from other recommendations made in the report, should be directed to raising teacher pay to competitive levels. Increasing teacher pay to regional averages will cost an estimated \$500,000 annually.

Community Involvement: MPISD has two significant traditional ethnic minorities; 38 percent of the student population is Hispanic and 18 percent is African American. In turn, its Anglo student population is now in the minority. Appointing a tri-ethnic task force to develop a greater understanding of minority issues and needs can provide a vehicle for open community communication and planning.

Personnel Management: While MPISD is a minority-majority district, 5 percent of its teachers are Hispanic and 5 percent are African American. Understanding the need for minority children to have positive role models in their teachers, the district has a goal of recruiting more minority teachers, but has not been successful in significantly elevating its share of minority teachers. Some proven recruitment strategies can help MPISD make up ground.

Facilities Use and Management: Community members and district staff said MPISD's facilities are always kept clean, in part because custodial staff have been limited to cleaning buildings during school hours at the same time teachers and students occupy the buildings. By redesigning custodial cleaning areas and establishing two custodial shifts, the district can improve cleanliness and eliminate overtime for custodians, saving \$21,500 annually.

Financial Management: MPISD's tax collection costs are out of line with costs in peer districts. By taking proposals for tax collection services from agencies such as the county tax office, MPISD can reduce tax collection costs by \$30,000 annually.

Risk Management: MPISD participates in a commendable workers' compensation insurance pool that significantly limits the district's exposure to losses. Despite the fact that the pool carries reinsurance policies that limit the district's losses, however, MPISD continues to contribute almost double the amount of the annual costs to the fund, amassing \$1.2 million in retained earnings. The claims administrator estimated the district could maintain cash reserves of \$500,000 and still be completely covered for all possible contingencies. After determining the optimum fund balance, MPISD can withhold annual premiums for a period of up to five years at a savings of \$368,000 annually.

Purchasing: By hand, MPISD processed 5,000 purchase orders in 1997-98, or 350 to 400 purchase orders a month. Implementing an automated purchase order system would speed up the order process and allow the district to redirect purchasing staff to more productive endeavors.

Food Services: MPISD's Food Services Department is a model in many ways, but the Food Services Director is not involved in the department's

financial management, does not have authority to evaluate kitchen managers and staff, and is not paid in keeping with other school district food service directors. By rewriting the director's job description, giving the director the authority and responsibility for running the operation, and establishing a salary commensurate with the position, the district can hold the director accountable for Food Services operations and improve productivity.

Transportation: MPISD's transportation function merits significant in-house changes. In an effort to provide MPISD with alternatives to a massive overhaul of internal operations, the review team offers two options for MPISD's consideration: contracting for all or part of the transportation services from an outside vendor and creating a transportation cooperative similar to one operated by Bowie County.

Safety and Security: MPISD has a police force, but its role and responsibilities are not clear. MPISD needs to establish goals and objectives for MPISD's safety and security functions drawing upon a well-defined vision for students, teachers, principals, assistant principals, parents, police officers, and security personnel. When everyone understands the vision, students and staff will benefit from a more secure environment.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many of TSPR's recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that could be used to meet student needs more effectively. The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums. Proposed investments of additional funds usually are related to the creation of increased efficiencies or savings or the enhancement of productivity and effectiveness.

Full implementation of the recommendations in this report could produce net savings of nearly \$263,261 in the first year (**Exhibit 2**). MPISD could achieve total net savings of more than \$1.2 million by 2003-04 if all of TSPR's recommendations are implemented.

Exhibit 2
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Mount Pleasant Independent School District

Year	Total
1999-00 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$263,261
2000-01 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$45,696
2001-02 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$312,551

2002-03 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$312,551
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$312,551
One Time Net Savings/(Costs)	(\$30,000)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2000-2004	\$1,216,610

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 3**. 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 series of actions needed to achieve the proposed results. Some should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two, and some over several years.

TSPR recommends the MPISD board ask district administrators to review the recommendations, develop a plan to proceed with implementation, and monitor progress. As always, TSPR staff are available to help implement proposals.

Exhibit 3
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

	Recommendation	1999 -2000	2000 -2001	2001 -2002	2002 -2003	2003 -2004	Total 5- Year (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1 District Organization and Management								
1	Explore a committee structure to address key areas of district operations. (p. 21)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
2	Develop a profile of the ideal superintendent to be used in seeking and selecting a superintendent. (p. 22)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
3	Establish a five-	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	year plan that ties annual district priorities to the budget. (p. 27)							
4	Reorganize central administration with two deputy superintendents, one for business and operations, and one for all instructional areas. (p. 34)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$375,000	
5	Evaluate ways to strengthen the working relationship of the management team. (p. 37)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
6	Clearly define the levels of authority associated with each decision team in the SBDM process and communicate the new policy to MPISD staff. (p. 39)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
7	Adopt the site-based planning process recommended by the Texas Education Agency and involve members of the SBDM committees in the process. (p. 41)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
8	Institute districtwide guidelines on the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

14	Hire a counselor for grades 7-12 dedicated to identifying non-college bound, average, below average, and at-risk students and developing alternative learning tracks. (p.96)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$229,940)	
15	Review MPISD assessment procedures for identifying gifted and talented students to determine whether other measures can be used to assist In identifying a greater number of minority students. (p. 103)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
16	Enroll in the Medicaid Administrative Claiming program. (p. 113)	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$216,000	
17	Develop a shared services contract and have all participants sign the document. (p. 114)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
18	Document services provided to the cooperative and seek reimbursement. (p. 115)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 2	(\$5,948)	(\$5,948)	(\$5,948)	(\$5,948)	(\$5,948)	(\$29,740)	(\$30,000)

Chapter 3 Community Involvement

19	Develop a comprehensive community involvement plan in conjunction with existing business and civic partners to enhance community involvement at MPISD. (p. 131)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
20	Appoint a tri-ethnic task force for the purpose of developing a greater understanding of minority issues and needs. (p. 133)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
21	Hold quarterly town hall meetings to allow members of the community to speak on educational issues. (p. 134)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
22	Include the agenda for each school board meeting on the cable television channel as soon as it is available. (p. 134)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
23	Activate the district's foundation, establish necessary by-laws to govern its functions, and recruit a board of directors. (p. 136)	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$185,000	
24	Develop a comprehensive and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	structured collaborative business partnership program. (p. 139)							
	Totals-Chapter 3	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$185,000	\$0
Chapter 4 Personnel Management								
25	Expand minority recruitment efforts. (p. 155)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
26	Explore the development of a regional alternative certification program through RESC VIII. (p. 158)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
27	Develop an employee performance measurement and reward system that links improved performance in critical areas to increased rewards. (p. 161)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
28	Increase teacher compensation to competitive levels to reduce high turnover. (p. 164)	(\$247,565)	(\$495,130)	(\$495,130)	(\$495,130)	(\$495,130)	(\$2,228,085)	
29	Implement a retirement incentive plan. (p. 166)	\$75,090	\$75,090	\$269,320	\$269,320	\$269,320	\$958,140	
30	Conduct a market survey and revise the paraprofessional employee, hourly employee, and bus	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	driver salary schedules to a market-based system. (p. 169)							
31	Hire a full-time personnel specialist. (p. 171)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$203,105)	
32	Evaluate whether MPISD should change insurance coverage to a fully-funded plan. (p. 177)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 4	(\$213,096)	(\$460,661)	(\$266,431)	(\$266,431)	(\$266,431)	(\$1,473,050)	\$0
Chapter 5 Facilities Use and Management								
33	Develop a long-range facilities master plan. (p. 189)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
34	Evaluate custodial cleaning areas and eliminate overtime for custodians by establishing two custodial shifts. (p. 196)	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$107,500	
	Totals-Chapter 5	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$107,500	\$0
Chapter 6 Financial Management								
35	Clarify roles and reporting responsibilities of business office staff, and delegate appropriate responsibilities to management personnel and staff. (p. 209)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
36	Revise the annual financial	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	statements. (p. 210)							
37	Settle the successor-in-interest for the Titus County Education District between participating districts to reduce administrative time and effort in accounting for this activity. (p. 211)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
38	Solicit proposals for tax collection services from agencies such as the county tax office and seek to reduce tax collection costs by about 40 percent. (p. 213)	\$27,211	\$32,211	\$32,211	\$32,211	\$32,211	\$156,055	
39	Provide in-service training for federal program managers to maximize the amount of federal assistance used by the district. (p. 214)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
40	Discontinue use of clearing accounts and begin accounting for cash transactions in the particular fund that is receiving and disbursing money. (p. 215)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
41	Use word processing and spreadsheet applications in the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	(p. 227)							
46	Reduce general operating disbursement frequency to two times per month. (p. 229)	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$32,845	
47	Increase the district's fixed asset capitalization policy amount to \$5,000 and establish a control inventory of other high-theft items and all computer and telecommunications equipment. (p. 231)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
48	Review the district's claims history and retain only those earnings that are required to meet the needs of the fund. (p. 234)	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$1,840,225	
	Totals-Chapter 7	\$388,893	\$388,893	\$388,893	\$388,893	\$388,893	\$1,944,465	\$0
Chapter 8 Purchasing and Warehousing								
49	Implement the RSCCC automated purchase order system. (p. 250)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
50	Assign numbers to all approved vendors and enter them into the automated finance system. (p. 251)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
51	Establish computer files to maintain all documentation records for required	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	quotations. (p. 252)							
52	Eliminate open purchase orders. (p. 253)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
53	Integrate the warehouse tracking system into the financial accounting system. (p. 256)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
54	Establish a fee structure for print shop services and charge customers for all printing services. (p. 258)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 8	\$0						

Chapter 9 Food Services

55	Develop a job description for the Food Services Director and increase the salary to be commensurate with the new duties and responsibilities expected of the director. (p. 267)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$74,890)	
56	Give the Food Services Director the authority to evaluate kitchen managers and staff. (p. 268)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
57	Provide job descriptions, training materials, and recipes for Food Services employees in English and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	system to equip each school bus in the active fleet. (p. 296)							
70	Establish staggered bell times, increase bus ridership, and improve routing efficiencies. (p. 300)	\$0	\$0	\$52,625	\$52,625	\$52,625	\$157,875	(\$3,500)
71	Designate hazardous routes where appropriate and apply to the Texas Education Agency for the full hazardous busing entitlement. (p. 301)	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$97,800	
72	Hire two part-time "lead" drivers. (p. 302)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$51,200)	
73	Send one driver to training school and use this driver to train other drivers. (p. 303)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000)
74	Address routine and remedial maintenance of MPISD's bus fleet by exploring options. (p. 305)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$250,000)	
75	Include transportation facilities in a districtwide facilities master plan. (p. 307)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
76	Consider outsourcing the entire	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	transportation function. (p. 310)							
77	Explore the possibility of forming a transportation cooperative with other school districts in Titus, Morris, and Franklin counties. (p. 312)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 10	(\$12,505)	(\$12,505)	\$40,120	\$40,120	\$40,120	\$95,350	\$0

Chapter 11 Safety and Security

78	Establish goals and objectives for MPISD's safety and security function. (p. 320)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
79	Increase the amount and frequency of communication with parents and the community about security issues, and regularly solicit support for district efforts. (p. 322)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
80	Develop a cultural diversity training program for teachers that focuses on discipline management using input from representatives of the minority community. (p. 323)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
81	Formalize	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	cooperation with local law enforcement and pursue grants. (p. 329)							
82	Establish additional coverage for a districtwide hotline. (p. 330)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
83	Pilot a student mediation program in MPISD. (p. 331)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 11	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	TOTAL SAVINGS	\$884,678	\$914,678	\$1,181,533	\$1,181,533	\$1,181,533	\$5,343,955	\$4,500
	TOTAL COSTS	(\$621,417)	(\$868,982)	(\$868,982)	(\$868,982)	(\$868,982)	(\$4,097,345)	(\$34,500)
	NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	\$263,261	\$45,696	\$312,551	\$312,551	\$312,551	\$1,246,610	(\$30,000)

5 Year Gross Savings	\$5,348,455
5 year Costs	(\$4,131,845)
Grand Total	\$1,216,610

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines the organization and management of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) in four parts:

- A. Board and Governance
- B. Planning
- C. District Management
- D. Site-Based Decision-Making

BACKGROUND

School districts in Texas are predominantly "independent" school districts. An independent school district board sets policies, selects key management, establishes property tax rates, and approves staffing levels, pay rates, and the annual district budget. It also determines facility needs and calls bond elections as necessary to support those needs.

A superintendent hired by the board serves as chief executive officer for a contracted period of time subject to renewal, nonrenewal, or dismissal. District superintendents are responsible for determining the number of staff needed to accomplish district objectives, preparing and recommending an annual budget, and supervising day-to-day operations.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD serves a 230-square-mile area of Titus County 115 miles east of Dallas. The City of Mt. Pleasant, county seat of Titus County, has a population of approximately 13,000. The county economy is based on farming and manufacturing. The major employer is the Pilgrim's Pride Company, which employs more than 5,000 area residents.

MPISD has seven schools, a Child Development Center, and one alternative education campus. Enrollment for 1998-99 totaled 4,463 students. The district is served by Regional Education Service Center VIII (RESC VIII), which is also located in Mt. Pleasant.

For this review, MPISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes based on similarities in size, location, enrollment, and property values. The districts include the Athens, Corsicana, Greenville, Kaufman, Kilgore, Liberty Eylau, Paris, Terrell, and Texarkana Independent School Districts (ISDs).

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Board and Governance

BACKGROUND

Each Texas school district is governed by an elected Board of Trustees, which governs and oversees management of the schools. School board members are elected by district residents either at-large, as in districtwide, or from single-member districts.

Each board derives its legal status from the Texas Constitution and state laws. The board must function in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, controlling court decisions and applicable regulations pursuant to state and federal law. Under Section 11.151 of the Texas Education Code, each board must:

- Govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district;
- Adopt such rules, regulations and bylaws as the board may deem proper;
- Approve a district-developed plan for site-based decision-making and provide for its implementation;
- Levy and collect taxes and issue bonds;
- Select tax officials, as appropriate to the district's need;
- Prepare, adopt, and file a budget for the next succeeding fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- Have district fiscal accounts audited at district expense by a Texas certified or public accountant holding a permit from the Texas state board of public accountancy following the close of each fiscal year;
- Publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including campus performance objectives and the progress of each campus toward those objectives;
- Receive bequests and donations or other money coming legally into its hands in the name of the district;
- Select a depository for district funds;
- Order elections, canvass the returns, declare results, and issue certificates of election as required by law;
- Dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the school district;
- Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district; and

- Hold all powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to the Texas Education Agency or the State Board of Education.

CURRENT SITUATION

The MPISD board consists of seven members elected at-large for three-year terms (**Exhibit 1-1**). Terms are staggered so that a maximum of three seats is filled each election.

Elections are held each year on the third Saturday of May. In the election held in May 1998, one incumbent was re-elected and one position was filled by a new member.

The board meets at 7:30 pm on the third Thursday of each month in the board room on the second floor of the Central Services Support Building.

**Exhibit 1-1
MPISD Board of Trustees
1998-99**

Name	Title	Term Expires	Years of Experience	Occupation
Mary Hearron	President	1999	3	Community college faculty member
Ezeal McGill	Vice President	2000	2	Retired teacher
Billy Wayne Flannigan	Secretary	2001	4	Attorney
Royce Carr	Assistant Secretary	2000	1	Independent geologist
Clint Rivers	Sergeant at Arms	2000	2	Plant manager
Jesse May	Member	1999	3	Retired game warden
Mike Reynolds	Member	2001	6	Trailer sales company owner

Source: MPISD.

FINDING

In a written survey conducted by the Comptroller's review team, teachers, parents, campus administrators, and central administrative staff were

asked to "grade" the school board (**Exhibit 1-2**). Sixty percent of teachers and 57 percent of campus administrators gave the board an "A" or "B" grade. Forty-three percent of parents and 33 percent of central administrative staff graded the board with an "A" or "B."

Exhibit 1-2
Grades Given to the MPISD Board by Teachers, Parents, Campus Administrators, and Central Administrative Staff

Group	A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know or No Response
Teachers	12%	48%	10%	8%	1%	12%
Campus administrators	9%	48%	30%	2%	0	11%
Central administrative staff	0	33%	38%	4%	4%	21%
Parents	13%	30%	23%	9%	5%	20%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

A majority of the members of the board and a large number of community members who participated in focus groups raised concerns about recent disagreements among board members that have sent a negative message to the community. Board members cited a number of votes on key issues, such as passage of the annual budget and purchase of new buses, that were decided on 4-3 votes. Community members mentioned incidents of incivility by board members toward other board members and residents, a contentious discussion and attempt by several former board members to get rid of specific personnel through the elimination of automatically-renewing contracts for employees, and specific incidents of poor treatment and lack of professional courtesy by board members toward MPISD staff members in meetings.

Recent elections have altered the composition of the board, and the board has undergone an extensive, four-day training course in team-building conducted by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). However, a majority of the board still felt that disharmony and distrust existed among board members either toward other board members or the administration.

The review team found that communication among board members tends to be limited to the monthly meetings and executive sessions of the board. In contrast to some other school districts, the MPISD board has no standing committees, which could afford more opportunities for communication. In private industry, board committees allow members to handle detailed evaluation of complex items such as budgets, financial

audits, personnel matters, and benefits. Committees evaluate staff recommendations and supporting information, assess the impact of the recommendations, and make recommendations to the full board. This approach allows board members to interact with staff members, ask questions, and raise differences of opinion in a working session rather than at the board dais.

Committees have not worked in every Texas school district. None of MPISD's peer districts have standing committees. According to the board president in Spring ISD, which successfully uses the committee structure, several factors must be in place for committees to work:

- The district must have a plan that governs all decisions of the board and action of the staff. The committees use the plan as the guide to ensure that recommendations are in line with plan goals.
- Board members must understand that their role is one of policy-maker not administrator. The board must avoid "micro-managing," getting too involved in the details of each issue. It must set clear priorities, ensure the resources are there to accomplish them, and monitor the staff's performance.
- Board members must trust each other. Without mutual trust in the actions and motivations of all board members by one another, there is no basis for accepting the recommendations coming from the committees.
- Board members must have respect for the capabilities of other board members and for the district's staff. Board members must treat each other and the staff as professionals dedicated to serving the needs of the students of the district, not furthering their own best interests.
- The staff must be open and candid with the board, provide all information necessary to make decisions, and engage in frank discussion. If the board feels the staff are withholding information, the committees will not use the staff and will not have the information necessary to make intelligent, meaningful recommendations to the full board.
- Board members must be willing to commit the time necessary to make the committees function. The role of the committees is to digest complex issues, thoroughly discuss and evaluate options, and make a recommendation to the board. The board as a whole should not have to review the work of the committee to ensure that it has thoroughly evaluated all information and alternatives.
- Leadership of, and membership on, committees should rotate so that each board member has an opportunity to be both a committee chair and a member on various committees.
- The areas covered by the committees should be changed periodically to reflect the changing priorities of the district. Spring

ISD uses annual input from citizens in the district as well as a survey of parents, teachers, and students every five years to help mold priorities.

Some of these conditions exist within MPISD:

- The board formulated goals for 1998-99 and intends to measure progress toward accomplishing each one.
- With the changes in board composition, a majority of members appear to work together on a consistent basis and trust one another's recommendations.
- The working relationship between the board and staff has improved.
- Board members all expressed a willingness to spend the time necessary to accomplish the work of the board. Collectively, members have invested numerous hours in team-building training to make meetings more effective.

In the other areas, more work is required to establish trust among all members of the board and to elevate board members to a joint role of policy-makers rather than administrators.

Recommendation 1:

Explore a committee structure to address key areas of district operations.

One area of consistent contention has been the annual budget. This could be used as a pilot to determine whether a committee structure could work in MPISD. The goals of the board could be an initial point to provide direction to the staff in formulating spending patterns for the next year.

The committee would work with the staff to clarify each goal, develop strategies to accomplish them, and to set timelines for accomplishment. The committee could provide periodic reports to the full board and discuss key items that may require full board input.

The committee should begin its work at the outset of the budget preparation process. As the staff proceeds in building the budget using the direction set by the goals, the board committee should meet with the staff to assess progress and make changes. The district's budget calendar can be modified to include timing of board committee meetings and key items for discussion at each meeting.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board solicits information from the Texas Association of School Boards and districts where committees are working well.	March 1999
2.	The board meets with senior staff and evaluates the committee structure, identifies potential committees and what issues will be coming up, and discusses how the committee structure could function.	April-May 1999
3.	The board discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using committees and makes a decision.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

The superintendent plans to retire at the end of 1999-2000, leaving board members until early 2000 to identify the qualifications, qualities, and experiences they desire in the next superintendent. In January 1999, the board extended the superintendent's contract through June 2000.

A superintendent search often begins with the hiring of a search consultant and ends with the interviews of final candidates and a hiring. This process typically takes 120 days depending upon the availability of candidates with the qualifications set by the board such as prior experience, areas of strength, and special educational qualifications. However, reaching consensus among board members on the qualities and experiences they want in a superintendent can be a more time-consuming process.

Given that there has been disagreement among MPISD board members on the priorities of the district and on major items, it would be appropriate to begin developing a set of desired qualifications well before the formal superintendent search begins. Desired qualifications could include, for example, experience in facilities management and construction, working in a majority-minority district, improving minority test scores, and developing community relations.

Typically a district's goals and objectives are reflected in the desired qualifications and in the search process. According to the board president for Texarkana ISD, a similar process during its superintendent search improved the working relationship of the board, clarified district priorities, and increased the board's overall effectiveness.

Some districts, such as Cypress-Fairbanks and Katy ISDs, used a board committee to manage the search. This committee invited public input at

special meetings to help the board understand what the community desired in a superintendent.

Recommendation 2:

Develop a profile of the ideal superintendent to be used in seeking and selecting a superintendent.

A board committee should be formed to get community input as well as work with the full board in establishing the desired qualifications for a superintendent.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president appoints a committee to receive input from the community on the desired skills and attributes of a new superintendent.	March 1999
2.	The committee holds meetings and forums with business and community leaders, parents, and other interested parties to gather information.	March - May 1999
3.	The committee provides a report to the board on the community information.	May 1999
4.	The board uses a facilitator from a local college or other community organization to assist it in developing a profile of a new superintendent.	June - August 1999
5.	The board uses the profile to begin the search process.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the development of information on the new superintendent profile. A facilitator can likely be located for a nominal fee or donated by the individual or organization.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. Planning

FINDING

In 1998, for the first time, the MPISD board set written goals for a school year (**Exhibit 1-3**). Each of eight goals for 1998-99 identifies a series of related issues, strategies to accomplish the goals, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative measurements to gauge progress in accomplishing the goals. The goals were not formally made a part of the state-mandated district improvement plan (DIP), but they were reflected in the priorities of the DIP.

Exhibit 1-3
MPISD Board Goals
1998-99

Goal	Description
1.	Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.
2.	A well balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.
3.	MPISD students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.
4.	Qualified and effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.
5.	All campuses within MPISD will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.
6.	Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.
7.	Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.
8.	The school district will provide and maintain adequate facilities, which will contribute to student learning.

Source: MPISD.

In developing the goals, the board also identified a series of strategies to accomplish each goal and key measurements to determine progress (Exhibit 1-4).

**Exhibit 1-4
Strategies and Measurements Associated with MPISD Board Goals**

Goal	Strategies to Accomplish Goals	Key Measures to Determine Progress
<p>Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.</p>	<p>Strengthen reading skills by implementing instructional programs that ensure that all students master reading, writing, and mathematics and are proficient in science and social studies by the end of 3rd grade. Student failures will decrease because of the added support and nurture provided by the teaching staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 3rd grade students will read on grade level by the end of their 3rd grade year. • The percentage of students in each student group who pass each subject of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) will increase to 90%. • The percentage of students in grades 3-8 who show adequate progress on the Texas Learning Index in reading and mathematics will increase to 90%.

<p>A well balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.</p>	<p>Implement effective reading programs, which enable all students to achieve early mastery of reading. Build mathematics and science programs around rigorous content and student performance standards. Implement strong social studies programs that stress the democratic process. Implement language programs that provide for multilingual opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will achieve computational and problem solving skills in mathematics. • All students will achieve scientific literacy in the physical and life sciences. • All students will achieve an understanding of the democratic process and the role of citizenship in a democratic society. • All students will be provided enrichment in foreign languages, music, and the arts and encouraged to excel in one or more areas. • All students will be provided curriculum opportunities in vocational areas.
<p>MPISD students will demonstrate</p>	<p>Implement valid, nondiscriminatory, consistent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance

<p>exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.</p>	<p>and reliable assessments which measure the progress of students relative to national norms and performance standards. Increase participation in, and performance on, advanced placement and college entrance exams.</p>	<p>will consistently exceed national norms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of students completing the Distinguished Achievement Program will increase. • Student performance on college entrance exams will exceed the national average. • The number of advanced placement examinations receiving grades of 3 or higher will increase. • MPISD will have at least two of its campuses recognized as "Exemplary" with the remainder rated "Recognized."
<p>Qualified and effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.</p>	<p>Provide professional staff development and a communications network to assist teachers and ensure that all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninety-eight percent of teachers will be in teaching

	<p>students achieve high standards. Develop initiatives to identify and address critical teacher shortage areas.</p>	<p>positions for which they are certified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of teachers on permit in critical shortage areas will be reduced. • The teacher turnover rate will be 10% or less.
<p>All campuses within MPISD will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.</p>	<p>Develop school-family-community partnerships and interagency collaboration to establish safe schools. Establish zero-tolerance guidelines for behaviors and actions that threaten school safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate of criminal activities on school campuses will decrease. • The number of discipline referrals among students will decrease. • The percentage of students using tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs will decrease.
<p>Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.</p>	<p>Establish a planning process that emphasizes integrating technology into curriculum and instruction. Establish a system of technology training and professional development that is tied to the content and student performance standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All graduates will demonstrate computer-related competencies. • MPISD will meet or exceed the

		<p>state standard for the student-to-computer ratio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of classrooms with direct access to the Internet will increase.
<p>Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.</p>	<p>Promote district and campus improvement in academic and instructional performance through continuous training in, and implementation of, site-based decision making. Ensure that the information provided to campuses increases the effectiveness of planning. Link district and campus plans for improvement to strategies for implementing content and student performance standards, familiarize educators with those standards, improve teaching, and enhance organizational effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The campus site-based committees will report improvements in the use of site-based decision making and improvement planning. • The number of presentations by campus groups at state, regional, and local conferences by local educators will increase.
<p>The school district will provide and maintain adequate facilities which will contribute to student learning.</p>	<p>Planning should include short- and long-range needs assessment to insure that MPISD facilities are more than adequate for the educational needs both now and in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district will annually conduct a short-range facility assessment. • The district will periodically

		<p>conduct a long-range needs assessment of the district's facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district will design a plan, incorporating the long-range facility needs to accommodate site acquisition, financial issues, and construction.
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The administration has taken the broad goals and, under the auspices of a long-range plan, has developed priorities to be addressed currently, in the long term, or on an ongoing basis (**Exhibit 1-5**).

**Exhibit 1-5
MPISD Long-Range Plan
1998-99**

Priority	Description
1.	Expand the team-building training for board and administration.
2.	Automate the policy manual.
3.	Expand the Gifted and Talented program to include under-represented groups.
4.	Conduct a facilities needs assessment.
5.	Reorganize the Transportation Department.
6.	Enlarge the library on the high school campus.
7.	Construct a new competitions gym for the high school campus.
8.	Complete the re-roofing of all district buildings.
9.	Obtain a level of four networked computer stations in every classroom

	in the district.
10.	Have all campuses reach recognized status in state accountability process.
11.	All students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.
12.	Have 100 percent of the teaching staff committed to the Accelerated School concept.

Source: MPISD.

COMMENDATION

The board and the staff have established district goals and developed concrete measures and strategies to implement them.

FINDING

While both the board goals and long-range plan contains measures and strategies for implementation, neither prioritizes goals nor estimates the funds necessary to accomplish them over three to five years. No distinction was made in the board goals or the long-range plan on the relative importance of any priorities.

As required by state law, the district prepares a district improvement plan and individual improvement plans for each campus. A site-based decision-making committee plan and a technology plan also are prepared each year. Site-based teams set goals and objectives for the specific plans. The technology plan, updated annually, is a long-range document tied to specific expenditures. Board goals are not specifically incorporated in the district improvement plan. The district and campus improvement plans are not specifically tied to district objectives or to specific budgeted expenditures.

Residents cited a lack of long-range planning in several areas including the budget, transportation fleet, and facilities. Others cited a lack of a long-range plan to address student achievement in light of changing student demographics.

An effective planning document can be developed through a process that involves determining community priorities and student needs, translating results into annual objectives, and then tying objectives to the district operating budget.

The American Association of School Boards and the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting have developed key elements to an effective long-range planning process (**Exhibit 1-6**).

Exhibit 1-6
Key Elements of An Effective Long-Range Plan and Their Presence in MPISD

Key Elements	Presence in MPISD
Regular stakeholder input: parents, citizens, community groups	The board employs no regular method for community member to provide input. MPISD received poor marks in communication with campuses and parents in the written survey conducted by the review team.
Development and annual review of policy and critical objectives of the district by the board of trustees	Goals were established by the board in 1998, but the goals were not specifically included in the district improvement plan or the staff's long-range plan.
Development of strategies to achieve critical objectives by the staff	The staff has prepared a long-range plan that includes strategies to accomplish the results.
Linkage of financial resources to strategies which help achieve policy and critical objectives	There is no formal link between the district's goals and the budget.
Communication of the plan and expected results and outcomes to stakeholders	There is no regular communication in these areas.
Measurement of results versus plan and evaluation of performance	Each area of the district is measured individually, but sufficient time has not elapsed to evaluate performance. There is no central plan with performance expectations so there is no ability to look at priority areas collectively.

Source: American Association of School Boards, National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting, and interviews of MPISD board members and staff.

Setting district goals and establishing a long-range educational plan for a district can be greatly enhanced through wide community and staff

involvement and participation. In assuming responsibility for guiding the development of this planning process, a board and superintendent meets one of their most important governance responsibilities, setting clear direction for the district. A board and superintendent also may properly budget funds consistent with annual objectives. Such a process builds confidence in the community and among staff members that the district has a planning process that sets the district's direction.

Recommendation 3:

Establish a five-year plan that ties annual district priorities to the budget.

Building upon the exemplary work begun by the board in 1998, the superintendent, working with the board, should enhance its planning by establishing timelines for implementing each strategy, prioritizing goals and strategies, and tying goals directly and formally to the budget by involving community members and staff in the process. The board and superintendent also should establish an annual performance evaluation cycle during which priorities and strategies are adjusted and modified to ensure success. The process should describe the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of each program, and show how the programs will be measured annually to determine if progress is being made in accomplishing objectives.

Representatives from all staff groups and from the community should be included in developing the priorities. Such a process provides the district with a way to communicate its priorities, achievements, and results to the community.

Technical assistance may be available from RESC VIII field service agents or Northeast Texas Community College.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board appoints a committee of MPISD staff and community members to develop long- and short-term priorities.	March 1999
2.	The committee recommends priorities to the board for consideration.	May 1999
3.	The board holds a public meeting/hearing on the recommended priorities and adopts priorities.	June 1999
4.	The board refers the priorities to staff for inclusion in the annual budget process and the committee begins working with the board and administration to formally link the priorities to the budget.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations oversees many business-related functions of the district and also serves as the personnel director, the energy management coordinator, and the hearing officer for the alternative school. The deputy superintendent also is responsible for the drug testing program and facilities, insurance, and purchasing issues.

The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology oversees the district's instructional technology programs and all instruction-related programs for special student populations. She also serves as coordinator for all special programs except Special Education, including Accelerated Schools, Content Mastery, counseling services, deaf education, English as a Second Language (ESL)/bilingual, emergency immigrant, Gifted and Talented, Compensatory, and Title I.

The deputy superintendent for Curriculum oversees the operation of curriculum and also serves as the elementary and secondary curriculum director, coordinator of the dyslexia program, testing coordinator, and staff development coordinator.

In a written survey of parents, teachers, campus administrators, and central administrative staff, 39 percent of the parents and 35 percent of the teachers gave the superintendent an "A" or "B" grade (**Exhibit 1-8**). Fifty-four percent of the parents and 79 percent of the teachers gave campus administrators an "A" or "B" grade.

Exhibit 1-8
Grades Given to the MPISD Superintendent and Campus
Administrators
by Teachers and Parents

Group	Superintendent					Campus Administrators				
	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F
Parents	16%	23%	18%	9%	13%	16%	38%	14%	9%	2%
Teachers	15%	30%	18%	14%	13%	39%	40%	14%	2%	3%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

The full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) for the district for 1994-95 through 1997-98 and the budgeted total for 1997-98 are described in **Exhibit 1-9**. MPISD staffing has increased at more than twice the rate as the student population (12.3 percent versus 5.8 percent) since 1994-95. The largest numerical increases have been in teachers and auxiliary staff. The largest percentage increases have been in campus

administration/school leadership positions and educational aides. Central administration staff includes all or part of the time filled by the following positions: superintendent, deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, secretaries for the two positions, business manager, textbook custodian, and six changes in positions in the business office. Professional support includes technical staff and paraprofessionals located centrally or on a campus. Auxiliary staff includes maintenance personnel, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

**Exhibit 1-9
MPISD Staff Positions
1994-95 through 1997-98**

Staff Category	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget	Percentage of Change over the Period
Teachers	312.9	317.1	327.8	335.5	7.2%
Professional support	22.0	28.6	21.9	25.7	16.8%
Campus administration	13.0	14.0	12.0	18.0	38.5%
Central administration	9.5	7.0	6.0	6.0	-36.8%
Educational aides	60.5	66.0	71.4	79.9	32.1%
Auxiliary staff	162.1	164.2	163.7	186.3	24.2%
Total staff	580.0	596.9	602.8	651.5	12.3%
Enrollment	4,202	4,290	4,375	4,444	5.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Exhibit 1-10 breaks down the FTEs by categories of employees. The percentage of teachers declined, but teachers made up more than half the district's staff in 1997-98.

**Exhibit 1-10
Breakdown of MPISD Staff Positions
1995-96 through 1997-98**

Staff Category	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget
Teachers	53.1%	59.6%	51.5%

Professional support	4.8%	4.0%	4.0%
Campus administration	2.3%	2.2%	2.8%
Central administration	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%
Educational aides	11.1%	13.0%	12.3%
Auxiliary staff	27.5%	20.2%	28.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 -1997-98.

Although an individual works in the central administrative building, their position may be coded to other areas based on their responsibilities. In MPISD, 26 individuals work in the Central Services Support Building (**Exhibit 1-11**). Since 1996-97, MPISD staffing in central administration has increased by two positions. One of those positions, the homeless grant coordinator, is paid through grant funds, not local funds.

Exhibit 1-11
MPISD Central Administration Staffing
1996-97 through 1998-99

Position Title	1996 -97	1997 -98	1998 -99
Superintendent	1	1	1
Secretary	1	1	1
Deputy superintendent - Administration and Operations	1	1	1
Secretary	1	1	1
Deputy superintendent - Curriculum	1	1	1
Secretary	1	1	1
Deputy superintendent - Instruction and Technology	1	1	1
Secretary	1	1	1
Business manager	1	1	1
Payroll supervisor	1	1	1
Accounts payable clerk	1	1	1
Purchasing agent	1	1	1
Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator	1	1	1

Accounts/inventory clerk	1	1	1
Risk manager	1	1	1
Public information officer	1	1	1
Receptionist	1	1	1
Literacy coordinator	1	1	1
Migrant program coordinator	1	1	1
Gifted/Talented coordinator	1	1	1
Homeless grant coordinator	0	1	1
Instructional technology staff	4	5	5
Total	24	26	26

Source: MPISD.

Exhibit 1-12 shows MPISD's budgeted staffing for 1997-98 compared to peer districts. MPISD had the second lowest percentage of teachers (51.5 percent). This percentage lags both the region, 53.2 percent, and the state, 51.7 percent. MPISD had the third-lowest percentage of professional support staff and central administrators, the second-highest percentage of campus administrators, the third- highest percentage of educational aides, and the fourth highest percentage of auxiliary personnel.

Exhibit 1-12
Budgeted Staff
MPISD and Peer Districts
1997-98

District	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administrators	Central Administrators	Educational Aides	Auxiliary Staff
Liberty Eylau	56.7%	5.8%	3.0%	1.4%	9.6%	23.6%
Kilgore	56.5%	3.3%	2.7%	0.9%	7.2%	29.4%
Terrell	54.0%	6.9%	2.6%	1.0%	11.0%	24.6%
Kaufman	53.9%	5.8%	3.0%	1.0%	7.8%	28.5%
Greenville	53.3%	6.0%	1.6%	1.1%	12.0%	26.0%
RESC VIII Average	53.2%	5.2%	2.8%	1.3%	12.8%	24.7%

Corsicana	52.1%	5.3%	2.7%	1.7%	15.4%	22.9%
Athens	51.9%	3.7%	3.0%	1.7%	10.8%	29.0%
Texarkana	51.7%	6.5%	2.4%	0.8%	8.7%	29.9%
State Average	51.7%	6.8%	2.5%	0.8%	9.9%	28.2%
Mt. Pleasant	51.5%	4.0%	2.8%	0.9%	12.3%	28.6%
Paris	49.4%	8.5%	2.9%	0.7%	13.6%	24.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Section 16.205 of the Texas Education Code requires TEA to analyze district expenditures to identify districts that exceed established administrative cost standards in the prior year. MPISD's administrative cost ratio for since 1994-95 has been less than the required standard (**Exhibit 1-13**).

Exhibit 1-13
MPISD Administrative Cost Ratio
1994-95 - 1996-97

Year	MPISD Administrative Cost Ratio	Percentage Change from the Prior Year
1996-97	0.0737	-2.9%
1995-96	0.0759	-3.9%
1994-95	0.0790	-10.1%

Source: TEA, *Computation of Administrative Cost Ratio, 1993-94 - 1996-97*.

Exhibit 1-14 compares MPISD's administrative cost ratio to that of its peer districts. MPISD has the third-lowest rate among its peer districts.

Exhibit 1-14
MPISD Administrative Cost Ratio Compared to Peer Districts
1996-97

District	Administrative Cost Ratio
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Greenville	0.0700
Kaufman	0.0706
Mt. Pleasant	0.0737
Liberty Eylau	0.0748
Terrell	0.0817
Texarkana	0.0933
Kilgore	0.1000
Corsicana	0.1018
Paris	0.1128
Athens	0.1147

Source: TEA, Computation of Administrative Cost Ratio, 1996-97.

FINDING

Before becoming superintendent in 1995, the superintendent served as the district's only assistant superintendent for two years. When he was selected as superintendent, he recommended, and the board approved, the district's organization with three deputy superintendents: one each for Administration and Operations, Curriculum, and Instruction and Technology. In addition to the deputy positions, the superintendent's secretary, who also serves as the district's records manager, the business manager, seven school principals, and the district's public information officers report to the superintendent for a total of 14 administrative people.

While the existing organization has served the district well, it may not be the most appropriate structure for moving the district into the future. MPISD's student enrollment has increased 5.8 percent since and will likely continue to grow if Pilgrim's Pride builds a new plant in the area. While administrators must carry multiple roles in smaller districts, as the districts increase in size, the various district operations require more expertise and time. If progress is to be made and order maintained, functions must be aligned under specialized skilled administrators. By bringing in more technical expertise and creating more focused departments a district breaks the complex maze of duties and responsibilities into smaller bites.

Also, as districts grow, a functional organization develops with specialists directing the various functions. For example, support services such as food service, transportation, maintenance, custodial operations, and facilities management often are grouped together, as are finance and management information services.

MPISD is not organized in this manner. At MPISD, food service is grouped with instructional technology under one deputy superintendent, and personnel is grouped with transportation, facilities, and warehousing under the direction of another deputy superintendent. The same deputy who handles transportation and facilities also is the hearing coordinator for the alternative school.

Instructional and administrative technology support are split with the former reporting to a deputy superintendent and the latter to the business manager who reports to the superintendent.

The regular education program and the special programs are divided between two deputy superintendents.

The organizational roles and reporting relationships in MPISD cause conflicting lines of authority. For example, food service workers report to the principal at each campus rather than the food service director. Another problem resulting from unclear lines of authority is duplication of effort. The number of people reviewing purchase orders illustrates this problem. There also are widely varying levels of supervisory responsibility. The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology has 11 direct reports while the deputy superintendent for Curriculum has two.

As district priorities and personnel change, adjustments to department groupings may be needed.

For example, as the district's minority population increases, the need for coordination of special programs, like bilingual education with the regular education program, will increase.

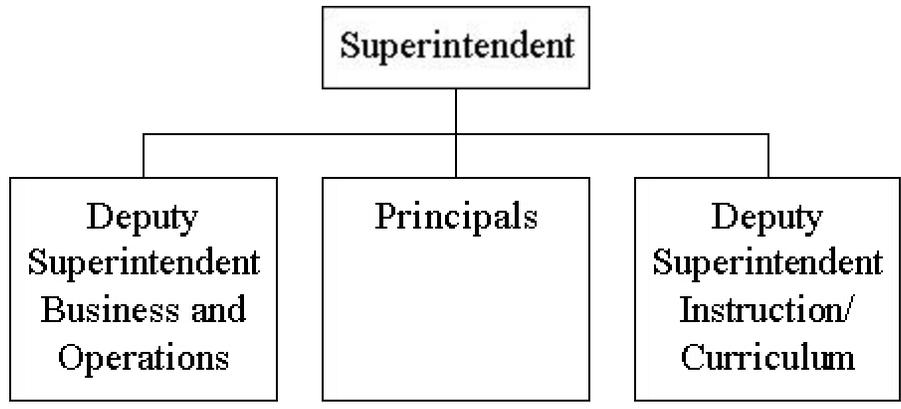
As other senior staff retire, the district needs to be able to attract personnel with experience and skills in specific areas.

Recommendation 4:

Reorganize central administration with two deputy superintendents, one for business and operations, and one for all instructional areas.

After the anticipated retirement of several senior staff members, an alignment similar to that in **Exhibit 1-15** would prove more functional.

Exhibit 1-15 Recommended MPISD Organization



Source: MPISD

Business and Operations:

- Food services
- Transportation
- Maintenance
- Business office
- Facilities

Instruction:

- Curriculum design
- Instructional support
- Personnel
- Staff development
- Hearing officer

The recommended structure would eliminate one deputy superintendent position. The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Curriculum would be responsible for curriculum design and evaluation, and the academic programs. Staff development, personnel, and hearing officer responsibilities should be transferred to this position.

The deputy superintendent for Business and Operations would oversee transportation, maintenance, food services, all business functions, and records management.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent evaluates the structure and grouping of functions.	March 1999
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2.	The superintendent presents changes to the board for discussion and approval.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent develops alternatives to fill new positions and provide backup to existing positions.	May 1999
4.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations rewrites and/or develops job descriptions needed to support any changes.	June 1999
5.	Job descriptions are reviewed by the superintendent and approved.	July 1999
6.	New positions are included in the budget and approved by the board.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended organization includes additional positions, and the financial impact of adding the positions is discussed in other chapters. The financial impact of eliminating one deputy superintendent is \$75,000 (salary = \$60,000 and benefits @ 25 percent = \$15,000).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Reorganize central administration	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000

FINDING

The district's management team consists of the superintendent, the three deputy superintendents, and the principals at the eight schools. While there has been no change since 1995 among the superintendent and the deputy superintendents, there have been numerous changes among the principals. At the high school and at the junior high school, each principal is the third in the last four years, at Sims Elementary School the principal is the third in the last six years, and at Corprew Intermediate School and Brice Elementary School, the principal is the second in the last three years.

Frequent changes in key managers often lead to disruptions in program delivery and continuity, transfers of teachers to other campuses or districts, increased communication difficulties, negative messages to parents and teachers about the district's ability to identify and retain leaders, and the management team's ability to work together.

Central office and campus staff, excluding teachers, differ in how they perceive communication between the two levels. In a written survey, 79 percent of MPISD central administrators and support staff agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "An effective line of communication exists between central administration and the schools." Only 52 percent of campus personnel, excluding teachers, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Communication between the central office and campuses is good." Thirty percent of campus personnel, excluding teachers, either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Teachers said the communication link was more effective between campus staff and themselves than between the central office and teachers. In response to the statement, "MPISD central and campus administrators regularly communicate with teachers," 48 percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed while 43 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked to respond to the statement, "An effective line of communication exists between teachers and campus level administrators," 67 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed and 25 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

MPISD has attempted some team-building efforts in the past three years and has periodically held administrative retreats. But there has not been a planned approach. The management team has no specified regular meetings, but it usually meets at least once a month. The superintendent calls meetings of the principals approximately once a month, but not on a scheduled basis.

Interviews with members of the management team suggest that in the past two to three years, there have been significant differences of opinion about key initiatives or programs that the district was implementing or considering for evaluation. As a result, some programs were implemented in full at some schools and only partially, if at all, at other schools. By not "being on the same page," some members of the management team have had negative feelings toward others.

Some districts use management retreats to develop managers and working relationships among the management team. Ideally, the retreats facilitate program implementation and communication. Each summer in Spring ISD, the district provides administrative training to all administrators above the level of assistant principal. The program lasts from three to five days and involves 125 to 140 people. Each year, the superintendent designates a theme for the training. Recent themes have included site-based decision-making; teaching, learning, and respect; creating the conditions for classroom success; and team building and leadership development.

Participation in such programs requires some advance preparation such as reading articles or books, preparing information for discussion, and researching topics to be studied. The sessions involve both full group meetings and small workshops on specific topics.

At the conclusion of each program, each participant is asked to evaluate the training. The district develops an evaluation tool that covers each section of the program. Participants are asked to rate the quality of the individual presentations, the applicability of the subject matter to their responsibilities, and whether additional information or sessions on the subject would be beneficial.

Spring ISD managers said they looked forward to the sessions and found them both informative and stimulating. Participants said they found the sessions useful in setting the tone and priorities for the year and in emphasizing key areas for the long term.

Recommendation 5:

Evaluate ways to strengthen the working relationship of the management team.

Among the methods that MPISD could employ are annual management retreats, regularly scheduled management team meetings with part of the meeting set aside for small group discussions on key topics, and continued team-building training.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent schedules management team meetings to discuss ways to encourage greater cooperation and interaction among team members.	March 1999
2.	The team meets to discuss various options and recommends several to the superintendent for approval.	April - May 1999
3.	The superintendent approves the recommendations and assigns the responsibility for implementing each element to a member of the management team.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

D. Site-Based Decision-Making

CURRENT SITUATION

Site-based decision-making (SBDM), a state and federal initiative in education management, focuses the full resources of a school district at the school level and encourages all decisions to be made as close to the people affected by them as possible. The major focus of SBDM is to empower students, teachers, parents, principals, and schools.

Districts must establish a districtwide SBDM committee as well as one for each campus. Section 11 of the Texas Education Code provides information on the composition of the committees as well as the roles and responsibilities of each one. The committees are to be comprised of elected professional staff of the district in a ratio of two-thirds classroom teachers and one-third other campus- and/or district-level professional staff. Parents, community members, and businesses are to be included on each committee "in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity."

In each district, an administrative procedure must be provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in six areas:

- Planning
- Budgeting
- Curriculum
- Staffing patterns
- Staff development
- School organization.

The district adopted a SBDM plan in 1994. This plan created eight SBDM committees: one at the district level and one at each of the seven campuses. This plan also documents the general scope of responsibility, committee composition, electoral processes for member selection, and approval processes. The committees meet at least once monthly to review issues and concerns. Matters that have been brought to the attention of the committee but do not pertain to site-based management are referred to the central administration.

FINDING

District SBDM participants suggested a wide disparity in the way each school uses the committees. At the elementary schools, the committees actively review information and provide input to the principals as decisions are made. Representatives said that SBDM committees and the teachers discussed all major issues and had input on all decisions in the same manner.

Representatives at the district level, the high school, and the junior high school said that input to decision-making is limited and the committees are used more as a forum to present information than to receive input. One representative said the committee merely approved the school calendar. Another said they had never seen the policy governing the role of the SBDM committee.

In a written survey of teachers and campus administrators, the review team asked both groups to respond to the following statement regarding the SBDM process: "Site-based decision-making is implemented effectively in MPISD." A majority of teachers, 53 percent, either agreed or strongly agreed while 41 percent of the campus administrators agreed or strongly agreed.

Intermediate, junior high, and high school teachers seemed most dissatisfied, with 58 percent, 45 percent, and 24 percent, respectively, of the teachers either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement.

The committee chairs, principals, and committee members also indicated that there is no clear definition of the authority levels of the committees. Where the elementary SBDM committees are an integral part of the budget process, the high school committee has had very little input or evaluation of options in the budget. The site-based plans provide general statements of responsibility, but according to the chairs, the role of the committee is left to the discretion of the principal at each school.

Representatives of SBDM committees said that until this school year, no training had been provided on the roles and responsibilities of SBDM committees. In fall 1998, RESC VIII provided training on the roles of the committees.

Some districts have addressed these types of circumstances by creating a model that assigns responsibility at each level for providing input, offering recommendations, making decisions, and giving approval. The model used by the Spring Branch ISD appears in **Appendix F**.

Recommendation 6:

Clearly define the levels of authority associated with each decision team in the SBDM process and communicate the new policy to MPISD staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent meets with the SBDM committee chairs, the deputy superintendents, and the principals to review current SBDM policies and procedures, identify inconsistencies in the application of the policies and procedures, and develop consistent use of the committees at all levels.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent develops a policy that reflects the discussions on how committees will function at each campus and at the district level, and outlines and presents this policy to the board for review and approval.	April 1999
3.	Upon board approval, the superintendent meets with the principals and SBDM committee chairs to review the policy and begin implementation.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Representatives of the SBDM committees said there was little feedback to the committees about the status of recommendations brought to the superintendent or the board. There is no mechanism for regular periodic reports by the committees to the board, nor is there any regular meeting of the committee chairs with the superintendent. The superintendent also said the SBDM committees are not actively involved in the preparation of campus and district budgets.

Representatives of the committees and the committee chairs said the involvement sought in the development of the district and campus performance/improvement plans was left to each campus. At the elementary level, teachers and committee representatives were actively involved. At the other levels, according to representatives of the SBDM committees, the plans were usually prepared by the principal and several members of the campus leadership team, then presented to the committees for approval.

Members of the district SBDM committee indicated that the annual plan was prepared by district staff and presented to the committee for

discussion and approval. Reporting during the year on the plan's status was viewed as minimal by committee members.

In the *Accountability Resource Guide on Site-Based Decision Making and District and Campus Planning* released by TEA in 1992, the steps of an effective site-based planning process were described (**Exhibit 1-16**). An updated version of the guide with the same process was released in 1995.

Exhibit 1-16
TEA Recommended Site-Based Planning Process

Step	Description
1.	Acquire governance support by ensuring that the local school board has approved policies outlining the district- and campus level planning and decision-making processes.
2.	Ensure that board policy designates the procedures for election of both district- and campus-based professional staff members to the district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees.
3.	Follow local district policy and requirements of state statute to elect district and campus professionals for the district and campus committees.
4.	Ensure that all appropriate specialists have an opportunity to provide input in the planning and decision-making process.
5.	Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment beginning with an analysis of the most current student performance on the academic excellence indicators for all student populations tested.
6.	Organize for planning. Provide background information and training, select plan formats, appoint skilled facilitators, provide for clerical support, and access needed materials, space, and equipment.
7.	Conduct planning sessions. Collaboratively identify appropriate long-range goals and annual performance objectives.
8.	Identify resources necessary to accomplish performance objectives.
9.	Complete the planning documents.
10.	Develop recommendations for a comprehensive budget aligned with strategies identified to accomplish stated performance objectives.
11.	Ensure that a draft of the proposed plans has been made available for review to representatives of all stakeholder groups prior to final submission of the performance objectives to the board for approval.
12.	Provide a review of the proposed district and campus performance objective for board approval.

13.	After board approval, disseminate plans to all district and campus staff and make them available to parents, community members, and business representatives.
14.	Allocate adequate resources to accomplish the strategies. Assign specific staff members to guide implementation of each strategy and activity within each plan.
15.	Implement the plans.
16.	Monitor the ongoing implementation of each plan according to identified incremental timelines and evaluative criteria and make adjustments as needed.
17.	Evaluate the accomplishment of targeted performance objectives on an annual basis.

Source: Accountability Resource Guide on Site-Based Decision Making and District and Campus Planning, TEA.

Recommendation 7:

Adopt the site-based planning process recommended by the Texas Education Agency and involve members of the SBDM committees in the process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent meets with SBDM committee chairs and principals to discuss the TEA site-based planning process.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent, committee chairs, and principals modify the process to accommodate MPISD and finalize the process for presentation to the board.	April-June 1999
3.	The board reviews and approves the process with any modifications.	July 1999
4.	The superintendent implements the process with the district SBDM committee, and the principals implement the process on each campus.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

Interviews and focus group meetings with SBDM committee members, principals, and teachers revealed that different selection methods are used to pick committee members. At some campuses, teachers recommend teachers who are then asked if they want to participate; at other campuses there are elections; and at some campuses the principal picks who will participate.

Participation by parents and community members is minimal. No more than three members of any of the campus or district committees, according to lists provided to TSPR by the district at the beginning of the review, were parents or community members.

Interviews with SBDM committee representatives also indicated that few, if any, of the committee members are minorities. The high school committee has no African Americans and one Hispanic member; the junior high school has one African American and no Hispanic member; and Brice Elementary School has no minority members. Only at Fowler Elementary School, where two African Americans and one Hispanic are committee members, was there any minority community presence. According to the Texas Education Code, the composition of the SBDM committees are to be "in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity."

Members of the committees said repeated efforts had been made to recruit minority community members. Problems cited in securing participation by minorities included inconvenient meeting times, too many other commitments, and limited parental interest.

Some districts recruit participants through the business community, local minority organizations, and churches. One of the district's board members is a vice president with Pilgrim's Pride, which employs a large number of Hispanic workers, and the board member may be able to get recommendations through plant employees. The Child Development Center has a working group of parents that meets regularly that could be asked for recommendations on Hispanic participants.

Members of the review team met with an African American group called Rebound, comprised of teachers, professionals, substitute teachers, members of the clergy, and other interested citizens. Members of Rebound indicated an interest in providing names of potential participants and in encouraging greater minority participation on the committees.

Recommendation 8:

Institute districtwide guidelines on the election of MPISD teachers and professional staff to SBDM committees and increase efforts to attract minority representatives.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent meets with SBDM committee chairs and develops a standard process for selecting committee members at each level and discusses ways to increase minority participation on the committees.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent and committee chairs present this proposed election and recruitment process to the board for review and approval.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent and SBDM committee chairs meet with representatives of the minority communities to discuss the importance of the role of the committees, emphasize the need to have the composition of the total school population represented on the committees, and solicit potential committee members.	May 1999
4.	Committee chairs maintain continuing contact with minority community representatives to generate a reserve of potential committee members.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This chapter examines the educational services delivery and performance measures of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) in the following subchapters:

- A. Student Performance
- B. Curriculum Development and Evaluation
- C. Staff Development
- D. Compensatory Education
- E. Bilingual/English as a Second Language
- F. Career and Technology Education (CATE)
- G. Gifted and Talented Program
- H. Special Student Populations
- I. Instructional Technology

The key role of any school district is educating children. Instructional programs and services should be developed, evaluated, and modified based upon student performance.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD has seven schools, a Child Development Center, and an alternative education campus, serving 4,463 students in 1998-99 (**Exhibit 2-1**). The district is served by the Regional Education Service Center VIII (RESC VIII) also in Mt. Pleasant.

Exhibit 2-1
MPISD Campuses, Grade Levels, and Enrollment
1997-98 and 1998-99

Campus	Grade Levels	1997-98 Enrollment (1)	1998-99 Enrollment (2)
Mt. Pleasant High School	9-12	1,252 students	1,215 students
Alternative Education	various	19 students	13 students
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	6-8	608 students	618 students
Wallace Middle School	4-5	652 students	643 students

Corprew Intermediate	3-4	645 students	659 students
Sims Elementary	K-2	349 students	368 students
Brice Elementary	EC-2	341 students	334 students
Vivian Fowler Elementary	EC-2	345 students	287 students
Child Development Center	Headstart	247 students	326 students
Total		4,458 students	4,463 students

Source: MPISD.

Since 1993, Texas has rated and accredited districts and schools based upon specific performance measures including the reading, writing, and math portions of the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), student dropout rates, and attendance rates. Districts are evaluated each year, and beginning with the 1995-96 school year, districts were rated Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable, or Unacceptable. In 1997-98, state-approved charter schools were added to the accountability listings. During the same year, all MPISD campuses were rated acceptable. The Head Start campus was not rated because pre-K and kindergarten campuses are not rated statewide. The enrollments and ratings of MPISD and its peer districts are presented in **Exhibit 2-2**.

Exhibit 2-2
MPISD and Peer District Enrollments and Accreditation Status
1997-98

District	Enrollment	Accreditation Status
Athens	3,450	Academically Acceptable
Corsicana	5,046	Academically Acceptable
Greenville	5,299	Academically Acceptable
Kaufman	3,023	Academically Acceptable
Kilgore	3,694	Academically Acceptable
Liberty Eylau	2,706	Recognized
Mt. Pleasant	4,444	Academically Acceptable
Paris	3,878	Academically Acceptable

Terrell	3,969	Recognized
Texarkana	5,298	Academically Acceptable

Source : Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-3 shows statewide ratings in each category for 1997-98.

**Exhibit 2-3
Number of Texas School Districts by Accreditation Level
1997-98**

Accreditation Level	Number of Districts Receiving This Level of Accreditation	Percentage of Total
Exemplary	120	11.3%
Recognized	329	31.0%
Academically Acceptable	585	55.1%
Academically Unacceptable	6	0.6%
Unacceptable	2	0.2%
Charter School	19	1.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

As **Exhibit 2-4** indicates, since 1994-95 MPISD has grown at a slower rate (5.2 percent) than the average for the state (8.1 percent), but the district's growth rate has been almost twice the average for RESC VIII districts (2.7 percent).

**Exhibit 2-4
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Rates of Student Growth
1993-94 through 1997-98**

Entity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
State of Texas	3,601,839	3,670,196	3,740,260	3,828,975	3,891,877	8.1%
Mt. Pleasant	4,226	4,202	4,290	4,375	4,444	5.2%
RESC	54,316	54,661	54,943	55,450	55,766	2.7%

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Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Compared with its peer districts, MPISD's student population is growing at the second fastest rate (**Exhibit 2-5**). Only Kaufman has grown at a faster rate.

Exhibit 2-5
MPISD and Peer District Student Population Growth Rates
1993-94 through 1997-98

Entity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Athens	3,395	3,436	3,448	3,485	3,450	1.6%
Corsicana	4,822	4,894	4,966	4,998	5,046	4.6%
Greenville	5,360	5,326	5,372	5,374	5,299	-1.1%
Kaufman	2,802	2,833	2,889	2,937	3,023	7.9%
Kilgore	3,773	3,786	3,637	3,752	3,694	-2.1%
Liberty Eylau	2,810	2,741	2,712	2,682	2,706	-3.7%
Mt. Pleasant	4,226	4,202	4,290	4,375	4,444	5.2%
Paris	3,908	3,855	3,860	3,961	3,878	-0.8%
Terrell	3,801	3,792	3,839	3,967	3,969	4.4%
Texarkana	5,451	5,502	5,535	5,401	5,298	-2.8%
RESC VIII	54,316	54,661	54,943	55,450	55,766	2.6%
State	3,601,839	3,670,196	3,740,260	3,828,975	3,891,877	8.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

By grade levels, MPISD has experienced a 9.2 percent increase at the elementary level (Early Childhood-Grade 5) a 2.2 percent increase at the junior high level (grades 6-8), and a 0.6 percent increase at the high school level (grades 9-12) (**Exhibit 2-6**).

Exhibit 2-6
MPISD Student Enrollment by Grade Level/School
1994-95 through 1997-98

Grade Level (Grades)	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Elementary (EC-5)	2,072	2,114	2,191	2,242	2,263	9.2%
Junior high school (6-8)	902	871	883	895	922	2.2%
High school (9-12)	1,252	1,217	1,216	1,238	1,259	0.6%
Total	4,226	4,202	4,290	4,375	4,444	5.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Since 1996-97, MPISD is a majority-minority district, meaning that more than 50 percent of its students are members of one of the following ethnic groups: Hispanic, African American,

Native American, or Asian/Pacific Islander. The Anglo student population decreased from 52 to 44 percent of the total, while the Hispanic student population increased from 29 to 38 percent and African American students decreased slightly to 18 percent (**Exhibit 2-7**).

Exhibit 2-7
Changes in Ethnicity of MPISD Student Population
1994-95 through 1997-98

Ethnicity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Anglo	54%	52%	50%	46%	44%
Hispanic	27%	29%	31%	34%	38%
African American	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The only majority-minority district among MPISD's peer districts is Texarkana (**Exhibit 2-8**).MPISD has the lowest Anglo population of its peer districts and the highest Hispanic population.

Exhibit 2-8
Ethnicity of MPISD, Peer Districts, RESC VIII, and State Student Populations 1997-98

Entity	Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Other
Athens	65%	17%	17%	1%
Corsicana	49%	20%	30%	1%
Greenville	59%	14%	27%	1%
Kaufman	70%	21%	9%	0
Kilgore	71%	8%	22%	1%
Liberty Eylau	54%	2%	43%	0
Mt. Pleasant	44%	38%	18%	1%
Paris	57%	2%	39%	2%
Terrell	49%	14%	35%	1%
Texarkana	47%	3%	50%	1%
RESC VIII	69%	7%	24%	1%
State	45%	38%	14%	3%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

During 1997-98, MPISD teachers did not reflect the ethnic composition of the student population (**Exhibit 2-9**).

Exhibit 2-9
MPISD Student and Teacher Ethnicity 1997-98

Ethnicity	Students	Teachers
Anglo	44%	91%
Hispanic	38%	5%

African American	18%	5%
Other	1%	0
Total	100%	100%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

With regard to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and economically disadvantaged, MPISD is above both the regional and state averages and has been over the past five years. The percentage of MPISD students classified as LEP was one quarter of the student population in 1997-98. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students is determined by dividing the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or other public assistance by the total number of students. In MPISD, students classified as economically disadvantaged exceeded one-half of the student population in 1997-98 (**Exhibit 2-10** and **Exhibit 2-11**).

Exhibit 2-10
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State LEP Students
as a Percentage of Total Student Population
1993-94 through 1997-98

Entity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Mt. Pleasant	17%	17%	19%	21%	25%
RESC VIII	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%
State	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 - 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-11
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Economically Disadvantaged Students
as a Percentage of Total Student Population
1993-94 through 1996-97

Entity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Mt. Pleasant	47%	50%	50%	54%	56%
RESC VIII	42%	44%	45%	46%	46%
State	45%	46%	47%	48%	49%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 - 1997-98.

Compared to its peer districts, MPISD was the fourth highest in percentage of economically disadvantaged students and by far the highest in percentage of LEP students during 1997-98(Exhibit 2-12).

Exhibit 2-12
MPISD and Peer District Economically Disadvantaged and LEP
Students
as a Percentage of Total Student Population
1997-98

Entity	Economically Disadvantaged Students	LEP Students
Paris	62%	1%
Liberty Eylau	59%	1%
Texarkana	57%	1%
Mt. Pleasant	56%	25%
Corsicana	54%	8%
Greenville	52%	7%
Terrell	52%	6%
State	49%	13%
RESC VIII	46%	4%
Kilgore	41%	4%
Kaufman	39%	3%
Athens	36%	10%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

The district's total expenditures in 1997-98 were \$22,555,974. Of the total, operating expenditures were \$19,285,989. Within operations, \$11,833,212, or 61 percent, was spent on instructional functions. Instructional expenditures were higher than the regional average of 59 percent and the state average of 59 percent (Exhibit 2-13).

Exhibit 2-13
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Instructional Expenditures
as a Percentage of Operating Expenditures
1997-98 Budget

Entity	Operating	Instructional	Instructional Expenditures
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	Expenditures	Expenditures	as a Percentage of Operating Expenditures
Mt. Pleasant	\$19,285,989	\$11,833,212	61%
RESC VIII	\$267,850,790	\$181,261,168	59%
State	\$19,465,285,020	\$11,571,395,230	59%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

MPISD is spending below the regional and state averages for regular education, special education, and compensatory education. The district is also below the regional average and above the state average for Career and Technology Education (CATE). It is well above both the state and regional averages for bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) education, which reflects the increasing number of Hispanic students entering MPISD(Exhibit 2-14).

Exhibit 2-14
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Instructional Program
Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Instructional Operating
Expenditures
1997-98 Budget

Program	Mt. Pleasant	RESC VIII	State
Regular education	67%	74%	71%
Special education	9%	11%	12%
Compensatory education	6%	7%	8%
Career and Technology Education	5%	6%	4%
Bilingual/ESL education	12%	1%	4%
Gifted and talented education	1%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Compared to its peer districts, MPISD expenditures were second lowest for regular education and the highest for bilingual/ESL education reflecting the greater percentage of Hispanic students in the district

(**Exhibit 2-15**). The Titus County Special Education Cooperative has allowed MPISD to keep special education expenditures among the lowest of the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-15
MPISD, Peer Districts, RESC VIII, and State Instructional Program
Expenditures as a Percentage of Budgeted Instructional Operating
Expenditures
1997-98 Budget

Entity	Regular Education	Special Education	Compensatory Education	Career and Technology Education	Bilingual/ESL Education	Gifted and Talented Education
Greenville	84%	1%	9%	3%	2%	1%
Kaufman	78%	12%	5%	5%	0	1%
Kilgore	74%	7%	10%	6%	1%	2%
Corsicana	73%	11%	10%	5%	2%	1%
RESC VIII	73%	12%	7%	6%	1%	1%
Liberty Eylau	72%	14%	6%	7%	0	1%
Paris	72%	13%	10%	4%	0	1%
State	71%	12%	8%	4%	4%	3%
Texarkana	69%	13%	12%	5%	1%	1%
Terrell	68%	13%	11%	6%	0	1%
Mt. Pleasant	67%	9%	6%	5%	12%	1%
Athens	62%	11%	12%	5%	4%	7%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The expenditures by program for 1997-98 were similar to expenditures of the prior two years with several differences (**Exhibit 2-16**). Regular education program funding increased from 62 to 67 percent of budgeted operating expenditures, compensatory program funding declined from 15

to 6 percent, and bilingual/ESL expenditures increased from 10 to 12 percent of the total.

Exhibit 2-16
MPISD Instructional Program Expenditures
as a Percentage of Total Instructional Operating Expenditures
1993-94 through 1997-98

Program	1993-94 Actual	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget
Regular education	65%	62%	62%	65%	67%
Special education	7%	7%	7%	8%	9%
Compensatory education	8%	15%	15%	6%	6%
Career and Technology Education	6%	4%	5%	6%	5%
Bilingual/ESL education	11%	10%	10%	13%	12%
Gifted and talented education	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Instructional program funding increased 11.6 percent from 1993-94 through 1997-98. The largest increases in funding occurred in bilingual/ESL, CATE, and special education, which increased 72.2, 27.5, and 17.3 percent, respectively (**Exhibit 2-17**). Regular education program funding increased 15.5 percent, and compensatory education funding increased 5.3 percent. Gifted and Talented education program funding declined 6.2 percent.

Exhibit 2-17
MPISD Instructional Program Expenditures
1993-94 through 1997-98

Program	1993-94 Actual	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget	Percentage Change
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						over the Period
Regular education	\$6,826,880	\$6,855,092	\$7,521,659	\$7,002,845	\$7,885,476	15.5%
Special education	\$881,786	\$812,683	\$805,280	\$883,780	\$1,034,101	17.3%
Compensatory education	N/A	\$1,721,454	\$1,804,987	\$651,078	\$683,061	5.3%
Career and Technology Education	\$475,787	\$476,147	\$572,663	\$636,558	\$606,685	27.5%
Bilingual/ESL education	\$848,545	\$1,124,211	\$1,195,627	\$1,354,076	\$1,461,000	72.2%
Gifted and talented education	\$173,600	\$163,950	\$185,805	\$173,934	\$162,889	-6.2%
Total	\$10,600,453	\$11,153,537	\$12,086,021	\$10,702,271	\$11,833,212	11.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1993-94 - 1997-98.

The federal government provides funding to school districts for targeted purposes through various programs or Titles. Title I, Part A, for helping disadvantaged children at risk of failure to meet high standards; Part C for education of migratory students; Title II Part B for Dwight D. Eisenhower professional development program; and Title VI, for innovative education program strategies, were authorized in 1965 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was last reauthorized in October 1994.

To qualify as a "schoolwide project" campus, a school must serve a student population with 50 percent of the students identified as economically disadvantaged. MPISD receives funds for programs under both Title I and Title VI. For 1997-98, MPISD received \$711,655 in Title I funds, \$21,693 Title II funds, and \$25,397 in Title VI funds.

Title 1, Part A programs are designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged and at-risk students. Programs are designated as either schoolwide assistance, which means the funds can be used throughout the school to upgrade the entire educational program as long as the uses help meet the needs of the targeted students, or targeted assistance, which means that the funds are used for only a designated purpose, such as a computer lab, that serves the targeted students only.

MPISD has five schools with schoolwide assistance programs: Sims, Brice, and Fowler Elementary Schools, Corprew Intermediate School, and Wallace Middle School.

The purpose of the migrant program (Title I, Part C) is to ensure that migratory children have the opportunity to meet the same state content and performance standards that all children are expected to meet. The parents of children in this category are in occupations, such as farming, that require them to move from place to place during the year. By designing programs that help migrant students overcome education disruptions, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of these children to do well in school, MPISD prepares them to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment.

MPISD's program is designed to identify and recruit migrant students year round. All migrant students have the option of enrolling in summer school and Project Smart, which allows migrant students to continue educational goals during the summer months. During 1997-98, 474 students were designated as migrant students (**Exhibit 2-18**).

Exhibit 2-18
MPISD Enrollment in Title I, Part C Programs by School
1997-98

School	Total Enrollment	Enrollment in Program	Percentage of Total Enrollment in Title I, Part C Program
Mt. Pleasant High School	1,252	29	2.3%
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	608	45	7.4%
Wallace Middle School	652	91	14.0%
Corprew Intermediate School	645	111	17.2%
Sims Elementary School	349	58	16.6%
Brice Elementary School	341	35	10.3%
Fowler Elementary School	345	55	15.9%

Child Development Center	247	50	20.2%
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Source: MPISD.

Eisenhower program funds support staff development in critical areas of student performance such as math, advanced placement subjects, and writing. In MPISD, funds have been used to support:

- Marilyn Bums Math Solutions training in grades K-8,
- Core-Plus training in Algebra,
- 4-MAT training to assist teachers in how to differentiate instruction to accommodate student learning styles at the secondary level, and
- New Jersey Writing Program.

Since 1989, MPISD has spent Eisenhower funds to support innovative education strategies. While many districts have used the funds to purchase library books, in MPISD, the program is implemented districtwide on all campuses and includes programs that relate to integrating technology into the curriculum or providing infrastructure for such integration.

Instructional Environment

Exhibit 2-19 shows changes in full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers in each of the instructional program areas from 1993-94 through 1997-98. CATE, special education, compensatory education, and regular education programs recorded the largest percentage increase in teacher FTEs. The gifted and talented program was the only program to experience a decrease in teacher FTEs.

**Exhibit 2-19
Number of Teacher FTEs by Instructional Program
1993-94 through 1997-98**

Program	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Regular education	185.7	203.1	206.3	213.1	222.0	19.5%
Special education	20.7	23.6	20.4	25.8	25.7	24.2%
Compensatory education	21.8	28.9	28.6	23.2	26.1	19.7%
Career and Technology	15.5	14.9	19.7	21.5	20.3	31.0%

Education						
Bilingual/ESL education	31.1	36.0	35.1	37.8	35.1	12.9%
Gifted and talented education	4.4	2.9	3.9	1.1	0.8	-81.8%
Other (honor/migrant)	5.3	3.5	3.0	5.3	5.4	1.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 - 1997-98.

MPISD has fewer teacher FTEs in regular education, special education, and gifted and talented education programs. Reflecting its increasing Hispanic population, MPISD has much higher expenditures in its bilingual/ESL program and more teacher FTEs assigned to this program (**Exhibit 2-20**). Compared to its peer districts, MPISD has the fifth lowest percentage of teachers in compensatory education; the second lowest in gifted and talented education; and the highest in Bilingual/ESL.

Exhibit 2-20
Percentage of MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and State
Teacher FTEs by Instructional Program
1997-98

Entity	Regular Education	Special Education	Compensatory Education	Career And Technology Education	Bilingual/ESL Education	Gifted and Talented Education	Other (Honor/Migrant)
Athens	77.5%	7.9%	4.4%	4.2%	1.8%	2.7%	1.5%
Texarkana	76.8%	9.6%	3.3%	4.5%	0.7%	0.9%	4.3%
RESC VIII	76.1%	8.8%	5.0%	5.6%	1.4%	0.9%	2.1%
Corsicana	74.6%	10.8%	4.8%	5.4%	2.1%	0.5%	1.8%
Terrell	73.4%	10.4%	6.9%	5.6%	0.6%	0.1%	3.1%
Kaufman	72.2%	8.1%	8.1%	4.8%	1.7%	0.6%	4.5%
State	71.2%	9.4%	4.1%	4.1%	6.8%	2.1%	2.2%
Liberty Eylau	70.9%	11.8%	7.9%	6.5%	0.5%	0.7%	1.8%
Greenville	67.2%	9.2%	10.4%	3.7%	2.6%	1.6%	5.3%
Mt. Pleasant	66.2%	7.7%	7.8%	6.0%	10.5%	0.2%	1.6%

Paris	65.8%	10.8%	12.2%	4.5%	0.6%	4.5%	1.5%
Kilgore	63.4%	7.9%	13.6%	6.6%	1.5%	1.2%	5.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

In a written survey, teachers responded to several statements about the learning environment and emphasis on learning in the district (**Exhibit 2-21**). Eighty-one percent of the teachers responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD," and 60 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years."

Exhibit 2-21
Responses of Teachers to Survey Statements

Statement	Percentage of Teachers by Category				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion/No Response
Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD.	26%	55%	12%	3%	12%
Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years.	15%	45%	13%	3%	23%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

Seventy-three to 91 percent of teachers at grade levels K-8, depending on the campus, either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Only at the high school was there significant disagreement, where 39 percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD" (**Exhibit 2-22**).

Exhibit 2-22
Responses of Teachers by Grade Level to Survey Statement
"Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD"

	Percentage of Teachers by Category				
Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion/No Response
Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD.					
High school	12%	40%	29%	10%	10%
Junior high school	17%	63%	9%	3%	9%
Middle School	32%	58%	11%	0%	0%
Intermediate school	18%	55%	13%	8%	5%
Elementary school	36%	55%	5%	1%	2%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

In response to the statement, "Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years," 73 percent of both elementary and middle school teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; however, less than half the teachers at the junior high and high schools agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (**Exhibit 2-23**).

Exhibit 2-23
Responses of Teachers by Grade Level to Survey Statement
"Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years"

	Percentage of Teachers by Category				
Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion/No Response
Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD.					
High school	10%	33%	24%	12%	21%
Junior high school	3%	43%	23%	3%	29%
Middle School	13%	68%	0%	0%	26%

Intermediate school	13%	39%	11%	5%	32%
Elementary school	24%	49%	10%	0%	17%

Source: TSPR Survey Results

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A. Student Performance

CURRENT SITUATION

Student performance on standardized tests is one indicator of the success of a district's educational delivery system. In MPISD, the percentage of students passing the TAAS stayed basically the same in 1995-96 for third, fourth, and fifth graders, but went down significantly for third graders in 1996-97. In 1996-97 average scores for fourth graders were up in writing and about the same in reading and math, while fifth graders were up significantly in math and down in reading. In 1997-98, third graders increased in reading, but declined in math; average scores for fourth graders declined in all areas, and for fifth graders increased in reading and declined in math (**Exhibit 2-24**).

Exhibit 2-24
Percentage of MPISD Elementary Students Passing TAAS
1994-95 through 1997-98

Grade/Subject	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
3rd-Reading	87%	88%	79%	81%
3rd-Math	95%	93%	81%	73%
4th-Reading	87%	82%	88%	82%
4th-Math	87%	88%	86%	81%
4th-Writing	91%	92%	97%	88%
5th-Reading	95%	92%	90%	91%
5th-Math	87%	89%	96%	94%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Compared to students in MPISD's peer districts in 1997-98, MPISD third grade elementary students had the second-lowest scores in reading, and the lowest in math; fourth grade had the second-lowest scores in reading and math and were in the middle in writing; and fifth graders had the second-highest scores in math and the third-highest in reading (**Exhibit 2-25**).

Compared with the region and the state, MPISD third graders were below regional and state averages; fourth graders were below both averages in reading and math, below the state average in writing, but at the regional average in writing; and fifth graders were above the regional and state averages.

Exhibit 2-25
Percentage of MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and
State Elementary Students Passing TAAS
1997-98

Entity	3rd Grade		4th Grade			5th Grade	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Writing	Reading	Math
Kilgore	91%	75%	93%	82%	93%	93%	91%
Kaufman	90%	85%	90%	93%	87%	86%	85%
Terrell	89%	80%	95%	91%	95%	95%	95%
RESC VIII	88%	83%	90%	88%	88%	90%	92%
Paris	86%	75%	88%	90%	86%	87%	90%
State	86%	81%	90%	86%	89%	88%	90%
Corsicana	83%	83%	81%	83%	79%	71%	75%
Greenville	83%	79%	87%	88%	90%	79%	81%
Liberty Eylau	83%	81%	91%	93%	91%	83%	92%
Athens	82%	74%	85%	90%	78%	84%	87%
Mt. Pleasant	81%	73%	82%	81%	88%	91%	94%
Texarkana	78%	74%	74%	77%	75%	87%	77%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

At the junior and high school levels, the percentage of students passing the TAAS generally improved from 1994-95 through 1997-98 (**Exhibit 2-26**). Of particular note were improved passing rates of students in grades 6 and 7 in math, grade 8 in science and math, and reading and math, and grade 10 in reading and math. On the down side, grade 6 reading scores declined 10 percentage points from 1996-97 to 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-26
Percentage of MPISD Junior High
and High School Students Passing TAAS
1994-95 through 1997-98

Grade/Subject	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
6th-Reading	78%	83%	87%	77%
6th-Math	73%	89%	87%	86%
7th-Reading	87%	83%	86%	82%
7th-Math	69%	74%	87%	87%
8th-Reading	85%	79%	87%	88%
8th-Math	56%	70%	76%	86%
8th-Writing	89%	79%	83%	83%
8th-Science	84%	82%	88%	90%
8th-Social Studies	70%	70%	73%	72%
10th-Reading	76%	73%	83%	82%
10th-Math	64%	59%	74%	81%
10th-Writing	91%	78%	79%	91%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Compared to its peer districts, MPISD junior high school students were generally lower at the grade 6 reading only level; and higher at the grade 8 science only level (**Exhibit 2-27**). MPISD junior high students were below the regional average in each area. The junior high students were above the state average in grade 7 math and all grade 8 areas except writing. They were below the state averages in all other areas, except in grade 6 math.

Exhibit 2-27
Percentage of MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and
State Junior High School Students Passing TAAS
Grades 6 - 8
1997-98

Entity	6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade				
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Writing	Science	Social Studies
Kaufman	94%	98%	91%	93%	89%	91%	86%	84%	74%
Terrell	94%	94%	94%	90%	90%	93%	95%	88%	76%
Liberty Eylau	92%	90%	90%	89%	92%	89%	97%	92%	71%

Kilgore	91%	84%	87%	79%	89%	87%	88%	88%	75%
RESC VIII	90%	90%	90%	90%	91%	91%	90%	91%	79%
State	86%	86%	86%	84%	85%	84%	84%	84%	70%
Athens	82%	85%	82%	86%	88%	84%	75%	86%	73%
Corsicana	79%	86%	78%	79%	79%	80%	85%	76%	67%
Paris	79%	77%	84%	84%	81%	87%	87%	81%	70%
Texarkana	79%	75%	84%	83%	85%	88%	86%	83%	60%
Mt. Pleasant	77%	86%	82%	87%	88%	86%	83%	90%	72%
Greenville	73%	76%	73%	73%	74%	71%	73%	68%	61%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Compared to students in MPISD peer districts, MPISD high school students had the third-lowest scores in writing, the lowest in reading, and the fourth-lowest scores in math during 1997-98 (**Exhibit 2-28**).

Compared to students in the region, MPISD high school students were below average in all tests; compared to the state average, they were above average in math and writing.

Exhibit 2-28
Percentage of MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and
State High School Students Passing TAAS
Grade 10
1997-98

Entity	10th Grade		
	Reading	Math	Writing
Kilgore	95%	89%	96%
Paris	94%	90%	97%
Athens	91%	74%	88%
Terrell	91%	78%	93%
RESC VIII	91%	85%	94%
Greenville	90%	83%	93%
Corsicana	89%	82%	92%

Kaufman	89%	80%	93%
Liberty Eylau	88%	81%	92%
State	88%	78%	90%
Texarkana	84%	69%	86%
Mt. Pleasant	82%	81%	91%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

In comparing student performance by ethnic group on the TAAS (all grade levels) to the region and the state, MPISD students as a group equaled the state averages of students passing in math, but were below state averages in reading, writing, on all tests, and the exit-level TAAS required for graduation. Compared with regional averages, MPISD students as a group were lower in all areas. Anglo student performance was above state averages in all areas except the exit-level test. MPISD African American students did not perform as well as African American students in the state on all tests, reading, or exit level exams, but exceeded averages for African American students statewide in writing and math. MPISD Hispanic students had a higher percentage passing the math test than the average for Hispanic students statewide (**Exhibit 2-29**), but do not meet statewide averages in other categories.

Exhibit 2-29
Percentage of MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Students Passing TAAS,
All Levels
1997-98

Test				African American		Hispanic		Anglo	
	State	RESC VIII	MPISD Total	State	MPISD	State	MPISD	State	MPISD
Reading	87%	90%	83%	75%	72%	75%	70%	91%	93%
Writing	87%	91%	83%	77%	80%	77%	71%	90%	97%
Math	84%	89%	84%	67%	73%	73%	78%	89%	91%
All tests	78%	83%	75%	59%	58%	63%	60%	84%	88%
Exit level	89%	91%	81%	83%	76%	83%	61%	94%	89%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Compared with students in peer districts, MPISD students were at or near the middle in reading, writing, and math (**Exhibit 2-30**). The percentage of students passing was below the region in all areas but met the state average in writing and math.

Exhibit 2-30
Percentage of MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and State Students
Passing TAAS,
Grades 3-8, and 10
1997-98

Entity	Reading	Writing	Math	All Tests
Terrell	93%	94%	89%	85%
Kilgore	91%	92%	84%	80%
Kaufman	90%	88%	89%	82%
RESC VIII	90%	91%	89%	83%
Liberty Eylau	88%	93%	88%	81%
State	87%	87%	84%	78%
Athens	85%	80%	83%	74%
Paris	85%	90%	85%	77%
Mt. Pleasant	83%	87%	84%	75%
Texarkana	81%	82%	78%	70%
Corsicana	80%	84%	81%	70%
Greenville	79%	85%	79%	70%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

MPISD students trailed the regional and state average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) I scores from 1994 through 1997, the last year for which information is available from TEA (**Exhibit 2-31**). After a significant increase in scores by the class of 1996, the average score for the class of 1997 declined by 3 percent.

Exhibit 2-31
Mean SAT I Score for MPISD, RESC VIII, and the State
Classes of 1994 through 1997

Entity	Class of 1994	Class of 1995	Class of 1996	Class of 1997
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Mt. Pleasant	873	849	987	962
RESC VIII	876	882	989	981
State	885	891	993	992

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Compared to its peer districts, MPISD mean scores on the SAT I were the third lowest (**Exhibit 2-32**).

Exhibit 2-32
Mean SAT I Score for MPISD, Peer Districts, RESC VIII, and State Class of 1997

District	Score	Percentage of Students Tested
Athens	1065	42.3%
Kilgore	1064	44.1%
Texarkana	1010	71.9%
Paris	1002	58.2%
Liberty Eylau	995	61.5%
Kaufman	993	50.4%
State	992	63.6%
RESC VIII	981	64.0%
Greenville	974	48.7%
Mt. Pleasant	962	41.7%
Corsicana	951	63.3%
Terrell	934	48.3%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-33 shows the attendance rate of MPISD students versus averages for the region, state, and among peer districts through 1996-97, which is the last data available through TEA.

Exhibit 2-33
Attendance Rate of MPISD Students Compared to Peer Districts, RESC VIII and the State 1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Terrell	97%	97%	96%
Mt. Pleasant	95%	95%	96%
Paris	95%	96%	96%
RESC VIII	96%	96%	96%
Athens	96%	95%	95%
Kaufman	95%	95%	95%
Kilgore	95%	95%	95%
Liberty Eylau	96%	95%	95%
Texarkana	95%	95%	96%
State	95%	95%	95%
Corsicana	95%	94%	94%
Greenville	95%	94%	95%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Within MPISD, all the major ethnic student groups have high attendance rates (**Exhibit 2-34**). The "other" student category represents only 1 percent of the total student population, making it prone to fluctuations from year to year.

Exhibit 2-34
Attendance Rate of MPISD Students by Ethnicity
1993-94 through 1996-97

Ethnicity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
African American	96%	96%	94%	96%
Anglo	96%	96%	95%	96%
Hispanic	96%	96%	95%	97%
Other	95%	94%	87%	96%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Retention rates for students show the percentage of students who start the school year enrolled in the same grade that they were in at the end of the previous school year. According to state requirements, a district can only

retain a student in grades K-8. **Exhibit 2-35** shows that among regular education students, MPISD's retention rates are comparable to the region and below those for the state for most grades.

Exhibit 2-35
Regular Education Retention Rates of MPISD by Grade Level
Compared to Peer Districts, RESC VIII, and the State
1997-98

Entity	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Athens	0.5%	2.0%	0.4%	0.9%	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%	3.0%	1.7%
Corsicana	4.8%	7.5%	1.8%	0.3%	0.9%	0.7%	0.3%	4.7%	1.0%
Greenville	1.8%	7.1%	3.8%	1.2%	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	2.1%	2.4%
Kaufman	1.1%	2.4%	2.2%	1.1%	2.2%	1.1%	1.1%	3.0%	1.1%
Kilgore	0.9%	1.4%	0.9%	0	0	0	0.4%	4.2%	0.8%
Liberty Eylau	1.8%	6.1%	4.2%	3.3%	0	0	3.3%	7.6%	3.9%
Mt. Pleasant	3.1%	2.8%	1.1%	0	0.4%	0	1.7%	0.4%	0.4%
Paris	3.9%	5.8%	4.1%	0.8%	0	0.4%	3.2%	1.8%	1.4%
Terrell	2.4%	1.3%	2.5%	1.0%	0.4%	0	0	1.7%	0
Texarkana	0.8%	7.8%	2.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	5.5%	1.7%
RESC VIII	2.4%	4.3%	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%	1.4%	1.7%	0.9%
State	1.4%	5.0%	2.3%	1.4%	1.0%	0.6%	1.5%	2.6%	1.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-36 shows retention rates for special education students in MPISD compared to the region and the state. As shown, MPISD did not retain any special education students in grades 3 and 5. MPISD is comparable to the regional and state averages for students retained in grades K-5, although it is well below both the regional and state averages in grade 1. At grades 6-8, MPISD's special education retention rate was higher than the region and state.

Exhibit 2-36
Special Education Retention Rates for MPISD, Peer Districts, RESC
VIII, and State
1997-98

Entity	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
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Athens	0	2.6%	0	0	14.3%	0	0	3.8%	0
Corsicana	5.0%	7.8%	0	0	9.7%	0	0	6.7%	2.3%
Greenville	9.6%	12.2%	11.1%	1.5%	1.7%	0	2.3%	5.6%	0
Kaufman	3.4%	5.0%	13.0%	0	0	0	0	2.6%	0
Kilgore	3.4%	2.3%	0	0	0	3.5%	0	0	0
Liberty Eylau	4.8%	3.7%	0	0	0	0	0	10.2%	0
Mt. Pleasant	6.8%	1.4%	2.1%	0	3.7%	0	2.1%	3.8%	5.6%
Paris	8.8%	8.1%	7.5%	2.2%	0	0	0	4.8%	0
Terrell	10.3%	0	0	1.5%	0	0	1.2%	0	2.0%
Texarkana	0	12.3%	12.9%	4.7%	4.1%	6.3%	0	0	0
RESC VIII	6.0%	7.8%	3.4%	1.3%	1.9%	2.0%	1.4%	1.6%	0.9%
State	7.0%	10.2%	3.8%	2.2%	1.6%	2.0%	2.0%	3.0%	3.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-37 compares the MPISD dropout rate to its peer districts, the region, and the state for 1994-95 through 1996-97, which is the last year for which TEA has data available. MPISD remained below the state average, but it was slightly above the regional average in 1995-96 and 1996-97. Compared to its peer districts, MPISD ranked in the middle.

Exhibit 2-37
Dropout Rate for MPISD, Peer Districts, RESC VIII, and the State
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Kaufman	0.2%	0.7%	0.1%
Kilgore	1.9%	1.2%	0.8%
Liberty Eylau	0.9%	0.7%	0.9%
Terrell	0.7%	0.3%	1.0%
Paris	3.4%	2.6%	1.0%
RESC VIII	1.7%	1.4%	1.3%
Mt. Pleasant	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%

Greenville	1.8%	1.2%	1.6%
State	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%
Corsicana	2.5%	1.8%	1.7%
Athens	2.5%	2.0%	2.7%
Texarkana	1.8%	1.0%	3.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-38 compares the MPISD dropout rate by ethnicity from 1993-94 through 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-38
Dropout Rate for MPISD Students by Ethnicity
1993-94 through 1996-97

Ethnicity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
African American	0	0.9%	0.6%	1.4%
Anglo	0	1.0%	1.4%	1.3%
Hispanic	0.3%	3.8%	2.3%	1.9%
Other	0	0	0	N/A

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1993-94 through 1997-98.

FINDING

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) designates advanced courses as more challenging courses. MPISD has had a far greater percentage of students taking and completing advanced courses than the regional and state averages (**Exhibit 2-39**). According to the deputy superintendent for Curriculum, the reasons for this higher percentage include: (1) a tradition of offering advanced courses; (2) a large selection of advanced courses such as fourth and fifth years of foreign language, math, and science; (3) encouragement by counselors and other high school staff for students they determine to have the ability to take advanced courses; and (4) an emphasis on training teachers to teach advanced courses.

The number of students taking advanced courses is based on the number of students who completed and received credit for at least one advanced academic course in grades 9-12. From 1994-95 through 1996-97, the number of students taking advanced courses declined from 49 to 42 percent. With the exception of Kilgore and Texarkana ISDs, however,

MPISD had more than double the percentage of students in advanced courses than any peer district in 1996-97, which is the last year of data available through TEA.

Exhibit 2-39
Percentage of MPISD, Peer District, Regional,
and State Students Taking Advanced Courses
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Mt. Pleasant	49%	46%	42%
Kilgore	38%	45%	41%
Kaufman	25%	23%	21%
RESC VIII	17%	18%	20%
Texarkana	16%	19%	24%
State	15%	17%	20%
Paris	15%	17%	19%
Terrell	15%	18%	14%
Corsicana	14%	18%	18%
Athens	12%	13%	13%
Liberty Eylau	11%	9%	9%
Greenville	10%	13%	16%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-40 shows the ethnic breakdown of MPISD students in advanced courses.

Exhibit 2-40
Percentage of MPISD Students by Ethnicity Taking Advanced
Courses
1993-94 through 1996-97

Ethnicity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
African American	30%	25%	22%	16%
Anglo	52%	55%	53%	43%
Hispanic	21%	47%	44%	54%

Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
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Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

COMMENDATION

MPISD emphasizes advanced courses to challenge students and students take advantage of the availability of these courses.

FINDING

The percentage of MPISD minority and economically disadvantaged students passing the TAAS trailed state and regional averages and those of Anglo students in the district in 1997-98 (**Exhibit 2-41**).

**Exhibit 2-41
Percentage of MPISD Students Passing TAAS Test
1997-98**

	All Tests	Math	Reading	Writing
All students	75.0%	84.3%	83.3%	87.3%
Anglo	87.5%	90.7%	93.4%	96.5%
Economically disadvantaged	63.1%	77.9%	73.5%	77.2%
Hispanic	59.9%	78.4%	70.2%	71.3%
African American	58.4%	72.7%	71.7%	80.0%

Source: TEA, Accountability Profile, MPISD, September 1998.

Recognizing this situation as a serious issue, MPISD has implemented two strategies that focus particularly on at-risk students: the Maximum Achievement Learning Lab (MALL) and Accelerated Schools teaching strategies. The most important instructional strategy supplementing the achievement of at-risk students is the content mastery MALL. All students are allowed to come to the MALL for assistance as needed. Participation is tracked by program, and the MALL is funded by a combination of Title I, compensatory, local, and technology allotment funds.

The district created the MALL on every campus in 1994-95. The MALL is an enhanced content mastery lab that serves every child in the school, especially in the elementary grades. A technology center is part of every MALL. There are telephone lines, modems, scanners, digital cameras,

video cameras, and color printers. There are five multimedia machines for enrichment for gifted and talented students.

Goals of the MALL include:

- Keep all students in the regular classroom as much as possible.
- Assist all students with methods designed to enhance learning.
- Provide classroom teachers with effective instructional methods for teaching different learning styles.
- Assist classroom teachers in dealing with special students.
- Create one set of goals and learning objectives for all students.
- Unite the expertise of classroom educators and consulting teachers.
- MALL teachers and classroom teachers plan and monitor student progress during team meetings.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.

Staffing for each MALL varies from campus to campus. However, each MALL has at least one certified special education teacher and one certified Gifted and Talented teacher. MALL personnel serve as at-risk coordinators for each campus.

The district at-risk list is generated at the beginning of the school year so students who are in need of special services can be monitored by MALL personnel. Three- and six-week progress reports are sent to the MALL so that monitoring remains ongoing. Services provided to at-risk students in the MALL include:

- Tutoring,
- Small group assistance on classroom assignments,
- Materials on variations in learning styles that help MALL and regular classroom teachers adapt to different student needs,
- Classroom assignment and test modifications provided to the classroom teacher on request,
- Before/after school assistance on class assignments,
- After-school tutoring in reading and math,
- Study skills assistance,
- TAAS remediation,
- Computer activities involving problem solving and the Internet,
- Enrichment activities,
- Accelerated Reading program, and
- Reading Recovery strategies.

In addition to these activities, the middle school, junior high school, and high school MALLs offer activities to specifically address the needs of at-risk students, including: Accelerated Learning Systems video courseware for students not functioning on grade level, PLATO 2000 courseware for

students who need TAAS remediation, and special classes offered to students who need assistance to pass the TAAS.

According to the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology, principals at each campus, and teachers, the MALL creates a collaborative relationship between classroom and consulting teachers, promotes individual and group reteaching and preteaching for all children, promotes individual and group enrichment for all children, and eliminates the stigma associated with leaving the regular classroom.

MPISD teachers in several schools have received training in the Accelerated Schools program and methods. The district has not formally adopted the program at any of its schools but has been using some of the program's practices in addressing the needs of at-risk students. TEA, through Title I grants, is making funding available to districts to adopt programs such as Accelerated Schools, and MPISD plans to adopt this approach in conjunction with receiving funding to train teachers and parents on all campuses.

The program was created by the National Center for the Accelerated Schools at Stanford University. The program has the goal of "bringing all students into the educational mainstream by the end of elementary school so they can perform at levels appropriate to their age group." The term "accelerated" emphasizes that at-risk students must learn at a faster rate than more privileged students, not at a slower rate that puts them farther behind.

Accelerated schools are based on three principles: (1) unity of purpose, which refers to a striving among parents, teachers, students, and administrators toward common goals for the school that will be the focal point of everyone's efforts; (2) school-site empowerment, which refers to the ability of the key participants of a school community in the school and at home to make important educational decisions, take responsibility to implement them, and take responsibility for the outcomes; and (3) an instructional approach that builds on the strengths of students, teachers, administrators, other staff, and parents, rather than their weaknesses. Among key elements of the program are high expectations for all students; deadlines for making children in the program academically able; combining curriculum, diverse instructional techniques, and creative school organization; problem-solving applications rather than "drill and kill" worksheets; campus-level identification of problems and solutions; and involving parents.

The program's curriculum emphasizes language development in all subjects including math and science, an early introduction to writing and reading for meaning, using applications tied to each student's culture and

everyday experiences, and a focus on problem-solving and higher order analytical skills. Also, there are curricular objectives for all students.

Individual schools, not districts, become program members. The basic partnership agreement requires a minimum three-year commitment because the experience of program managers is that it takes at least five years for a school to undergo a full transformation to the approach. In each member school, 90 percent of full-time staff and school community representatives must indicate a willingness to transform their school using the approach.

Principals and teachers at schools that have adopted this approach suggested that accelerating learning increased achievement levels of minority and at-risk students. TEA, in research results contained in *Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs. Remediation and The Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement* (1993), states: "Accelerated Instruction, or building quality into the process of education, particularly for students in at-risk situations, holds immense promise...Accelerated Instruction focuses curricular priorities around student needs and builds on student strengths."

Since the MALL was created and the Accelerated Schools approach was initiated, student TAAS scores have increased in MPISD, especially among economically disadvantaged and African American students(Exhibit 2-42).

Exhibit 2-42
Percentage of MPISD Economically Disadvantaged
and Minority Students Passing All TAAS Tests
1993-94 through 1997-98

Year	Economically Disadvantaged	African American	Hispanic
1997-98	63.1%	58.4%	59.9%
1996-97	61.3%	57.4%	59.7%
1995-96	56.8%	48.6%	58.8%
1994-95	54.1%	40.4%	60.4%
1993-94	44.8%	34.6%	52.8%

Source: TEA, Accountability Profile, MPISD, September 1998.

COMMENDATION

The MALL and the Accelerated Schools approach are innovative programs that address the needs of all students and target assistance to at-risk and minority students.

FINDING

School districts strive to maintain as low a student-teacher ratio as possible. Texas sets a maximum student-teacher ratio of one teacher for 22 students for grades K-4, but the law provides no guidelines for higher grade levels.

In 1997-98, the student-teacher ratio in MPISD was less than regional and state averages (**Exhibit 2-43**). Compared to its peer districts, MPISD had the lowest student-teacher ratio. All the peer districts except Kaufman were below the state average.

**Exhibit 2-43
MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and State Student-Teacher Ratio
1997-98**

Entity	Student-Teacher Ratio
Mt. Pleasant	13.2
Paris	13.3
RESC VIII	13.4
Liberty Eylau	13.6
Greenville	14.0
Terrell	14.3
Kilgore	14.5
Corsicana	14.6
Texarkana	14.8
Athens	15.1
State	15.3
Kaufman	17.0

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

By campus, the 1998-99 average class sizes ranged from 9.9 at Fowler Elementary School to 13.7 at Wallace Middle School (**Exhibit 2-44**).

Exhibit 2-44
Average Class Sizes at MPISD Elementary,
Intermediate, Middle, and Junior High Schools
1993-94 through 1997-98

	Number of Student	Number of Teacher	Student-Teacher Ratio
Campus	1998-99	1998-99	1998-99
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	618	51	12.1
Wallace Middle School	643	47	13.7
Corprew Intermediate School	659	49	13.5
Sims Elementary School	368	32	11.5
Brice Elementary School	334	28	11.9
Fowler Elementary School	287	29	9.9

Source: TEA, Accountability Profile, MPISD, September 1998.

From 1994-95 through 1997-98, MPISD's average elementary class size fell 8.1 percent (**Exhibit 2-45**). MPISD's average elementary class size was less than averages for the region or the state in 1997-98.

Exhibit 2-45
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Average Elementary School Class Size
1994-95 through 1997-98

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage of Change over the Period
Mt. Pleasant	19.8	18.9	18.5	18.2	-8.1%
RESC VIII	18.9	18.8	18.9	18.8	0
State	20.2	20.0	19.8	19.8	-2.0%

Source : Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Compared to its peer districts, MPISD had the lowest elementary class size in 1997-98(**Exhibit 2-46**). Only one of its peer districts had an average elementary class size less than the state average. Reasons MPISD's class sizes are much smaller than classes in its peer districts are: (1) Corprew Intermediate School, Wallace Middle School, and Mt. Pleasant Junior High School use a team-teaching concept that groups five teachers and rotates them across a group of students, lowering the average

number of students served per teacher; (2) grades K-4 in each elementary school use a dual language approach for ELS/bilingual students, so each class has two teachers; (3) only one campus exists at grades 5-6, 7-8, and high school, where class sizes are not regulated; (4) two or three Maximum Achievement Learning Lab teachers on each campus are not assigned to any students; and (5) teachers who teach Reading Recovery at the first-grade level teach only five students each.

Exhibit 2-46
MPISD, Peer District, Regional,
and State Average Elementary School Class Size
1997-98

Entity	Class Size
Mt. Pleasant	18.2
RESC VIII	18.8
Texarkana	19.6
Terrell	19.8
State	19.8
Greenville	20.1
Corsicana	20.6
Athens	20.7
Kilgore	20.8
Liberty Eylau	20.9
Paris	21.0
Kaufman	21.6

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

At the secondary school level, average class sizes in English, math, and social studies decreased from 1994-95 through 1997-98. Average class sizes increased in foreign languages and science (**Exhibit 2-47**). Block scheduling was implemented at the high school in 1998-99, but there was no increase in the number of teachers. The student-teacher ratio at Mt. Pleasant High school is 96 teachers for 1,215 students, or 12.7 students for every teacher. The master schedule listed several classes with 10 or fewer students in courses including English II, Journalism, Algebra/Geometry I, Algebra II, Biology I, Economics, Art, Keyboarding, Introductory Business, Office Support Systems, Home Economics, and Interior Design.

In all of these classes, there were multiple offerings of the same course, suggesting the smaller classes could have been consolidated. None of the low enrollment courses represented advanced placement courses, nor did they serve targeted populations such as ESL/bilingual students.

Exhibit 2-47
MPISD Average Secondary School Class Size
1994-95 through 1997-98

Subject	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage of Change over the Period
English	18.4	17.9	19.0	17.0	-7.6%
Foreign language	20.3	16.8	23.7	21.9	7.9%
Math	19.2	16.8	19.0	17.9	-6.8%
Science	19.9	19.3	20.9	20.6	3.5%
Social studies	22.0	19.6	19.7	19.6	-10.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 - 1997-98.

MPISD secondary classes are smaller than the state average with the exception of foreign language classes. Compared to the regional averages, MPISD has larger average secondary classes with the exception of English and social studies classes (**Exhibit 2-48**). Compared to its peer districts, MPISD secondary class sizes were the smallest in social studies, the second smallest in English and math, the fourth smallest in science, and the third highest in foreign language.

Exhibit 2-48
MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII,
and State Average Secondary School Class Size
1997-98

Entity	Class Size				
	English	Foreign Language	Math	Science	Social Studies
Mt. Pleasant	17.0	21.9	17.9	20.6	19.6
RESC VIII	17.8	18.4	16.5	18.7	20.0
State	20.8	21.4	20.7	21.7	22.7
Athens	17.7	24.7	20.8	20.6	20.8

Corsicana	21.1	19.7	21.7	22.3	22.8
Greenville	22.6	17.4	18.4	20.5	20.7
Kaufman	23.2	21.7	21.7	22.0	20.8
Kilgore	19.6	18.3	18.0	19.8	20.7
Paris	18.1	20.2	18.1	20.8	21.2
Texarkana	19.9	23.8	21.1	20.9	22.2
Liberty Eylau	16.2	19.7	16.0	18.4	19.7
Terrell	18.2	21.1	21.6	21.9	23.1

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Small class sizes and the low student-teacher ratios mean that more teachers than needed are employed by the district, and the cost of the instructional program is higher than it may need to be.

Recommendation 9:

Consolidate low-enrollment courses at the secondary level and use the savings generated to offset the cost of raising teachers' salaries to regional averages.

Consolidating low enrollment classes at the secondary level would allow the district to eliminate seven teaching positions at the high school level. Additional positions may be eliminated at the junior high and middle school as well, but are not considered in these estimates since educational goals may make it desirable for the district to retain those positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendents for Curriculum and for Administration and Operations evaluate class sizes by campus and determine where modifications can be made to the master schedule.	March-April 1999
2.	The deputy superintendents review their findings with the superintendent and develop a recommended plan for implementation in 1999-2000.	April-May 1999
3.	The superintendent presents this plan to the board during budget meetings.	June-July 1999
4.	The deputy superintendents implement the plan.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

By consolidating low-enrollment classes the district should be able to reduce the number of secondary teachers from 96 to 89. Assuming that the district's average teacher turnover rate continues at 15.2 percent, the cost savings for not hiring seven new teachers, based upon the 1999 beginning salary for a bachelor degree teacher in MPISD (\$22,496), would be \$196,840 (7 teacher positions x \$22,496 = \$157,472 plus 25 percent benefits). These savings should be redirected to cover the cost of raising teachers salaries as discussed in the Personnel Management Chapter of this report.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Consolidate low enrollment courses at the secondary level.	\$196,840	\$196,840	\$196,840	\$196,840	\$196,840

FINDING

MPISD offers nine advanced placement (AP) courses at the high school: English III, English IV, Calculus, Biology 111, Chemistry H, Spanish V, French IV, Economics, and U.S. Government. The district also offers 10 pre-AP courses at the high school and three pre-AP courses at the junior high school.

Enrollment in AP courses for 1996-97 through 1998-99 is shown in **Exhibit 2-49**.

Exhibit 2-49
MPISD Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses
1996-97 through 1998-99

Advanced Placement Course	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Calculus	35	34	34
English III	33	34	31
English IV	17	19	16
Chemistry II	N/A	32	30
Biology II	N/A	41	21
French IV	N/A	7	4
Spanish V	N/A	11	10

Economics/US Government	N/A	36	38
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N/A=not available in 1996-97 Source : MPISD Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

Only 2.9 percent, or less than 130, MPISD students took AP tests in 1997-98, compared to 5.1 percent of the students in RESC VIII and 9.7 percent of the students in the state (**Exhibit 2-50**).

**Exhibit 2-50
Percentage of MPISD Students Taking Advanced Placement Tests
1994-95 through 1997-98**

Ethnicity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
African American	0%	0%	1.3%	2.5%
Anglo	0%	1.5%	1.3%	3.4%
Hispanic	0%	0%	0%	0.9%
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Most universities award college credit based on AP exam scores of "3" or higher. Of MPISD students taking the tests since 1994-95, only two African American students have received scores of "3" or higher; one in 1996-97 and one in 1997-98.

Recommendation 10:

Increase the proportion of African American and Hispanic high school students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses.

MPISD should motivate all students to participate in more rigorous classes. Encouraging students, especially minority students, to enroll in Advanced Placement classes will improve district and school performance and continue MPISD's efforts to close the achievement gap among ethnic groups.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Curriculum and the Gifted and Talented program coordinator meet with elementary intermediate	March- April
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	middle, junior high, and high school counselors and with African American and Hispanic students and parents to discuss the nature and benefit of the advanced courses, and receive input from those attending regarding factors that might be inhibiting greater participation.	1999
2.	The deputy superintendent and coordinator prepare a report of these meetings and recommendations to improve minority student enrollment in advanced courses.	May 1999
3.	The superintendent reviews the report and authorizes its implementation with changes, as necessary.	June 1999
4.	The coordinator implements the recommendations.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANE MEASURES

B. Curriculum Development and Evaluation

CURRENT SITUATION

Prior to 1991-92, MPISD's instructional program involved homogeneous groupings of students, or the grouping of students by their achievement levels. Gifted and talented students were grouped together in a class and lower achieving students were grouped together in a class. In 1991-92, the district decided to restructure its instructional approach to accomplish heterogeneous groupings of students: mixing high achievers in with low achievers. The primary reason was an increasing gap in performance between high and low achievers, especially the district's at-risk student population.

Research discussed in *Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs. Remediation and The Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement* (1993) demonstrated that "when minimally-achieving students can watch, learn, grow, and contribute to classes of moderate as well as high achieving students, research shows tremendous gains." The same research showed, however, that homogeneous grouping best facilitates academic learning for the truly gifted students.

Heterogeneous grouping of students, according to the same research, is "challenging (and) stressful." MPISD teachers said that workload and lesson planning has increased dramatically since the shift. At the same time, many teachers said that overall student achievement increased dramatically, and they would not advocate a return to homogeneous grouping.

To accomplish the transition, MPISD invested heavily in training for teachers, including cooperative learning strategies, identification of students qualified for Section 504 accommodations, New Jersey Writing Project strategies, brain research, thematic instruction, and Reading Recovery.

Curriculum and instruction was designed on each campus to meet the needs of all students. Programs used at the elementary, intermediate, and middle schools include:

- Reading Recovery and Literacy Support Strategies for first and second grade students.

- Saxon Math, kindergarten through 6 grade.
- Rebecca Sitton Spelling, kindergarten through 6 grade.
- Dr. George Gonzalez's Reading and Writing Strategies for ESL and Bilingual Students, kindergarten through 6 grade.
- New Jersey Writing Project, offered to all teachers as a supplemental strategy, kindergarten through 6 grade.
- Cooperative Learning.
- Integrated Thematic Instruction.
- Identification and implementation strategies designed to address learning styles.

Exhibit 2-51 through **Exhibit 2-53** list all programs by elementary, intermediate, and intermediate campus within each grade level.

Exhibit 2-51
Curriculum and Instruction Programs Used at MPISD Elementary Schools
1998-99

School	Grade	Subject	Program
Sims	Kindergarten	Reading	Scholastic Early Childhood
			Phonemic awareness
			Extrellitas (*)
		Math	Saxon Math
	1st, 2nd	Reading	Passports Learning System
			Scholastic Voz Del Lector System
			MacMillian Basal Reading (*)
		Handwriting	D'Nealian Handwriting
		English	Houghton Mifflin English
			Hampton Brown English Partner-ESL (*)
			Extrellitas (*)
		Math	Saxon Math
			Mathematics in Action
			Matematicas in Accion (*)
		Science	Discover Science
			Windows on Science

			Descubre Las Ciencias (*)
		Social Studies	Stories in Time
			Realtos Historia (*)
		Spanish as a Second Language	Rei, Amigos
		Health	Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Health
		Music	Music Connection
Brice	Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd	Math	Saxon Math
			Marilyn Burns
		Spelling	Rebecca Sitton
		Language Arts	New Jersey Writing
			Balanced Literacy
			Levelled Books
			Extrellitas (*)
		Drug awareness	Education for Self Responsibility
Fowler	Kindergarten	Math	Saxon Math
		Language Arts	Scholastic
	1st	Math	Saxon Math
		Spelling	Rebecca Sitton
		Social Studies	Harcourt Brace Johanovich
		Reading	Silver Burdett
		Bilingual Reading	MacMillian, Hampton Brown English Partner-ESL, Wright Group, Rigby (*)
		ESL	Hampton Brown English Partner-ESL (*)
		Writing	D'Nealian Handwriting
		Science	Scott Foresman
	2nd	Math	Saxon Math, Marilyn Burns, MacMillian
		Spelling	Rebecca Sitton

		Reading	Silver Burdett, MacMillian
		Writing	D'Nealian Handwriting
		Science	Scott Foresman
		Social Studies	Heath
		English	Houghton Mifflin
		ESL	Hampton Brown English Partner-ESL (*)
		Spanish Reading	MacMillian

Source: MPISD.

(*) Indicates bilingual curriculum

Exhibit 2-52
Curriculum and Instruction Programs Used at MPISD Intermediate
and Middle Schools
1998-99

School	Grade	Subject	Program
Corprew Intermediate	3rd , 4th	Math	Saxon Math
			MacMillian
		Spelling	Rebecca Sitton
		Social Studies	Harcourt Brace
		Science	Discover Science
			Scott Foresman
		English	Houghton Mifflin
		Reading	New Discoveries in the World of Reading
			Silver Burdett
		Drug awareness	Education for Self Responsibility
Wallace Middle	5th, 6th	Math	
		Math	Saxon Math
		Reading	Silver Burdett

		Handwriting	D'Nealian
		English	Houghton Mifflin
			Shurley Method
		Spelling	Rebecca Sitton
		Science	Scott Foresman
		Social Studies	HBJ Stories in Time
		Health	Being Healthy
		Drug education	Education for Self Responsibility

Source: MPISD.

(*) Indicates bilingual curriculum

Exhibit 2-53
Curriculum and Instruction Programs
Used at MPISD Junior High and High Schools
1998-99

School	Grade	Subject	Program
Junior High school	7th	English	Scope English, New Jersey Writing, Making Connections (ESL)
		Literature	Adventures in Literature I, Star Walk, Voices (ESL), Noble Pursuits
		History	Texas Our Texas
		Science	Science I
		Mathematics	Saxon, Mathematics in Action, Merrill Pre-Algebra
		Spanish I	Dime
		Art II	A World of Images
		Career Investigation	Your Career Adventure
	8th	English	Scope English, New Jersey Writing, Making Connections (ESL)
		Literature	Adventures in Literature II. Worlds

			Beyond, Voices (ESL), Lofty Achievements
		History	American Journal
		Science	Science II
		Mathematics	Saxon, Mathematics in Action, Merrill Pre-Algebra, Algebra I
		Spanish I	Dime
		Art I	Images and Ideas
		Career Investigation	Your Career Adventure
		Health	Health
High School	N/A	English	Basic English Composition and other materials, Writer's Craft, Adventures in Reading, Adventures in Appreciation, Adventures in American Literature, Adventures in British Literature
		Mathematics	Mathematics (MacMillian), Number Power, PLATO, Practical Mathematics - Consumer Application, Graphics Calculators, Advanced Mathematics (Houghton Mifflin), Calculus: Graphical, Numerical, analytical (Addison-Wesley) and other materials
		Science	Fearon Biology, TEKS for Science, The Class Computer Program, Web of Life, Biology Alive video series, Biological Concepts, Biological Simulations, RESC VIII video selection, MD Anderson videos, Universe, Elementary Modern Physics, Health Physics, Astronomy, and other materials
		Spanish	Paso a Paso, Dime, Mundo 21, Galleria de Arte y Vida, and other materials
		French	Various textbooks and accompanying reading
		ESL	Teaching English Through Action, Sing-a Rhymes, D'Nealian Handwriting, Write Track, Writer's Express, Merrill Pre-Algebra. Essentials for High School

			Mathematics, and other materials
		World Geography, World History, US History, Government, Economics	World Geography (Glencoe), Patterns of Civilizations (Prentice Hall), The Story of America (Prentice-Holt-Rinehart-Winston), Magruder's Government - Texas Edition (Prentice Hall), Economics - Principles and Practice (Glencoe), and other materials
		CATE	Included in Exhibit 2-65

Source: MPISD

FINDING

District staff, principals, and teachers appear diligent in their efforts to address program and student needs, but there is no district curriculum plan to assist them by providing a coordinated process through which district priorities can be addressed. There is no district plan for program development nor evaluation established by the board that would provide a framework for addressing district priorities.

District staff have expressed concern over the lack of coordination and articulation throughout the system. This concern could become more important to the teaching staff as they seek to address the needs of a changing student population.

Curriculum guides serve as work plans for classroom teachers and blueprints for student success. Quality curriculum guides clearly state learner goals and objectives, evaluation methods, prerequisite skills, instructional resources, and teaching strategies, and establish minimum teaching and learning expectations. In addition to these basic elements, however, the guides should drive teachers and inspire students to critical thinking and accelerated learning.

In the written survey, teachers were asked to grade the curriculum guides. Fifty-one percent gave grades of "A" or "B," but 43 percent gave a "C" or less. Curriculum guides usually facilitate lesson planning, but more than one-third of all teachers responding to the survey either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "I have sufficient time to plan and deliver curriculum for my classes." This was particularly true at the intermediate and junior high school campuses where 47 and 75 percent of teachers, respectively, either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

To be effective, a school curriculum must reflect district educational expectations as well as state educational goals in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and tested by the TAAS. TEKS spells out specific skills, learning, and abilities (SKAs) that students must demonstrate at certain points during their schooling to be incorporated into each district's curriculum. The SKAs must be well-documented in curriculum guides that clearly describe the scope of content by grade and subject as well as the sequence in which subjects will be taught as students progress through the grades.

TSPR found a broad variation in the quality of MPISD's guides and, consequently, varied relevance to educators. The MPISD deputy superintendent for Curriculum has been hesitant to develop such guides for MPISD without teacher support.

In many districts, guides created by former educators in isolation from teachers in the classroom become work efforts without meaning. When Houston ISD used campus-level administrators and teachers to work on the guides under the tutelage of curriculum experts, however, it experienced a dramatic change in the curriculum's approval rating among teachers. More importantly, teachers started using guides.

Some districts in Texas and other states with established curricula and guides use the Curriculum Management Audit (CMA), a curriculum management process including five standards, each with a number of measurable indicators. The process examines the district as a whole to see how its curriculum is developed, tested, and taught. Texarkana ISD completed a CMA review marketed through Phi Delta Kappa, International and the Texas Association of School Administrators.

During 1998, the MPISD deputy superintendent responded to growing teacher comments regarding the need for a vertical alignment of the curriculum by establishing a districtwide committee of teachers and principals, which recommended a process for developing a K-12 curriculum through Curriculum Designer, a software product created by Tudor Publishing Company. Not all program areas, however, were represented in the committee evaluation process,

Recommendation 11:

Include all education program areas in designing a new curriculum.

In order to develop a K-12 curriculum, program personnel would ideally provide input about the learning objectives for the types of students they serve, whether they be gifted and talented or at risk. Also, since MPISD has only one school for grades 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12, respectively, it

could be important to make sure that each of the grades is represented. Without comprehensive involvement from all areas, there could be gaps in the curriculum for some or all groups of students, undermining the consistency sought by a sequencing effort.

After the curriculum has been in place for two to three years, the district should consider conducting a CMA review to determine how well the curriculum has addressed TEKS and other district priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Curriculum convenes a committee made up of a broad range of teachers to be trained to work with the Curriculum Designer software.	February 1999
2.	The committee works with the software to develop a curriculum to cover all grades, subjects, and learning levels.	February - May 1999
3.	The committee recommends the results to the deputy superintendent for review, modification, and approval.	May 1999
4.	The deputy superintendent for Curriculum recommends the results to the superintendent for approval.	June 1999
5.	The deputy superintendent for Curriculum implements the program.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The district has purchased the software and arranged for the training of teachers and administrators. A provision for a monetary stipend (\$20/hour) for each teacher who participates is included in the budget. Adjusting the range of participants so that all program areas have representation should have no impact on the total amount expended.

FINDING

MPISD examines the results of new programs or the process by which new programs are implemented through constant monitoring of student performance, responding to individual teacher concerns about student learning, and responding to identified needs of key, at-risk segments of the student population.

The process also involves informal methods such as conversations with parents and students.

In focus group meetings with parents, teachers, and principals, concerns were raised that there was no continuity to the program evaluation process

and that programs were added without evaluation of the impact on other programs. Additional concerns were raised about the effectiveness of programs and a concern that "quick fixes" were often employed when parents voiced concerns. For example, the Accelerated Reading program at the high school was originated as a voluntary program to encourage reading; then, it was changed to a mandatory program; and, after a number of parent complaints, it reverted to a voluntary program.

According to the deputy superintendent for Curriculum, program evaluation is not very effective in MPISD. There is no ingrained discipline and no regular interval of evaluation. The deputy superintendent and principals vary widely on how they implement a particular program on their campus and there is no method for ensuring consistency or determining the need for modifications.

Effective program evaluation processes in school districts describe standards to be applied to the evaluation of all district educational programs. In Waco ISD, district staff developed a *What Works* process permitting schools to use discretionary funds to implement a program if it meets one of three conditions:

- It is listed in the *What Works* compendium, which was developed after a comprehensive review of educational research.
- The campus site-based committee can provide documentation showing the program has produced desired outcomes under similar circumstances.
- It is a pilot project for which a research design is developed and used to measure results for a period of time not to exceed three years. The principal and site-based committee must agree to discontinue the program if results are not achieved.

Spring ISD also has an effective, structured program evaluation process. According to the district's manual, it is the intent of these processes "to establish program evaluation as an expected, systematic, and continuing process integrated with an organized program development cycle."

An effective process gathers information useful to improving, revising, and determining the worth of programs. Two types of evaluation are included for these purposes: an evaluation designed to improve the implementation of programs in progress, and another designed to measure the merit of new programs.

According to the *Standards for Evaluation of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials* produced by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, a national panel of educators, the variables to consider during program evaluation include:

- degree of program implementation;
- student performance;
- quality of teacher preparation and development;
- teacher satisfaction and concern;
- use, quantity, and quality of materials and resources;
- unintended effects;
- student, parent, and community satisfaction; and
- adequacy of staffing, facilities, and equipment.

These measures identify both strengths and weaknesses. Instructional and administrative staff can then use results as a basis for program planning and revision.

Recommendation 12:

Develop an ongoing educational program evaluation process.

All program areas should be included in the evaluation cycle including: language arts, mathematics, science, art, health, CATE, special education, foreign languages, music, counseling, library, physical education, pre-K, and the Child Development Center. A timetable should be developed that identifies when each area will be reviewed.

The program evaluations should have discrete measures that identify both strengths and concerns. In addition to the evaluations, MPISD should consider evaluating programs periodically through surveys of parents, teachers, students, and graduates.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Curriculum and the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology select a group of teachers for participation on a committee to establish program evaluation methods and measures.	March 1999
2.	The committee reviews evaluation methods used in other districts and appropriated information from other sources.	March - April 1999
3.	The committee recommends a series of measures to address the various program evaluation variables and reviews these with the deputy superintendents.	April 1999
4.	The deputy superintendents make changes as necessary and present them to the superintendent for approval.	May 1999
5.	The deputy superintendents develop an evaluation schedule for each program over a three to five year period.	June 1999

6.	The evaluation program is implemented by the deputy superintendents.	Ongoing
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FISCAL MPACT

The district should pay a one-time stipend of \$500 to each of 10 teachers selected to participate on the committee to establish program evaluation methods and measures, or a one-time cost of \$5,000.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Develop an ongoing educational program evaluation process.	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

C. Staff Development

FINDING

Staff development for teachers and other instructional personnel is determined and scheduled both centrally and by each individual campus (**Exhibit 2-54**). Centrally, MPISD has provided staff development in the following areas:

- Reading Recovery - MPISD is an official training site for this program. The district has trained teachers at each campus with a first grade and has extended the training significantly beyond the Reading Recovery teachers.
- Technology - There is continuous training in technology that includes both basic proficiency and advanced training. Technology training on hardware, software, Internet use, and network use is conducted by the Districtwide Technology department and its two trainers. Scheduled workshops are presented on a districtwide basis, schools are scheduled for visits during one week of each month for small group or individual training, and teachers can request individual assistance in addition to the other opportunities on an as-needed basis.
- Phonemic Awareness - All six of the MPISD kindergarten teachers and most of the district's pre-kindergarten teachers received six days of training in 1998-99, and some are receiving extended training this year.
- Teaching Mathematics - The district has used its Eisenhower funds to train math teachers for at least five years. In the last two years, MPISD has sent at least 25 teachers of grades K-8 to Math Solutions' five-day institute. The district also sent three high school math teachers to Western Michigan State University for five days of training in the summer of 1997-98 and sent them back for two additional days in November. MPISD has also used the math consultant at RESC VIII to do numerous workshops in teaching mathematics at all levels in addition to having sent teachers to numerous other workshops.
- Discipline Management - Every one of the district's elementary schools has trained teachers for a discipline management program such as the Boys Town program.

- Learning Styles - Most of the district's teachers have been trained in how to accommodate children's learning styles and to make good use of their own learning style.
- New Jersey Writing - Over the last two summers, the district has trained approximately 20 teachers in the New Jersey Writing Project.
- ESL/Bilingual - Since the district continues to require that all teachers attain ESL endorsement, MPISD routinely hosts classes for that training.
- Gifted and Talented Education - All teachers who have identified gifted students in class receive the required initial training and the annual training.

Exhibit 2-54
MPISD Staff Development by Campus
1996-97 through 1997-98

Campus	Type of Staff Development
Mt. Pleasant High School	Gradebook software training
	Vertical teaming
	Working with students and adults from poverty
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	Discipline plan
	Section 504 procedures
	Vertical teaming
	Technology
	Working with students and adults from poverty
	Plato 2000
Wallace Middle School	Technology
	Working with students and adults from poverty
	Gifted and talented
	Improving reading
	Appraisal orientation
	Vision management
	Team building
Corprew Intermediate School	Discipline management
	Planning priorities

Sims Elementary	Special education procedures
	Brain compatible learning
	Department-based inservices
	Inclusion
	Working with students and adults from poverty
	Vertical and horizontal teaming
	Gifted and talented
Brice Elementary	Vertical and horizontal teaming
	Technology
	Literacy development
	Portfolio assessment
	Department-based inservices
Fowler Elementary	Team building
	Discipline
	Technology
	New Jersey Writing
	Vertical and horizontal teaming
	Department-based inservices
Child Development Center	Domestic violence and substance abuse
	Education performance standards
	True colors

Source: MPISD, deputy superintendent for Curriculum.

The district also held a districtwide inservice training day on January 6, 1997 at which approximately 380 district personnel attended. Topics included Reading Recovery, brain-based learning, critical and creative thinking, teaming and integration of curriculum, vertical teaming, Plato computer managed instruction, Shurley Grammar, New Jersey Writing Strategies, and Thoughtful Literacy.

According to principals, site-based decision-making committee (SBDM) representatives, and teachers, there has been no standard means of determining training needs. To determine staff development needs, some campuses conduct an annual survey of teachers, others request that

teachers submit ideas through the SBDM committees, and on others the principal develops the program with input from various teachers or department heads. Since there have been three principals in the last four years at the high school, two principals in the last three years at the junior high school, two principals in the last two years at the middle school, and a new principal at the intermediate school in the last two years, there has been little consistency in the approach to staff development.

Since each school has developed its own customized curriculum to meet student needs, a decentralized approach to staff development has been appropriate. However, with the district moving to an aligned K-12 curriculum, there needs to be a coordinated staff development program to support the curriculum. Also, achievement of TEKS objectives and training to support achievement will need to be monitored and evaluated centrally.

During 1998-99, the district had staff development coordinators on two campuses to teach part of each day and facilitate staff development the rest of the day. This combination of teaching and staff development gives each coordinator credibility with the other teachers, and also keeps them in touch with the practical aspects of teaching.

Recommendation 13:

Hire campus staff development coordinators for all campuses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board approves the creation of a staff development coordinator position at each campus where one does not exist.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations advertises the positions, screens applicants, and recommends final candidates to the superintendent and deputy superintendent for Curriculum.	March-May 1999
3.	The superintendent and deputy superintendent for Curriculum interview finalists and hire coordinators.	June 1999
4.	The staff development coordinator at each campus meets with the principal and department heads and conducts an initial training needs assessment to complement the curriculum and address needs in each school and department.	July-August 1999
5.	The coordinators at each campus implement the staff development plan for their campus.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The campus staff development position requires at least one-half FTE at each of the Child Development Center, elementary, intermediate, and middle school campuses, and one FTE will be required at the junior high school and high school for four FTEs. Filling the position at the existing staff development salary will cost \$40,000 annually for each position or \$160,000 for four new positions plus benefits of 25 percent, or \$200,000 total.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire campus staff development coordinators for all campuses.	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

D. Compensatory Education

MPISD receives funds through the state's compensatory education program designed to assist the district in providing targeted programs for at-risk students. MPISD received \$845,040 in 1994-95, \$807,920 in 1995-96, and \$924,088 in 1996-97 in compensatory funds and budgeted for \$942,077 in 1997-98. Compensatory funding is co-mingled with Title funding, local funds, and the district's technology allotment to provide funding for the MALL.

MPISD's compensatory education program supplements the regular classroom on each campus (**Exhibit 2-55**).

Exhibit 2-55
MPISD Compensatory Education Programs
1996-97 through 1997-98

Course/Program	Description
Content Mastery MALL	Offered on each campus, students are served on an as needed basis for acceleration or enrichment.
Plato 2000 software	Courseware offered to students at the junior high and high schools for acceleration needs.
Bilingual aides	Positioned at each campus to assist LEP students.
Technology technicians	Provided so that teachers and staff members may have "just-in-time" or close to "just-in-time" access to assistance with classroom networks and hardware/software problems.
Technology trainers	Provided so that teachers and staff members can have local access to skilled trainers and assistance with software integration into the curriculum.
Remedial reading and math teachers at the high school	Courses offered to juniors and seniors who have not passed the TAAS.
Alternative education	Provided as an alternative to "dropping out" and for students who might otherwise have been expelled.
Frameworks	A staff development program offered each semester that

	involves teachers training once a week for 3 hours. This training helps teachers more fully understand holistic, natural learning in education with an emphasis on language. Teachers are paid a stipend for attending the class (\$200), and funds are made available to them to purchase materials to carry out the program (\$300).
Drop-out recovery coordinator	Drop-out recovery efforts are coordinated through these positions in conjunction with the campus counselors. Students are counseled before dropping out, and former students who have already dropped out are contacted and encouraged to finish their degree through variety of alternatives.
Aides for the on-campus suspension (OCS) programs	Aides to assist students in the OCS classrooms.
Staff development opportunities	As requested by campus personnel.

Source: MPISD 1998-99 State Compensatory Education Plan.

The courses/programs used by MPISD are designed to help students succeed in school. Students identified as being "at-risk" are the primary students monitored by the MALL staff at each campus. Report card grades are examined each six weeks by the MALL At-Risk Coordinator, and if students are failing, some intervention takes place.

Each campus has developed a plan for annual review of the progress of the students listed on the at-risk list for their campus. Beginning of the year or pre-test scores are compared with end-of-the year-assessment information to measure student progress. Also, a locally-developed checklist is completed so that the campus leadership team can evaluate the programming the students on the at-risk list have been able to use. Based upon the data collected, each campus leadership team will develop recommendations about the programming for at-risk students to more effectively serve them the following year (**Exhibit 2-56**).

Exhibit 2-56
MPISD Campus End of Year Evaluations for At-Risk Students
1998

Campus	Recommendations
Fowler Elementary	At risk students will be given priority when selecting students for the literacy support.

School	
	MALL teachers will meet with each grade level during planning time to become familiar with weekly instruction.
	A bilingual assistant is assigned to the MALL to address the needs of LEP students.
	At risk students are assigned to community mentors.
Brice Elementary School	Teachers and assistants will work within the regular classroom to give immediate help to those students who are having difficulty.
	Training for paraprofessionals in teaching strategies to assist children in the classroom and content mastery will be scheduled.
	Training in writing strategies to encourage success in written and oral communication will be scheduled.
Sims Elementary School	Closer alignment of at-risk determination at kindergarten and first grade to identify students for literacy support groups and Reading Recovery interventions.
	Identification of and intervention strategies provided for students with dyslexia.
	Re-assignment of Reading Recovery teachers' duties to include time in classrooms as well as one-to-one intervention in a pull-out program.
Corprew Intermediate School	Increase parent involvement opportunities on the campus.
	Use more formative assessments on students using the RESC VIII Assessment Option of the Curriculum Coop.
	Tutoring for at-risk students will be scheduled.
Wallace Middle School	Year Round Education strategies will be implemented for at-risk students.
	TAAS remediation will be a major focus for the at-risk students during after school tutorials.
	LEP students will be given more opportunities to be served in the mainstream.
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	The Plato 2000 software strategy will be expanded to include supplementing the social studies curriculum to help eighth grade students with the social studies TAAS test.

	Add the elective entitled, Sampler, which exposes students to a variety of skills needed to enhance the affective side of their life.
	Teachers will have more input into school affairs.
	Teachers requested more training in instructional strategies to work with the at-risk students to help them have more success in the regular classroom.
Mt. Pleasant High School	Block scheduling will be implemented during the 1998-99 school year to offer students longer class periods to develop concepts, projects, and understanding.
	An activity period will be implemented during the 1998-99 school year to give at-risk students an opportunity to ask for help in class, to makeup assignments, and to prepare for the next class.
	Daily attendance checks are made for students who are absent and phone calls are made before 10:00 am.
	An integrated math course will be added for the 1998-99 school year to help students develop math concepts for real world applications.
	One half-time migrant teacher will be added to the MALL and one full-time bilingual aide will be added to the MALL to assist the at-risk students who are migrant and LEP.

Source . MPISD 1998-99 State Compensatory Education Plan and District Self-Evaluation Document.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has developed a comprehensive compensatory education plan to provide programs tailored to the needs of at-risk students on each campus.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

E. Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

Bilingual English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are required by federal and state laws to provide educational access to students whose first language is not English. Specifically, these programs are designed to help Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) students learn English.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD initiated bilingual education in 1982 and by 1998-99 had 17 bilingual teachers serving 492 students. The purpose of the ESL program is to provide an intensive second language program for older students and students at grades where bilingual education is not available. The ESL program serves 615 students in grades 4-12, with 19 teachers. **Exhibit 2-57** shows the total number of ESL students by grade level for 1998-99.

Exhibit 2-57
MPISD Bilingual and ESL Students by Grade Level
1998-99

Grade Level	Number of Students
Pre-school - 4th grade	773
Middle school (5th and 6th grades)	179
Junior high school (7th and 8th grades)	67
High school (grades 9-12)	88
Total	1,107

Source: Deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.

MPISD has more than double the percentage of bilingual ESL students as Athens, the next highest peer district and almost triple the percentage of the third-highest district, Corsicana (**Exhibit 2-58**).

Exhibit 2-58
MPISD, Peer District, Regional, and State Students in Bilingual/ESL Program

**as a Percentage of Total Enrollment
1997-98**

Entity	Bilingual/ESL
Mt. Pleasant	21%
State	12%
Athens	10%
Corsicana	8%
Greenville	6%
Terrell	6%
RESC VIII	4%
Kaufman	3%
Kilgore	4%
Paris	1%
Texarkana	1%
Liberty Eylau	1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98

At grades pre-K-12, students in both programs are given the IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test once a year to determine their growth in oral language. ESL students in grades 3-12 are given the IDEA reading and writing tests at the end of the year to measure their growth in the English language. At grades 3-5, students in both programs receive the TAAS in either English or Spanish. TAAS scores for 1997-98 for ESL students are included in **Exhibit 2-59**.

**Exhibit 2-59
Percentage of MPISD Bilingual/ESL Students Passing TAAS Tests
1997-98**

Grade/Subject	Number Tested	Percentage Passing
Spanish TAAS - Bilingual Students		
3rd/Reading	52	48%
3rd/Math	52	46%

4th/Reading	52	19%
4th/Math	52	58%
4th/Writing	50	60%
Spanish TAAS - ESL Students		
3rd/Reading	30	63%
3rd/Math	31	74%
English TAAS - Bilingual Students		
3rd/Reading	7	100%
3rd/Math	7	100%
5th/Reading	19	84%
5th/Math	17	100%
6th/Reading	7	57%
6th/Math	7	86%
English TAAS - ESL Student		
3rd/Reading	16	100%
3rd/Math	16	94%
4th/Reading	19	26%
4th/Math	18	78%
4th/Writing	20	60%
5th/Reading	12	92%
5th/Math	9	100%
6th/Reading	61	41%
6th/Math	52	63%
7th/Reading	17	24%
7th/Math	17	29%
8th/Reading	12	42%
8th/Math	12	58%
8th/Writing	12	25%
10th/Reading	9	56%
10th/Math	10	50%

10th/Writing	10	30%
11th/Reading	12	17%
11th/Math	9	22%
11th/Writing	11	27%
12th/Reading	10	20%
12th/Math	7	14%
12th/Writing	10	10%

Source: Deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.

TAAS scores for the third and fourth grade bilingual/ESL students trailed below the state average. During 1997-98, MPISD implemented the following:

- Beginning of the year testing for all students in Spanish and English reading and writing at grades 2-5 to ensure that teachers have baseline data,
- Transitional self-contained classes for students ready to transition into English only classes were started at grade 4,
- One new bilingual class was begun at grade 2 to ensure native language development for students, and
- A bilingual Reading Recovery teacher was hired to implement the native language development program.

Bilingual students exempted from taking the TAAS either take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the IDEA reading and writing tests, or a released form of TAAS as alternative assessments (**Exhibit 2-60**).

Exhibit 2-60
Results of Alternative Assessments of MPISD Bilingual/ESL Students
1997-98

Grade	Type of Student	Measure Used	Number Tested	Number Showing Improvement
Reading				
3rd	Bilingual	IDEA	6	6
3rd	ESL	IDEA	1	1
4th	ESL	Released TAAS	21	19
5th	Bilingual	Spanish released	30	20

		TAAS		
5th	ESL	Released TAAS	13	13
6th	ESL	English released TAAS	1	1
6th	ESL	Spanish released TAAS	19	14
7th	ESL	IDEA	23	17
8th	ESL	IDEA	16	13
Math				
3rd	Bilingual	Released TAAS	6	6
3rd	ESL	Released TAAS	1	1
4th	ESL	Released TAAS	21	20
5th	Bilingual	Released TAAS	30	29
5th	ESL	Released TAAS	15	14
6th	ESL	English released TAAS	1	1
6th	ESL	Spanish released TAAS	19	18
7th	ESL	Released TAAS	15	15
8th	ESL	Released TAAS	9	9
Writing				
3rd	Bilingual	IDEA	6	6
3rd	ESL	IDEA	1	1
4th	ESL	Released TAAS	21	20
7th	ESL	IDEA	23	20
8th	ESL	IDEA	16	12

Source: Deputy superintendent of Instruction and Technology, MPISD.

Expenditures for the bilingual/ESL program are included in **Exhibit 2-61**. While total expenditures increased by 20.1 percent from 1994-95 through 1997-98, per student expenditures decreased by 20.6 percent due to a 51.2 percent increase in the number of students served.

Exhibit 2-61
MPISD Bilingual/ESL Education Expenditures
1994-95 through 1997-98

Category	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget	Percentage Change over the Period
Bilingual expenditures	\$1,216,394	\$1,246,863	\$1,354,078	\$1,461,000	20.1%
Bilingual students served	732	803	921	1,107	51.2%
Bilingual expenditures per student	\$1,662	\$1,553	\$1,470	\$1,320	-20.6%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1994-95 through 1996-97 and AEIS 1997-98.

Compared to its peer districts, MPISD spends almost four times the next highest amount and over one-half of the total bilingual/ESL expenditures in the region (**Exhibit 2-62**). This significant difference reflects the disproportionate number of Hispanic students that MPISD serves.

Exhibit 2-62
MPISD Bilingual/ESL Education Expenditures vs. Peer Districts
1997-98 Budget

Entity	Bilingual/ESL Expenditures
State	\$395,118,454
RESC VIII	\$2,193,520
Mt. Pleasant	\$1,461,000
Athens	\$378,322
Greenville	\$359,017
Corsicana	\$269,166
Texarkana	\$157,725
Kilgore	\$130,725
Liberty Eylau	\$45,306

Kaufman	\$22,227
Terrell	\$17,800
Paris	\$6,466

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98.

FINDING

In 1994, MPISD implemented a variation of a dual language model. The model pairs a bilingual teacher, certified as fluent in both English and Spanish, with an ESL teacher, certified in teaching techniques that assist students in gaining proficiency in English. The bilingual teacher provides instruction in Spanish language arts, and the ESL teacher teaches math and oral English. Each teacher teaches up to 22 students in their respective subjects, and at a designated time the teachers trade groups and provide a second group of students with the same instructor. This approach is designed to ensure that children have an academic foundation in their native language combined with the development of English vocabulary and comprehension essential for transition to a second language. The dual language program covers grades K-3. In grade 4, the district is using a slight variation of the method.

The district adopted the dual language approach after determining that the prior pull-out ESL program was ineffective and failed to attract certified bilingual teachers in sufficient numbers to meet the district's student demands.

1997-98 was the first year that dual language students who started in kindergarten took the TAAS. **Exhibit 2-63** shows the improvement in TAAS scores from 1997-98. In all areas, except grade 3 math, MPISD scores for students in the dual language program increased.

Exhibit 2-63
MPISD TAAS Scores for Bilingual/ESL Students
1997-98 vs. 1996-97

Grade/Subject/Area	1996-97 Percent Passing	1997-98 Percent Passing
Spanish TAAS Data		
3rd/Reading/ESL	0%	63%
3rd/Reading/Bilingual	27%	48%
3rd/Math/ESL	0%	74%

3rd/Math/Bilingual	51%	46%
English TAAS Data		
3rd/Reading/ESL	50%	100%
3rd/Math/ESL	63%	94%

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.

COMMENDATION

MPISD's effort to increase the achievement levels of minority students through the dual language approach has been successful.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

F. Career and Technology Education (CATE)

Career and Technology Education (CATE) is a popular curriculum designed to prepare students to live and work in the future by providing training in areas such as health sciences and technology, marketing, industrial technology, and trade and industrial occupations. Approximately 60 percent of MPISD high school students, 743 of 1,233, are enrolled in a CATE course.

MPISD enrollment in CATE programs declined slightly from 1994-95 through 1997-98 while both the regional and state averages increased (**Exhibit 2-64**). The state mandated additional courses for graduation, such as speech, and increased the number of required course hours. Since CATE courses are electives, students had fewer opportunities to take the courses, reducing CATE enrollment.

MPISD compared to state and regional percentages in the number of students enrolled in one or more CATE courses is shown in **Exhibit 2-64**.

Exhibit 2-64
MPISD, Regional, and State Students Enrolled in CATE Programs
as a Percentage of Total Enrollment
1994-95 through 1997-98

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Mt. Pleasant	20%	19%	18%	17%
RESC VIII	19%	21%	21%	20%
State	16%	17%	17%	17%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

TECHPREP is a program that leads students toward associate or baccalaureate degree programs and helps students prepare for high skill, high wage jobs in at least one field of engineering technology, applied science, health, or business through a planned, sequential program of study. MPISD participates in the Upper East Texas TECHPREP/School-to-Work Partnership.

MPISD students may choose from more than 80 CATE courses representing eight different program areas including Agricultural Science and Technology, Business, Career Orientation, Health Science Technology, Home Economics, Marketing, Technology/Industrial Technology, and Trade and Industrial Education courses. Course offerings are determined using projected job needs from the Texas Workforce Commission and through information developed by the partnership. For the past two years, Microcomputer Applications has been the course with the largest enrollment (**Exhibit 2-65**).

Exhibit 2-65
MPISD Career and Technology Enrollment by Course
1997-98 through 1998-99

Course	Enrollment	
	1997-98	1998-99
Business Computer Programming	21	23
Business Computer Programming II	N/A	26
Business Law	8	17
Keyboarding	11	49
Microcomputer Applications	189	176
Accounting CP	13	21
Accounting CP II	N/A	6
Office Administration	22	11
Office Support Systems	12	4
Recordkeeping	17	8
Construction Systems	47	54
Building Trades	14	18
VEH	N/A	14
CAD Drafting	13	6
Business Computer Applications	35	11
Introduction to Business	11	26
Comprehensive Home Economics	163	116
Advanced Food Science	28	18
Food Science Nutrition	50	31

Individual/Family Life	30	18
Parenting Education I	N/A	30
Introduction to Agricultural Economics	21	14
Home Maintenance and Improvement	17	10
Wildlife and Recreation/Metal Fabrication	32	24
Agricultural Mechanics I	18	9
Agricultural Mechanics II	N/A	6
Agricultural Independent Study	N/A	1
Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology	29	36
Animal Science	11	6
Personal Skill Agriculture	10	N/A
Cosmetology I	17	12
Cosmetology II	N/A	4
Health Care Occupations	19	N/A
Anatomy and Physiology of Human Systems	N/A	20
Health Care Science	20	N/A
Health Science Technology Education I	N/A	9
Health Science Technology Education II	N/A	6
Graphic Arts	15	6
Media Technology	6	8
Marketing Dynamics	65	47
Marketing Management	25	12
Crime in America	29	31
Trade and Industrial Education Career Preparation I	N/A	64
Trade and Industrial Education Career Preparation II	N/A	18
Total	1,018	1,021

Source: MPISD CATE director.

Funding for CATE programs comes from a number of sources. The program director investigates and seeks grants to supplement state and local funding. **Exhibit 2-66** shows actual expenditures for 1994-95

through 1997-98 and budgeted expenditures for 1997-98. CATE expenditures declined 1.5 percent over the period while the number of students served increased by almost 20 percent.

Exhibit 2-66
MPISD Expenditures for Career and Technology Education
Programs
1994-95 - 1997-98

Category	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget	Percentage Change over the Period
CATE expenditures	\$616,057	\$775,664	\$636,558	\$606,685	-1.5%
CATE students served	854	805	794	1,018	19.2%
CATE expenditures per student	\$721	\$964	\$802	\$596	-17.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1994-95 - 1996-97 and AEIS 1997-98.

Texas school districts receive state funding based on attendance. In the case of Career and Technology education, the state has a weighted funding formula that is designed to compensate districts for additional operating costs associated with certain CATE programs. The formula is multiplied by 1.37. The intent of Career and Technology funding is to compensate for lower student/teacher ratios in laboratory classes requiring expensive technology/equipment as teaching tools, specialized career guidance and planning services, and development of partnerships with business and industry.

The MPISD Parenting Education Program (PEP) program is funded by a competitive grant through the TEA. The purpose of the program is to provide support services for parenting teens such as child care, access to community services, and transportation that enables them to remain in school. MPISD has received \$324,369 for this program since first receiving funds in 1992-93.

MPISD also receives funds through the Carl D. Perkins Single Parent and Gender Equity grant, designed to help single parents and to encourage enrollment in courses providing training in non-traditional roles. Since first receiving funds in 1994-95 under this program, MPISD has received \$99,976.

FINDING

In a written TSPR survey, parents and teachers were asked to assess how the needs of students in the following categories were being met: academically advanced, average, below average, non-college bound, and at risk of dropping out of school. On a scale of 1 - 10, with 1 being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest, both parents and teachers rated the district's ability to meet the needs of the academically advanced students as the highest and those of non-college-bound and at-risk students as the lowest (**Exhibit 2-67**).

Exhibit 2-67
Responses of Parents and Teachers on the Ability
of MPISD to Meet the Needs of Various Groups of Students

Type of Student	Rating 1-4, Lowest		Rating 5-6		Rating 7-10, Highest	
	Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers
Academically advanced	22%	10%	26%	19%	45%	70%
Average	21%	10%	40%	30%	37%	58%
Below average	32%	22%	29%	21%	34%	56%
Non-college bound	22%	24%	28%	28%	29%	39%
At-risk	45%	25%	18%	26%	28%	41%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

Note: Not all totals may add to 100% due to returned surveys with no response to one or more of these questions.

Since the district does not have a non-college bound track of subjects in which students can enroll, it has been difficult to identify students in junior high school and high school who would benefit from CATE courses. Some districts use Perkins funds to pay the salary and benefits of a counselor for grades 7-12 to develop alternative learning tracks.

Recommendation 14:

Hire a counselor for grades 7-12 dedicated to identifying non-college bound, average, below average, and at-risk students, and developing alternative learning tracks.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board of trustees authorizes creation of a counselor position to focus on at-risk students.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations advertises the position, screens applicants, and recommends final candidates to the superintendent and director of CATE.	March - May 1999
3.	The superintendent and director interview the finalists and hire a person to fill the role.	June 1999
4.	The counselor begins work.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The salary and benefits of the counselor are \$45,988 (\$36,790 = salary and \$9,198 = benefits @ 25 percent of salary).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire a counselor for grades 7-12 dedicated to identifying non-college bound, average, below average, and at-risk students and developing alternative learning tracks.	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)	(\$45,988)

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

G. Gifted and Talented Program

Since 1987, state law has required that all Texas school districts have educational programs to serve the needs of gifted and talented students and that programs be available in all districts and for all grades. Gifted and talented students are characterized as having high levels of achievement, intellectual and academic ability, creativity, leadership skills, and talent in the visual and performing arts.

Districts are required to use a systematic process for identifying gifted and talented students. TEA issues guidelines for the identification of gifted and talented students in an effort to ensure that all of these students receive a quality education. Funding for the identification of gifted and talented students and programs is available through the Texas Foundation School Program. This program is intended to provide gifted and talented programs for students from various cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD's gifted and talented program is called "Explore Gifted and Talented." It is provided for those students who excel or show potential to excel in either general intellectual ability or creative and productive thinking. Through a variety of instructional and organizational approaches, the program is designed to foster high-level thinking and a self-development process. It is designed to challenge students through an integrated, multi-dimensional approach. The ultimate goal of the program is to develop within each individual a desire for excellence and a sense of individual responsibility to self and society.

The program covers students in grades 1-12. A waiver from TEA, approved in September 1993, allowed MPISD to forego formal identification at the kindergarten level. The district plans to formally identify kindergarten students by March 1, 1999. Students may be nominated in the fall or spring of each school year by teachers, counselors, parents, or other interested persons.

In 1997-98, MPISD had enrollment in the gifted and talented program less than regional and state averages (**Exhibit 2-68**). It was in the middle of the group compared to its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-68
MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and State Students in
Gifted and Talented Program as a Percentage of Total Enrollment
1997-98

Entity	Gifted and Talented
Texarkana	15%
Paris	10%
Terrell	9%
Greenville	8%
State	8%
RESC VIII	8%
Mt. Pleasant	7%
Liberty Eylau	7%
Kilgore	6%
Corsicana	6%
Athens	5%
Kaufman	5%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98

Students are screened for the gifted and talented program using five equally-weighted criteria. For 1998-99, the criteria used were: revised Renzuli-Hartman Scale completed by a teacher of the student; student portfolio; Otis Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT) or Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI); Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT); and Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students (students up to age 12 years 11 months), or Structure of Intellect Test (students 13 years or older). According to the program coordinator, there was no set number of these criteria that a student had to meet to be accepted, but the district looked for a preponderance of evidence for the best educational benefit to the student. These criteria are described in greater detail in **Exhibit 2-69**.

Exhibit 2-69
MPISD Criteria Used for Gifted and Talented Program Screening
1998-99

Criterion	Description
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OLSAT/TONI	These tests are designed to measure reasoning skills that are most closely related to scholastic achievement. The TONI is used for non-English-speaking students. These tests are most suitable to assess the student's ability to cope with school learning tasks, to suggest their possible placement for school learning functions, and to evaluate their achievement in relation to the talents they bring to school learning situations.
TTCT	This test is used to measure a student's creative and divergent thinking abilities. Students who score high on these tests usually prefer to learn in creative ways, by experimentation, manipulation and inquiry.
Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students or Structure of Intellect	These tests measure a student's achievement (their knowledge of general information) and aptitude (their reasoning ability). The scores can be compared to students in the normal population and students in the gifted population.
Renzulli-Hartman Scale	This is a checklist that teachers complete on each nominated student. The list is divided into three sections: planning characteristics, motivational characteristics, and learning characteristics.
Student Portfolio	This portfolio can measure a student's best work over a period of time. Students who might not perform well on standardized tests have the opportunity to show their individual strengths. Students must submit four projects from school and three from home, church, or somewhere else.

Source: MPISD Gifted and Talented Program coordinator.

The curriculum for gifted and talented students is differentiated in the core subject areas to meet the needs of each individual student. Curriculum is integrated in a variety of instances during the time the students spend in the content mastery lab. Identified students in grades K-6 are placed in regular classrooms for appropriately, differentiated instruction in reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies. On a regular basis, usually twice a week, identified students meet together with a teacher in the MALL to participate in integrated curriculum projects and individual projects.

Identified gifted and talented students in grades 7-12 are offered pre-Advanced Placement (AP), AP, and advanced-level courses. Junior high students are offered pre-AP literature and are in appropriate classes using differentiated instruction for the other core areas. On the grades 7 and 8

levels, one teacher provides all instruction in literature (reading) for all identified gifted and talented students. Senior high students are challenged in pre-AP and AP classes in the four core areas that they, their parents, and their counselor feel best meets their educational needs. Optional programs, such as Future Problem Solving and Duke Talent Search, are available to complement the curriculum.

The gifted and talented program works in coordination with a variety of programs in the district including bilingual/ESL, MALL, student government, University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitive teams, debate, chess club, and deaf education.

MPISD requires that all core curriculum teachers of gifted and talented students meet the state minimum required 30 hours of inservice training and the required six hours of annual training. Opportunities through RESC VIII inservice, Texas Association of Gifted and Talented state conferences, and other special out-of-district services are used to help teachers attain this level of training. MPISD expenditures for the gifted and talented program appear in **Exhibit 2-70**. Total and per student funding have declined by 0.6 and 20.2 percent respectively since 1994-95; yet the number of students in the program increased by 24.5 percent during the same period.

Exhibit 2-70
MPISD Expenditures for the Gifted and Talented Education Program
1994-95 - 1997-98

Category	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget	Percentage Change over the Period
Gifted and talented expenditures	\$163,950	\$185,805	\$173,934	\$162,889	-0.6%
Gifted and talented students served	249	297	296	310	24.5%
Gifted and talented expenditures per student	\$658	\$625	\$587	\$525	-20.2%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1994-95 - 1996-97 and AEIS 1997-98.

FINDING

MPISD's grade 7 gifted and talented students may participate in the Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP). Students who participate

in this program must take either the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) math or verbal test or the American College Testing Program (ACT) math, English, reading, or science reasoning test. Students qualify for, and are invited to, a state recognition ceremony if their score is greater than, or equal to, 500 on either the SAT or greater than, or equal to, 18 on the ACT math, 25 on the ACT English, 27 on the ACT reading, or 24 on the science reasoning.

Students may also be invited to the Grand Ceremony at Duke University if they meet one of the following test results: greater than, or equal to, 620 on either SAT test or 22 on the math ACT, 29 on the English ACT, 31 on the reading ACT, or 29 on the science reasoning ACT.

For six years, all seventh grade students in MPISD have been screened for identification in TIP using scores on the sixth grade TAAS as the basis for selection. MPISD students are offered tutorials in preparation for the SAT and ACT tests. The tutorials are conducted before and after the regular day school. They are taught by English and math teachers and have proven very successful. In 1997-98, 22 MPISD seventh graders participated in TIP. Of the students, seven qualified for, and were invited to, the state recognition ceremony. One of the seven state recognized students also qualified for the Grand Ceremony.

The Texas Future Problem Solving Program has a Community Solving Program, a real-life application of problem-solving skill to an existing problem within the school, community, state, nation, or world. After identifying a problem situation, teams use the Future Problem Solving Process to reach a solution. They then develop a plan to carry out their solution and act.

The program is designed to help students learn and use problem-solving strategies, bridge the gap between school and community through active involvement, bring problem-solving from the hypothetical to the practical, develop teamwork skills, experience the impact their effort can have on problems around them, and realize their lives can make a difference in the world. Projects are evaluated by trained evaluators who are professional educators and business leaders and are evaluated on 11 criteria examining the description of the problem and proposed solutions and the supporting documents provided with the project.

Students participating in the gifted and talented program from grades K-6 are involved in the Community Solving Program. Students in grades K-2 are introduced to the steps of the problem-solving process as a part of the curriculum of the MALL. Students in grades 3-6

participate in the program on teams.

COMMENDATION

MPISD's gifted and talented program develops students who perform well in state and national programs.

FINDING

From fall 1996 through 1998, or five nominating periods, 367 students were nominated for the gifted and talented program (**Exhibit 2-71**). Almost three-fourths of the nominated students were Anglo, one-fifth were Hispanic, and less than one-tenth were African American.

Exhibit 2-71
MPISD Students Nominated for the Gifted and Talented Program by
Ethnicity
Fall 1996 - Fall 1998

Ethnicity	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Fall 1998	Total	Percentage of Total Nominated
Anglo							
Male	15	35	9	38	18	115	31%
Female	25	47	21	41	12	146	40%
African American							
Male	1	3	3	3	3	13	4%
Female	3	4	0	4	4	15	4%
Hispanic							
Male	4	14	0	15	6	39	11%
Female	2	9	0	22	1	34	9%
Other							
Male	0	1	0	1	1	3	1%
Female	0	0	0	1	1	2	1%
Total	50	113	33	125	46	367	100%

Source: MPISD Gifted and Talented Program coordinator.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Of students nominated during this timeframe, **Exhibit 2-72** shows the number of students by ethnicity who were accepted. Twenty-eight percent of the students nominated were accepted into the program (104 out of 367). Eighty-three percent were Anglo and 17 percent were minority students.

Exhibit 2-72
MPISD Students Accepted for the Gifted and Talented Program by
Ethnicity
Fall 1996 - Fall 1998

Ethnicity	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Fall 1998	Total	Percentage of Total Accepted
Anglo							
Male	4	12	4	7	9	36	35%
Female	12	17	7	9	5	50	48%
African American							
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Female	1	0	0	0	1	2	2%
Hispanic							
Male	1	4	0	1	0	6	6%
Female	1	2	0	4	0	7	7%
Other							
Male	0	1	0	1	0	2	2%
Female	0	0	0	1	0	1	1%
Total	19	36	11	23	15	104	100%

Source: MPISD Gifted and Talented Program coordinator.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Minority students were not nominated nor accepted to the gifted and talented program in percentages commensurate with the ethnic makeup of the overall student population (**Exhibit 2-73**). Interviews with the program coordinator indicated that information has been sent home with children in both English and Spanish and advertisements were placed in the newspaper and on radio and television stations in both languages. However, the program coordinator said that minority parents, particularly African Americans, appeared reluctant to nominate their children, or if

they did nominate them and have them tested, some did not submit required items to complete the student portfolio.

Exhibit 2-73
MPISD Gifted and Talented Program Enrollment Percentage
By Ethnicity Compared to Total Enrollment by Campus
October 15, 1998

Campus	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Other
Mt. Pleasant High School				
• Total enrollment	16.4%	26.0%	57.1%	0.5%
• G/T enrollment	2.4%	3.2%	92.8%	1.6%
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School				
• Total enrollment	15.1%	33.4%	50.6%	0.8%
• G/T enrollment	1.2%	1.2%	96.5%	1.2%
Wallace Middle School				
• Total enrollment	19.5%	37.3%	42.1%	1.1%
• G/T enrollment	3.4%	13.6%	81.4%	1.7%
Corprew Intermediate School				
• Total enrollment	20.1%	42.3%	37.1%	0.5%
• G/T enrollment	2.2%	10.9%	84.8%	2.2%
Sims Elementary School				
• Total enrollment	12.2%	45.2%	41.8%	0.9%
• G/T enrollment	0	16.7%	83.3%	0
Fowler Elementary School				

• Total enrollment	24.9%	50.3%	24.2%	0.6%
• G/T enrollment		33.3%	50.0%	16.7%
Brice Elementary School				
• Total enrollment	22.3%	37.7%	39.4%	0.6%
• G/T enrollment		33.3%	33.3%	0

Source: MPISD

Members of the review team conducted interviews with representatives of the minority communities in Mt. Pleasant and with educators within MPISD to identify means of involving more minority students in these types of programs. Among suggestions:

- Distribute information through, and make presentations at, local churches.
- Contact church leaders to assist in identifying potential candidates or families that may have gifted and talented children.
- Establish a group or groups of community members who can assist in identifying students and encouraging parents to complete the nomination process.

Recommendation 15:

Review MPISD assessment procedures for identifying gifted and talented students to determine whether other measures can be used to assist in identifying a greater number of minority students.

Elementary, intermediate, middle, junior high, and high school counselors should begin by conducting exploratory meetings with African American and Hispanic students and parents to provide appropriate information. At these meetings, teachers of honor courses and students participating in the courses could discuss the nature and benefit of the courses, and receive input from those attending regarding factors that might be inhibiting greater participation.

MPISD also should consider creating a working group or committee of members of the minority community to assist in the information distribution, identification, and application process.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AND STRATEGIES

1.	The Gifted and Talented coordinator meets with representatives of the African American and Hispanic communities to identify people to serve on the committee.	March 1999
2.	The coordinator submits those names to the superintendent for presentation to the board of trustees.	March 1999
3.	The board selects members for the committee and authorizes it to develop a plan.	March 1999
4.	The coordinator and the committee members meet and identify ways to improve information dissemination and to encourage more nominations of minority students.	April 1999
5.	The committee and the coordinator present the plan to the board for review and approval.	May 1999
6.	The board approves the plan and the coordinator initiates implementation.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of implementing this recommendation can be handled within the existing budget.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

H. Special Student Population

CURRENT SITUATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require all public school districts that receive federal funds to establish central and campus processes to identify students with learning disabilities or special learning needs so that accommodations can be made to assist them. This includes students in special education and students with attention deficit and or hyperactivity disorders, among others, and it includes accommodations such as additional instruction in a particular subject through a resource teacher, additional time to complete assignments, and oral exams versus written exams.

Most school districts establish separate functions and coordinators centrally for each of these areas. Each campus usually has a different person identified as the "504 coordinator" or the "special education coordinator," and that person is supported by a campus committee for each area that reviews each situation and recommends appropriate action. This can be confusing to parents since the requirements of each act are similar but the requirements for qualifying under 504 versus special education are much different.

FINDING

In 1996-97, to eliminate the confusion and the duplication of effort associated with identifying particular student needs, MPISD established the Campus Intervention Team (CIT). The CIT is designed to serve as a "vehicle to provide strategies for intervention when a need begins to arise for any student." A need may be indicated by a student not performing well in class, having difficulty reading, or exhibiting behavioral difficulties. Each campus has a team and the team is made up of one MALL teacher, the school counselor, the student's classroom teacher, and the principal.

Teachers are encouraged to fill out pre-referral forms on any student who is experiencing difficulty in the classroom for any reason. The pre-referral forms are sent to the MALL teachers, who serve as at-risk coordinators on each campus, and the MALL teacher notifies committee members that a meeting needs to be held.

The process is illustrated in **Exhibit 2-74**.

Exhibit 2-74
MPISD CIT Referral Process
(Contact Texas School Performance
Review for a copy of this chart)

The CIT has four options to consider before making a decision to intervene. These options are to be considered from least restrictive to most restrictive in the order that follows:

- Implement campus modifications for a pre-determined amount of time.
- Refer to the dyslexia committee on campus.
- Initiate 504 referral process.
- Initiate special education referral process.

Principals and teachers representing all grade levels said the committee members discuss each student's situation carefully and attempt to identify campus modifications that will address concerns. According to the principals and teachers, in 75 to 80 percent of cases, campus modifications accomplish needed results with the least restrictive environment for the student.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has developed a process to identify individual student needs, devise appropriate modifications, and accomplish desired learning and achievement levels within the least restrictive environment.

FINDING

MPISD is part of the Titus County Special Education Cooperative. Established in 1971, the cooperative originally had seven districts: Old Union, Argo, Cookville, Chapel Hill, Harts Bluff, Mt. Pleasant, and Winfield. The first three districts consolidated into MPISD in the mid-1970s, and the remaining four districts make up the cooperative.

During 1997-98, the cooperative served 807 students. The number of students served in each district was: Chapel Hill, 111; Harts Bluff, 67; Mt. Pleasant, 610; and Winfield, 19.

In MPISD, resource students, who are pulled from their regular classroom for tutoring in specific subjects, and mainstream students, who are kept in the regular classroom for all subjects, are served on each campus. The MALL is available on each campus to students who need assistance with

re-teach, pre-teach, or more time to work on assignments or tests. Students who have difficulty with behavior may be served in an elementary or secondary behavior adjustment classroom. Life skills classes are provided on all campuses for students who need specific life skills training. Students who have severe physical or mental involvements may be served in a classroom located on an elementary campus. Children who qualify for the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities may be served in one of two classroom, all day, half day, or integrated with Head Start. An inclusion teacher works with students placed in Head Start classes. Students at the high school have opportunities to participate in vocational training through the CATE program, special education, or VOCNET, a sheltered workshop. An inclusion teacher is also available at the high school. Special education funds are used for students who are placed in the alternative education program. Students who need homebound services are served by a homebound teacher who is employed by the cooperative.

MPISD also participates in the Mt. Pleasant/Paris Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) which involves 33 students in a nine-county area and includes the following members: Titus County Special Education Cooperative, Cass County Special Education Cooperative, Hopkins County Special Education Cooperative, Lamar County Special Education Cooperative, Morris County Special Education Cooperative, Mt. Vernon ISD, Paris ISD, Pittsburg ISD, Red River County Special Education Cooperative, and Wood County Special Education Cooperative. MPISD was the fiscal agent for all three cooperatives.

RDSPDs, created in 1973 by the Texas Legislature, are supervised by TEA's Division of Services for the Deaf. For 1997-98, 4,411 students from approximately 500 school districts were served in RDSPDs. Regional day school students are reviewed annually by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee that prepares and revises an annual plan for development for each student.

RDSPDs are funded from a Foundation School Fund appropriation, Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds, and local school district contributions. The total cost for this program statewide is \$44 million or \$9,973 per pupil for 1997-98, which compares favorably to the \$31,000 per pupil cost at the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin. The per student cost in the Mt. Pleasant/Paris Regional Day School Program for the Deaf was \$7,463, less than the state average. Expenditures for the deaf and visually impaired cooperatives for 1997-98 are provided in **Exhibit 2-75**.

Exhibit 2-75
Expenditures for the Deaf and Visually Impaired Cooperative
1997-98

Cooperative	1997-98 Expenditures	Number of Students Served	Expenditures Per Student
Visually impaired	\$56,156	27	\$2,080
Deaf	\$246,267	33	\$7,463

Source: MPISD 1997-98 annual financial audit.

MPISD also participates in the Tri-County Cooperative for the Visually Impaired (TCCVI), which serves 27 students in three counties. Districts included in this cooperative are: Pittsburg, Daingerfield, Paul Pewitt, Mt. Pleasant, Chapel Hill, Harts Bluff, and Winfield. Shared services agreements exist for the RDSPD and the TCCVI but not for the Special Education Cooperative.

COMMENDATION

MPISD participates in cooperatives to provide quality services at reasonable costs to students with special needs.

FINDING

MPISD has a slightly higher percentage of special education students than the state average, but is slightly below the regional average (**Exhibit 2-76**).

Exhibit 2-76
MPISD, Peer District, RESC VIII, and State Students in Special Programs as a Percentage of Total Enrollment 1997-98

Entity	Special Education
Liberty Eylau	18%
Terrell	16%
RESC VIII	15%
Kaufman	13%
Mt. Pleasant	13%
Paris	13%
Texarkana	13%
Corsicana	12%

Greenville	12%
State	12%
Athens	11%
Kilgore	11%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98

The Titus County Special Education Cooperative provides funds to pay for educational aides to support general and regular education teachers, and related services personnel/services including: physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech/language pathologist, counseling services, deaf education and visually impaired itinerant teachers, and interpreters. Materials and supplies are provided, on request, for special and regular education teachers to assist with classroom instruction. Adaptive equipment and assistive technology is purchased by the cooperative as requested. Stipends are also provided to teachers for special training, such as Reading Recovery.

From 1993-94 through 1997-98, the number of students served by the cooperative increased by 51.4 percent (**Exhibit 2-77**). The major increase from 1993-94 to 1997-98 was due to two factors: a new director of the cooperative and an increase in the number of diagnosticians in the cooperative from two to five, meaning more students were being tested.

Exhibit 2-77
Student Population for the Titus County Special Education Cooperative
1993-94 - 1997-98

District	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change
Chapel Hill	45	53	72	89	111	146.7%
Harts Bluff	51	37	45	62	67	31.4%
Mt. Pleasant	424	471	517	605	610	43.9%
Winfield	13	12	17	21	19	46.2%
Totals	533	573	651	777	807	51.4%

Source: Director, Titus County Special Education Cooperative.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975 requires school districts to provide certain education-related health services to children with disabilities to meet their unique needs. As of September 1992, the state's Medicaid program was amended to allow school districts to enroll as Medicaid providers and to apply for Medicaid reimbursement for services provided to children with disabilities.

School Health and Related Services (SHARS) are defined as those services determined to be medically necessary and reasonable to ensure a disabled child under the age of 21 receives the benefits of a free and appropriate public education. These services include assessment, audiology, counseling, medical services, school health services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, psychological services, and associated transportation.

School districts need not spend any new money but instead can simply apply for reimbursement for specific services provided to Medicaid-certified children. The reimbursement amount is for the federal portion of the fee for each eligible service, which was 62.28 percent for 1998. Districts must certify that they used state or local funds to pay for the remainder. Reimbursements can be deposited in the general revenue fund and do not necessarily have to be spent on special education services. To qualify for SHARS Medicaid reimbursement, claims must be filed within 12 months of the date that services are delivered.

The Titus County cooperative bills Medicaid for SHARS. The cooperative used Medicaid Claim Solutions of Texas for its billing through 1995-96. Since 1996-97, it has used TG Computer Services in Longview to submit claims. The Cooperative pays the firm 5 percent of all claims made, whether reimbursed or not. The cooperative was reimbursed \$102,337 in 1995-96, \$133,837 in 1996-97, and \$141,421 in 1997-98, respectively, in SHARS funds. The claims processing fees were \$16,236, \$11,198, and \$15,398, respectively, in those years.

The SHARS billings for students served by the Titus County Special Education Cooperative in 1997-98 for each quarter of the year are shown in **Exhibit 2-78**.

Exhibit 2-78
SHARS Activity for the Titus County Special Education Cooperative and Statewide 1997-1998

	Titus County Cooperative			Statewide		
Calendar	Amount	Number of	Average	Amount	Number of	Average

Quarter	Paid	Unduplicated Student	Payment Per Student	Paid	Unduplicated Students	Payment Per Student
First	\$33,275	78	\$427	\$5,802,618	20,987	\$276
Second	\$45,682	106	\$431	\$10,108,648	31,517	\$321
Third	\$33,238	100	\$332	\$12,703,892	36,081	\$352
Fourth	\$29,226	108	\$271	\$12,719,083	37,672	\$338

Source: Texas Department of Health.

As shown, the average payment per student for the Titus County Cooperative in 1997-98 was roughly comparable to state averages, although the cooperative's payments were higher during the first two quarters, and lower during the second two quarters.

The cooperative served 807 students in 1996-97, including 610 from Mt. Pleasant, 76 percent of the total. Mt. Pleasant's overall student population of 4,375 was 80 percent of the total for the four districts in the cooperative (5,500) for the same year. The percentage of Medicaid eligibility for each district in the cooperative was as follows: Mt. Pleasant, 19.88 percent; Chapel Hill, 15.15 percent; Harts Bluff 14.22 percent; and Winfield, 18.67 percent.

The number of students participating in the Titus County Cooperative increased 24 percent between 1995-96 and 1997-98, while SHARS payments increased 39 percent (**Exhibit 2-79**).

Exhibit 2-79
Titus County Special Education Cooperative Students and SHARS
Payments
1995-96 through 1997-98

Year	Number of Student	Percentage Increase	Total SHARS Payments	Percentage Increase
1995-96	651	N/A	\$102,337	N/A
1996-97	777	19%	\$133,837	31%
1997-98	807	24%	\$141,421	39%

Source: Director, Titus County Special Education Cooperative and the Texas Department of Health.

COMMENDATION

The Titus County Special Education Cooperative has achieved a high level of federal reimbursements through SHARS.

FINDING

In 1996, the state started another reimbursement program, Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC), to allow districts to receive reimbursement for administrative services provided by districts that cannot be billed through SHARS. At that time, it was not feasible for districts or consortiums with less than 15,000 students to participate because the federal requirements for a time study of direct-service staff on the amount of time spent on health-related activities was too burdensome. MPISD chose not to participate in MAC because it found that potential reimbursements did not justify the extensive documentation and time on the part of employees.

However, the MAC program has changed significantly, making it feasible for smaller districts to participate. Beginning in January 1997, TEA, along with the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Health and Human Services Commission, came up with a plan to open MAC to small districts. Consortiums have been established to pool participating districts so that each district's time commitment for the time study is greatly reduced. As a result, about half of the districts in state participate in MAC.

Districts that join a consortium provide the names of their staff that provide direct activities, such as counselors, nurses, and therapists (not teachers or administrators, but direct staff with high risk populations). From this list, a percentage are selected to participate in the time study, which only requires one week per quarter of coding activities. From this study, the levels of service are determined which, along with base expenditures and Medicaid-eligibility rates, determines the reimbursements to districts for their MAC-eligible activities.

At least two consortiums could serve Mt. Pleasant and the other districts in the Titus Cooperative. One or more of the districts in the Titus cooperative could join one of the MAC consortiums, but all of the joiners must join the same consortium.

Districts sign on with a consortium directly. The consortium would send a representative to the district to explain the services and fees, which are based on a percentage of reimbursements. There are no out-of-pocket costs, but staff time is required for coding for the week during the quarter that the time study is done. And all staff selected for the time study have to attend two to three hours of training, which must be provided by the MAC

consortium within 50 miles of the district, regardless of where the consortium offices are located.

Since the consortiums handle most of the burdensome administrative functions required by the federal government for this program, it is relatively simple for districts to participate. The amount of reimbursements depends on level of activity of staff for the eligible activities. Part of the issue is the level to which a district promotes health-related activities (expenditure base), and the percentage of the student population that is Medicaid eligible. For one of the consortiums that serves VIII (LaPorte), the average reimbursement per quarter for all districts in the consortium was \$2.75 to \$4.20 per student based on total students in the district, not the Medicaid-eligible students. One district in the consortium, Lampasas ISD, has 3,600 students with a Medicaid-eligible rate similar to Mt. Pleasant: 19 percent. This district has received three quarters of reimbursements so far: \$9,607, \$16,535, and \$14, 598.

MAC is designed as a supplemental program and is not intended to cover health-related expenditures provided by districts. For example, a district could hire speech therapists, nurses, or place a worker in the schools to facilitate eligibility, or open a clinic. Districts have to report on how the reimbursed money is used annually; no reports had come in as of February 1999 because the program was just initiated.

By using MAC funds to expand health-related and outreach activities, more students can be enrolled in Medicaid, which would potentially SHARS payments, and would increase the expenditure base for determining MAC reimbursement levels.

Recommendation 16:

Enroll in the Medicaid Administrative Claiming program.

MPISD should meet with the other three districts in the Titus County Special Education Cooperative to see which, if any, would like to enroll in MAC.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGUES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Titus County Special Education Cooperative director meets with all consortium districts and determines which MAC consortium could best serve the district(s).	May 1999
2.	The director enrolls in the most appropriate MAC consortium and coordinates the required training and time study activities and	August 1999

billing procedures for all participating districts in the Titus County Cooperative.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

Lampasas ISD achieved reimbursement levels of more than \$40,000 for three quarters, or an annualized rate of \$54,000. One of the consortiums achieved a \$2.75-\$4.20 per student reimbursement level per quarter for their participating districts. For Mt. Pleasant, this would result in a reimbursement amount of \$48,000 (4,375 students X \$2.75 = \$12,000 X 4 quarters = \$48,000). If other districts in the Titus County Cooperative join MAC, additional reimbursements would be received, but they would be divided by district according to participation levels. A fee of 10 percent could be paid to the consortium out of reimbursed MAC funds, for a net annual gain of \$43,200 (\$48,000 - \$4,800).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Enroll in the Medicaid Administrative Claiming program.	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$43,200	\$43,200

FINDING

Formal cooperatives, such as the ones for special education and the visually impaired and deaf services, are vehicles for providing shared services to districts. By sharing the method and cost of providing services, the cost to individual districts can be reduced and the level and quality of service increased.

To support the sharing of services through a cooperative requires a shared services agreement signed by all participating districts. Based upon the Financial Accounting and Reporting Module of the *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*, a shared services contract should address certain legal requirements and include information on the following topics:

- Administrative, including composition of the board, appointment of the fiscal agent, meetings schedule, and taking and maintaining official minutes of the meetings.
- Financial, including ownership of assets and an acceptable cost allocation method.
- Legal, including responsibility for legal fees.

- Designation of responsibilities for the fiscal agent and member districts, including employment of personnel, budgeting and accounting, and a general summary of the services to be shared.

When the special education cooperative was started in 1971, these types of agreements were not required. The cooperative does not have a formal agreement, even though individual districts approve the procedures of the cooperative annually.

Recommendation 17:

Prepare a shared service contract and have all participants sign the document.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of the Titus County Special Education Cooperative solicits copies of shared services agreements from RESC VIII and other cooperatives.	March 1999
2.	The director develops a draft shared services agreement and presents it to the board for review and approval.	April 1999
3.	The board approves the shared services agreement.	April 1999
4.	A copy of the agreement is sent to each district for approval by the district's board of trustees.	May 1999
5.	The board of trustees of each district approve the shared services agreement and return a signed copy to the director.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

In its capacity as fiscal agent for regional special education, deaf services, and visually-impaired cooperatives, the district provides routine administrative, bookkeeping, and support. The special education financial operations information is audited each year as part of MPISD's annual audit.

It is typical for the fiscal agent in a shared services arrangement to be reimbursed for administrative and bookkeeping services. For example, in the Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative, Hamilton ISD acts as the fiscal agent and receives \$20,000 for providing the same type of services MPISD provides to the Titus County cooperative. MPISD is not being reimbursed for any of the services it provides or pays for on behalf of the cooperative. Based upon the level of expenditures for the three cooperatives and the associated level of transaction processing, the amount of service provided by district personnel, and the cost of the annual audit, the MPISD business manager estimated the district's costs at approximately \$12,000 annually.

Recommendation 18:

Document services provided to the cooperative and seek reimbursement.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Business office personnel estimate activities and time spent supporting the cooperative.	March 1999
2.	The business manager, superintendent, and director of the Titus County Special Education Cooperative agree on a recommended reimbursement for these services.	April 1999
3.	The director includes this item in the shared services agreement to be prepared.	April 1999
4.	Business office staff monitor their activities to determine if any adjustments to the level of reimbursement need to be made.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Based upon the assessment of the business manager, the district could receive \$12,000 annually.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Document services provided to the cooperative and seek reimbursement.	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

I. Instructional Technology

BACKGROUND

TEA has updated the original plan for technology to reflect these changes and has recommended goals for 1996-2010. The *Long-Range Plan for Technology 1996-2010* provides recommendations in four key areas: teaching and learning, educator preparation and development, administration and support services, and infrastructure for technology. Within each area there are goals for the short-term (1996-98), mid-term (1999-2002), and long-term (2003-2010).

A key recommendation for local school districts is providing a computer workstation for every student by 2010. By the end of 2002, the goal is to have three students for every workstation.

Texas public school districts generally contract for computing needs externally and maintain an internal department to provide support in both technical services and training. External agencies or organizations, such as the RESC VIII, perform specific computer-supported tasks for an organization, such as the processing of payroll checks, student grades, or financial information.

CURRENT SITUATION

The MPISD Districtwide Technology Department, which supports instructional computing and the district's network, reports directly to the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology. This department provides support for software and hardware in these areas:

- Software for student learning.
- Training on instructional technology.
- Maintenance of personal computer (PC) labs in the schools.
- Support for library resources, including the Internet.
- Network management.

The deputy superintendent, in concert with the District Technology Committee, has prepared a detailed five-year plan updated annually. The most recent update came in spring 1998. The plan includes a technology mission statement, district goals, an evaluation and assessment of achievements and needs, action plans to implement each objective and a

timeline for accomplishment, and estimated budget requirements for each objective.

The Districtwide Technology Department consists of a network specialist and technician, network analyst and technician, software specialist and trainer, and secretary/work order assistant.

MPISD has 834 computers, including 494 Macintosh or Apple machines and 340 IBM or IBM clone computers. Of these, all are networked and Internet-accessible except for the IBM/clone computers at Brice, Fowler, and Sims Elementary Schools and Corprew Intermediate School. There is one workstation for approximately every five students. The number of computers by campus is shown in **Exhibit 2-80**.

Exhibit 2-80
MPISD Computers by Campus
1998-99

Campus	Number of Computers	
	Macintosh/Apple	IBM/Clone
Child Development Center	30	22
Brice Elementary School	52	1
Fowler Elementary School	56	2
Sims Elementary School	52	27
Corprew Intermediate School	94	3
Wallace Middle School	72	2
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	77	25
Mt. Pleasant High School	49	233
Central Support Services Building	12	17
Special Education Building	0	8
Total	494	340

Source: Deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology and Special Program, MPISD.

Technology spending by MPISD is described in **Exhibit 2-81**.

Exhibit 2-81
MPID Expenditures for Technology
1996-97 through 1997-98

Source/Program	1996-97	1997-98
Emergency immigrant	\$899	\$193
Head Start	\$11,301	\$46,641
Eisenhower program	\$0	\$90
Title I	\$87,486	\$101,744
Migrant program	\$71,682	\$1,712
Even Start	\$0	\$23,770
Title VI	\$3,578	\$12,885
Cafeteria	\$144	\$4,226
CATE	\$35,996	\$11,653
Technology allotment	\$147,665	\$199,036
Other funds	\$25,031	\$1,495
Local funds	\$506,379	\$462,270
Total	\$890,161	\$869,295
Per student total	\$203	\$195

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.

MPISD participates in the Northeast Texas Regional Education Telecommunications Network (NTxRETN) through RESC VIII. NTxRETN links 47 districts, Texas A&M University - Commerce, Texas A&M University - Texarkana, North Texas Community College, Paris Junior College, Texarkana College, RESC VIII, and two centers for professional development and technology.

When Technology in Education (TIE), funding became available in 1997, RESC VIII developed a group application for Internet connectivity and basic infrastructure. The TIE grant of \$1.6 million was shared among 20 districts with an average daily attendance of more than 1,000, including MPISD. Each district received a T1 line into the district and all of the essential equipment to centrally manage and monitor the system.

In June 1998, RESC VIII received a new \$1.7 million TIE grant to expand the NTxRETN to add videoconferencing capabilities. This grant extended

the NTxRETN to provide two-way interactive distance learning between local districts; other districts, colleges, and universities throughout Texas and the United States; and other participating institutions.

FINDING

MPISD operates a wide area network (WAN) branching out from the Central Support Services (CSS) building. Direct connections to the Internet are routed to every campus from the CSS building.

Multimedia workstations are located in every classroom in the district. These workstations are equipped with a color ink jet printer and software that will allow teachers to do gradebook, basic works programs, and at least one multimedia slide show application.

Local area networks (LAN) are completed at Mt. Pleasant Junior High School; Fowler and Brice Elementary Schools; the CSS building; the Education Support Services building; and Wallace Middle School. The district has received \$84,000 in TIF grant funds and used the funds to complete the LAN at Sims Elementary School, Corprew Intermediate School, and the academic building at Mt. Pleasant High School.

All of the libraries in the district are automated and the librarians are pursuing training in the Texas Library Connections projects. All teachers and staff members demonstrate proficiency in using a computer prior to receiving one. The district provides training, or a teacher can receive training from an outside source. Advanced training is also available to teachers on a request basis.

Computer Assisted Instruction is offered to students at the junior high and high schools using PLATO 2000 courseware for TAAS remediation. Josten's software is offered to students at the Corprew, Sims, and Fowler campuses and plans are to phase this courseware out of the curriculum and replace it with software that meets more of the technology application TEKS requirements.

Future plans of the district are to place distance learning units for interactive video teleconferencing on each campus and to place computer labs of multimedia workstations on each campus.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has an advanced technology system that facilitates a broad range of learning opportunities for students and teachers.

FINDING

The two trainers employed by MPISD provide training in a variety of settings: group workshops centrally for all teachers and staff members, campus-based group training for smaller numbers of people, and individualized training in teacher classrooms. Trainers are assigned to work on campuses on a weekly basis. Teachers can sign up to work with a trainer during their conference period before or after school. Technology workshops are offered during the week on at least two days and on two Saturdays each month.

According to the trainers, the variety of forums accommodates the different learning needs of each person in the district and enhances their ability to use technology, especially in the classroom.

In response to the written survey conducted by TSPR, teachers responded positively about instructional technology and support for the classroom. When asked to grade the district's use of technology as an instructional tool on their campus, 69 percent responded with an "A" or a "B."

COMMENDATION

The Districtwide Technology Department's focus on individualized teacher training enhances classroom instruction.

FINDING

MPISD adopted a K-12 technology curriculum based upon TEKS requirements for each grade level. Campus budgets reflect resources allocated for the purpose of supporting teachers in their individual endeavors to teach technology TEKS with access to appropriate teaching supplies, software, and specialized training.

The District Technology Committee worked in conjunction with the Districtwide Technology Department and the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology during the spring of 1998 to develop a set of proficiencies that the district requires of all teachers. This program is called the New Phase I Training Program and ensures that teachers get the necessary skills they need in order to implement the Technology TEKS in their classroom.

The first year of the program requires that teachers show mastery in the following basic strategies: word processing, spreadsheet, database, graphics, multimedia slideshow, Internet navigation basics, and campus gradebook program.

The teacher can show mastery of the above skills by submitting a disk to their building principal for approval. The building principal has the option

of going and observing the teacher using these skills. A set of proficiencies for each of the above-mentioned skills has been developed, and the teacher must be able to demonstrate mastery of each of these. Principals are also encouraged to look for these skills during each teacher's evaluation.

During the second year of the program the teacher must show mastery in the following set of strategies and submit lesson plans showing that they have used them in their classroom with their students: advanced Internet navigation; advanced slide show in either Hyperstudio, Kid Pix Studio, or Powerpoint; and advanced content-specific software that involves the whole class or

a group of students in the class.

During the third and fourth years of the program, each teacher is asked to master four new software applications or new skills for software applications that they are already trained in over a two-year period. The teachers can request training for the software. They must use these software applications with their students in the form of projects. The project must be put on a disk and turned into the campus technology committee on their campus. Software proficiencies were developed by the District Technology Committee for all of the major software applications owned by the district. The project is rated using the sets of proficiencies and returned to the teacher for credit or for revision.

Supporting this curriculum, MPISD has over 50 different pieces of software available for checkout from the Districtwide Technology Department. These programs are geared toward helping teachers improve cooperative learning in the classroom. Students engaged in problem solving actually improve in the areas of acquisition and retention of content skills throughout the curriculum.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has adopted a technology curriculum that will increase the skills of students and teachers and has developed a process to monitor implementation.

FINDING

In 1994-95, MPISD put together a district technology committee and began to develop a long-range plan. A lease purchase program with Apple Computer was implemented during 1995-96 that allowed the district to acquire 158 computers, triple the amount of hardware they would have been able to purchase with only the state technology allotment. The lease

was extended in 1996-97 so the district could acquire 58 more computers and additional printers.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has used a lease-purchase arrangement to expand computer technology.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter discusses the efforts of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) to manage its relations with the Mt. Pleasant community in the following three sections:

- A. Public Information
- B. Community and Parental Involvement
- C. Collaborative Partnerships

BACKGROUND

The quality of educational services can be improved if strong, positive relationships are built with parents, area businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, and other concerned citizens. An effective school district tells the community about its goals and accomplishments and encourages support for the district's efforts. An effective public relations program communicates regularly with the media and all stakeholders to build long-term relationships.

Districts organize their community involvement activities in a variety of ways. Larger districts dedicate staff to oversee public relations, communications, parental involvement, and partnership programs. Smaller districts may have the function divided among several staff, including the superintendent, principals, and key department directors.

Community involvement efforts are strengthened by informative, well-designed publications that enhance public perceptions of the school system. An informed public is more likely to participate in school activities and provide vital community support and assistance to the students in the district.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. Public Information

CURRENT SITUATION

The MPISD Public Information Office (PIO) is staffed by two public information officers, who report directly to the superintendent. One officer teaches a high school career and technology class, called Media Technology, and performs PIO functions approximately 60 percent of time. The other officer performs PIO functions approximately 50 percent of time and spends the other 50 percent as the gifted and talented education program coordinator.

The responsibilities of the PIO are:

- Prepare monthly newsletters
- Coordinate American Education Week activities
- Prepare weekly calendar of events for distribution to media outlets
- Coordinate campus reporters
- Produce MPISD Today program for radio broadcasts
- Coordinate Red Ribbon week activities
- Prepare press releases
- Write feature stories for the local newspaper
- Update media outlets daily about district activities
- Coordinate Fan Appreciation Night
- Produce and edit promotional videos
- Coordinate district's Speakers Bureau
- Develop and publish most district brochures
- Develop special advertisements for the newspapers
- Develop Family Friendly Business program
- Help start Junior Achievement in district.

Exhibit 3-1 illustrates the cost of operating the PIO for the past three years and the current year's budget.

Exhibit 3-1
Public Information Office Expenditures
1995-96 - 1998-99

Budget Category	Actual 1995-96	Actual 1996-97	Actual 1997-98	Budgeted 1998-99
Salaries and benefits	\$24,093	\$46,116	\$46,741	\$42,900

Contracted services	\$10,831	\$12,126	\$0	\$0
General supplies	\$905	\$1,684	\$2,334	\$2,000
Travel and other	3,105	\$2,752	\$3,681	\$4,600
Capital outlay	\$0	\$2,999	\$0	\$1,000
Total	\$38,934	\$65,678	\$52,746	\$50,500

Source: MPISD Finance Office and 1998-99 Budget.

Exhibit 3-2 provides the results of a telephone survey of peer districts, comparing the number of full time equivalent (FTE) positions employed in each district's public information office.

**Exhibit 3-2
Comparison With Peer Districts
Regarding The Use of Public Information Office**

School District	Does District Have PIO?	Number of PIO Personnel	Comments
Mt. Pleasant	Yes	1.1 FTE	Two professionals, both part-time.
Kaufman	No	N/A	N/A
Terrell	Yes	2.0 FTE	One professional and one clerk
Paris	Yes	1.5 FTE	1.5 FTE represents one professional and a part-time clerk
Texarkana	Yes	1.0 FTE	PIO also supervises the print shop
Liberty-Eylau	Yes	1.0 FTE	
Athens	No	N/A	N/A
Kilgore	No	N/A	N/A
Greenville	Yes	1.0 FTE	
Corsicana	Yes	1.0 FTE	Just hired the PIO. Will hire a full-time secretary to assist.

Source: Survey conducted by WCL Enterprises November 1998

The survey indicates that only three of MPISD's peer districts do not have a PIO. The others have staffing similar to MPISD.

FINDING

The PIO produces publications for individuals and organizations within the district and the surrounding community. **Exhibit 3-3** provides a list of district publications and programs, a description of each, and the audience it is intended to reach.

**Exhibit 3-3
Listing of MPISD Publications and Programs
1997-98**

Publication/ Program	Description/Frequency	Targeted Audience
Tiger Pause	Monthly newsletter	All employees
FYI	Issue specific newsletter	Administrators
MPISD Calendar	Updated weekly	Newspaper, cable TV, radio stations
MPISD Today	Weekly radio program	Local community
Horizon	Sunday full page pullout	Local community
Brochures	Examples: Speaker's Bureau, Know Your School Board, Test Taking Tips, PIO Handbook	Parents, students, and the community at large

Source: MPISD Public Information Office.

Reporters at each campus provide information for the *MPISD Calendar*. The reporters are teachers, aides, or secretaries at the school, who volunteer for the position. The PIO has arranged with the local paper to provide film and free developing for pictures taken at each campus. The PIO prepared a Public Information Handbook and provides training for each campus reporter. Calendar information is scrolled on the local public access cable TV channel and is updated each week. Many people in the community indicated during focus group discussions that the calendar was an excellent way to learn about MPISD activities.

A unique program is MPISD Today, which is a short radio program featuring MPISD activities. The program is aired during football, baseball, basketball, and softball games. The program is produced by the Media

Technology class at the high school, which is taught by one of the public information officers. The program is broadcast by KALK 97.7 FM, which contracts with the district to broadcast sporting events.

The PIO sends frequent press releases to the local newspaper, radio stations, and TV stations. **Exhibit 3-4** indicates the number of press releases sent to the various media outlets for the six-week period from September 1, 1998 through October 20, 1998. According to the PIO, this number of press releases is representative of press releases provided throughout the year.

Exhibit 3-4
Press Releases to Various Media Outlets
September 1, 1998 - October 20, 1998

Media Outlets	Number of Press Releases
Mt. Pleasant Daily Tribune	33
KALK radio station	36
K101/KIMP radio station	30
KIMP Spanish speaking radio station	12
Channel 54 television station	31
Channel 19 cable television station	12
Total	154

Source: MPISD Public Information Office.

Most of MPISD press releases are about events at a specific school or districtwide activities and are sent to all the outlets listed above. The press releases sent to the Spanish-speaking radio station are provided in Spanish and target the district's Hispanic population. A district employee who works at P. E. Wallace Middle School goes to the station and reads the releases in Spanish.

During March 1997, there were 132 articles about MPISD activities in the *Mt. Pleasant Daily Tribune*. During prior years, the PIO provided a clipping service for the school board consisting of all articles in local papers about the district. The PIO discontinued the clipping service in May 1997 at the request of the board because board members all subscribed to the paper and indicated that they did not need the information compiled again. The review team reviewed the clippings for the 1996-97 school year and found that coverage has continued at about

the same level for the past three years. In the opinion of the PIO, the local paper has always provided substantial coverage of district events.

COMMENDATION

The Public Information Office provides a wide assortment of publications and programs for the community, media, parents, students, and district employees.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

B. Community and Parental Involvement

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD has its boundaries in and around the City of Mt. Pleasant, a town with a population of approximately 13,000 residents. As the review team met with various community groups, it became apparent that one of the key issues in the community is the changing ethnic minority population. As **Exhibit 3-5** illustrates, the ethnic mix at MPISD has changed significantly over the past several years.

Exhibit 3-5
Change in Ethnic Composition of MPISD Student Population
1990-91 - 1997-98

Ethnic Group	1990 -1991	1991 -1992	1992 -1993	1993 -1994	1994 -1995	1995 -1996	1996 -1997	1997 -1998
Anglo	61%	58%	57%	54%	52%	50%	46%	44%
Hispanic	20	21	23	27	29	31	34	38
African American	19	20	19	19	19	19	19	18
Other	0	1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: 1990-91 - 1992-93 MPISD, 1994-95 - 1997-98 Texas Education Agency, AEIS

The district's minority population has surpassed the non-minority population. One of the primary reasons for the changes has been the increase in jobs provided by Pilgrim's Pride, a local manufacturing firm that employs a large number of Hispanic employees. **Exhibit 3-6** indicates the estimated change in the population of Titus County, the county in which MPISD resides.

Exhibit 3-6
Projected Change in Ethnicity of Titus County
1990 to 2000

Ethnicity	1990 Census	2000 Projection	Increase	Percentage Increase
Anglo	18,136	18,878	742	4.0%
African American	3,191	3,711	520	1.6%
Hispanic	2,553	3,532	979	38.3%
Other	129	145	16	12.4%
Total	24,009	26,266	2,257	9.4%

Source: 1990 U. S. Census, 2000 Data from Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Winter 1995-96 County Forecast; and the Texas State Data Center at Texas A&M University

The estimated growth in the minority population accounts for approximately two-thirds of the increase in population in Titus County in the last ten years. It also is interesting that the total number of Anglos has increased 4 percent in Titus County, while the Anglo population in MPISD has decreased by almost 20 percent in the last seven years. The community is predominantly Anglo, while the district student population is predominantly African American and Hispanic.

MPISD has taken significant steps to meet the needs of Hispanic students. The district was recently commended by a Texas A&M research study as one of the most improved districts in the State of Texas at educating Hispanic students.

FINDING

Approximately four years ago, the district appointed a parent involvement coordinator. Before the parental involvement coordinator was hired, there was no organized district-level support and encouragement for parent involvement. The primary reason for creating this position was to increase the level of parental involvement in MPISD.

Authors Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla have written a series of research publications entitled: *The Evidence Grows (1981)*; *The Evidence Continues to Grow (1987)*; and *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical To Student Achievement (1995)*. Their research indicates that parental involvement in their children's education, from birth until they leave home, has a positive impact on achievement. The major benefits of parent involvement are: higher test scores, better grades, more

consistent attendance, a more positive attitude and behavior, and more effective academic progress.

The programs that are now part of the parent involvement program at MPISD are explained in **Exhibit 3-7** below.

Exhibit 3-7
MPISD Parent Involvement Programs
1998-99

Name of Program	Description	Target Audience
MPISD Community Education or The Parent School	Offers various adult basic education classes on week nights	Parents of MPISD students
Mentoring Program	Individuals work one-on-one with at-risk students	Members of community and businesses, not necessarily parents
Volunteer Program	Work in classroom or on campus to assist in a variety of ways	Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) directs program for parents and community members
Parents Involvement Team	Group formed by campus; coordinates campus activities	Teachers and parents of students at that campus
Parent Advisory Committee	Group that assists in planning and developing Title I schoolwide programs	Parents, teachers and administrators, and community members
Parental Involvement Newsletter	Monthly update providing educational and developmental information for parents	Parents of students in grades K through 6 (newsletter printed in Spanish and English)
Safe and Drug Free Schools Advisory Council	Assist in developing budget for the program	Parents, teachers, counselors, community, and businesses
Parent Advisory Council	Advisory committee for migrant education program	All migrant and ESL parents at all schools
Miscellaneous Activities	Specific issue activities and classes held, including classes in CPR, parenting skills, positive discipline, etc.	Parents and community members

Source: Parent Involvement Office, MPISD

The night that members of the review team observed the Parent School, there were over 200 parents attending classes while their children were being cared for in adjacent rooms. The classes offered in Parent School and their enrollment are shown in **Exhibit 3-8**. In 1998, the district added a sign language class and an Internet class in response to parental requests.

Exhibit 3-8
MPISD Parent School Courses Offered And Enrollment
1997 and 1998 Fall Semester

Course Offered	Number Enrolled	
	1997	1998
General education development (GED)	26	32
Computer training - beginners	73	71
Computer training - advanced	22	15
Internet training	N/A	20
Spanish	43	24
Citizenship	20	28
English	53	65
Sign language	N/A	13
Average number in child care	50	50
Total Served	287	318

Source: Parent Involvement Office, MPISD

COMMENDATION

The district has increased parental involvement and developed a thriving adult education program.

FINDING

Many smaller districts like MPISD that are located in a more rural setting often have fewer graduates who go to college. One of the primary reason students cannot continue their education in college is the cost of tuition, books, and fees.

Based upon the students' need for financial help, the Mt. Pleasant community created the Mt. Pleasant Scholarship program in 1987. The scholarships are provided by the Mt. Pleasant Community Fund, which is

administered by the administrative board of Tennison Memorial United Methodist Church. Every student who graduates from Mt. Pleasant High School is eligible for one of two types of scholarships at Northeast Texas Community College. Students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class receive paid tuition, books, and fees. All other students receive paid tuition and fees. Since the scholarship was established in 1987, more than 1,200 students have taken advantage of the program.

COMMENDATION

The Mt. Pleasant community is striving to make a college education an affordable alternative for every MPISD high school graduate.

FINDING

MPISD has not conducted any comprehensive community involvement planning. While the parent involvement coordinator has helped to develop many positive programs, especially those that target parents of students at risk of dropping out of school, MPISD has not developed a plan with specific action steps or program evaluations for its community involvement functions.

Although the superintendent approves all fundraising projects, efforts appear to be duplicative. Some of the business people in the focus groups indicated they are asked for money by every organization within the district. Parents and businesses indicated a lack of support from the district in establishing collaborative relationships.

The PIO and the parent involvement coordinator do not track community involvement activities within the district. The volunteer coordinator at each campus is responsible for tracking participation and recognizing businesses and individuals. The PIO does not regularly document the districtwide involvement activities or the needs of individual campuses for additional support. Each campus keeps its own records in the manner it chooses. For example, the review team requested information about the number of parents attending open houses, parent teacher conferences, and volunteers. The information provided is displayed in **Exhibit 3-9** below:

**Exhibit 3-9
Open House Attendance, Parent Conference and
Volunteer Efforts by Campus
1997-98**

School/Campus	Number Attending Open	Number of Parent Teacher Conferences	Number of Volunteers
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	House		
Mt. Pleasant High School	0 - No Open House	No records are kept on conferences	No records are kept on volunteers
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	300	199	32
Wallace Middle School	565	403	40
Corprew Intermediate School	400 +	At least 350 including ARDs and CITs	Less than 50
Brice Elementary School	167	Records not kept, yet each teacher is re-sponsible for at least one contact per year.	43
Fowler Elementary School	100 +	250+	20
Sims Elementary School	190	982	66
Child Development Center	76	238 Head Start home visits (4 year olds) 238 Head Start and additional parent conferences 120 Head Start home visits (3 year olds) 320 Pre-kindergarten Parent Conferences 128 Home visits for Even Start	149 Volunteers (2,132 Volunteer Hours) 168 for Even Start visits

Source: MPISD Schools 97-98

The table above indicates that record-keeping practices vary. For example, Mt. Pleasant High School does not keep any records, while the Child Development Center provides detailed records.

During focus group meetings, parents, teachers, administrators, and business people argued that the last two bond issues failed in part because the district was unable to rally community support. A bond issue in 1990 failed by more than a 2 to 1 margin. The bond issue was repackaged in 1992, and a better promotional campaign was delivered to the community, but the issue failed by only 72 votes. Many focus group participants told

the review team the district had not done an adequate job of explaining the district's needs to the minority community and encouraging them to get out and vote.

Other participants mentioned the primary reason for the inability of the district to pass a bond issue is resistance to change and general opposition to tax increases among residents of the community. Yet, the district has not developed a formal program to involve the senior residents in school activities. Some districts such as Glen Rose ISD (GRISD) have developed an ongoing "Silver Card" program for all citizens of the district 60 years of age and older. GRISD implemented this program because officials believe that every citizen of the community is a valuable part of the school district.

Residents of GRISD who are 60 years of age and older can apply for the Silver Card. The Silver Card makes them eligible to attend many school functions free or at a reduced price. In addition, all Silver Card holders receive a calendar of events each month. Other events sponsored by GRISD include trips to baseball games, cultural events in Dallas, Christmas shopping trips, and other promotional activities. The seniors also are invited to read books to elementary students during a planned reading month.

The Silver Card members are also active in the Alternative Education Program (AEP). Members visit the AEP school and spend time working with at-risk students, acting as their mentors and helping them make career decisions.

Alief ISD's Intergenerational Volunteers program also is an excellent example of a coordinated senior citizen volunteer program. A senior citizen, who serves as a voluntary coordinator, seeks volunteers from retirement homes, American Association of Retired People, churches, and other groups to help with tutoring, mentoring, field trips, and reading activities. The program has become successful because it matches seniors with the activities that they would like to participate in, and has become a mutually rewarding arrangement for both seniors and the students.

A comprehensive community involvement plan would:

- Develop goals, objectives, and strategies to increase involvement.
- Create a Business Advisory Committee to serve as an advisory and advocacy voice for businesses interested in contributing services and resources to MPISD schools.
- Identify and recruit potential business partners, civic organizations, parents, and other citizens.

- Teach committee members how the district operates and how they can help.
- Maintain a list of area businesses that have expressed an interest in certain types of projects or issues.
- Develop and implement districtwide programs that target groups of people who might be unaware of the district's activities.
- Monitor and track volunteer hours, donor participation, calculate the monetary value of volunteer hours, and make periodic reports on the results to the board and superintendent.

Recommendation 19:

Develop a comprehensive community involvement plan in conjunction with existing business and civic partners to enhance community involvement at MPISD.

The district may want to use Parent Involvement Teams that have been created at several campuses as a resource in developing a comprehensive community involvement plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and a public information officer work with local civic and business groups to form a business advisory committee.	March 1999
2.	The public information officer and parent involvement coordinator contact other districts with successful community involvement plans and provide data to the committee for review and consideration.	April 1999
3.	The business advisory committee develops ideas that can be incorporated into a community involvement plan, including a program for senior citizens.	April - June 1999
4.	The committee presents the plan to the board for discussion and approval.	July 1999
5.	The public information officer and superintendent implement the plan at MPISD schools.	August 1999
6.	The public information officer and/or the parent involvement coordinator develop means to monitor and track participation.	August 1999
7.	The public information officer develops a periodic reporting and evaluation process.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Some nominal costs could be associated with the development of a seniors program. The district could fund the program, or local community and business organizations could be asked for contributions.

FINDING

While the district has done a commendable job of meeting the needs of the increasing number of Hispanic students, it does not appear that a concerted effort has been made to actively involve the parents of minority students. Interviews with African American parents revealed that many felt the district had not reached out to them to make sure their childrens' needs are being met. While many of the Hispanic parents indicated they were pleased with the education their children are receiving, many were concerned that they were not always able to understand all the information their students brought home, for example, homework.

Other school districts, such as Tyler ISD, have established a minority committee or task force that includes key members of the minority community, teachers, principals, district administrators, members of the clergy, and board members. This group focuses on improving education for all students while raising the awareness of the needs of minority students and parents. Since MPISD has two significant traditional minority communities, African American and Hispanic, and an Anglo population that is now in the minority, a vehicle that give all groups an opportunity to voice their concerns is increasingly important.

Recommendation 20:

Appoint a tri-ethnic task force for the purpose of developing a greater understanding of minority issues and needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Each member of the board recommends people to serve on the task force.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent and public information officer publicize the task force's creation.	March - April 1999
3.	The board selects task force members.	April 1999
4.	The task force and the board hold a community forum to focus on minority issues.	May 1999
5.	The task force develops a minority action plan for board approval.	May - August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

While approximately 70 percent of the parents agree that MPISD regularly communicates with the parents, only 50 percent believe that there is an effective line of communication between parents, central administration, and the schools.

The survey indicates that only 49 percent of campus level employees agree that the district has a good relationship with various groups in the community. Conversely, 76 percent of central administrative personnel believe that the district has a good relationship with groups in the community. While MPISD provides a great deal of printed and verbal information, the community has only limited opportunities to express its views to the board and the central administration.

Hispanic parents interviewed by the review team felt they could approach staff in the Head Start or ESL/bilingual program, but did not feel comfortable approaching the board or top-level administrators.

The board meets only once per month. While the focus group participants told the review team that there was no public forum for them to express their views, they also noted that attendance at board meetings was sparse. Members of the focus group indicated this was due to the disunity of the board, and the fact that citizens did not feel comfortable speaking to the board.

Other districts use public forums to allow the community to express its concerns. Often the meetings are held in the community where people feel most comfortable, instead of a board room.

Recommendation 21:

Hold quarterly town hall meetings to allow members of the community to speak on educational issues.

These forums will give people the opportunity to express their concerns related to MPISD. The forums should be held separately from regular board meetings. The meetings could be held at the campuses or out in the community, for example at local churches, at the Parent School, or at the civic center. The key would be for the board to go to the people to ask for their input.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The public information officer develops a format for participation.	March 1999
2.	The public information officer publicizes the town hall meetings.	Ongoing beginning in April 1999
3.	The board sponsors its first quarterly town hall meetings.	April 1999
4.	The board schedules future quarterly meetings.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

MPISD has an excellent relationship with the local cable television channel, which has been posting the MPISD Weekly Calendar and updating it each week. Many parents applauded this service. The public information officer is responsible for developing the calendar and providing it to the station. While the calendar makes the community aware of scheduled board meetings, the board meeting agendas are not provided. The agendas are posted only on the door of the central administration building.

Recommendation 22:

Include the agenda for each school board meeting on the cable television channel as soon as it is available.

By posting the topics to be discussed at each meeting, community members may be more inclined to attend regular meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The public information officer develops a strategy for the station to post the board meeting agendas.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent requests board approval to post board agendas on the station.	April 1999
3.	The public information officer starts posting the agendas as soon as they are received.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Districts throughout Texas have established not-for-profit foundations to aggressively pursue contributions from local companies for programs, capital purchases, or grants to district teachers and other employees. For example, Houston and Clear Creek ISDs provide grants to teachers to support specific research projects or class projects. Harris County Department of Education raises funds to support staff development for its personnel and to acquire technology to support its programs. Humble ISD raises funds to provide grants to teachers to support research or classroom projects, and Cypress-Fairbanks raises funds to provide stipends for teachers for special projects, staff development, and projects that cannot be supported by general fund revenues.

The reason for offering several foundation initiatives is that some individuals, companies, and foundations prefer to support program efforts, while others prefer to support capital projects, such as the purchase of technology equipment. By making the functions of a district foundation broad enough, districts can solicit more donations to support a wider array of programs.

In addition to donations, foundations often use events such as golf tournaments, home tours, and community carnivals to raise additional money. Some districts even make payroll deductions available to employees.

MPISD has established a not-for-profit foundation to receive contributions from individuals and companies to support instructional initiatives in the district. However, the district has never activated the foundation, nor sought contributions.

Foundations usually have a board of directors composed of local business leaders, parents, and interested parties. The board members contact potential contributors, develop ideas for promoting the work of the foundation, work closely with district officials to identify needs, and are usually supported by staff who prepare proposals, coordinate fund-raising events, and seek external grants.

Several significant efforts have been implemented in MPISD using federal grant and state compensatory funds to support targeted efforts to improve the performance of at-risk students. However, with the rapidly increasing Hispanic student population, there will be more efforts needed in the future.

The principal of Fowler Elementary School told the review team that a local church had once recruited volunteer retired teachers to provide after-school tutoring to at-risk students. This effort eventually was discontinued because not enough volunteers could be found.

This type of tutoring program for at-risk students in MPISD could be funded by a foundation. Current and/or retired teachers could be paid stipends for mentoring students or developing special projects or programs that focus on these students.

Additional technology also could be acquired through foundation donations to support the state goal of three students per computer by 2002. Teacher staff development stipends for training in key areas or to support classroom projects could be included.

Recommendation 23:

Activate the district's foundation, establish necessary by-laws to govern its functions, and recruit a board of directors.

The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology should provide support to the board and the foundation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board appoints a board of directors for the foundation.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent assigns the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology to support the foundation.	March 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent presents information to the board of directors on the types of needs and programs that the foundation could support.	April 1999
4.	The board of directors establishes a set of bylaws, establishes key programs, and sets fund-raising targets.	April 1999
5.	The board of directors identifies key corporations and foundations that could be contacted.	May 1999
6.	The deputy superintendent puts together an annual plan of proposals for grants, contributions, and fund-raising events.	June 1999
7.	The board of directors approves the plan.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Based upon the experience of other districts, the availability of grant money for such purposes, and the existence of local business in the area, the district should be able to raise a net of \$50,000-\$100,000 annually.

There will be some start-up costs associated with any fund raising, such as materials, communication, and postage. These one-time costs are estimated at \$5,000 the first year. The district, however, could be expected to raise about \$10,000 in the first year, bringing net revenues to \$5,000 in the first year. In future years, as fund-raising events occur, the cost of such events should be paid from gross contributions. Based on estimated net revenue of \$5,000 the first year, \$30,000 the second year and \$50,000 each year thereafter, MPISD could raise \$185,000 over the next 5 years.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Activate the district's foundation, establish necessary by-laws to govern its functions, and recruit a board of directors.	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

C. Collaborative Partnerships

In any community, the interaction between local businesses and employers and the school district, can have a significant impact on both the employers and the students. In a cost-sharing arrangement with the Head Start Program, the district received a pledge from the area's largest employer, Pilgrim's Pride, for \$1 million to help build the Child Development Center (CDC). These funds are being paid in the amount of \$100,000 per year for ten years. This financial relationship with Pilgrim's Pride was crucial in funding the CDC.

The district implemented the Junior Achievement program in the schools last year. Under this program, local business people come into schools to teach a one-hour civics class each week for 12 weeks.

The number and type of collaborative partnerships in MPISD is shown in **Exhibit 3-10**.

Exhibit 3-10
MPISD Business Partnerships
All Schools

School/Department	Business/Organization	Activity
Mt. Pleasant High School	Mt. Pleasant Junior Auxiliary	Works on Project Graduation
Wallace Middle School	Super 1 Food Store	Adopted the school and provides incentives for student achievement
Corprew Intermediate School	Super 1 Food Store	Adopted the school, provides food for school activities
Brice Elementary School	Super 1 Food Store	Adopted the school, provides food for school activities
Fowler Elementary School	Brookshires Food Store	Adopted the school, provides food for school activities
Sims Elementary School	MP Junior Auxiliary	Work with second grade students needing special assistance
Sims Elementary	Pilgrim's Pride	Provides facilities.

School		supplemental funds for supplies, refreshments, workshops for parents
Sims Elementary School	McDonalds	Provides paper products, coupons for school programs
Sims Elementary School	Hershell's Restaurant	Provides paper products, coupons for school programs
Sims Elementary School	Super 1 Food Store	Provides paper products, coupons for school programs
Sims Elementary School	Lil Abner's Dry Cleaners	Cleans all lost and found coats and jackets and stores them for future use
Sims Elementary School	Lion's Club	Assists students who need glasses
Sims Elementary School	Brookshires Food Store	Provides students incentives for achievement
Adult Education Center	Northeast Texas Community College	Contract to provide teachers for certain classes

Source: MPISD Schools 97-98

COMMENDATION:

Segments of the Mt. Pleasant business community are actively supporting MPISD.

FINDING

The large number of business partnerships with MPISD schools demonstrates there is a willingness within the business community to work with the district. However, there is not an organized and structured plan to involve local businesses in proactive relationships with the schools and students.

Based on interviews conducted by the review team, the primary, ongoing business partnerships are with the two local grocery store chains and the high school career and technology education program that allows the students to get out of school early to go to work. The only business people who attended focus group sessions on business partnerships were the managers of the grocery stores and the Junior Achievement Director.

The best use of a business partnership is one where employers work with the district to identify the types of jobs that will be available for graduates. The district then develops classes, either through the vocational or regular instruction curriculum, to begin training students for future employment. Partnerships that provide intern opportunities, summer jobs, and tours of the employer's business typically have the biggest impact on students.

Business partnerships are an excellent way to leverage limited resources and build trust and confidence in the district. A good collaborative partnership program could include building relationships with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and neighborhood-based civic associations. For example, McManagement is a collaboration with McDonald's Corporation, in which McDonald's trains students in restaurant management skills. Local chambers of commerce also can facilitate matching employers with the district's career and technology programs to address the needs of non-college bound students.

At Spring ISD, Spring High School has a program called BLAST (Business Leaders Assisting Spring Teens) that uses a group of business leaders recruited and trained by the school to provide individual weekly support and role models for at-risk students. One of the elementary schools has developed a school-neighborhood partnership. The school and neighborhood association plan activities to bring the community and school closer together.

Also at Spring ISD, three nonprofit organizations, the Shriners, Masons, and Northwest Assistance Ministries provide support for the Teen Parent program. The day-care program and teen parents are provided with services and materials through these organizations. Other partnerships include YMCA after-school programs conducted at school sites, and outdoor learning centers. There are similar groups in the Mt. Pleasant area that could develop partnerships.

Recommendation 24:

Develop a comprehensive and structured collaborative business partnership program.

The successful development of collaborative partnerships is a process that will take several years and will require input from every area of the community, particularly local employers, nonprofit organizations and civic associations.

While the district already has developed some areas of collaborative partnerships like the mentoring program, junior achievement, and the

Pilgrim's Pride relationship, more can be accomplished by coordinating all efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board discuss the goals and objectives of collaborative partnerships.	April 1999
2.	The board appoints a committee chaired by a public information officer and the parent involvement coordinator to develop ideas that can be incorporated in a collaborative partnership plan.	May - June 1999
3.	The committee contacts other districts that have successful collaborative partnership programs, like Spring ISD, Corpus Christi ISD and Port Arthur ISD.	May - June 1999
4.	The committee evaluates the programs of other districts and determines their applicability at MPISD.	July 1999
5.	The committee presents the plan to the board for review and approval.	August 1999
6.	The public information officer, parent involvement coordinator, and superintendent implement the plan at MPISD schools.	September 1999
7.	The public information officer and/or the parent involvement coordinator develop means to monitor and track participants.	September 1999
8.	The public information officer develops a periodic reporting and evaluation process.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

This chapter describes the personnel management practices of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) in the following sections:

- A. Recruitment and Employee Turnover
- B. Salary Administration
- C. Organization and Management
- D. Employee Benefits

BACKGROUND

Factors critical to the success of any personnel or human resources function include: efficiently processing all personnel actions, appropriate staffing and salary administration, compliance with state and federal personnel laws, and providing adequate training opportunities for staff.

In most public school districts, a personnel or human resources office manages employee-related tasks. While management techniques and structures may vary, the basic tasks include:

- Development of wage and salary schedules;
- Administration of salary systems that include placement of positions on the salary schedules and periodic review of the schedules to ensure they are competitive with area employers who compete for similar positions;
- Classification of all positions;
- Development of job descriptions for all positions and the periodic update or modification of the job descriptions to reflect changes in responsibilities;
- Development and administration of training programs for some or all district personnel;
- Development of personnel staffing tables and review of staff allocation formulas;
- Administration of an employee grievance process;
- Recruitment of personnel to fill vacant positions;
- Maintenance of required employee records;
- Administration of certification and permit processes;
- Issuance of contracts and nonrenewal or dismissal notices;
- Recruitment and placement of substitutes and student teachers;
- Development of board policies regarding personnel issues;
- Development and administration of an employee benefits program;
- Maintenance of personnel policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all state and federal laws and guidelines (ie.,

Equal Employment Opportunity, Internal Revenue Service, Fair Labor Standards Act)

- Preparation of periodic reports to address local board, state, and federal reporting requirements.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD's personnel functions are handled by the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, who is assisted by a secretary. In discharging these responsibilities, the deputy superintendent involves department and campus personnel to conduct recruiting visits, solicit applicants, and conduct candidate interviews. In some instances, certain personnel-related activities are handled by other departments exclusively or in conjunction with the deputy superintendent (**Exhibit 4-1**).

Exhibit 4-1
MPISD Personnel Management Responsibilities

Responsibility	Department or Position Involved
Recruiting staff	Personnel
Hiring staff	Personnel; all departments participate
Background checks	Personnel
Reference checks	Personnel; all departments participate
Initial salary determinations	Personnel
Salary adjustment calculations	Personnel
Compensation studies	Personnel
Attendance monitoring (employees)	All departments
Benefits administration	Risk Management (Business Office)
Employee grievances	All departments; Personnel
Training / staff development	All departments
Termination	All departments; Personnel
Planning for staffing levels	Superintendent; Board

Source: MPISD Interviews.

Like most employers, MPISD must comply with federal laws governing human resources management, including the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which governs wages and hourly payments; the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires employers to provide reasonable

accommodation to any employee or job applicant who has a disability; and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, which prevents employers from making hiring and firing decisions based on age, race, religion, gender, or other factors not related to performance. There also are state laws governing school district personnel administration in areas such as employee grievances, due process, termination, and contract renewal (Section 21, Texas Education Code).

Payroll accounts for more than 70 percent of MPISD's 1997-98 budget (**Exhibit 4-2**).

Exhibit 4-2
MPISD Expenditures by Category
1996-97 and 1997-98

Category	Percentage of Total Expenditures	
	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget
Payroll costs	69.7%	72.5%
Professional and contracted services	6.2%	6.1%
Supplies and materials	4.7%	4.9%
Other operating expenses	1.7%	2.0%
Debt service	14.1%	8.8%
Capital outlay	3.7%	5.7%

Source: TEA, AEIS Reports, 1996-97 and 1997-98.

For purposes of the Academic Excellence Indicate System (AEIS), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) categorizes school district staff into three groups: 1) professional staff, which includes teachers, professional support staff, campus administrators, and central administrators; 2) educational aides; and 3) auxiliary personnel.

The total number of full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) for the district for 1993-94 through 1996-97 and the budgeted total for 1997-98 are described in **Exhibit 4-3**. Total MPISD staffing has increased at almost four times the rate of growth in the student population (20.2 versus 5.2 percent) over the past five years. The largest numerical increases have been in teachers, educational aides, and auxiliary staff. The largest percentage increases have been in campus administration/school leadership positions and educational aides. These increases have been

largely driven by the necessity of opening the Child Development Center (CDC) and the junior high school. The CDC uses a large number of educational aides due to the large number of at-risk and Limited English Proficient students, and both the CDC and the junior high school have cafeterias that require a full complement of food service staff.

Exhibit 4-3
MPISD Staff FTEs
1993-94 through 1997-98

Staff Category	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Professional Staff						
Teachers	284.5	312.9	317.1	327.8	335.5	17.9%
Professional support	21.8	22.0	28.6	21.9	25.7	17.9%
Campus administration	14.0	13.0	14.0	12.0	18.0	28.6%
Central administration	6.5	9.5	7.0	6.0	6.0	-7.7%
Educational aides	59.4	60.5	66.0	71.4	79.9	34.5%
Auxiliary staff	156.0	162.1	164.2	163.7	186.3	19.4%
Total staff	542.2	580.0	596.9	602.8	651.5	20.2%
Total students	4,226	4,202	4,290	4,375	4,444	5.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1993-94 through 1997-98.

Central administrative staff includes administrative and business office personnel located in MPISD's Central Service Support Building. Professional support includes technical staff and paraprofessionals located centrally or on a campus. Auxiliary staff includes maintenance personnel, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

Exhibit 4-4 compares MPISD's percentage of employees budgeted for each group in the 1997-98 school year with its peer districts' employee budgets. MPISD had the second lowest percentage of teachers (51.5 percent). This percentage lags behind both the region with 53.2 percent, and the state with 51.7 percent. MPISD has the third lowest percentage of professional support staff and central administrators, the second highest percentage of campus administrators, the third highest percentage of

educational aides, and the fourth highest percentage of auxiliary personnel.

Exhibit 4-4
MPISD Staffing Compared to Peer Districts
1997-98

District	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administrators	Central Administrators	Educational Aides	Auxiliary Staff
Liberty Eylau	56.7%	5.8%	3.0%	1.4%	9.6%	23.6%
Kilgore	56.5%	3.3%	2.7%	0.9%	7.2%	29.4%
Terrell	54.0%	6.9%	2.6%	1.0%	11.0%	24.6%
Kaufman	53.9%	5.8%	3.0%	1.0%	7.8%	28.5%
Greenville	53.3%	6.0%	1.6%	1.1%	12.0%	26.0%
RESC VIII	53.2%	5.2%	2.8%	1.3%	12.8%	24.7%
Corsicana	52.1%	5.3%	2.7%	1.7%	15.4%	22.9%
Athens	51.9%	3.7%	3.0%	1.7%	10.8%	29.0%
Texarkana	51.7%	6.5%	2.4%	0.8%	8.7%	29.9%
State	51.7%	6.8%	2.5%	0.8%	9.9%	28.2%
Mt. Pleasant	51.5%	4.0%	2.8%	0.9%	12.3%	28.6%
Paris	49.4%	8.5%	2.9%	0.7%	13.6%	24.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Exhibit 4-5 shows the number of MPISD students to staff per category over the last five years. The number of students for all staff categories, except central administrators, declined over the period which means that staff were added at a faster rate of growth than the student population. Again, it should be noted that the district added two new schools during this period, which required the addition of full campus support and administrative staff including principals, cafeteria workers, custodians, office personnel, and educational aides. Some additional teachers were hired to support student growth, but many were moved to new schools where the student population shifted.

Exhibit 4-5
Ratio of Students FTEs to Staff
1993-94 through 1997-98

Staff Category	Number of Students for One Staff Member by Category					Percentage Change over the Period
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	
Teachers	15	13	14	13	13	-13.3%
Professional support	194	191	150	200	173	-10.8%
Campus administrators	302	323	306	365	247	-18.2%
Central administrators	650	442	613	729	741	14.0%
Educational Aides	71	69	65	61	56	-21.1%
Auxiliary staff	27	26	26	27	24	-11.1%

Source: AEIS 1993-94 through 1997-98

In addition to a growth in total teachers, the statistics reveal an increase in teachers with more than 20 years of experience (**Exhibit 4-6**). From 1993-94 through 1997-98, this group of experienced teachers increased by a total of 23.5 FTEs, while beginning teachers increased by 7.7 FTEs. According to the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, who is in charge of recruiting, the district's salary schedule is much more attractive to more experienced teachers, while the entry level teacher salary is below competing districts in the area. Not only do lower salaries affect recruiting, but they also affect teacher retention.

Exhibit 4-6
MPISD Full-time Teacher by Years of Experience
1993-94 through 1997-98

Total Years of Experience	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Beginning teachers	29.0	28.4	32.2	20.5	36.7	26.6%

1-5 years	75.6	96.7	101.0	108.3	93.3	23.4%
6-10 years	60.0	57.0	51.0	53.5	59.0	-1.6%
11-20 years	74.0	78.0	77.5	75.5	77.0	4.1%
More than 20 years	46.0	52.9	55.3	70.1	69.5	51.1%
Total	284.6	313.0	317.0	327.9	335.5	17.9%

Source: AEIS 1993-94 through 1997-98.

Even though the number of experienced full-time teachers increased over the past four years, MPISD's teaching staff is much less experienced than regional and state averages. Forty-three percent of MPISD's teachers have 11 or more years of experience compared to 54 percent for the region and 49 percent for the state. MPISD's teachers with less than five years of experience make up 38 percent of total teachers compared to an average of 28 percent for the region and 34 percent for the state (**Exhibit 4-7**).

Exhibit 4-7
Percentage of Teachers by Years of Experience
MPISD, RESC VIII, and the State
1997-98

Years of Experience	Mt. Pleasant	RESC VIII	State
Beginning teachers	10.9%	4.9%	7.0%
1-5 years	27.8%	23.2%	26.6%
6-10 years	17.6%	17.7%	17.5%
11-20 years	23.0%	31.5%	28.7%
More than 20 years	20.7%	22.7%	20.1%

Source: AEIS 1997-98.

MPISD has been hiring experienced teachers. Over the past five years, the average total years of experience among MPISD teachers has increased by 9.5 percent (**Exhibit 4-8**). The average experience is about equal to the state average but is more than one year less than the average for the region.

Exhibit 4-8
Years of Teaching Experience

**MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Average
1993-94 through 1997-98**

Entity	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Mt. Pleasant	10.5	10.3	10.5	11.5	11.5	9.5%
RESC VIII	12.1	12.1	12.3	12.6	12.8	5.8%
State	11.5	11.5	11.7	11.7	11.8	2.6%

Source: AEIS 1993-94 through 1997-98.

Without exception, the average salaries for MPISD personnel are lower than the state and regional averages for similar positions in all categories (**Exhibit 4-9**). Compared to its peer districts, the average MPISD teacher salary exceeded only that for teachers in Kaufman ISD; professional support salaries are the lowest; campus administrative salaries exceed those of only three other districts; and central administrative salaries are the lowest of all the peer districts.

**Exhibit 4-9
Actual Salaries of Certified Personnel
MPISD, RESC VIII, State, and Peer District Average
1997-98**

Entity	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administration	Central Administration
State	\$33,537	\$40,713	\$52,030	\$62,946
Corsicana	\$33,067	\$41,613	\$49,802	\$57,816
Liberty Eylau	\$32,692	\$37,879	\$47,492	\$55,185
Kilgore	\$32,614	\$37,267	\$43,540	\$60,273
Paris	\$32,609	\$35,443	\$48,091	\$62,462
Terrell	\$32,440	\$39,935	\$49,054	\$65,812
RESC VIII	\$32,013	\$36,686	\$46,848	\$55,157
Greenville	\$31,690	\$35,003	\$49,857	\$67,439
Texarkana	\$31,671	\$36,055	\$45,539	\$58,424

Athens	\$31,379	\$36,990	\$44,415	\$59,127
Mt. Pleasant	\$30,535	\$32,497	\$45,668	\$54,450
Kaufman	\$29,980	\$34,975	\$49,870	\$65,536

Source: AEIS 1997-98.

Over the past five years, the salaries of certified personnel, other than teachers, in MPISD have increased. Central administrative and campus administration salaries increased at the state average and professional support salaries increased at a rate much slower than the state average (**Exhibit 4-10**).

Exhibit 4-10
Certified Personnel Other than Teachers
MPISD and State Average Salaries
1993-94 -through 1997-98

Category of Personnel	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	MPISD Percentage Change over the Period	State Percentage Change over the Period
Professional support	\$31,899	\$30,627	\$32,380	\$31,589	\$32,497	1.9%	13.0%
Campus administration	\$40,686	\$42,921	\$43,444	\$45,679	\$45,668	12.2%	12.1%
Central administration	\$47,725	\$44,898	\$42,850	\$53,070	\$54,450	14.1%	14.0%

Source: AEIS 1993-94 through 1997-98.

The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and a variety of other MPISD employees carry out the personnel functions listed below.

Alcohol and drug testing. Any employee required to have a commercial driver's license is subject to drug and alcohol testing. Teachers, coaches, and other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements when they are driving. The program is coordinated by the deputy superintendent for Administration and

Operations. Private companies administer the tests for students, bus drivers, and all other drivers of district vehicles.

Performance evaluation. All employees are evaluated annually by their immediate supervisor. Written evaluations are completed on generic forms prepared by the Texas Association of School Boards. Each department head is responsible for ensuring that employee evaluations are conducted annually.

Staff development. Staff development activities are predominantly campus-based and are to be related to achieving campus performance objectives. The deputy superintendent for Curriculum provides several districtwide training programs, such as Reading Recovery, and RESC VIII provides additional training to MPISD employees. Teachers must demonstrate a proficiency in basic computer skills and can receive training from MPISD technology staff or from an outside source to meet this requirement. Additional technology training can be obtained through the instructional technology staff that reports to the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.

Each department within central administration is allocated a training budget annually based upon historical usage or requests for specific training. The department head recommends appropriate training for staff personnel.

Salary and wage administration. The district has developed salary schedules for all positions within the district. MPISD uses the state teacher salary schedule as the basis for its teacher and librarian salaries. Other local schedules cover paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and all other personnel paid hourly.

Employee benefits. Group insurance is available to all full-time employees, including health, dental, life, supplemental life, worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, and cafeteria plan coverage. Before annual enrollment each employee receives information in a booklet, *Employee Benefits*, on the available coverage and options and the associated costs. The district annually contributes a portion of the insurance premium cost.

Other employee benefits, such as personal leave, sick leave, local leave, temporary disability, family and medical leave, military leave, and jury duty also are provided to employees. These benefits are described in the employee handbook issued to each employee annually.

Personnel policies. The district maintains a set of personnel policies and updates them in accordance with changes mandated by the federal and

state governments and Texas Education Agency (TEA). Each employee annually receives an employee handbook that reflects all current MPISD personnel policies. Each employee must sign for receipt of the handbook. Copies of the signed sheets are maintained in the office of the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

A. Recruitment and Employee Turnover

BACKGROUND

Teacher recruitment has become a major concern to school districts throughout Texas and the nation. Demand is particularly keen for minority graduates, especially in Texas, where a growing Hispanic population makes competition brisk for bilingual teachers, counselors, and aides. While the demand for such personnel is high, the supply of minority graduates is low, primarily because private industry can often offer minority candidates higher pay.

The Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) indicates that, during the past 10 years, it issued 174,172 initial teaching certificates. Of those, 7 percent or 12,192 were issued to Hispanic graduates and 3.5 percent, or 6,096, were issued to African-American graduates. Compounding the recruitment problem is the fact that more than 40 percent of those certified during the past 10 years no longer teach in Texas public schools. This rate of departure is similar for all ethnicities.

FINDING

One of the most constant themes expressed in focus group sessions was the need for MPISD to make greater efforts to recruit and attract minorities. Interviews with members of the African American and Hispanic communities indicated that, with the exception of one Communities-in-Schools counselor, they are not involved in identifying potential candidates, used in developing recruiting plans, or involved in the district's minority recruitment task force.

MPISD recognizes the benefits of minority teachers and administrators as role models for minority students. A minority recruitment team was established in 1998 to focus on recruiting a more diverse staff. The team consisted of 12 minority members and the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations who is in charge of personnel. The team met four times from February through May and established a series of goals to recruit minority professional personnel (**Exhibit 4-11**).

Exhibit 4-11
MPISD Minority Professional Recruitment Goals
1998-99

Goal	Description
1.	The district will hire at least two minority professionals per campus over the next five years.
2.	The district will make every effort to replace a minority professional with a minority whenever possible.
3.	The district will "actively" recruit minority applicants.
4.	The district will utilize technology in the recruitment process.
5.	The district will develop opportunities for employees to pursue educational opportunities and ultimately teacher certification.

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

To achieve these goals, the district has undertaken several steps. The deputy superintendent and the chair of the team attended nine different job/career fairs hosted by colleges and universities in Texas that produce a large number of minority teachers (**Exhibit 4-12**). The goal of the team is to begin visiting neighboring states in the future.

Exhibit 4-12
MPISD Teacher Recruitment Trips
1998-99

College/University
Jarvis Christian College
Prairie View A&M University
Stephen F. Austin State University
Texas A&M University - Commerce
Texas A&M University - Texarkana
Texas College
Texas Southern University
The University of Texas - Tyler
Wiley College

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

The district advertised extensively on its Internet site. In addition to posting vacancy notices on the MPISD home page, the district also used <k12jobs.com>, a web site that provides the largest pool of active job opportunities available at K-12 public and private schools in the United States, and the Texas Military Initiative/Troops to Teachers, a statewide Internet service sponsored by TEA. MPISD also is considering expanding the number of Internet sites used for posting job vacancies, such as that of the Texas State Teachers Association.

For colleges and universities that MPISD could not schedule recruiting visits, graduate and teacher directories were obtained. MPISD also placed job vacancy notices in the *Black Employment Review*, a national publication disseminated from Arizona.

From the recruiting visits, hand-written contact sheets are maintained for each visit to document the people interviewed, how to contact them, and the certification they will receive upon graduation. Some school districts maintain an automated database of each interview conducted at each college and university. The database typically includes whether the contact was asked to interview at the district, the rating the contact received from the recruiters conducting the interview, the contact's area of certification, and other pertinent information. Districts use this information to analyze where to make future recruiting visits, to assess the quality of contacts at each campus, and to prepare reports for the superintendent and the board.

Despite MPISD's minority recruitment efforts, only four African American and two Hispanic teachers were recruited for 1998-99 compared to 50 Anglo teachers. Four other minority candidates committed to come to MPISD but were unable to fulfill their commitment to the district. As a result, the ethnic composition of MPISD's teachers continues to differ significantly from that of the student population (**Exhibit 4-13**).

Exhibit 4-13
MPISD Ethnic Composition of Teachers and Students
1994-95 through 1997-98

Ethnicity	1994-95		1995-96		1996-97		1997-98	
	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers
Anglo	52%	87%	50%	89%	46%	90%	44%	91%
Hispanic	29%	5%	31%	4%	34%	4%	38%	5%
African American	19%	8%	19%	8%	19%	6%	18%	5%
Other	0	0	0	0	1%	0	0	0

Source: AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

The state provides a variety of alternative certifications for teachers to allow districts the flexibility to use people who may have the qualifications or a degree in another field of study to fill certified or non-certified teaching positions. This process is particularly useful to districts seeking to fill critical vacancies when certified teachers in an area of study are scarce (**Exhibit 4-14**).

Exhibit 4-14
Types of Permits

Type of Permit	Description
Emergency (for certified personnel)	Activated by the employing superintendent for the professional services of a certified individual.
Emergency (for uncertified personnel)	Activated by the employing superintendent for the professional services of an uncertified individual.
Nonrenewable	Issued to allow an individual to complete testing requirements stipulated for continued employment.
Temporary classroom assignment	Activated by the local school district for a teacher who is certified to teach in departmentalized grades 6-12, but who will be assigned outside the certified area(s) at the secondary level.
District Teaching	Activated by the local school district and approved by the commissioner of education for a degreed teacher who is uniquely qualified to teach a particular assignment and does not hold any type of teaching credential.
Temporary exemption	Activated by the employing superintendent for a certified, degreed teacher who is not certified for the classroom assignment. This exemption cannot be renewed

Source: Chapter 230, Subchapter Q of the State Board of Educator Certification Rules.

Recruiting certified teachers in math, science, bilingual education, and special education is a problem facing many districts in Texas. Helping qualified individuals become certified is one way districts can fill these positions. This process allows a district to hire a person who is committed to working toward certification. The person and the district must prepare a deficiency plan and file it with the State Board of Educator Certification

(SBEC) 60 days before assignment. The plan must include an agreement between a college and the student teacher to complete a certification program. The plan provides specific information on the courses needed for certification and verifies that the individual meets the grade-point average required for admission into the college or university teacher education program. The plan must be completed within three years.

The permits are renewable based upon the person completing specified levels of work each year that the permit is in use (**Exhibit 4-15**).

**Exhibit 4-15
Renewal Requirements for Emergency Permits**

Category	Information
General Provisions	1) The employing superintendent or authorized representative of a public school district may renew an emergency permit for the same assignment in the same school district for which the initial permit was activated.
	2) No individual may continue in the same assignment for more than three years of service on the basis of an emergency permit.
	3) The total number of semester hours required to obtain certification appropriate for the assignment shall determine the number of permit renewals for which the individual may be eligible. The following schedule shall determine eligibility for permit renewal.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One through six semester hours plus the appropriate examination requirements - no renewal.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven-12 semester hours plus the appropriate examination requirements - one renewal.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 12 semester hours plus the appropriate examination requirements -two renewals.
Renewal Procedures	Before an emergency permit for a noncertified individual is renewed for the first time, the superintendent or authorized representative must verify that:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a noncertified teacher, except one serving in a vocational assignment requiring skill and experience in the area taught, has passed a competency examination of basic skills Texas

	Academic Skills Program (TASP); and
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a noncertified teacher serving in a vocational assignment requiring skill and experience in the area taught has passed the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers or the reading and writing portions of the TASP or the reading and writing portions of the TASP.

Source: Chapter 230, Subchapter Q of the State Board of Educator Certification Rules.

Some Texas districts facing problems with minority recruitment have successfully used the permitting process to bring in qualified but uncertified minority teachers. Since 1996-97, RESC VIII school districts have seen a 74-percent increase in the number of teachers working on emergency permits. MPISD has used the permit process (**Exhibit 4-16**) primarily in positions designated as shortage disciplines by TEA. However, less than one-sixth of the permits issued in MPISD were for minorities in 1997-98, and less than one-seventh are for minorities in 1998-99.

**Exhibit 4-16
MPISD Use of Permits
1994-95 through 1997-98**

Type of Permit	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Emergency (for certified personnel)	0	0	6	18 (2 minorities)	12 (3 minorities)
Emergency (for uncertified personnel)	0	12	18	8 (3 minorities)	15
Nonrenewable	0	0	2	6 (2 minorities)	2 (1 minority)
Temporary classroom assignment	0	0	1	4	1
District teaching	-	0	0	0	0

Temporary exemption	0	0	0	0	0
Total personnel on permits	0	12	27	36	30
Percentage of teacher FTEs	0	3.8%	8.2%	10.4% (7 minorities)	N/A (4 minorities)

Source: AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98 and MPISD, 1998-99.

Texas A&M University - Texarkana, in concert with RESC VIII, and three area community colleges, recently received a grant from TEA to develop Teacher Bound, a regional partnership to address critical teacher shortages in the areas of special education, bilingual education, ESL, and math. The major objectives of the program are to develop and implement innovative models for (1) the professional development of instructional aides to enable them to become fully certified in critical teacher shortage areas; (2) the recruitment of high school students to the teaching profession; (3) intensive use of technology and distance learning strategies for teacher preparation coursework; and (4) evaluation based upon learner-centered proficiencies.

Teacher Bound will provide classes through the distance learning NovaNet system in RESC VIII. The program will pay the tuition for any instructional aide in a school district in the region who wants to get a degree in one of the four teacher shortage areas.

Recommendation 25:

Expand minority recruitment efforts.

The district should examine its recruiting efforts over the past two years. The district should identify additional colleges and universities in Texas and adjoining states that graduate large numbers of minority teachers; intensify efforts at those locations; contact a sample of minority applicants who were offered positions but went to another district to learn their reasons and adjust recruitment strategies accordingly; identify minority community leaders, such as local church or civic organization members, who could participate in campus recruitment efforts, either through participation in interviews or presentations to student teachers; and survey minority teachers and administrators to identify alumni associations and explore the prospect of using these groups to attract teachers.

A computer database of information regarding each recruiting trip each year should be developed and maintained. The database should have information on the number of candidates interviewed, the evaluations of

the candidates, the number of candidates receiving offers, and the number accepting positions. Future recruiting trips should be targeted to areas or schools producing the greatest return on invested dollars.

The district should encourage any instructional aides to participate in the Teacher Bound program and ensure that participants have adequate time and support groups to complete the program.

The district also should consider offering a one-time monetary incentive to existing MPISD employees who successfully recruit or help identify minority teachers that are eventually hired by MPISD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations solicits information from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the State Board of Educator Certification regarding colleges and universities in Texas that graduate a large number of minorities, with and without teaching certification.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operation reviews the recruitment schedule and identifies opportunities to expand efforts to include additional colleges and universities.	April 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operation surveys minority teachers and administrators about alumni associations and their potential help in the recruiting process.	April 1999
4.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operation meets with minority administrators and teachers to identify minority community members who could be used in the recruitment effort.	April 1999
5.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operation meets with representatives of community groups to discuss the district's need to attract minority teachers and administrators.	May 1999
6.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operation modifies the current recruitment plan and recommends it to the superintendent for approval.	June 1999
7.	The superintendent approves the recommendations with necessary changes.	June 1999
8.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operation implements the plan.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Texas Education Code (Sec. 21.049) allows the district's board to propose rules to provide for educator certification programs as an alternative to traditional educator preparatory programs. This regulation was designed to provide an additional source of qualified educators. In response to this regulation, TEA has developed an alternative certification program (ACP). ACP is considered an "alternative" route because it accomplishes certification outside the traditional university program setting.

ACP is a program designed for college graduates who meet certain minimum criteria to obtain teacher certification through plans approved by TEA. The basic requirements for all areas of certification are: a bachelor's degree from an accredited university; an overall grade point average of 2.5 on all university work attempted; and passing scores on the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test. Certification is achieved while a person is employed as a teacher of record, receiving a teacher's salary, and completing TEA's approved training curriculum.

Twelve universities, 13 Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC), and four school districts are approved by TEA to offer alternative certification programs. The programs vary in size from RESC III in Victoria, which typically has about 50 students in its program, to RESC IV in Houston, which has 400 students annually. Each ACP program must have specific areas for which it is training potential teachers, such as: bilingual, ESL, generic special education, industrial technology, secondary composite science, secondary foreign language, secondary mathematics, secondary social studies, and generic elementary certification. These areas of certification must be based upon an initial needs assessment of districts within the area and must be approved by TEA. The more areas of certification offered by an ACP, the more costly the program. The cost per student ranges from \$4,000 to \$5,000 within all the programs.

Alternative certification typically involves intensive coursework during the summer before a school year and then at night during the school year while the participant teaches school. Upon successful completion of coursework and the first year of teaching, the participant receives full certification from the state. School districts, such as Houston and Dallas, have developed programs to alternatively certify people for teaching positions, and RESCs, such as RESC IV in Houston, have also developed programs to serve all districts within its region. Typically, a regional service center or school district will team with an area college or university to provide the coursework required to meet the minimum requirements. For example, RESC III teams with the University of

Houston-Victoria; Houston ISD teams with the University of Houston-University Park, and RESC IV teams with the University of St. Thomas.

There is no resource within RESC VIII to provide alternative certification training. RESC VIII would be an excellent place because it is within Mt. Pleasant and could attract local people more likely to stay in the area. Teaming could be provided through Texas A&M University, either at Texarkana or at Commerce, to provide the coursework. The University of Texas at Tyler also is exploring the option of developing a program.

Recommendation 26:

Explore the development of a regional alternative certification program through RESC VIII.

MPISD should contact RESC VIII, Texas A&M University (Texarkana and Commerce), and other area districts about the possibility of developing a co-operative alternative certification effort. The districts, RESC VIII, and the universities should determine areas of need, design a program, determine what training is involved and who should do it (i.e., RESC VIII, district, and/or the university), and determine the number of candidates who would be served at an optimal program level.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendents for Administration and Operations and for Curriculum meet with the director of RESC VIII and representatives of other major districts and universities in the region to discuss establishing an alternative certification program.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendents present information from TEA and other Regional Education Service Centers regarding similar programs.	March 1999
3.	RESC VIII, the districts, and the universities evaluate the information and its applicability to their situations.	April-May 1999
4.	The districts determine areas of teacher needs and the potential number of teachers needed over the next 3 to 5 years.	May-June 1999
5.	The districts, RESC VIII, and the universities determine the feasibility and cost associated with having an ACP.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to evaluating the creation of an alternative certification program. If RESC VIII establishes one, then there will be costs to MPISD associated with the number of teachers it would have in the program at any one time.

FINDING

Turnover is a measure of workforce stability, job satisfaction, and the adequacy of programs and incentives designed to retain qualified personnel. During the last two years, MPISD has had to recruit 75 and 59 professionals, respectively, to fill positions vacated by district employees. Overall, 165 incumbents left MPISD positions during 1997-98, and as of October 31, 1998, 38 employees had left positions during 1998-99 (**Exhibit 4-17**).

Exhibit 4-17
MPISD Employee Turnover by Position
1997-98 through 1998-99

Position Category	Total Number of Incumbents in Position (1)		Number of Incumbents Who Have Left MPISD		Percentage Turnover	
	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99 (2)
Administrators	26	23	4	0	15.4%	0
Teachers	342	345	58	8	16.9%	2.3%
Counselors/Librarians	13	13	3	0	23.1%	0
Diagnosticians/Speech Therapists	10	10	3	0	30.0%	0
Technology staff	5	5	5	0	100.0%	0
Instructional aides	88	88	30	7	34.1%	8.0%
Cafeteria personnel	63	63	19	10	30.2%	15.9%
Clerical/secretarial/nurse	60	60	10	8	16.7%	13.3%
Custodial	39	39	16	3	41.0%	7.7%
Maintenance	10	12	5	0	50.0%	0
Transportation/other	17	18	15	2	88.2%	11.1%

Source: Deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

(1) Total number of incumbents includes both full- and part-time personnel.

As a result, variances with percentages computed using FTEs may occur.

(2) Through October 31, 1998.

Reasons cited by personnel leaving the district include: accepting another job in the private sector, accepting a position with another school district; retiring; deciding to stay at home with children; relocating due to a transfer; changing careers; moving closer to home; going back to school; and personnel conflicts.

A vast majority of Texas school districts provide three-year contracts for central and campus administrative management personnel, including: superintendent, deputy/assistant superintendent, executive director/director, and principal. Unless the board takes action to renew the contract each year, one year automatically lapses from the contract. Typically, boards will extend contracts annually so that they always cover a three-year period.

In January 1997, the board took no action on the superintendent's contract, reducing it to two years. In February 1997, the board voted to reduce the contracts of the three deputy superintendents and the business manager to two years instead of three. All principals received a new two-year contract. The business manager ultimately moved to another district as a result of this action.

In January 1998, the board again took no action on the superintendent's contract, reducing it to one year. In February 1998, the board voted against extending any administrator's contract and voted to extend contracts only when they had completely expired. This action reduced the length of the superintendent's and the three deputy superintendents' contract to one year. In January 1999, the board renewed the superintendent's contract for one more year, extending it through June 30, 2000. All of the peer districts and other districts in the immediate area (Daingerfield, Chapel Hill, Harts Bluff, or Mt. Vernon), with which MPISD competes for staff, have three-year contracts.

As noted in **Exhibit 4-9**, salaries for district employees are lower than the regional average. Due to the change in the minimum teacher salary by the Texas Legislature two years ago, MPISD teachers have actually lost ground in comparison to peer districts in the region. Also, employee focus

group participants indicated that board members over the past three years have not advocated salary increases, except for teachers, even to keep pace with inflation.

Based upon TSPR interviews and comments of employee focus groups, the contract and salary situation has led to low morale and has created concern about job security. In their opinion, the board's opposition to salary increases for any position, other than teachers, is affecting the recruitment of qualified administrative personnel.

Some districts have eliminated the three-year rollover contract in lieu of a performance-based system tied to employee expectation and goals. Often, these specific goals are incorporated into the district improvement plan so that performance can be monitored and when performance improves, performance pay increases follow. When a change in contracting style is accompanied by performance-based measures such as improved productivity or student performance, a board sends a clear message to the administration to improve. In MPISD, however, employees said, there were no specific reasons cited for the change and no guide for performance enhancement given to the administration.

Studies have demonstrated that the cost of employee turnover is high when considering the cost of recruiting a new employee, training that employee, and allowing time for that new employee to become productive in a new environment. Successful retention strategies reward employees for working above the expected level of performance and achieving outcomes beyond expectations. This is especially true for key management positions where proper employee motivation, project planning, and financial management skills are essential.

The review team has seen other school districts' successful retention strategies that include the methods listed below:

- Development of a performance-based pay system where pay increases are linked to well-defined objectives and measures. The employee receives no guaranteed increase but can earn two to three times the amount of a typical guaranteed increase (i.e., 10-12 percent versus 3-4 percent). These programs are designed for teachers, campus administrators, and central office administrators whose performance either can be measured based upon campus and classroom achievements (student performance) or on the accomplishment of other district objectives (financial management). These types of plans require an annual set of district goals and objectives with targets for overall district improvement that can be then translated to individual staff performance targets.

Rewards can range from zero to a double-digit increase based upon performance.

- Additional staff development opportunities for outstanding employee performance. In lieu of monetary rewards, some districts use increased staff development opportunities in which an employee can select a special conference or training program.
- Earlier access to newer technology. Katy ISD uses a certification program to evaluate the progress of teachers and administrators in using technology and in integrating it into the curriculum or their areas of responsibility. As new hardware is available within the district, those individuals with the highest levels of proficiency and usage receive the equipment first.

In all these cases, a well-defined series of performance objectives are in place for each position, and accomplishment of these goals, along with appropriate feedback, is measured annually. An annual budget amount should be established based on a percentage of the salaries of those positions included in the program. For example, there are 170.5 FTEs in central administrative, campus administrative, and teacher positions with 11 or more years of experience. The total payroll for these positions in 1997-98 was \$6,593,879. If 3 percent of this total was budgeted for performance-based rewards, then MPISD would budget \$197,816 to be distributed based upon guidelines developed to administer the program.

Recommendation 27:

Develop an employee performance measurement and reward system that links improved performance in critical areas to increased rewards.

The district could phase in the system over several years beginning with teachers, then campus administrators, and then central office personnel.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations reviews employee performance measurement and reward systems in other school districts, public sector entities, and private business for their applicability to MPISD.	April- August 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent develops a report that discusses alternatives, assesses their applicability to MPISD, and evaluates their effectiveness in recruiting and retaining employees.	September - October 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent presents the information to the superintendent and recommends an alternative.	November 1999

4.	The superintendent reviews the recommendation with selected teachers, principals, and central office personnel and evaluates the fiscal impact associated with it.	December 1999 - February 2000
5.	The superintendent presents the recommendation to the board.	March 2000
6.	The board conducts a workshop and approves the recommendation and timing of implementation.	April - May 2000
7.	The superintendent implements the system.	August 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with developing a performance and reward system. Once a system is in place, there will be an annual cost, but that cost can be managed by the district based upon budget limitations.

FINDING

Turnover has been high among MPISD teachers, averaging 15.2 percent over the past four years (**Exhibit 4-18**). In all but 1996-97, MPISD has been above both the regional and state averages.

Exhibit 4-18 MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Teacher Turnover Rate 1994-95 through 1997-98

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Average
Mt. Pleasant	14.1%	18.0%	9.9%	18.7%	15.2%
RESC VIII	11.2%	11.5%	9.9%	10.8%	10.9%
State	12.2%	12.1%	12.6%	13.3%	12.6%

Source: AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics, many teachers leave teaching for retirement, moving, family or a personal reasons, and pregnancy/child rearing. The top reasons MPISD's teachers left were taking a position in another school district, moving, retiring, and family/health reasons. **Exhibit 4-19** illustrates teacher turnover at MPISD and common reasons for departure during the 1997-98.

Exhibit 4-19 MPISD Teacher Turnover and Reasons for Departure 1997-98

Reason for Leaving	Number	Percentage
Take a position in another district	22	38%
Moving	13	22%
Retiring	6	10%
Family/personal reasons	5	9%
Changed careers	3	5%
Other	9	16%
Total	58	100%

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

MPISD's base teacher salaries have increased at a slower rate over the past three years than either the region or state (**Exhibit 4-20**). The average base salary is more than \$3,000 below the state average and almost \$1,500 below the regional average. In 1994-95, MPISD's average teacher salary was above the regional average, and the average of three of its peer districts, and within \$1,000 of the second highest average among the peer districts. By 1997-98, MPISD teachers had the second lowest average salary among its peer districts, the region, and the state. Only Kaufman ISD has a lower average teacher salary. MPISD's average teacher salary increased at the slowest rate (13.5 percent) of any other district in the region except Kilgore ISD (11.6 percent).

Exhibit 4-20
MPISD, RESC VIII, Peer District, and State Teacher Average Base Salary
1994-95 through 1997-98

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage of Change over the Period
State	\$29,452	\$31,400	\$32,426	\$33,537	13.9%
Corsicana	\$27,910	\$29,581	\$31,524	\$33,067	18.5%
Liberty Eylau	\$27,308	\$28,891	\$30,673	\$32,692	19.7%
Kilgore	\$29,220	\$29,689	\$30,851	\$32,614	11.6%
Paris	\$26,821	\$29,501	\$31,585	\$32,609	21.6%
Terrell	\$27,824	\$29,079	\$30,955	\$32,440	16.6%

RESC VIII	\$26,776	\$28,855	\$30,612	\$32,013	19.6%
Greenville	\$27,842	\$29,462	\$30,351	\$31,690	13.8%
Texarkana	\$27,617	\$28,322	\$30,194	\$31,671	14.7%
Athens	\$26,360	\$28,583	\$29,421	\$31,379	19.0%
Mt. Pleasant	\$26,903	\$28,645	\$29,152	\$30,535	13.5%
Kaufman	\$25,651	\$26,788	\$29,064	\$29,980	16.9%

Source: AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Note: Average salaries exclude any local supplements.

Two years ago, the Texas Legislature increased the minimum salaries for teachers by \$2,000 but did not provide adequate state funding for this increase. MPISD had been providing a local supplement of \$2,000 above the state minimum at the time. With the legislative change, MPISD could not fund the state-mandated increase and continue paying an additional \$2,000, and it reduced its local contribution to \$500 above state minimum with an additional \$200 for teachers with a masters degree.

Exhibit 4-21 shows the average teacher salary by years of experience for 1997-98 for MPISD, the state, and RESC VIII.

Exhibit 4-21
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State
Average Teacher Salary by Years of Experience
1997-98

	Beginning teachers	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
RESC VIII	\$22,238	\$23,977	\$29,977	\$36,045	\$38,759
MPISD	\$22,496	\$24,201	\$29,089	\$35,654	\$38,846
State	\$24,736	\$26,787	\$30,811	\$37,240	\$42,624

Source: AEIS 1997-98

The salaries of MPISD's most experienced teachers, those with 11 to 20 years and more than 20 years experience, increased by the largest percentages over the last four years (**Exhibit 4-22**).

Exhibit 4-22
MPISD Teacher Average Base Salary by Years of Experience
1994-95 through 1997-98

Years of Experience	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	MPISD Percentage Change over the Period
Beginning teachers	\$20,053	\$20,964	\$20,666	\$22,496	12.2%
1-5 years	\$22,376	\$23,606	\$22,681	\$24,201	8.2%
6-10 years	\$28,271	\$28,889	\$27,978	\$29,089	2.9%
11-20 years	\$30,603	\$33,598	\$34,182	\$35,654	16.5%
More than 20 years	\$31,922	\$35,162	\$37,108	\$38,846	21.7%

Source: AEIS 1994-95 through 1997-98.

Focus group participants indicated that salary issues were causing major morale problems among teachers at all levels. In responding to the written survey, TSPR asked teachers to grade their salary levels. Fifty-nine percent graded them as a "D" or "F," 28 percent as a "C," and only 14 percent as an "A" or "B." Over 50 percent of the teachers at each grade level gave current salaries a "D" or "F."

Houston ISD recently began a program to pay additional stipends for hard-to-fill teaching position, such as those in math, science, and ESL/bilingual. Houston also provides monetary incentives to teachers based on overall school performance by students, individual classroom performance by students, and teacher attendance. Spring ISD created a performance-based pay plan for teachers that allows teachers to earn up to double-digit increases based upon their accomplishing pre-established objectives that contribute to campus and district goal achievement.

Efforts are underway in the Texas Legislature to give teachers a "fully-funded" pay increase. Should this occur, MPISD will still remain behind state and regional averages because other districts also will move their teacher salaries up incrementally. Therefore, it remains important for MPISD to assess the competitive market and adjust salaries accordingly.

Recommendation 28:

Increase teacher compensation to competitive levels to reduce high turnover.

The district should establish this goal as one of its highest priorities to help the district attract new teachers and retain experienced ones.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations conducts a salary survey of other districts in the area with which MPISD competes for teachers.	March - April 1999
2.	Based upon the information from the survey, the deputy superintendent recommends a two to three-year plan to increase the average teacher salary in MPISD and presents it to the superintendent for review and approval.	May 1999
3.	The superintendent reviews the plan, modifies it as necessary, and presents it to the board for approval.	June 1999
4.	The board reviews the plan, modifies it as necessary, approves it, and instructs the superintendent to incorporate the changes into the 1999-2000 budget.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

For cost estimating purposes, the following assumptions are made:

- MPISD will increase the average teacher salary (\$30,535) to the regional average (\$32,013) over a two-year period.
- The number of teachers used for the calculation is 335, which is the number of full time equivalents, and that number remains constant over the five-year estimate.
- The total cost would be \$495,130 ($\$32,013 \text{ regional average teacher salary} - \$30,535 \text{ MPISD average teacher salary} = \$1,478 \times 335 \text{ teachers} = \$495,130$). The cost for the first year will be \$247,565 ($\$495,130 \text{ total cost} / 2 = \$247,565$). Thereafter, the annual cost will be \$495,130.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Increase teacher compensation to competitive levels to reduce high turnover.	(\$247,565)	(\$495,130)	(\$495,130)	(\$495,130)	(\$495,130)

FINDING

Of MPISD's total employees, 142 are over 50 years old (**Exhibit 4-23**), and 33 of those employees will be eligible for full retirement in September 1999 according to the Teachers Retirement System of Texas (TRS).

Exhibit 4-23
MPISD Employees by Age Group
1998-99

Age Group	Total by Age Group	Percentage of Total Employees
61-79 years old	27	3.9%
51-60	115	16.6%
41-50	210	30.3%
31-40	175	25.3%
Under 31	165	23.8%
Total	692	100.0%

Source: MPISD.

TRS administers a defined benefit pension plan for school district employees. Under this plan, the state pays retirees a retirement annuity based on a benefit formula that uses the employee's years of service, multiplied times a benefit rate of 2 percent for each year of service, times the average of the three highest annual salaries.

TRS members are eligible for full or normal retirement at age 65 with five or more years of service, age 60 with 20 or more years of service, or age 50 with 30 or more years of service. Beginning September 1, 1997, TRS members with any combination of age and years of service equal to 80 are eligible to retire, also known as the "Rule of 80." Members also are given the option to retire early with reduced benefits.

The average salary for MPISD teachers with at least 20 years of service is \$38,846, which is slightly above the regional average of \$38,759 for teachers in this experience category. It is significantly above the regional average of \$22,238 for beginning teachers.

Retirement Incentive Plans have been used by private industry and public school districts as a tool to encourage employees to retire at controlled intervals. Retirement incentives are typically one-time payments made by the school district, not the TRS, and are offered for a limited period of time known as a retirement "window." Retirement incentives can benefit

employers by reducing payroll costs, creating a smaller workforce, and providing an opportunity to reorganize staff.

Retirement Incentive Plans take many forms, but some of the most common plans offer cash incentives to retire early. For school districts, the objective of retirement incentive plan is to provide financial incentives for a district's most experienced, highly paid employees to retire. It has been argued that encouraging experienced employees to leave will have a detrimental effect on any school district, while others prefer a more controlled exit of eligible employees. Many public school employees welcome an opportunity for early retirement and a sizable cash bonus after years of dedicated work.

Retirement programs offered by school districts in Texas are unique in that district employees have several options when retiring. District employees may elect to retire from the district but are not obligated to retire from TRS. Rather, they simply take jobs in other school districts in a part or full-time basis. Employees may, however, choose to retire from both the district and TRS.

Several Texas school districts have successfully implemented retirement plans. Some districts have offered lump-sum payments of up to 100 percent of an employee's salary payable in installments over a two- to four-year period. A retirement program has been offered to all eligible employees in Corpus Christi ISD, and 287 employees, including 162 teachers, have participated. Through realized salary savings, the district increased beginning teacher salaries. The sick leave payoff at the time of retirement or termination also was capped. The district anticipates \$12 million in related savings by 2005. Other school districts that have offered retirement plans include Amarillo, Arlington, Friendswood, Memphis, McLean, Spring, and Pasadena.

Districts must carefully consider all aspects of the retirement incentive and weigh the benefits of offering the incentive against the possible negative impacts of losing experienced employees. Districts that are concerned about losing too many key employees too quickly often adjust the retirement package being offered to reduce the number of eligible employees. For example, offering the incentive only to employees with more than 30 years of service with TRS and 12 years of experience in the district may narrow the field of eligible employees to a manageable number.

Recommendation 29:

Implement a retirement incentive plan, and use the savings generated to offset the cost of raising teacher salaries to regional averages.

If MPISD should decide to offer an early retirement incentive plan, it should be made available to all district employees and customized to meet the needs of the district. However, a comprehensive analysis should be performed to understand the impact of the program on the overall climate of the district and the management structure. As noted, serious detrimental effects can occur if all of these changes are not carefully thought out.

For purposes of conservatively estimating the potential financial impact on MPISD, one possible implementation method is presented here to show how this program could work. The plan could be structured as a one-time cash incentive program of 30 to 50 percent of an employee's annual salary; employees taking advantage of the program need not necessarily retire from TRS. MPISD employees could be offered the following retirement options:

- Retire from MPISD and receive the district's retirement incentive only;
- Retire from MPISD and from TRS and receive both the district's retirement incentive and the TRS retirement benefit; or
- Decide against retirement.

Participants in the MPISD plan should not be able to return to work for the district, however, to ensure that critical knowledge is not lost entirely, the plan should not preclude the district from re-employing a retired participant to the extent permitted by the TRS rules of employment applicable to retired employees.

When designing a plan, MPISD administrators should be mindful of all the legal issues surrounding retirement incentives; these issues should be clearly communicated to interested employees as well. In compliance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the plan must be voluntary, and apply to all classes of employees

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, in cooperation with the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, requests samples of retirement plans from the Texas school districts that have successfully implemented incentive plans.	March 1999
2.	The assistant superintendent reviews the list of district employees with creditable service in TRS and determines the appropriate age and length of service criteria for employees to be eligible for the retirement plan.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent, the district's attorney, and the assistant superintendent explore the impact of a retirement plan on overall	April- May

	district operations.	1999
4.	The superintendent presents the findings of its study to the board for discussion and/or approval.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact presented shows what TSPR determined could be saved by offering a retirement plan in MPISD. TSPR assumed that all employees meeting TRS criteria for full retirement would be eligible for the plan and that all positions currently occupied will be refilled. TRS member records show that 33 MPISD employees are eligible for full-retirement as of September 1999.

The average salary of teachers with more than 20 years service, \$38,846, was used as the average salary for eligible employees to be conservative. Lump sum payments, however, would likely be based on each employee's salary base at the end of the 1997-98 school year. Key assumptions in the fiscal estimate include:

- Thirty-three MPISD employees are eligible to participate in the plan.
- The average salary for eligible employees is \$38,846. The average salary of a replacement is the state's 1998-99 minimum salary for a teacher with five years of experience, \$25,380.
- An estimated 60 percent of eligible employees (20 employees) will elect to participate in the plan. Salaries for these employees total \$776,920 (20 employees x \$38,846 = \$776,920).
- Participants will receive a lump sum payment of 50 percent of salary payable in two annual installments of \$9,712 per year per employee ($\$38,846 \times 50 \text{ percent} = \$19,423 / 2 \text{ years} = \$9,712 \text{ per employee per year}$).
- The district's lump sum cost for participants would be \$194,230 per year (20 employees x \$38,846 x 50 percent = \$388,460 / 2 years = \$194,230 per year).
- Twenty new hires will replace retiring employees. (The district, however, should evaluate each position before refilling it.) The district will spend \$507,600 on new hires' salaries (20 new hires x \$25,380 = \$507,600).

MPISD may incur additional costs for accrued sick leave, but this amount should be capped for each employee based on a finite number of days at a reduced daily rate. These costs are not included in this estimate, but should not exceed \$50 per day per employee.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
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Employees accept plan	\$776,920	\$776,920	\$776,920	\$776,920	\$776,920
Lump sum payment to employees accepting plan	(\$194,230)	(\$194,230)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Hire new employees to replace employees accepting plan	(\$507,600)	(\$507,600)	(\$507,600)	(\$507,600)	(\$507,600)
Net Savings	\$75,090	\$75,090	\$269,320	\$269,320	\$269,320

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

B. Salary Administration

FINDING

Until 1997-98, MPISD did not have salary schedules for any employees not included on the state teacher schedule. The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations has created salary schedules for paraprofessionals, hourly employees, and bus drivers.

The paraprofessional and hourly schedule is based upon a combination of total work experience and work experience relevant to a school district position. For example, if a new principal's secretary has 11 years experience as a secretary, and one of those years is as a principal's secretary, then only one year is relevant work experience. Total work experience, other than relevant experience can receive no more than 50 percent consideration when placing a new employee on the salary schedule.

The salary schedule for bus drivers is based upon the numbers of miles driven bus drivers, route, how full the bus is relative to bus capacity, and the tenure of the employee in the district (**Exhibit 4-24**).

Exhibit 4-24
MPISD Bus Driver Salary Schedule

Pay Component	Measure
Mileage (1)	\$1/mile = less than 30 miles
	\$30 = 30-39 miles
	\$31 = 40-49 miles
	\$32 = 56-70 miles
	\$33 = 71-85 miles
	\$34 = 86+ miles
Capacity (2)	Full = full credit
	3/4 full = full credit - 1
	1/2 full = full credit - 2
Tenure (3)	Step 0-1 = \$0

	Step 2-5 = \$200
	Step 6-9 = \$300
	Step 10-14 = \$400
	Step 15-19 = \$500
	Step 20+ = \$750

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

(1) Minimum base pay will be \$20/day.

(2) Full credit refers to daily rate.

(3) Based on MPISD experience only.

The deputy superintendent attempted to address numerous concerns about inequities in pay when setting up these schedules, including: new employees being hired at higher pay level than long-tenured employees; bus drivers with 10 or more years experience who had never received a pay increase; and paraprofessional salaries that were at or less than \$12,000 annually. However, based on comments during employee focus group sessions, the schedules are complex to administer and difficult for employees to understand.

According to standard employee compensation theory, salary schedules for groups of employees should be simple to understand, easy for an administrator or supervisor to communicate to the employee, and easy for the employer to administer. Most of the time, organizations will employ a ranking-to-market schedule that determines what area employers or school districts are paying and sets salary levels at comparable levels. The advantage of this type of schedule is that it is simple to administer and easy to explain.

Published information, such as the annual wage and salary surveys conducted by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, provide a good starting point for identifying hourly pay and salary data.

The district has already budgeted funds to accomplish the transition to the current schedules.

Recommendation 30:

Conduct a market survey and revise the paraprofessional employee, hourly employee, and bus driver salary schedules to a market-based system.

The district should use the budgeted funds to revise the schedules and phase in the results of the market study.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations identifies the market for each type of position within the paraprofessional employee, hourly employee, and bus driver salary schedules.	April 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent researches current market pay for these positions using published data and contact with other employers.	May 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent prepares the recommended schedules using these data and reviews them with the superintendent.	May 1999
4.	The superintendent reviews the recommended schedules, makes changes as necessary, and presents them to the board for approval.	June 1999
5.	The board reviews the schedules, approves them, and instructs the superintendent to include the new schedules in the 1999-2000 budget.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The funds budgeted for pay adjustments should be applied to the new salary levels.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

C. Organization and Management

FINDING

The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations is responsible for most personnel functions and is assisted by a secretary in this role. The deputy superintendent also is responsible for overseeing or directly handling the following functions: facilities construction and renovation projects, security, drug testing, energy management, hearings involving the alternative school, property and casualty insurance, maintenance, student affairs, transportation, and warehouse operations.

Within the personnel function, the deputy superintendent is responsible for creating salary structures and conducting comparisons with other districts and employers, recruiting teachers and other certified personnel, and maintaining and updating all personnel policies and files. The diversity of responsibilities within the job description for the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations affects the amount of time to perform key personnel responsibilities in a thorough manner. Other than the superintendent, there is no one else in the district who has either extensive knowledge or prior experience in personnel management functions.

Districts that have effective personnel or human resource functions employ at least one individual who performs only personnel-related functions and has training and experience in performing key responsibilities (**Exhibit 4-25**). The deputy superintendent is trained in most personnel regulations and is responsible for handling each of the key responsibilities noted below. However, TSPR found that the deputy superintendent does not have time to handle each of these key responsibilities. For example, the district has averaged a 15.2 percent turnover in teachers over the past four years, which means about 50 teachers will leave during 1998-99. Recruiting and interviewing candidates for these positions, both at college and university campuses and at MPISD, requires extensive time. Also, the district faces an increasing shortage of teachers with bilingual and ESL certification, which increases the amount of time and effort necessary to spend in these areas.

Exhibit 4-25
Key Responsibilities of a Personnel Specialist

Area of Responsibility	Description
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Staff placement	Develops and coordinates an on-campus recruitment program to ensure an adequate supply of qualified applicants for professional positions.
	Screens candidates and refers to appropriate departments/campuses for interviews.
	Maintains applicant files and records.
Personnel administration	Develops employee position requirements for the budget and staffing allocations for each campus.
	Conducts in-service training on hiring, termination, and employee grievance procedures.
	Serves as district certification officer and reviews status of all employees on special permits.
	Maintains all active employees files and ensures that all information is in each file.
	Develops salary schedules and job descriptions for each position, conducts annual survey of salaries to determine competitiveness, and conducts periodic reviews of all jobs to ensure accuracy of job descriptions.
	Remains current in the area of personnel administration and law through professional organizations, professional literature, and workshops.

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

Recommendation 31:

Hire a full-time personnel specialist.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board approves the creation of a personnel specialist position.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations advertises the position, screens applicants, and recommends final candidates to the superintendent.	April - June 1999
3.	The superintendent and deputy superintendent interview the finalists and hire personnel specialist.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the average salary of a professional support staff employee, the salary and benefits of the personnel specialist will be \$40,621 (\$32,497 salary plus \$8,124 benefits or 25 percent of salary).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire a personnel specialist.	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)	(\$40,621)

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

D. Employee Benefits

The MPISD employee benefits program includes group health and accident, dental, life and disability, and workers' compensation insurance for all eligible staff members. Employees who work at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month, excluding overtime, are eligible for the plan. The plans are reviewed annually for the type and amount of claims paid, costs, and actuarial reliability.

MPISD's health plan is self-funded with stop loss coverage of \$2,000,000. ProAmerica Managed Care, Inc. is the care provider network used by MPISD. The TPA, Inc. serves as the district's third party administrator in designing and managing the plan and also serves as the claims administrator. The benefit plan is coordinated by the risk manager.

MPISD's has a self-funded employee medical plan, which means that the district maintains a fund from which the employer pays claims costs up to a certain maximum. The program features three plans with varying annual deductibles. A summary of the key plan provisions is provided in **Exhibit 4-26**.

Exhibit 4-26
Summary of MPISD Medical Plan Benefits
1998-99

Type of Service	In-Network	Out-of-Network
Calendar year deductible		
• Plan I	\$300 individual/\$600 family	\$300 individual/\$1,000 family
• Plan II	\$500 individual/\$1,000 family	\$1,000 individual/\$2,000 family
• Plan III	\$750 individual/\$1,500 family	\$1,000 individual/\$2,000 family
Co-share, stoploss maximum (calendar year)		

• Plan I	\$1,000 individual/\$2,000 family	\$2,000 individual/\$4,000 family
• Plan II	\$2,000 individual/\$6,000 family	\$3,000 individual/\$6,000 family
• Plan III	\$2,500 individual/\$5,000 family	\$3,000 individual/\$6,000 family
Hospital services		
Semi-private room and board	80%	60% after per admission deductible and calendar year deductible
Per admission deductible	None	\$250
Non-precertification penalty	None	\$250
Physician services		
Services performed in office	100%; \$20 co-pay	60% after calendar year deductible
Preventive care	100%; \$20 co-pay	60% after calendar year deductible
Allergy testing	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Inpatient visits and surgery	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Maternity care	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Initial OB office visit	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Lab and x-ray		
Procedures that do not require precertification	100%	60% after calendar year deductible
Procedures that do require precertification	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Other professional services		

Outpatient or office surgery	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Emergency room treatment		
Facility charges	80% after \$50 co-pay	
Physician charges	80% after calendar year deductible	
Non-emergency situations		
Emergency room facility charges	80% after \$50 co-pay	60% after \$50 co-pay and calendar year deductible
Emergency room physician charges	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Accidental injury	Deductible waived for medical emergency	
Extended care services		
Skilled nursing facility (calendar year maximum)	80% (\$10,000)	60% after calendar year deductible (\$7,000)
Hospice care (lifetime maximum)	80% (\$20,000)	60% after calendar year deductible (\$14,000)
Home health care (calendar year maximum)	80% (\$10,000)	60% after calendar year deductible (\$7,000)
Mental health care/chemical dependency	Not covered	Not covered
Serious mental illness	Payable as any other illness	Payable as any other illness
Chiropractic care (calendar year maximum)	80% after calendar year deductible (\$300)	60% after calendar year deductible (\$300)
Prescription drug program (\$50 per year deductible)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan I 	\$15 co-pay brand name/\$5 co-pay generic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan II 	\$15 co-pay brand name/\$5 co-pay generic	

• Plan III	\$15 co-pay brand name/\$5 co-pay generic
Prescription mail order program	Co-pays same as prescription drug program

Source: MPISD risk manager.

A fourth option is an alternate plan if an employee's spouse is covered by another plan (**Exhibit 4-27**).

Exhibit 4-27
MPISD Alternate Plan Benefits

Benefit	Description
Per day hospital indemnity benefit	\$150
Vision	
Exam	\$25
Frames	\$50
Lens:	
• Single	\$30
• Bifocals	\$40
• Trifocals	\$55
• Lenticular	\$150
• Contacts	\$125
Dental	
Deductible	\$100
Annual maximum	\$2,500
Lifetime orthodontic maximum	\$2,500
Accident	
Per accident per calendar year	\$200

Source: MPISD risk manager.

MPISD pays \$90 per month into the insurance fund to cover premium costs regardless of the type of coverage selected by the employee (**Exhibit 4-28**).

Exhibit 4-28
MPISD Monthly Premiums for Medical Coverage
1998-99

Plan Type	Total Cost	MPISD Share	Employee Cost
Plan I - \$300 Deductible			
Employee only	\$185	\$90	\$95
Employee and spouse	\$370	\$90	\$280
Employee and children	\$265	\$90	\$175
Employee and family	\$415	\$90	\$325
Plan II - \$500 Deductible			
Employee only	\$160	\$90	\$70
Employee and spouse	\$325	\$90	\$235
Employee and children	\$230	\$90	\$140
Employee and family	\$360	\$90	\$270
Plan III - \$750 Deductible			
Employee only	\$135	\$90	\$45
Employee and spouse	\$330	\$90	\$210
Employee and children	\$205	\$90	\$115
Employee and family	\$325	\$90	\$235
Alternative Plan			
Employee only	\$90	\$90	0

Source: MPISD risk manager.

Exhibit 4-29 compares MPISD's medical premium costs to those of its peer districts. MPISD contributes less for employee health coverage than any of the peer districts surveyed. The employee's contribution for

employee only is the highest, but for family, the cost to employees' coverage is in the middle.

**Exhibit 4-29
MPISD Medical Insurance Compared to Peer Districts
1998-99**

District	Amount of Premium Paid by the District	Net Cost to the Employee				
		Employee Only	Employee and Spouse	Employee and Children	Employee and Family	Alternate Plan
Mt. Pleasant						
• Plan I	\$90	\$95	\$280	\$175	\$325	0
• Plan II	\$90	\$70	\$235	\$140	\$285	0
• Plan III	\$90	\$45	\$210	\$115	\$250	0
Athens	\$135	0	\$152	\$108	\$240	0
Corsicana						
• Plan I	\$154	\$23	\$268	\$234	\$438	None
• Plan II	\$154	0	\$213	\$183	\$362	None
Greenville	\$171	0	\$185	\$122	\$295	0
Kaufman	\$188	0	\$150	\$140	\$274	0
Kilgore	50% of premium	\$62	\$148	\$108	\$179	None
Liberty Eylau	\$125	\$60	\$240	\$180	\$350	None

Terrell	\$120	0	\$210	\$140	\$330	0
Texarkana	\$165	0	\$155	\$120	\$275	None

Source: Telephone survey conducted by TSPR, November 1998.

FINDING

The district changed carriers at the beginning of 1998-99. The primary reason for the change was to reduce the fixed costs of administering the plan by a third-party administrator. The third-party administrator charges an annual administration fee, specified monthly fees (i.e., medical administration, case management, pharmacy), and fees for services such as transplants performed by a participating care provider.

Based upon interviews with the risk manager, the district's recent claims history has resulted in significant year-to-year fluctuations in the funds available in the self-funded plan (**Exhibit 4-30**). Only in the past three years has the annual financial audit provided separate information on the health insurance fund.

Exhibit 4-30
MPIISD Insurance Year-Ending Fund Balance
1995-96 - 1997-98

Year	Ending Fund Balance
1997-98	\$517,828
1996-97	\$143,058
1995-96	\$553,037

Source: Annual financial audits, 1996-1998.

The expenditures associated with the program over the past three years are included in **Exhibit 4-31**. These expenditures represent payments to care providers to satisfy claims and administrative charges associated with managing the program.

Exhibit 4-31
MPIISD Expenditures for Self-Funded Insurance Program
1995-96 - 1997-98

Year	Total Expenditures	Percentage Change
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		from the Prior Year
1997-98	\$831,755	-43.1%
1996-97	\$1,463,723	70.1%
1995-96	\$860,287	N/A

Source: Annual financial audits, 1996-1998

When employees were asked "Health insurance provided by the district meets my needs" on the written TSPR survey, their grades on the current benefits coverage were mixed (**Exhibit 4-32**). Central administration staff were basically satisfied with the current level of benefits with 59 percent indicating they agreed or strongly agreed to the statement and only 17 percent indicating they disagreed or strongly disagreed with it. Sixty-one percent of campus staff also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, but 20 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with it. Teachers responded negatively on the current plans with 33 percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement and only 28 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Exhibit 4-32
Employee Responses Regarding Statement
"Health insurance provided by the district meets my needs"

Response	Teachers	Campus Staff	Central Administration Staff
Strongly agree	3%	2%	46%
Agree	25%	59%	13%
No opinion	35%	15%	13%
Disagree	23%	11%	13%
Strongly disagree	10%	9%	4%
No response/don't know	3%	4%	12%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

Focus group participants, particularly those employees paid by the hour, also were critical of the level of coverage and the high cost to employees.

A number of districts throughout Texas are changing from self-funded to a fully-funded health plan. Conroe and Pasadena ISDs have recently

changed to fully-funded plans due to major fluctuations in year-to-year claims; Ft. Bend and Alief ISDs are considering switching to a fully-funded plan; and Katy ISD rejected switching from a fully-funded plan after receiving bids to go to a self-funded plan that showed their costs would increase by 20 percent per year - 12 percent increase in claims costs and 8 percent in administrative costs. Conroe ISD reduced its costs by 25 percent in the first year it changed to a fully-funded plan, and it has remained at the same level in the two years since then.

As the examples of Conroe and Katy ISDs show, fully-funded plans can offer lower employee premiums, lower fixed costs to administer the plan, and a lower liability level for the district.

Recommendation 32:

Evaluate whether MPISD should change insurance coverage to a fully-funded plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The risk manager solicits information from other districts and insurers on the costs and coverage available in fully-funded plans.	April 1999
2.	The risk manager analyzes the information, develops a cost and coverage comparison, and prepares a report for the superintendent.	May 1999
3.	Based upon the analysis, the superintendent determines whether to pursue a full-funded plan.	May 1999
4.	If the analysis demonstrates that a fully-funded plan would be more beneficial than the self-funded plan, then the risk manager solicits bids from insurers.	June-July 1999
5.	The risk manager receives and evaluates bids and recommends a provider to the superintendent.	August 1999
6.	The superintendent reviews and approves the recommendation and presents it to the board.	August 1999
7.	The board reviews and approves the recommendation, and the superintendent incorporates the costs in the 1999-2000 budget.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The evaluation of a fully-funded plan could be performed by district staff and the district's insurance broker at no cost.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES AND USE MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews facilities use and management in the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) in the following sections:

- A. Facilities Planning and Construction
- B. Maintenance
- C. Custodial Operations
- D. Energy Management

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive facilities, maintenance, and energy management program coordinates all the physical resources of a district. The program must effectively integrate facilities planning with all other aspects of school planning and operate under clearly defined policies and procedures.

The facilities use and management function is responsible for ensuring that district facilities are designed and built in a way that enhances the educational process and meets other needs, such as maintaining equipment in peak operating condition; providing a clean school and working environment; ensuring that facilities comply with local, state, and federal building regulations; and minimizing the district's utility costs.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD owns and operates 13 facilities within the district (**Exhibit 5-1**). Total square footage for all facilities is 796,388.

Exhibit 5-1
MPISD Facilities

Facility	Age (Years)	Square Footage	Capacity	
			Number of Students	Number of Classrooms
Mt. Pleasant High School	34	257,711	1,500	92
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	1	100,029	775	39
Wallace Middle School	29	112,042	850	50

Corprew Intermediate School	47	94,149	750	60
Fowler Elementary School	50	48,042	475	35
Sims Elementary School	49	44,692	440	32
Brice Elementary School	34	42,684	400	29
Child Development Center	New	48,500	375	22
Central Services Building	71	17,320	25 offices, board room, executive room, and community room	N/A
Tax Office	23	4,750	Offices	N/A
Brice Gym	42	12,922	Gymnasium	N/A
Warehouse	71	9,416	Warehouse	N/A
Special Education Building	23	4,131	Offices	N/A
Total		796,388		

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations.

All MPISD facilities are at least 23 years old with the exception of Mt. Pleasant Junior High School and the Child Development Center, which were constructed in 1996-97 and 1997-98, respectively. The fire marshal of the City of Mt. Pleasant cited the district for numerous code violations during a 1997 inspection. Making the needed repairs will cost MPISD \$169,898 (**Exhibit 5-2**). The district is correcting these violations in phases agreed to by the city. Corrective action will be completed by the end of 2001-2002.

**Exhibit 5-2
Code Violations and Costs of Repairs at MPISD Facilities**

Phase/Year	Types of Violations	Estimated Cost of Repairs	Cumulative Estimated Cost of Repairs
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Phase I/1997-98 (completed)	Fire alarm systems, fire lane widening, exit door lights	\$43,667 (actual cost)	\$43,667
Phase II/1998-99	Fire extinguishers and hoses, removal of locking door devices, fire alarms, exit and emergency lighting	\$68,227	\$111,894
Phase III/1999-2000	Door hardware, exit and emergency lighting	\$29,556	\$141,450
Phase IV/2000-01	Door hardware, exit and emergency lighting	\$15,198	\$156,648
Phase V/2001-02	Door hardware	\$13,250	\$169,898

Source: Correspondence date July 28, 1998 from MPISD superintendent to city manager of Mt. Pleasant.

On February 6, 1990, September 22, 1992, and December 15, 1992, MPISD held bond elections to construct new facilities and renovate some existing facilities. The size of the bond packages were \$9,897,956, \$7,000,000, and \$7,000,000, respectively.

In each instance, the voters refused to authorize issuance of additional debt. According to interviews conducted by the review team with community members and responses by focus group participants, the primary reasons for the defeat of the bond issues were:

- Retired persons living on fixed incomes in MPISD did not want to see their taxes raised.
- Many community members believe that new facilities are needed primarily to serve Hispanic students whose parents have been brought in by the Pilgrim's Pride Company to work in their various plants in the area. They did not want to build schools just to serve these students.
- The district did not "sell" the district's facility needs effectively. Several community leaders indicated that the last election was rushed to the community for vote without sufficient information and communication provided to the community.

The district has grown by 5.2 percent since 1993-94 and has added portable classrooms (**Exhibit 5-3**), or constructed or renovated a series of its buildings since that time (**Exhibit 5-4**).

Exhibit 5-3
MPISD Portable Buildings by Campus
1998-99

Facility	Number of Portable Classrooms	Percentage of Classroom Space
Mt. Pleasant High School	0	0
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	2	5.1%
Wallace Middle School	6	12.0%
Corprew Intermediate School	0	0
Sims Elementary School	4	12.5%
Brice Elementary School	4	13.7%
Fowler Elementary School	6	17.1%
Child Development Center	0	0
Total	22	6.1%

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

Exhibit 5-4
MPISD Major Facility Construction and Renovation Projects Since
1995

Location	Type of Renovation	Cost
Fowler Elementary School	Replacement of wooden floor with concrete floor	\$550,000
Fowler Elementary School	Roof replacement	\$70,000
Wallace Middle School	Roof replacement	\$400,000
Mt. Pleasant High School	Roof replacement	\$500,000
Corprew Intermediate School	12 new classrooms, library, cafeteria, and office space	\$2,800,000
Administration Building	Conversion from high school to office space	\$850,000
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	New construction	\$6,000,000
Sims Elementary School	Construction of special programs	\$225,000

	building	
Child Development Center	Renovation of former store	\$3,000,000

Source: Mt. Pleasant ISD.

To pay for these new facilities and renovations, MPISD has used three methods:

- The district entered into a lease purchase agreement with Nations Bank. This agreement allows the district to borrow money at 5.5 percent interest and repay it over a 10-year period. This agreement paid for the Mt. Pleasant Junior High School and the Child Development Center.
- The district used some of its available fund balance for the renovations to Corprew Intermediate School, Central Services Support Building, and Sims Elementary School.
- The district budgeted funds in its maintenance budget to pay for renovations at Fowler Elementary School, Wallace Middle School, Corprew Intermediate School, and Mt. Pleasant High School.

The district has completed these projects using outside contractors as well as MPISD maintenance staff. Whenever a project is determined to be too large for MPISD maintenance personnel to complete, an outside contractor is used. The total costs of contracted services related to facilities construction and renovation projects for 1995-96 through 1997-98 are described in **Exhibit 5-5**. The construction costs in 1995-96 and 1996-97 reflect the building of the junior high school and the addition of classrooms at Sims Elementary School. The construction costs in 1997-98 reflect the building of the Child Development Center.

Exhibit 5-5
MPISD Contracted Services for Facilities Construction and
Renovation Projects
1995-96 through 1997-98

Type of Service	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Roofing/construction	\$257,557	\$16,216	\$326,572
Carpet/lockers	0	0	\$38,332
Electrical/lighting/HVAC	\$22,553	\$921,218	\$75,569
Professional services (e.g., architect)	\$253,131	\$59,202	\$134,854
Construction	\$3,194,599	\$3,428,866	\$2,192,814

Supplies	\$25,347	\$17,997	\$204,753
Landscape/sprinklers	\$238	\$36,189	\$714
Asbestos removal	\$17,707	0	0
Other contracted services	\$12,097	\$17,257	\$756,052
Total	\$3,783,211	\$4,496,945	\$3,729,660

Source: MPISD Business manager.

The district's enrollment projections are compared to actual enrollment data in **Exhibit 5-6** for

1995-96 through 1998-99. The exhibit also includes projections through 2001-2002.

Exhibit 5-6
MPISD Actual and Projected Enrollment
1995-96 through 1999-2000

Year	Projected Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Variance	Percentage Change in Actual Enrollment from Prior Year
1995-96	4,250	4,316	+66	
1996-97	4,274	4,394	+120	1.8%
1997-98	4,311	4,445	+134	1.2%
1998-99	4,501	4,463	-38	0.4%
1999-2000	4,607	-	-	-
2000-01	4,615	-	-	-
2001-02	4,650	-	-	-

Source: Mt. Pleasant ISD.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES AND USE MANAGEMENT

A. Facilities Planning and Construction

FINDING

A facilities needs assessment is conducted periodically by school districts to identify needed construction and facilities improvements and to identify potential code violations; to ensure compliance with new and existing regulations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act; and to establish school educational and operational space guidelines using minimum state standards as a starting point for classrooms and common areas such as cafeterias and libraries.

All asbestos has been removed from school facilities except in the basement of the administration building. The district is in compliance with all other laws governing facilities access except for the code violations noted earlier in this chapter.

MPISD has had two assessments of its facilities needs. The first was performed by a local architect in 1989 and served as the basis of the scope of the construction and renovation projects and costs included in the three bond issues. The second was conducted in 1995 by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), which provided the basis for the recent major renovations and use of portable buildings at each campus. TASB presented its assessment to a facilities task force formed by MPISD. The task force established four priority groups based upon the TASB assessment (**Exhibit 5-7**).

Exhibit 5-7
Priorities of the MPISD Facilities Task Force

Priority	Description
First	Provide facilities for future growth and overcrowding
Second	Removal of portable buildings
	Cost effective/economical solutions
Third	Plumbing systems at capacity
	Future configuration of sixth grade
	Congested areas (e.g., auto/bus loading)
Fourth	Emergency systems

	Library/cafeteria overcrowding
	Campus security
	Aging heating/cooling systems
	Middle school overcrowding
	Inadequate lighting
	Electrical upgrades
	Intercoms
	Counselors' areas

Source: MPISD Facility Plan, 1995 and TASB.

The task force established as the district's top priority the construction of three new schools: a 5th-6th grade school, a 7th-8th grade school, and a K-4th grade school (**Exhibit 5-8**).

Exhibit 5-8
First-Priority Recommendations
MPISD Facilities Task Force

Facility	Estimated Cost
5th-6th grade school	\$5,015,885
7th-8th grade school	\$6,603,300
K-4th grade school	\$5,201,658
Total	\$16,820,843

Source: MPISD Facility Plan, 1995 and TASB.

The construction of the 7th-8th grade school, Mt. Pleasant Jr. High School, has been completed. The district did not construct the other two schools because of a lack of bond money. Instead, it addressed the capacity needs due to overcrowding through a major renovation of Corprew Intermediate School (12 new classrooms), construction of the Child Development Center to move Headstart and pre-K students to that facility, and modifications to the grade levels at each school resulting in three K-2 facilities, and one each for grades 3-4, 5-6, 7-8.

Specific projects in the remaining three priority groups were not identified in the TASB assessment. Instead, the assessment identifies conditions in each school that must be addressed such as wall and foundation cracks,

leaking roofs, carpet needing replacement, and restroom facilities needing repair. Using the priority groupings and this information as a guide, MPISD prepared an annual list of maintenance projects to be completed. For 1998-99, the district identified each project as either a first or second priority (**Exhibit 5-9**). The first priority projects have a total estimated cost of \$582,000, and the second priority projects have a total estimated cost of \$365,200, for a total cost of \$947,200.

Exhibit 5-9
MPISD Maintenance Projects
1998-99

Type of Project	Location/Description	Priority	Estimated Cost	
Roofing	Brice campus	1	\$170,000	
	Sims cafeteria/speech	1	\$10,000	
	Sims classrooms	1	\$170,000	
	Corprew (building C)	1	\$20,000	
	Corprew (gym)	1	\$26,000	
	Corprew (equipment room)	1	\$3,000	
	Wallace (big gym)	1	\$62,000	
	High school walkways	2	\$65,000	
	Sims walkways	2	\$9,500	
	Fowler walkways	2	\$30,000	
	Corprew (east classrooms)	2	\$5,000	
	Wallace (library)	2	\$35,000	
	Wallace (east of gym)	2	\$45,000	
		Subtotal		\$650,500
	Carpet	Wallace (center hall/9 classrooms)	2	\$13,000
Wallace (north wing/8 classrooms)		2	\$10,000	
Wallace (offices/nurse's station)		2	\$4,500	
Fowler (office/room 7)		2	\$1,700	
Brice (office/14 classrooms)		2	\$15,000	
		Subtotal		\$44,200

Air conditioning	Fowler cafeteria	1	\$10,000
	High school snack bar	1	\$5,000
	High school band hall	1	\$3,500
	Districtwide - general	1	\$8,000
	Brice cafeteria	2	\$10,000
	Sims kitchen	2	\$2,500
	Auditorium	2	\$15,000
	Subtotal		\$54,000
Plumbing	Sprinkler system (athletic fields)	2	\$30,000
	Elementary (hot water for bathrooms)	2	\$8,000
	Restroom renovations	2	\$2,000
	Subtotal		\$40,000
Painting	Fowler exterior/interior	1	\$3,000
	Central Services Support Building	1	\$1,500
	Wallace exterior	1	\$1,500
	Subtotal		\$6,000
Miscellaneous	Replacing ceiling tile	1	\$3,500
	Locks for high school lockers	1	\$11,000
	Portable building renovations	1	\$5,000
	Fire marshal compliance plan	1	\$69,000
	Marquee sign for high school	2	\$12,000
	Storage buildings (3)	2	\$12,000
	Public address system at Wallace	2	\$20,000
	Replace restroom partitions at Wallace	2	\$17,000
	Renovate transportation office	2	\$1,000
	Additional parking at the high school	2	\$2,000
Subtotal			\$152,500

Total	Priority 1	1	\$582,000
Total	Priority 2	2	\$365,200
Grand Total			\$947,200

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

In the fall of 1998, MPISD developed a plan for renovating its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems at a cost of \$304,400 over the next two years (**Exhibit 5-10**).

Exhibit 5-10
MPISD Plan for HVAC Renovations

Year	Location	Estimated Cost
1999-2000	Brice Elementary School	\$30,600
	Sims Elementary School	\$38,340
	Fowler Elementary School	\$36,200
	Corprew Intermediate School	\$19,700
	Mt. Pleasant High School	\$47,860
	Career and Technology Building	\$42,300
	Subtotal	\$215,000
2000-2001	Brice Elementary School	\$9,200
	Sims Elementary School	\$3,175
	Fowler Elementary School	\$2,675
	Wallace Middle School	\$1,050
	Mt. Pleasant High School	\$70,000
	Career and Technology Building	\$3,300
	Subtotal	\$89,400
	Total	\$304,400

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has conducted a needs assessment, prioritized construction projects, and identified estimated costs for each project.

FINDING

While MPISD has identified facilities improvement needs and estimated costs each year, it has not developed a facilities master plan for future construction and renovation needs that looks out over a longer period of time. Although the district has responded to critical needs, such as roof replacements, some needs, such as repair of the transportation facility, are not included in any of plans. Several board members indicated that facilities needs were often presented on a "crisis basis," which leaves little room to explore alternatives.

A school district's long-range comprehensive master plan is a compilation of district policies, information, and statistical data which provides a basis for planning educational facilities to meet the changing needs of a community. The master plan becomes the district's policy statement for the allocation of resources and offers potential alternatives for facilities improvements.

A facilities master plan identifies all major repair and/or renovation needs districtwide in a single document. It considers external factors such as community needs, and internal factors such as financing alternatives. It establishes a priority for each project, establishes a timeframe within which the work will be completed, and estimates the costs of the projects.

Each year, the plan is reviewed and updated to reflect changing priorities and events that have occurred. It is an opportunity to involve the community in the breadth of facilities issues and in determining priorities.

When a master plan is initiated, specific individuals are designated to provide leadership and responsibility for the plan's development and implementation. A facilities committee often directs the planning process, and includes: community leaders, the superintendent, instructional services representatives, business services representatives, principals, teachers, and classified personnel such as maintenance and cafeteria supervisors. The planning committee functions as a management group with individual responsibilities specified. This process ensures that there is a total staff and community involvement in the plan development.

Recommendation 33:

Develop a long -range facilities master plan.

The district should establish a facilities committee to review the most recent facilities needs assessments, work completed since the assessments, and priorities developed by the staff. The committee should have 25-30 members including MPISD administrators, teachers, and maintenance

staff and members of the community representing each of the eight schools. The plan should be a formal document taken to the board for review and approval.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board of trustees establishes a committee and nominates citizens from across the community to participate.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent selects MPISD staff to serve on the committee.	March 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations serves as support to the committee and schedules the initial meeting.	March 1999
4.	The committee tours all facilities, prepares a priority list of facilities needs and holds meetings at each school to gather feedback from parents and residents.	April-June 1999
5.	The committee includes community input in its recommendations and combines the priorities into a recommended master plan.	July 1999
6.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations provides cost data for each recommended item and recommends a schedule for accomplishing the plan based upon projected financial capabilities of the district.	July 1999
7.	The superintendent reviews the plan and recommends approval to the board.	July 1999
8.	The board reviews the plan, makes modifications, approves the overall plan, and directs the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations to initiate implementation of year-one items.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The development of the master plan can be accomplished using staff and community members and will not require additional resources.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES AND USE MANAGEMENT

B. Maintenance

CURRENT SITUATION

The Maintenance Department reports to the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and is headed by a supervisor. Other positions in the department include the HVAC technicians (2), a plumber, a pest control/environmental technician who also functions as a general assistant, electricians (2), a carpenter, a small engine mechanic, a painter, and grounds maintenance personnel (2). The district added an electrician and an HVAC technician at the beginning of the 1998-99 year. MPISD is still looking for a master plumber.

For each craft, the maintenance supervisor put together a preventive maintenance schedule by campus. The schedule includes all major equipment on each campus, the required work that needs to be completed during the year, and an estimated time for completing the work.

The operating expenditures for the Maintenance Department for 1997-98 were \$578,400, including salaries, materials, and contracted services. This is a 16 percent increase from the 1995-96 level of \$498,666.

The operating expenditures for the maintenance and janitorial functions (function 51) for 1997-98 were \$2,139,027 (**Exhibit 5-11**). Expenditures have increased 13.1 percent over the past three years.

Exhibit 5-11
MPISD Maintenance and Janitorial (Function 51) Budget
1995-96 through 1997-98

Operating Expense	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change
Salaries, wages, overtime, and benefits	\$943,552	\$971,979	\$1,098,547	16.4%
Contracted services	\$680,350	\$688,800	\$730,600	7.4%
Materials and supplies	\$173,365	\$165,800	\$231,100	33.3%
Total Function 51	\$1,890,502	\$1,907,779	\$2,139,027	13.1%

Source: Public Education Information Management System data.

FINDING

MPISD maintains more total square footage than any of the peer districts that responded to a telephone survey by the review team (**Exhibit 5-12**). Each maintenance staff member in MPISD maintains an average of 66,366 square feet.

**Exhibit 5-12
MPISD Maintenance Function Compared to Peer School Districts
1996-97**

	Mt. Pleasant	Corsicana	Greenville	Paris	Liberty Eylau	Texarkana
Size						
Students	4,444	5,046	5,299	3,878	2,706	5,298
Facility square footage	796,388	560,000	753,486	N/A	505,200	N/A
Expense						
Staff cost	\$971,979	\$889,612	\$1,324,550	\$744,680	\$564,635	\$1,488,364
Contract services	\$688,800	\$1,017,027	\$1,316,907	\$788,800	\$972,270	\$1,084,844
Materials	\$165,800	\$189,150	\$192,500	\$230,950	\$159,718	\$524,604
Total 51	\$1,907,779	\$2,178,039	\$3,007,640	\$1,805,555	\$1,769,323	\$3,322,517
Staff	12	10	17	8	8	23
Number of facilities	13	14	12	10	7	15
Square footage per staff member	66,366	56,000	44,323	N/A	63,150	N/A

Source: WCL Enterprises.

According to industry experts, the standard formula for determining the appropriate number of mechanics or technicians for a facility ranges from 40,000 square feet per skilled craftsman for old facilities to 60,000 square

feet for new facilities. By the 40,000-square-foot yardstick, MPISD could justify having 19 skilled maintenance workers but only employs 12.

The Maintenance Department budget has funded major renovations of a number of facilities, including: replacement of roofs at Sims and Brice Elementary Schools and Corprew Intermediate School; replacement of metal doors at Wallace Middle School; new panic bars on the doors of all MPISD schools; and major renovation of cafeterias at Sims, Fowler, and Brice Elementary Schools. The work was completed by MPISD maintenance employees.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has maintained its facilities in a cost-effective manner.

FINDING

MPISD completed wiring its wide area computer network (WAN) in mid-1998. The WAN connects all MPISD schools and the Central Support Services Building on one network.

Up until that time, the Maintenance Department was using a manual work order system that was not organized and did not allow staff to track preventive maintenance, labor costs, or materials costs by location. The work orders had been written out on available sheets of paper and were neither tracked nor recorded.

With the implementation of the WAN, the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations requested the Districtwide Technology Department to develop software to automate the work order system and use it on the WAN. The software was prepared, and now a work order is generated on each request, numbered, and logged into the system with a scheduled time for completion. A principal can access the system to see when a submitted work is scheduled and whether there is any delay. Each work order tracks labor hours and costs, contracted services, materials and supplies costs, and preventive maintenance by location and by piece of equipment.

COMMENDATION

MPISD used its technology capabilities to track and maintain key information on equipment and facilities.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES AND USE MANAGEMENT

C. Custodial Operations

Custodial duties must be coordinated with the schools so that the work supports the educational programs with a minimum of disturbance to pupils and other school personnel. There are many custodial tasks that need to be performed on a regular basis, including:

- Regulating the heating and/or air conditioning equipment as required.
- Unlocking doors, opening windows for ventilation, and turning on lights.
- Setting up rooms for special activities.
- Cleaning restroom facilities, replacing all commodities, and making sure dispensers work properly.
- Cleaning classrooms, teachers' lounges and other areas.
- Performing special tasks within the classrooms based upon teacher requests.
- Moving furniture.
- Trash disposal.
- Locking doors and gates, closing windows, turning off lights, etc., to school buildings and grounds.

Duties of a weekly, monthly, or quarterly nature should be defined and scheduled. Tasks, which may be included within this classification, include:

- Cleaning interior walls.
- Waxing floors and cleaning carpeting.
- Washing windows and blinds and arranging for the cleaning of draperies.
- Resurfacing floors.

CURRENT SITUATION

Custodians report directly to the principal at the school where they work. All custodians work during the daytime, and materials and supplies are purchased centrally and distributed to each campus. **Exhibit 5-13** shows the number of custodians assigned to each campus and the schedules at each campus.

Exhibit 5-13
MPISD Custodians by Campus
1998-99

Campus	Square Footage	Number of Custodians	Work Schedule
Mt. Pleasant High School	257,711	11	Supervisor opens facility at 5:15 am and last custodian leaves at 5:00 pm
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	100,029	6	Supervisor opens facility at 5:15 am and last custodian leaves at 5:00 pm
Wallace Middle School	112,042	5	1st custodian arrives at 6:30 am; last custodian leaves at 6:30 pm
Corprew Intermediate School	94,149	5	1st custodian arrives at 7:00 am; last custodian leaves at 6:30 pm
Fowler Elementary School	48,042	3	1st custodian arrives at 5:00 am; last custodian leaves at 9:30 pm
Sims Elementary School	44,692	3	1st custodian arrives at 6:00 am; last custodian leaves at 5:00 pm
Brice Elementary School	42,684	3	1st custodian arrives at 6:00 am; last custodian leaves at 5:30 pm

Source: MPISD deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations.

The custodians at each campus report to the principal. The duties of custodians may vary slightly from campus to campus based upon the priorities determined by the principal. **Exhibit 5-14** describes the key duties of the custodians at every campus.

Exhibit 5-14
Key Duties of MPISD Custodians
1998-99

Position	Key Duties
Custodian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for keeping building and grounds neat

supervisor	<p>and clean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make observations to identify safety hazards • Open and close the school • Regulate HVAC • Maintain work schedule of custodians
Custodian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain cleaning schedule • Maintain lawn, shrubbery, and playground • Maintain the stadium • Maintain an inventory of supplies • Move furniture

Source: MPISD custodial job descriptions.

Expenditures for custodial operations in 1997-98 were \$664,670, including salaries, supplies, and contracted services. Custodial costs have risen almost 20 percent in the last three years, primarily in personnel costs.

FINDING

Maintenance personnel and employees who participated in the focus groups said they did not feel the MPISD facilities are kept clean. They said trash is left overnight in some classrooms and in trash cans on campuses, food is left in open containers on desks and in lounges, and in some cases urine has been left sitting overnight in commodes. Focus group attendees also said that some facilities have been infested with rodents and other pests.

The written survey administered by the review team asked campus staff to respond to the statement "Schools are kept clean and well maintained" and asked teachers to grade the "Cleanliness of your classroom and school." Sixty-one percent of campus staff agreed or strongly agreed with the statement while 53 percent of teachers gave cleanliness of their rooms and schools an "A" or a "B" grade (**Exhibit 5-15**).

At the same time, 26 percent of campus staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, and 22 percent of the teachers graded the facilities as a "D" or an "F."

Exhibit 5-15
Campus Staff Evaluation of the Statement:
"Schools are kept clean and well maintained" and
Teacher Grades for the Statement:
"Cleanliness of your classroom and school"

Statement Response	Campus Staff	Grade	Teachers
Strongly Agree	4%	A	26%
Agree	57%	B	27%
No opinion	7%	C	25%
Disagree	20%	D	13%
Strongly disagree	6%	F	9%
Don't know/no response	6%	Don't know/no response	0

Source: TSPR survey results.

Cleaning is inhibited by the fact that it is performed during daytime hours while teachers and students occupy the facilities. In California, the State Department of Education has developed a guide for school district, entitled *Business Services Guide*, which provides recommended procedures in all operational areas of a district excluding instruction. In the custodial area, the procedures recommend limited daytime use of custodial personnel and, instead, recommended custodial work schedules that emphasize late afternoon and evening work hours. According to the guide, daytime cleaning limits the custodians' ability to thoroughly clean certain areas or take the time necessary to complete time-consuming tasks. Effective cleaning is much more difficult under these circumstances.

Many school districts assign custodians based upon specific square footage allocations along with the type of surfaces and areas to be cleaned. The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), using widely accepted industry standards, has developed cleaning guidelines or standards for schools that a district can tailor to its needs depending upon the type of facility, facility use, and types of surfaces to be cleaned (**Exhibit 5-16**). These standards identify the type of facility, the daily use, the types of surfaces to be cleaned, and an estimate of the time necessary to complete each task.

Exhibit 5-16
Examples of Recommended Custodial Work Standards
Established by the Association for School Business Officials

Space	Service	Unit Measure	Work Rate Time
Classrooms (average size)	routine clean	850 sq. ft.	24 minutes
Offices - resilient	routine clean	1,000 sq. ft.	24 minutes

floor			
Offices - carpet	routine clean	1,000 sq. ft.	24 minutes
Floors	dust mop	1,000 sq. ft.	12 minutes
	damp mop	1,000 sq. ft.	20 minutes
	spray buff - daily	1,000 sq. ft.	20 minutes
	spray buff - weekly	1,000 sq. ft.	40 minutes
	spray buff - monthly	1,000 sq. ft.	120 minutes
	light furniture scrub	1,000 sq. ft.	240 minutes
	medium furniture scrub	1,000 sq. ft.	300 minutes
	heavy furniture scrub	1,000 sq. ft.	400 minutes
Bathrooms	3 or less commodes, urinals, and wash basins	each	4.5 minutes
	more than 3	each	3.0
Stairs	damp mop	1 flight	12 minutes
	wet mop	1 flight	35 minutes
	hand scrub	1 flight	48 minutes
	dust handrails	1 flight	2 minutes
	dust treads	1 flight	6 minutes
Walls	wash	1,000 sq. ft.	210 minutes
	wash heavy soil	1,000 sq. ft.	290 minutes
Blinds	dust	each	15 minutes
	damp dust	each	30 minutes
	wash	200 sq. ft.	340 minutes
Windows - single pane	wash	1,000 sq. ft.	240 minutes
Windows - multi- pane	wash	1,000 sq. ft.	320 minutes
Light fixtures - fluorescent	dust	4 ft.	5 minutes
Light fixtures - egg crate	wash	4 ft.	40 minutes
Light fixtures - open	wash	4 ft.	20 minutes

Light fixtures - incandescent	dust	each	5 minutes
Light fixtures - incandescent	wash	each	15 minutes

Source: Custodial Methods and Procedures Manual, ASBO.

According to ASBO's standards, custodial staffing should be based upon an expected average productivity of 2,500 square feet per staff-hour of work or 20,000 square feet during a typical 8-hour cleaning period. The type of flooring, size of storage areas, age of buildings and other variables could reduce the square feet per staff hour of a facility. Applying this formula in MPISD by campus results in a total of 35 custodians or one less than the current total of 36 (**Exhibit 5-17**).

Exhibit 5-17
ASBO Recommended Number of Custodians Per Campus

Campus	Square Footage	Current Number Of Custodians	Recommended Number Of Custodians
Mt. Pleasant High School	257,711	11	13
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	100,029	6	5
Wallace Middle School	112,042	5	6
Corprew Intermediate School	94,149	5	5
Fowler Elementary School	48,042	3	2
Sims Elementary School	44,692	3	2
Brice Elementary School	42,684	3	2
Total		36	35

Some districts operate two custodial shifts to improve productivity. Skeletal crews are used during school hours to provide support for essential items and immediate cleaning needs. Floating crews perform major work after hours when students and faculty are not present. Since cleaning is more efficient, custodial overtime can be eliminated.

Recommendation 34:

Evaluate custodial cleaning areas and eliminate overtime for custodians by establishing two custodial shifts.

The district should evaluate custodial responsibility by facility to ensure maximum effectiveness. Two custodial shifts should be created. The daily skeletal crews should be available during school hours for essential and immediate cleaning needs that may arise. The floating crews should handle most heavy cleaning during work schedules when school is not in session. This should increase productivity since crews do not need to clean around students and teachers. As a result, custodians should no longer need to work any overtime hours.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs each principal to evaluate the cleaning areas and schedules of custodians using ASBO recommendations.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent eliminates all custodial overtime through a districtwide policy.	June 1999
3.	The principals and the lead custodian at each campus redesign the cleaning areas and restructure the work schedules to shift primary cleaning time to after-school hours.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating custodial overtime pay will save \$21,500 per year based on 1997-98 figures.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Evaluate custodial cleaning areas and eliminate overtime for custodians.	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500	\$21,500

Chapter 5

FACILITIES AND USE MANAGEMENT

D. Energy Management

FINDING

The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations serves as the district's energy manager. He is paid an additional \$9,000 per year to provide this service, usually on the weekends or evenings. In that role, the deputy superintendent administers the program, maintains records and data, monitors compliance, conducts regular audits of facilities, and reviews billings for accuracy.

MPISD began its energy management program in 1991 when it first contracted with Energy Education. The focus of the district's program is educating people of the importance of turning off devices or lights when not in use.

Since the program's inception, MPISD has added hundreds of computers in classrooms and labs, networked the entire district, purchased new walk-in freezers at each campus, added portable buildings, added more than 40 new utility meters and additional air conditioning and heating units, and completed renovations at several facilities.

In 1997, the district upgraded its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems at the high school and middle school. Work at the middle school also included a lighting retrofit. MPISD entered into a performance contract with a vendor, Control Systems International, that has installed equipment to monitor and control building temperatures and has enabled MPISD to lower its utility costs sufficiently to pay for the new system. Upcoming lighting retrofits at the intermediate and high schools scheduled for this year are guaranteed by contract to save the district an additional \$36,000 per year in the future.

The district has a two-year plan to improve its HVAC system at several schools (**Exhibit 5-10**). District officials have indicated that performance contracting will be explored to guarantee energy savings for those projects.

The utility costs for each of the cost centers included in the program are included in **Exhibit 5-18** for the past three years.

Exhibit 5-18
MPISD Utility Costs By Cost Center
1995-96 - 1997-98

Cost Center	Annual Utility Costs		
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Mt. Pleasant High School	\$210,635	\$193,037	\$198,986
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	N/A	\$22,004	\$75,773
Wallace Middle School	\$64,978	\$63,526	\$55,736
Corprew Intermediate School	\$72,046	\$85,643	\$69,592
Brice Elementary School	\$26,297	\$24,935	\$26,481
Fowler Elementary School	\$37,933	\$36,207	\$38,380
Sims Elementary School	\$31,101	\$31,201	\$32,663
Central Support Services Building	\$14,267	\$14,822	\$15,264
Special Education Building	\$3,634	\$3,620	\$4,635
Tiger Stadium	\$13,056	\$16,615	\$9,748
Mt. Pleasant Security Lights	\$3,856	\$3,854	\$3,852
Child Development Center	N/A	\$N/A	\$6,156
Warehouse	\$16,620	\$6,479	\$6,880

Source: MPISD records.

Energy experts estimate the appropriate level for school district energy costs per square foot at \$1 or less. For 1997-98, the utility cost per square foot averaged \$0.72 (**Exhibit 5-19**). Considering the age of the facilities, this is a remarkably low total.

Exhibit 5-19
MPISD Utility Costs Per Square Foot
1997-98

Facility	Square Footage	Utility Cost	Cost Per Square Foot
Mt. Pleasant High School	257,711	\$198,986	\$0.77
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	100,029	\$75,773	\$0.76

Wallace Middle School	112,042	\$55,736	\$0.50
Corprew Intermediate School	94,149	\$69,592	\$0.74
Fowler Elementary School	48,042	\$26,481	\$0.55
Sims Elementary School	44,692	\$38,380	\$0.86
Brice Elementary School	42,684	\$32,663	\$0.77
Central Support Services Building	17,320	\$15,264	\$0.88
Special Education Building	4,131	\$4,635	\$1.12
Warehouse	9,416	\$6,880	\$0.73
Total	730,216	\$524,390	\$0.72

Source: MPISD records.

MPISD uses the Fast Accounting System for Energy Reporting (FASER)/Baseline Cost Avoidance Energy Management System to analyze its utility consumption and cost. Since 1995-96, MPISD has avoided \$534,055 in energy costs or an average of \$178,000 per year (**Exhibit 5-20**). Cost avoidance is determined by applying the current utility rate schedule to the base year consumption of energy, i.e., the year prior to establishing an energy management program. This baseline is then used to determine the overall cost avoidance in future years. This cost avoidance has been accomplished through planning and organizing an effective program, maintaining thorough records and data, monitoring compliance with program guidelines, conducting routine audits of facilities, ensuring proper rate schedules and accurate billings, requesting appropriate refunds, and providing feedback on the success of the program.

Exhibit 5-20
MPISD Utility Cost Avoidance
1996-96 -1997-98

Year	Cost Avoidance
1997-98	\$212,425
1996-97	\$184,692
1995-96	\$136,938

Source: MPISD.

COMMENDATION

The district has established an innovative energy management program that has successfully reduced costs.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews all financial operations of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) in the following areas:

- A. Organization and Staffing
- B. Financial Reporting
- C. Financial Management Practices
- D. Budgeting
- E. Business Technology
- F. Public Facility Corporation
- G. Internal Controls

BACKGROUND

Successful financial management operations ensure that a school district receives all available revenue from the state and federal governments; maintain a track record of sound financial decisions and adequate and equitable budget allocations; issue timely, accurate, and informative reports on the district's financial position; maintain adequate internal controls; employ a skilled, well-trained staff; and maintain a consistent record of accurate accounting procedures and reports.

CURRENT SITUATION

Almost two-thirds of MPISD property value is designated as business use compared to 45.9 percent on average for other districts in Regional Education Service Center (RESC) VIII and 40.8 percent on average for the state. MPISD has much less residential property value than the state, peer district, and regional averages (**Exhibit 6-1**).

Exhibit 6-1
MPISD, RESC VIII, State and Peer District Property Values
by Category as a Percentage of Total Property Value
1997-98

District/ Grouping	Business	Residential	Land	Oil and Gas	Other
Mt. Pleasant	62.6%	26.6%	9.5%	1.1%	0.3%
Texarkana	54.1%	40.9%	4.7%	0.0%	0.4%
Corsicana	51.6%	39.2%	8.8%	0.1%	0.3%

Greenville	50.3%	40.6%	8.8%	0.0%	0.4%
Kilgore	46.3%	36.7%	9.9%	6.6%	0.5%
RESC VIII	45.9%	33.9%	17.4%	2.2%	0.7%
Paris	44.1%	53.2%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Terrell	42.8%	37.0%	18.5%	0.1%	1.7%
State	40.8%	46.7%	7.4%	4.6%	0.5%
Liberty-Eylau	39.9%	41.1%	14.0%	2.7%	2.3%
Athens	39.5%	40.6%	18.3%	0.8%	0.8%
Kaufman	21.6%	40.4%	33.8%	0.0%	4.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

In 1997-98, Texas school districts received an average of 47 percent of their funds from local property taxes and 45.2 percent from the state. In MPISD, 50.2 percent of revenues come from local property taxes and 42.6 percent from the state. The averages for the region are 37.7 and 54.4 percent, respectively (**Exhibit 6-2**). Other local and intermediate sources of funding include interest earnings, rental of facilities and all local sources of funding other than property taxes.

Exhibit 6-2
MPISD, RESC VIII, State, and Peer District
Sources of Budgeted Revenue as a Percentage of Total Budgeted
Revenue
1997-98

District/ Grouping	Local Property Tax	Other Local And Intermediate	State	Federal
Texarkana	54.2%	3.9%	36.2%	5.6%
Mt. Pleasant	50.2%	3.8%	42.6%	3.4%
State	47.0%	4.4%	45.2%	3.3%
Greenville	43.5%	5.4%	47.1%	4.0%
Athens	42.3%	4.3%	50.5%	2.9%
Corsicana	39.1%	4.2%	52.7%	4.0%
Kilgore	38.0%	15.5%	43.7%	2.8%

RESC VIII	37.7%	4.6%	54.4%	3.4%
Terrell	34.6%	3.3%	57.7%	4.3%
Paris	33.4%	4.2%	57.7%	4.7%
Kaufman	28.4%	4.2%	64.5%	2.9%
Liberty-Eylau	26.2%	3.2%	65.6%	5.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

Over the past three years, local revenue as a source of funds for MPISD has fluctuated between 50.1 and 54.6 percent of total revenues. At the same time, state revenue has increased from 40.2 to 42.6 percent of total revenues (**Exhibit 6-3**).

Exhibit 6-3
MPISD Sources of Revenue as a Percentage of Total Revenue
1995-96 - 1997-98

Source of Revenue	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget
Local property tax	50.1%	54.6%	50.2%
Other local and intermediate	5.8%	3.9%	3.8%
State	40.2%	38.3%	42.6%
Federal	3.9%	3.2%	3.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Compared to peer districts, MPISD has the second highest tax rate and the second highest value per student (**Exhibit 6-4**).

Exhibit 6-4
MPISD Tax Rate and Value per Student Compared to Peer Districts
1997-98

District	Tax Rate	Value per Student
Paris	\$1.514	\$115,780
Mt. Pleasant	\$1.492	\$168,313

Kilgore	\$1.485	\$152,544
Greenville	\$1.470	\$155,502
Athens	\$1.470	\$148,059
Corsicana	\$1.469	\$131,742
Kaufman	\$1.463	\$93,191
Texarkana	\$1.449	\$192,944
Terrell	\$1.410	\$137,855
Liberty Eylau	\$1.323	\$97,623

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98.

On the expenditure side, **Exhibit 6-5** shows how MPISD budgeted funds were distributed in 1997-98 compared to the region and the state averages. MPISD is similar to regional and state averages in most categories. However, MPISD's debt service costs are 8.8 percent of their total expenditures, which is higher than the state and regional averages. During the review of the financial statements for MPISD, the review team noted that the district is paying for its facilities through a Public Facility Corporation, which in essence is a loan. Most school districts in Texas finance facilities through the issuance of bonds.

Exhibit 6-5
MPISD, RESC VIII, and State Expenditures by Function
as a Percentage of Total Expenditures
1997-98

Function	Mt. Pleasant	Percent	RESC VIII	Percent	State	Percent
Instruction	\$11,833,212	52.6%	\$160,061,147	53.9%	\$11,245,811,208	51.8%
Instructional related services	536,034	2.4%	\$6,272,320	2.1%	\$562,761,247	2.6%
Instructional leadership	93,070	0.4%	\$2,120,054	0.7%	\$265,584,022	1.2%
School leadership	1,134,479	5.0%	\$14,943,595	5.0%	\$1,137,476,933	5.2%
Support services - student	497,028	2.2%	\$8,867,082	3.0%	\$849,752,434	3.9%
Student transportation	458,300	2.0%	\$6,351,985	2.1%	\$550,716,637	2.5%
Food services	1,020,700	4.5%	\$15,691,324	5.3%	\$1,088,906,943	5.0%

Co-curricular/extracurricular activities	727,220	3.2%	\$10,017,254	3.4%	\$490,126,870	2.3%
Central administration	744,800	3.3%	\$13,178,140	4.4%	\$801,049,679	3.7%
Plant maintenance and operations	1,924,900	8.6%	\$27,706,003	9.3%	\$2,183,072,112	10.1%
Security and monitoring services	49,600	0.2%	\$293,162	0.1%	\$103,877,919	0.5%
Data processing services	216,496	1.0%	\$2,348,724	0.8%	\$186,149,016	0.9%
Total operating expenditures	\$19,235,839	85.5%	\$267,850,790	90.2%	\$19,465,285,020	89.6%
Debt service	1,987,179	8.8%	\$15,829,745	5.3%	\$1,531,985,683	7.1%
Capital outlay	1,282,806	5.7%	\$13,385,538	4.5%	\$724,564,393	3.3%
Total non-operating expenditures	\$3,269,985	14.5%	\$29,215,283	9.8%	\$2,256,550,076	10.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98

On a per student basis over the past three years, expenditures have decreased more than five percent (**Exhibit 6-6**). Instruction and instructional leadership spending has decreased 7.19 percent or \$208 per student. Non-operating expenditures, capital outlay and debt service, have decreased over 23 percent, or \$267 per student, during this same period.

Exhibit 6-6
MPISD Expenditures Per Student
1995-96 - 1997-98

Expenditure Category	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budget	Percentage of Change over the Period
Instruction and instructional leadership	\$2,892	\$2,492	\$2,684	-7.19%
School leadership	\$208	\$209	\$255	22.60%
Central administration	\$246	\$161	\$168	-31.71%
Other operating	\$1,027	\$1,077	\$1,222	18.99%
Total operations	\$4,373	\$3,939	\$4,329	-1.01%

Total non-operations	\$959	\$873	\$736	-23.27%
Total per student	\$5,332	\$4,812	\$5,065	-5.01%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Organization and Staffing

CURRENT SITUATION

The financial management of MPISD is handled by the business office and is directed by the business manager who reports to the superintendent. Other positions include the purchasing agent, risk management clerk, payroll clerk, fixed assets clerk, accounts payable clerk, and data processing agent who acts as the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator. The district also has two part-time students who come in periodically in the late afternoons to assist with filing and data entry in the various business office areas.

The position responsibilities of business office staff are shown following in **Exhibit 6-7**.

Exhibit 6-7
MPISD Business Office Responsibilities by Position

Position	Responsibilities
Business manager	1. Oversees general operations of business office
	2. Maintains general ledger (monthly and annual closing of books)
	3. Handles cash and investment transactions (investment officer)
	4. Coordinates annual audit
	5. Oversees the distribution of all monthly payroll checks to campus locations
	6. Reviews and adjusts annual budgets
	7. Provides technical assistance to business office staff
	8. Performs special projects for superintendent
Purchasing agent	1. Maintains purchasing files, including bidding information and quotations received for goods and services
	2. Processes and controls all purchase orders and works

		closely with vendors
	3.	Assists in coordinating new facility construction and renovations
	4.	Analyzes purchasing options and bids
	5.	Suggests best practices for purchasing goods and services
Risk Management Clerk	1.	Works closely with the district's payroll clerk and third-party administrators to coordinate employee health insurance and other benefit programs
	2.	Coordinates workers' compensation coverage
	3.	Posts disbursement transactions from third-party administrators for benefit programs to general ledger
	4.	Administers property and casualty insurance coverage
	5.	Assists in analyzing cost benefits of various plans for all district risk coverages
Payroll Clerk	1.	Handles all activities associated with running the monthly payrolls
	2.	Works closely with the risk management clerk on employee benefit program participation
	3.	Works closely with the data processing agent on the monthly payroll processing and related tax reports
	4.	Has daily interaction with all employees and campus administrators
	5.	Implements new hire information in the computerized pay system and other approved pay changes based on approval of the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations who oversees human resources
	6.	Changes pay rates in the pay system (and can without approval of deputy superintendent)
	7.	Reconciles certain district bank accounts under supervision of the district's business manager
	8.	Oversees use of check signing machine for general disbursements processed by the accounts payable and

		fixed assets clerks
Fixed Assets Clerk	1.	Maintains all fixed assets records
	2.	Prints all general disbursement checks for issuance under the supervision of the accounts payable clerk twice a week
	3.	Maintains general ledger and related accounting records and reconciles cash account for the Titus County Education District for which the district acts as successor-in-interest
	4.	Maintains warehouse inventory records
	5.	Performs general assistance activities in the business office under the supervision of the business manager and other clerks
Accounts Payable Clerk	1.	Receives all purchase orders and other purchase requests from other areas of the district
	2.	Checks account coding and makes sure that budget amounts are available before forwarding to the superintendent or deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations for approval
	3.	Approved purchase orders and other purchase requests are then forwarded to the purchasing agent for processing
	4.	Matches all receiving information to invoices before processing disbursements to vendors and makes sure that all invoices are approved by appropriate parties before actual payment of the bills
	5.	Forwards approved bills for payment to fixed assets clerk who prints all general disbursement checks twice a week at least three weeks out of the month
	6.	Oversees use of check signing machine for payroll checks processed by the payroll clerk
Data Processing Agent (PEIMS Coordinator)	1.	Acts as district's technical support person on RSCCC financial system supported locally by Region VIII

	2.	Acts as district's PEIMS coordinator
	3.	Works closely with the payroll clerk on the monthly payroll processing and related tax reports
	4.	Assists business manager in overseeing the distribution of all monthly payroll checks to campus locations
	5.	Prints all payroll checks and assists in preparing checks for delivery to campus locations
	6.	Administers and prepares all travel advances for district employees
	7.	Assists business manager on special projects and routine operations when needed

Source: MPISD

FINDING

On paper, the business office is organized effectively. Based upon interviews with business office personnel, however, the business office does not function as the organization chart indicates.

The business office's organizational chart shows clear lines of authority and an appropriate chain-of-command. The review team found instances, however, where business practices did not follow the organizational chart. These informal business practices lead to duplication of effort and overlapping responsibilities. For instance, the accounts payable clerk, the purchasing agent, the business manager, the superintendent, and the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations all performed similar processing and control activities in the purchasing function. In addition, several business office staff members reported routinely to the superintendent instead of the business manager on various matters.

The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations' business activities sometimes duplicates or overlaps the roles of the superintendent and business manager. The deputy superintendent reviews all purchase orders, is named as an investment officer, and has check signing authority but does not sign checks routinely.

Recommendation 35:

Clarify roles and reporting responsibilities of business office staff, and delegate appropriate responsibilities to management personnel and staff.

Duplication of effort at all levels of the organization should be eliminated. The responsibility for achieving established business and financial objectives should be assigned to the business manager. All business office employees should report directly to the business manager.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board and superintendent review organizational structure and define the roles and responsibilities of business office staff.	June 1999
2.	The board and superintendent clarify organizational reporting relationships; authority is assigned to the business manager and business office staff.	July 1999
3.	The superintendent and business manager establish objectives for business office staff, and procedural routines for the business manager and business office staff are updated.	July 1999
4.	The board approves revised business office organizational structure and the revised structure is implemented by the superintendent and business manager.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

The district's 1997-98 training budget for business office staff is included in the administrative travel budget. Based on interviews with the business manager, there is no formal continuing education programs for business office staff, however, all business office staff have the opportunity to attend annual training sessions pertinent to their functions. Many of these staff training sessions are held by RESC VIII and the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO). Consequently, MPISD business office staff have access to continuing education seminars and training programs that help them meet their job performance objectives. The business manager and data processing agent attend TASBO training sessions and periodic conferences annually.

COMMENDATION

The business office staff takes advantage of local and statewide training sessions to help them stay abreast of current business practices and current finance-related legal requirements pertaining to the district's business functions.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. Financial Reporting

CURRENT SITUATION

All Texas school districts must comply with state financial reporting guidelines contained in the Texas Education Agency's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*. The *Guide* includes generally accepted accounting principles, federally mandated auditing and financial reporting requirements, and specific accounting and financial reporting requirements of the Texas Education Agency.

The district relies heavily on a local certified public accounting firm that is engaged to perform its annual financial and compliance audit and prepares the district's annual audited financial statements. The audit firm is engaged for the next two years for these services. The arrangement was the result of a request for proposal. As a result of this request, the district received three proposals from local and regional area firms. The audit firm selected was the firm that has been the district's external auditor for over 10 years. Current annual audit fees average approximately \$15,000 for next three years.

FINDING

The review team noted financial reporting problems with the application of generally accepted accounting principles in the 1996-97 audited financial statements and the 1997-98 audit report drafts. These problems included:

- County Education District agency funds were not reported in the district's combined financial statements.
- Public Facility Corporation's financial information is not included in the district's combined financial statements as a blended component unit of the district. A separate audited financial report is prepared for this entity.
- Cash borrowed from the general fund by federally funded operations is not reflected as liabilities of the federal funds. These amounts are reimbursed when federal program funds are eventually received.

Recommendation 36:

Revise the annual financial statements.

To ensure proper financial reporting to the public and regulatory bodies, the annual audited financial statements should be revised, even if it has already been filed with the Texas Education Agency. The revisions would bring the reporting up to minimum accounting and financial reporting standards.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager, with the assistance of the audit firm, incorporates necessary changes in the annual financial statements.	September 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

The Titus County Education District was established for two years in early 1991 by the Texas Legislature as a way to equalize funding to Texas public schools in Titus County. County Education Districts were later deemed unconstitutional by the courts. For two years, the County Education Districts assessed and levied property taxes for the benefit of all schools within counties. Once these taxing districts were abolished, "successors-in-interest" were established under state laws to collect any remaining property taxes that were delinquent and owed to participating school districts.

For the Titus County Education District, the successor-in-interest is MPISD. Under guidelines established by the Texas Education Agency, final settlements between participating schools can be made. The Titus County Education District's successor-in-interest administered by MPISD has not been settled between participating districts to achieve these administrative cost savings. The fixed asset clerk continues to spend time accounting for all aspects of this operation.

Information on handling the settlement between participating districts is available through the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Association of School Administrators. In addition, accounting and reporting guidance for these settlements are included in the Texas Education Agency's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*.

Recommendation 37:

Settle the successor-in-interest for the Titus County Education District between participating districts to reduce administrative time and effort in accounting for this activity.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and business manager negotiate a settlement for the successor-in-interest for the Titus County Education District with participating districts in accordance with acceptable methods.	May 1999
2.	The superintendent submits the recommended settlement to trustees for final approval.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation would yield some savings in time for the fixed assets clerk, however, the fiscal impact cannot be determined.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

C. Financial Management Practices

FINDING

Activity funds are funds collected from various school-approved, money-raising activities and the receipt of student dues or fees, commissions, investment interest and donations. These funds are to be 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 activity funds and must be handled through the activity funds accounts. Every school district should have formally adopted policies and procedures for activity fund management.

The Texas Education Agency's (*Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*) prescribes two common methods of activity fund accounting:

1. Centralized in which funds are controlled and disbursed through the school district's accounting department and:
2. Decentralized in which funds are accounted for and controlled at the various school sites.

There are advantages to centralizing activity funds accounting. Some of the advantages are:

- Better internal controls, assuming that the school district has good internal controls, as all receipts and disbursements flow through one central accounting system rather than systems that can vary from school site to school site
- Easier access for performing internal and external audits
- Consistency in the manner in which repetitive matters are handled
- Better control of cash management operations including assurance that proper collateralization of cash and investment balances is occurring
- More consistency in applying district policies and procedures
- Reduced need to audit funds if the school principal and/or finance clerk is replaced.

The district centralizes all activity fund accounts. This saves administrative effort and reduces financial monitoring activities by staff because personnel at campus locations are not involved in financial record keeping, such as maintenance of bank accounts and related data. The district maintains all financial records for these funds in the central

accounting office and uses established control processes to disburse all funds for these activities, thus reducing the potential for errors and inappropriate uses of these funds.

COMMENDATION

MPISD uses an effective, centralized method of accounting for the activity funds, which assists in strengthening the district's internal controls and fosters efficient fund operations.

FINDING

MPISD uses the Titus County Appraisal District (TCAD) to collect its property taxes. This method of collecting property taxes precludes the need for hiring and funding an additional department and staff for this purpose. Since TCAD collects for most of the county's school districts, duplication of costs are not incurred by the district or other participating entities. Further, state law prescribes that the district may not be charged more than the actual costs associated with this function

MPISD's total cost for tax collection services during the 1998 fiscal year was \$91,352. This cost is higher than costs incurred by any of its peers as a percentage of total budgeted tax collections for the 1997-98 year (**Exhibit 6-8**). All districts in the peer group have contracted out their tax collection operation except for Corsicana ISD. Corsicana's percentage of collection costs is lower than MPISD even though it funds its own internal tax collection office. MPISD's percentage of tax collection costs to budgeted tax collections of 0.79 percent is over twice that of the peer group average. Greenville, which is a district with similar student counts and tax levies is paying 0.15 percent of its tax collections in related costs. If MPISD were to effectively reduce its tax collection costs to the peer group average of .37 percent of total tax collections, the district would save \$48,704 annually, based on the 1997-98 data shown.

**Exhibit 6-8
MPISD Tax Collection Costs Compared to Peer Districts
1997-98**

District	Tax Collector	Actual 1997-98 Tax Collection Costs	Tax Collections 1997-98 Budget	Tax Collections 1997-98 Budget
Mt. Pleasant	TCAD	\$91,352	\$11,596,180	.79%
Paris	TCAD	\$43,311	\$6,819,609	.64%

Corsicana	District	\$50,523	\$9,815,894	.51%
Liberty Eylau	County	\$14,375	\$3,632,629	.40%
Texarkana	County	\$47,414	\$12,855,841	.37%
Kilgore	City	\$18,182	\$6,499,818	.28%
Athens	County	\$14,132	\$7,736,609	.18%
Greenville	County	\$16,541	\$11,406,181	.15%
Kaufman	County	\$4,427	\$4,247,437	.10%
Terrell	County	\$6,157	\$7,514,775	.08%
Average	N/A	\$30,641	\$8,212,497	.37%

Source: District and peer district financial records for 1997-98 and 1997-98 AEIS data.

The district said no inter-local agreement was available for the TCAD services. A written inter-local agreement, however, protects the school district, and it should provide for an analysis that proves charges made to the district comply with state law.

Recommendation 38:

Solicit proposals for tax collection services from agencies such as the county tax office and seek to reduce tax collection costs by about 40 percent.

By taking proposals for tax collection services, the district should be able to reduce its tax collection costs. If negotiations do not produce a savings, MPISD should consider funding its own tax collection effort patterned after successful programs, such as the one in Corsicana ISD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent authorizes the preparation of requests for proposals for tax collection services from area government agencies, including the county tax office.	June 1999
2.	The business manager evaluates alternative providers of this service based on answers to the proposal requests and considers costs in comparison to recent TCAD charges.	July 1999
3.	The business manager and superintendent analyze the costs of	August

	the tax collection activities and develop a recommendation to take to the board.	1999
4.	The superintendent submits a revised inter-local agreement for tax collection services for board approval.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

If the district could reduce tax collection costs to the Corsicana ISD level (.51 percent), the district could save \$32,211 annually (\$91,352 - \$59,141). The savings for the first year have been reduced by \$5,000 in estimated legal fees to assist the district in writing the appropriate inter-local agreement.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-2004
Seek to reduce tax collection costs by about 40 percent.	\$27,211	\$32,211	\$32,211	\$32,211	\$32,211

FINDING

Based on discussion with financial management personnel, federal grant program resources are not being fully used. Grant funds were returned on two programs in 1997-98. This problem has occurred in special education programs and resulted in \$47,725 being returned to the state. This amount represents 1.5 percent of the average of non-food service federal program revenues over the past three years. The total federal program funding, excluding food service, for MPISD for the past three years is shown below (**Exhibit 6-9**).

Exhibit 6-9
MPISD Federal Funding Summary
1995-96 - 1997-98

Item	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Federal grant revenues	\$2,646,250	\$2,927,249	\$3,693,234
Average for the three years	--	--	\$3,088,911

Source: MPISD audited financial reports for 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Training for program managers on financial compliance with federal programs could reduce the amount of grant funds that are returned at the

end of projects. Training on managing project budgets and completing projects on time could help staff better carry out their responsibilities.

Recommendation 39

Provide in-service training for federal program managers to maximize the amount of federal assistance used by the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager schedules and conducts in-service training for program managers on federal programs financial compliance.	September 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

The information and resources needed to implement this recommendation are available internally. Savings in the form of retained grant funds should result. Some minimal costs may be incurred if the district sends its business office staff to outside training courses through RESC VIII, TASBO, or other regional service centers.

FINDING

MPISD uses agency fund clearing accounts to track disbursements for routine bills and payroll. Although TEA considers this method of accounting appropriate, the process of record keeping for these agency fund clearing accounts is cumbersome and adds to the burden of business office employees. This is because the additional agency fund clearing accounts must be maintained on the district's books. The use of these agency fund clearing accounts results in transferring liabilities, such as accrued payrolls, from the operating and federal funds actually incurring the costs.

Record keeping can be simplified by discontinuing the use of these agency fund clearing accounts. Accounts payable and accrued expenditures should be recorded in the specific fund incurring the costs.

Recommendation 40:

Discontinue use of clearing accounts and begin accounting for cash transactions in the particular fund that is receiving and disbursing money.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager discontinues the use of agency fund clearing accounts and begins accounting for cash transactions by fund.	September 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

D. Budgeting

CURRENT SITUATION

Each year, the budget is set during the August board meeting. The budget is based primarily on prior year's expenditures with adjustments for new programs approved by the board.

The principals at each school build a budget for their campus using input from the teachers. The site-based decision-making teams are not formally involved in the process.

The Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) budget module allows the district to work on a budget for the next school year without affecting the current budget year or the current financial records. The module allows the district to work on proposed budget changes and view cumulative results. Once the budget is approved, the values can be transferred to the general ledger in the finance system.

FINDING

The district has an established budget and tax rate planning calendar that is used for effective control of the budget preparation process. The district's budget and tax rate planning calendar for the 1998-99 year is shown in **Exhibit 6-10**.

Exhibit 6-10
MPISD 1998-99 Budget and Tax Rate Planning Calendar

Date	Action
December 19	Budget forms submitted to administrators for budget requests.
February 27	Budget requests submitted to business office.
March 9	Budget requests consolidated, reviewed with each administrator.
March 16	Budget hearings with principals, directors, superintendent, deputy superintendent.
March 25	Budget hearings with principals, directors, superintendent, deputy superintendent.

March 31	Proposed budget submitted to superintendent for review.
May 1	Proposed budget submitted to board.
July 25	Certification of approved appraisal roll, anticipated collection rate by collector, calculation of effective and rollback rates.
August 2	72-hour notice for public hearing (open meetings notice).
August 5	Budget workshop (board meeting).
August 7	Publication of effective and rollback tax rates: schedules and fund balances.
August 15	Publication of notice of budgeting hearing (10 days before meeting).
August 20	72-hour notice for public hearing.
August 25	Budget hearing; conduct open meeting to adopt budget; discuss tax rate; any property tax revenue increase requires the board to take record vote and schedule public hearing (regular board meeting).
September 2	"Notice of public hearing on tax increase" (1 st quarter page notice) published at least 7 days before the public hearing. Headline must be in 18 pt type or larger. It may not be published in the legal or classified section.
September 6	72-hour notice for public hearing.
September 9	Public hearing; schedule and announce meeting to adopt a tax rate 3-14 days from this date.
September 11	"Notice of vote on tax rate" (2 nd quarter page notice) published before the meeting to adopt a tax rate.
September 18	72-hour notice for meeting at which the board will adopt a tax rate for the 1998-99 school year.
September 21	Meeting to adopt a tax rate 3-14 days after the public hearing (regular board meeting).

Source: District Files.

COMMENDATION

The district effectively manages the budget process through the use of a comprehensive budget and tax rate planning calendar.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

E. Business Technology

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) software and has purchased all of the modules available in this finance system for budgeting, payroll, fixed assets, and purchasing. The district uses the RSCCC software for monthly accounting and reporting. This system uses a series of options, or menus, to allow a district to pick and choose the level of detail it prefers in maintaining its business records.

The RSCCC software is able to generate a wide variety of management information reports in four general categories: summary reports; fixed asset and inventory reports; vendor and purchase order reports; and journals/checks/detailed ledger reports. Summary reports are most useful for board members and district administrators and include a summary of general ledger activity, comparisons of revenue to budget, budget status by organization (department, school, etc.), and budget status by program (technology, athletics, etc.).

FINDING

The district has word processing and spreadsheet software products available on its computers and business office employees have received training on this software. However, business office staff have not begun using the RSCCC software application in routine operations. This situation was evident from the information requests the review team made during the review. Typewritten responses and manually prepared (mostly handwritten) financial schedules had to be loaded into word processing and spreadsheet software for further analysis.

Most effective business operations, including those in school districts, use computer-based financial software to produce management reports such as those requested by the review team. Use of such software reduces time and effort in performing routine activities and provides information necessary for analysis by business office staff and other departments.

Recommendation 41:

Use word processing and spreadsheet applications in the business office to perform routine operations.

Business office employees should be supported in this effort by knowledgeable employees and the technology staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager meets with the deputy superintendent of Instruction and Technology to develop plans and schedules for all business office staff to begin using word processing and spreadsheet applications.	June 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent and the Technology Department staff develop additional training to meet the needs of business office personnel.	July 1999
3.	The business manager oversees revised procedures for the business office staff to begin using these software applications routinely.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Year 2000 bug (Y2K) is the result of shortcomings in many electronic data processing systems and other equipment that may adversely affect operations in the year 2000 and beyond. For many years, computer programmers eliminated the first two digits from a year when writing computer programs. For example the programmer would designate January 1, 1965 as "01/01/65" instead of "01/01/1965". On January 1, 2000 at 12:00:01 am, the internal clock in computers and other equipment will roll over from "12/31/99" to "01/01/00". Unfortunately, many programs will not be able to distinguish between the year 2000 and the year 1900. This may cause the programs to process data inaccurately or to stop processing data altogether. Another factor that may cause problems in programs is the leap year calculation. Some programs are not able to detect the year 2000 as a leap year.

Y2K issues relate to information technology (IT) and non-IT systems. Non-IT systems typically include embedded technology such as micro-controllers. These may be found in fire alarm systems, elevators, air handlers, and a wide variety of other electronic devices. Additionally, Y2K issues may be divided into three categories: 1) internal, 2) external, and 3) mechanical.

Internal Y2K issues may arise from an entity's own operations and materially affect its credit worthiness and ability to make timely payment

on its obligations. External Y2K issues may arise from parties, other than an entity, that provide payments that support debt service on an entity's debt securities. Such payments may include, for example, payments made under a lease, loan, or installment sale agreement. Y2K may affect contracted third parties that provide administrative services under outsourcing agreements.

Mechanical Y2K issues may arise if Y2K problems disrupt the actual mechanical process used to send payments to creditors, vendors and employees. For example, municipal securities pay interest semiannually, on January 1 and July 1 of each year, or have periodic sinking fund installments due to an indenture trustee or fiscal agent. Issuers may wish to determine whether Y2K issues affect their ability to identify and meet such obligations in a timely manner and to disclose any measures that will be undertaken if an entity determines it will not be able to meet such obligations.

Year 2000 computer issues have been addressed in the district's business office. District officials and RESC VIII have provided assurances that the current business system and hardware are Y2K compliant. However, these changes are only part of the Y2K problem. Other affected areas include subsystems and non-financial systems, such as heating and air-conditioning systems, fire protection systems, telephones, and elevators. Issues also exist regarding vendor and service provider assurances that needed products will be available and that essential services will not be interrupted. No business office representative has been assigned to a districtwide coordination group to monitor the Y2K issue impact on overall district operations. The district is at risk in its on-going operations without a districtwide coordination effort.

To ensure that all district internal systems, vendors and other providers have addressed year 2000 issues appropriately, written confirmations should be obtained from all hardware and software providers, as well as vendors and service providers. These confirmations should indicate that outside parties that provide any type of service or necessary products to the district for operating purposes have addressed these year 2000 issues. Also, the confirmations should address the specific plans of these parties to ensure that the district's operations will be uninterrupted when the year 2000 arrives.

The Y2K issue is substantial and there are additional information and checklists on the U.S. Department of Education web site at <http://inet.ed.gov/> or this information can be obtained by calling (800) USA-LEARN.

Recommendation 42:

Form a coordination group on a districtwide basis to monitor and oversee year 2000 issues and related software and equipment conversions that may be necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes a districtwide coordination group, and activities are begun to address Y2K issues.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent assigns the business office data processing agent to this group.	March 1999
3.	The group develops a plan to review all programs that could be affected and presents a list to the superintendent.	March 1999
4.	Vendors are contacted by the group and assurances are obtained that all systems are compliant, or plans are developed to make the system compliant.	April 1999
5.	Test runs and walk throughs of contingency plans are coordinated by the Technology staff.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Forming a coordination group and identifying affected systems should have no fiscal impact on the district. However, the district is at great risk if it fails to make appropriate plans and systems are not compliant.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

F. Public Facility Corporation

CURRENT SITUATION

The district established a Public Facility Corporation (PFC) in 1995 for purposes of financing needed facility expansions for student growth and major maintenance to existing facilities. Commonly referred to as a lease-purchase arrangement, the corporation was formed in response to the voters' rejection of bond issues for these purposes, the most recent of which was held in December 1992.

The PFC, which is used by the district as a financing mechanism for major capital project needs, is governed by the MPISD Board of Trustees. The district pays the debt service costs for the resulting debt from maintenance and operations rather than through a debt service property tax. The total debt outstanding at the end of the 1997-98 fiscal year was \$7,510,000. The district has contributed an average of \$877,350 for the past three fiscal years to pay debt service on this debt (**Exhibit 6-11**).

Exhibit 6-11
MPISD Public Facility Debt Funding
1995-96 - 1997-98

Fiscal Year	Debt Payments
1997-98	\$638,222
1996-97	\$1,016,510
1995-96	\$977,318
Average	\$877,350

*Source: MPISD audited financial reports
for 1995-96 - 1997-98.*

FINDING

PFC debt service costs are spread over a 10-year period in accordance with the terms of the public facility corporation. This 10-year period is one-half the time period of 20 years normally used in amortizing traditional debt to construct facilities by school districts.

Through the use of PFC debt, MPISD pays higher interest charges than would be the case for conventional bond financing for these facilities. A comparison of PFC debt service costs to the estimated costs using a conventional bond financing indicates that MPISD is paying about \$2.5 million more over the next five years for this type of financing than they might with bonded indebtedness (**Exhibit 6-12**). These savings assume a 4.7 percent annual interest rate in a 20-year conventional financing scheme versus a 5.85 percent rate for PFC's ten-year amortization schedule. While the district would pay \$2.1 million more in debt service over the life of the debt using conventional financing, the costs could be offset when the present value of money is considered.

Exhibit 6-12
Comparison of Current MPISD Debt Service Costs
to Projected Debt Service Costs
Associated with a Conventional Voted Bond Issue

Year	Current Debt Service Costs	Projected Debt Service Costs	Annual Savings
1998-1999	\$1,183,173	\$585,853	\$597,321
1999-2000	\$1,140,028	\$587,728	\$552,301
2000-2001	\$1,096,881	\$583,887	\$512,994
2001-2002	\$1,053,736	\$584,215	\$469,521
2002-2003	\$1,010,589	\$588,903	\$421,687
Sub-total	\$5,484,407	\$2,930,585	\$2,553,822
Through 2007-08	\$4,155,758	\$2,941,640	\$1,214,118
Through 2017-18	\$0	\$5,881,750	(5,881,750)
Total	\$9,640,165	\$11,753,975	(2,113,810)

Source: WCL Enterprises.

If MPISD used conventional voted bond issue to finance facilities, the district could shift the burden of paying these costs to a debt service tax, freeing up resources in the general fund. Also, financing rates are much lower because school bonds are guaranteed by the state and because longer pay-out terms provide for a lower present value for cash needed to fund annual debt service costs in the future. Present value considerations have not been made in making the above comparisons.

For MPISD, a reduction of one penny in the tax rate is approximately equal to \$74,800 in tax collections. Based on the reduced debt service costs over the next five years, the annual savings would amount to an average of \$.07 on the maintenance and operations tax rate. These funds could be freed up for other needed uses without having to increase the tax rate over the next five years.

Total debt service costs would be greater than those used in the above comparison. A present value study for the remaining life of the new debt would need to be performed by the district's financial advisors to obtain the true costs for comparison to existing debt service costs.

Recommendation 43:

For future capital projects, conduct a comprehensive cost comparison between the financing options to determine the most cost-effective financing plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent works with the district's financial advisors and develops a plan that comprehensively explores the true cost of future financing needs	June 1999
2.	The superintendent submits the plan to trustees for review and evaluation.	August 1999
3.	The board holds public forums to gather public comments about future financing options.	October 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation would depend upon future capital projects and cannot be estimated.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

G. Internal Controls

Internal controls as part of the accounting system are designed to provide reasonable assurance that assets are properly safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition, that financial records used in preparation of the financial statements are reliable, and that accountability for the district's assets is maintained. The concept of reasonable assurance in relation to internal controls recognizes that the cost of a control process should not exceed the benefits derived from performance of these procedures and that the district's management must make estimates and judgments in evaluating the cost and benefit relationships relating to control procedures that become a part of the District's accounting system.

FINDING

The payroll clerk handles all payroll processing tasks, and is assisted by the data processing agent. The payroll clerk has been with the district since 1976 and has been the payroll clerk since 1985. The payroll clerk has not missed a payroll processing since 1985. No one else in the district is trained to maintain payroll records and run monthly payroll.

The payroll clerk has the ability to change pay rate data in the system, but generally does not make these types of changes without specific approval from the Personnel Department. This is true for changes made during the year, but the payroll clerk makes changes to pay rates without specific approval from the Personnel Department at the beginning of the fiscal year when wholesale changes are being made to pay rates as a result of annual step increases and new hires. This is a control weakness because the person responsible for payment of payroll also has access to employee records and pay rates.

The payroll clerk uses a standard, gross-pay figure to control her processing. She and the data processing agent follow a specific procedural guide provided by Region VIII in processing monthly payrolls.

The payroll clerk has other duties as well including: recording all operating fund deposits into accounting system, except student activity funds; bank reconciliations for interest and sinking account and maintenance of employee benefit bank accounts (health, section 125, workers compensation).

The district is at risk under the current organizational arrangement from an operational perspective if the payroll clerk should ever be unavailable.

Recommendation 44

Cross-train another member of the business office staff to handle the payroll clerk's duties.

The district should require the payroll clerk's backup to process the payroll periodically.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager works with the payroll clerk and another member of the business office staff to arrange cross-training activities.	June 1999
2.	The cross-trained employee works routinely with the payroll clerk at selected times during the year to process payrolls and in maintaining employee records and pay rates.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 7

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews all asset and risk management functions of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD), including:

- A. Cash and Investments
- B. Fixed Assets
- C. Workers' Compensation
- D. Records Management

BACKGROUND

Asset management involves the management of the district's cash resources and physical assets in a cost-effective and efficient manner. This function includes accounting for and safeguarding these elements against theft and obsolescence. Risk management includes the identification, analysis, and reduction of risk through insurance and safety programs to protect the district's assets and employees.

MPISD's asset management function is performed by the business manager and overseen by the superintendent. Responsibility for the risk management function is vested in the risk management clerk, who reports to the business manager, but also is overseen by the superintendent. The risk management clerk administers all employee benefit insurance as well as all property and casualty insurance coverage. Due to the size of the district, these functions are interrelated with other areas of the business office.

Chapter 7

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

A. Cash and Investments

CURRENT SITUATION

In accordance with state laws, the district has a depository agreement with Guaranty Bank that covers all checking account needs for general and payroll disbursements. The depository agreement is bid every two years in odd-numbered years, also in accordance with state laws. Guaranty Bank has held the district's depository contract for the past five years. As part of this agreement, the district is paid NOW (money market) account rates at an annual rate of 2.7 percent on all idle balances in checking accounts. The depository agreement provides for a surety bond and/or acceptable collateral securities to cover all bank balances in excess of federal depository insurance limits established by the Federal Depository Insurance Corporation.

The district's cash and investment management activities are not complex, short term in nature, and are handled informally. In addition to cash and investment balances on deposit with its depository bank, the district has cash and investment balances in:

- NationsBank where the district maintains special interest-bearing checking accounts as required by debt agreements for the Public Facilities Corporation;
- Texas Investment Pool (Texpool)
- Lone Star Investment Pool (LSIP)
- Government Agency Securities
- Federated Money Market Accounts

FINDING

Based on interviews with the district's business manager, the time allotted for cash management activities is minimal. This limitation is due to the simple investment portfolio and the lack of time available for the business manager and staff to pursue this activity. In some instances, the district is losing interest earnings because idle funds are not always invested at the highest possible rates.

The district does not have an on-line computer connection with the depository banks or investment pools. All banking activity is handled by phone with the bank and pools. Cash forecasts are not prepared regularly,

and the district does not use an investment consultant to help the district make investment decisions.

The district's September 30, 1998 cash and investment balances are high due to recent receipt of state funding payments (**Exhibit 7-1**). The district is classified as a "category 3" payee for state foundation funding purposes, meaning MPISD is a school district where the property wealth per pupil is above the statewide average. As a category 3 payee, the district receives 80 percent of its state funding in September and October of each year. At the end of September, 1998, more than \$1 million of the district's funds were invested at rates 3 to 4 percent lower than available in comparably liquid investment pools.

Exhibit 7-1
MPISD Schedule of Cash and Investments by Deposit/Investment
As of September 30, 1998

Deposit/Investment	Balance	Percentage of Total Cash and Investments	Interest Rate
Lone Star Investment Pool	\$2,764,628	22.6%	5.39%
Texpool	\$7,464,176	60.9%	5.55%
Guaranty Bank	\$1,247,569	10.2%	2.47%
NationsBank	\$37,663	0.3%	1.51%
U.S. Agency Securities	\$296,057	2.4%	5.40%
Federated Money Market	\$450,473	3.7%	5.20%
Total or average	\$12,260,566	100.0%	5.17%

Source: District records.

The district's business manager handles all cash and investment transactions and keeps the superintendent informed of the district's daily cash and investment position and all related decisions. The district's average cash deposits at Guaranty Bank and at NationsBank during the 1997-98 school year were \$1,128,819 (**Exhibit 7-2**).

Exhibit 7-2
MPISD Monthly Cash Deposits
1997-98

Date	Deposit Balance
September 30, 1997	\$1,759,812
October 31, 1997	\$1,295,206
November 30, 1997	\$ 927,934
December 31, 1997	\$1,368,135
January 31, 1998	\$1,951,278
February 28, 1998	\$330,278
March 31, 1998	\$1,059,501
April 30, 1998	\$1,385,799
May 31, 1998	\$922,510
June 30, 1998	\$1,045,949
July 31, 1998	\$866,563
August 31, 1998	\$632,864
Average	\$1,128,819

Source: District records.

The district's average cash and investment balances have increased by over \$2 million during the past three years while average interest rates and interest as a percentage of total revenue have declined (**Exhibit 7-3**). Interest earnings for all funds also have declined over the past three years.

Exhibit 7-3
MPISD Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, Interest Earnings
and Average Cash and Investment Balances for All Funds
1995-96 - 1997-98

Year	Revenues All funds	Expenditures All funds	Interest Earnings All Funds	Average Cash and Investment Balances	Average Interest Rate	Interest as Percent Total Revenues
1995-96	\$25,582,188	\$25,164,825	\$804,398	\$5,599,792	14.36%	3.14%
1996-97	\$27,633,774	\$27,232,553	\$563,432	\$6,006,289	9.38%	2.04%

1997-98	\$29,801,787	\$29,269,922	\$626,114	\$7,647,300	8.19%	2.10%
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Source: District annual audited financial statements for the past three fiscal years and district financial records.

Placing idle checking account balances in higher yielding investments can increase the annual yield on average cash balances.

Recommendation 45:

Through a system of better cash flow forecasting and a more aggressive movement of idle cash to higher yielding investments, the district should seek to increase annual interest earnings.

While Mt. Pleasant's local economy is supported in part by a MPISD depository arrangement, it is important for the school district to earn the highest possible interest rates on idle cash. A board policy setting a maximum or minimum amount to be retained in the local depository bank could mitigate any negative effects on the economy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager prepares a cash flow forecasting and investment plan and presents it to the board for approval.	June 1999
2.	The business manager negotiates the highest possible rate of return on cash deposits held at Guaranty Bank and NationsBank and prepares revised depository agreements with both banks.	June 1999
3.	The superintendent presents revised depository contracts with Guaranty and NationsBank to trustees for review and approval.	July 1999
4.	The business manager revises depository agreements and begins aggressively investing idle cash in higher yielding investments.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

If one-half of the average cash deposits for 1997-98 (\$1,128,819) were invested overnight at 4 percent rate, instead of the current 2.47 percent rate, the district could realize an additional \$14,279 annually (**Exhibit 7-4**).

**Exhibit 7-4
Annual Savings from Increased Investment Earnings on**

**Overnight Investment of Daily Bank Cash Deposits
1997-98**

	One-Half Times Deposits
Balance available for investment	\$564,409
Estimated overnight interest rate	5.00%
Annual estimated interest earnings	\$28,220
Current account rate	2.47%
Current interest earnings estimate	\$13,941
Average savings	\$14,279

Source: MPISD.

Recommendation	1999- 2000	2000- 01	2001- 02	2002- 03	2003- 04
Seek to increase annual interest earnings.	\$14,279	\$14,279	\$14,279	\$14,279	\$14,279

FINDING

The business manager checks cash balances on the district's financial system daily. The fixed assets clerk informs the business manager how much cash will be needed to pay the next operating check run. The district issues checks to vendors up to two times each week. This frequency of check issuance forces the district to keep more cash in its lower yielding interest-bearing checking accounts.

The district issued an average of five check runs for operating and payroll disbursements during 1997-98 (**Exhibit 7-5**). Based on a review of detailed records in the district's business office, an average of 1,387 total checks was issued monthly in 1997-98. The average total monthly disbursement in 1997-98 was \$2,276,171.

**Exhibit 7-5
MPISD Schedule of Disbursements
1997-98**

Month	Operating Disbursements	Number of Operating Check	Payroll Disbursements	Number of Payroll Check	Total Disbursements
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		Runs		Runs	
September 1997	\$807,776	5	\$1,376,897	1	\$2,184,673
October 1997	\$457,996	6	\$1,396,199	1	\$1,854,195
November 1997	\$823,556	6	\$1,414,880	1	\$2,238,436
December 1997	\$927,790	5	\$1,429,489	1	\$2,357,279
January 1998	\$912,431	4	\$1,368,955	1	\$2,281,386
February 1998	\$1,170,120	5	\$1,424,189	1	\$2,594,309
March 1998	\$787,529	6	\$1,393,140	1	\$2,180,669
April 1998	\$497,002	5	\$1,397,589	1	\$1,894,591
May 1998	\$974,745	5	\$1,479,981	1	\$2,454,726
June 1998	\$1,266,579	8	\$1,385,466	1	\$2,652,045
July 1998	\$960,336	4	\$1,465,326	1	\$2,425,662
August 1998	\$768,132	5	\$1,427,953	1	\$2,196,085
Totals	\$10,353,992	64	\$16,960,064	12	\$27,314,056
Averages	\$862,833	5	\$1,413,339	1	\$2,276,171

Source: District records.

Over the past three years, MPISD's annual interest earnings have decreased while revenues and cash and investment balances have increased (**Exhibit 7-3**). The district's interest earnings are adversely affected when cash is held in lower interest checking accounts to support frequent general operating disbursements.

Recommendation 46:

Reduce general operating disbursement frequency to two times per month.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager revises policies and procedures to pay bills for general disbursements two times per month.	June 1999
2.	The superintendent presents revised disbursement policies to trustees for review and approval.	August 1999
3.	The business manager implements revised policies and procedures for general disbursement processing.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional investment earnings will result from implementing this recommendation (**Exhibit 7-6**). In calculating the savings resulting from reducing the frequency of general disbursement processing periods, an investment rate of 2.47 percent is used for current and future disbursements.

Exhibit 7-6 Annual Savings from Reducing Frequency of General Disbursement Processing Periods

Item	Amounts/Factors
Average current disbursement amount	\$161,781
Number of days available	5.625
Daily interest rate	.00676712%
Earnings for disbursement period	\$61.58
Number of disbursement periods	64
Annual interest earnings	\$3,941
Revised average disbursement amount	\$431,416.33
Revised number of days available	15
Daily interest rate	.00676712%
Earnings for revised disbursement period	\$437.92
Number of revised disbursement periods	24
Revised annual interest earnings	\$10,510
Annual savings	\$6,569

Source: District records.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Reduce general operating disbursement frequency to two times per month.	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$6,569	\$6,569

Chapter 7

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

B. Fixed Assets

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD's fixed assets include its land, buildings, furniture, equipment, and vehicles. Accounting for fixed assets is the responsibility of the fixed assets clerk who reports to the business manager.

MPISD performs an annual physical inventory of its fixed assets. A list of assets at each school is printed by the fixed assets clerk and distributed to the schools for a physical count. The school principals or their designees are responsible for performing the physical count and reporting any differences to the clerk. Fixed assets that are obsolete and no longer of use to the district are moved to a warehouse and sold at auctions.

FINDING

TEA defines fixed assets as items that are tangible in nature; long-lived (with a life of longer than one year); of a significant value at the time of purchase or acquisition and reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. According to TEA, if a purchase meets these criteria and costs \$5,000 or more the item is considered a fixed asset and should be capitalized. Districts are allowed to establish lower limits for capitalizing fixed assets if they see fit.

MPISD capitalizes as fixed assets items with a value of \$500 or more and a useful life of at least one year. The district raised its capitalization limits in 1997 from \$200 to \$500. This change resulted in the deletion of numerous fixed assets from the district's records.

MPISD's fixed assets listing is voluminous and maintaining the list requires a significant amount of the clerk's time. The clerk spends at least one hour per day with these records and is behind in both updating the fixed assets records and in implementing a bar coding control system recently purchased by the district. A computerized list of fixed assets with costs greater than \$2,000 contains significantly fewer items than the list of assets valued at \$500 or more. Many districts prefer to keep the capitalization limits low so that computers and audio/visual equipment, which are more prone to theft, are captured in the system. Unfortunately, maintaining a lower limit also results in the system tracking chairs, tables, and desks that are not as prone to theft. Some districts have addressed this problem by stipulating that all items with a value of \$5,000 are capitalized

as are *all* computers and audio/visual equipment with a value over \$100. Other districts have chosen to capitalize assets over \$5,000 and maintain a separate control inventory of items susceptible to theft. Both lists are maintained but external auditors are only required to sample and test the capitalize assets.

Recommendation 47:

Increase the district's fixed asset capitalization policy amount to \$5,000 and establish a control inventory of other high-theft items and all computer and telecommunications equipment.

The district's efforts to implement a bar coding control system would be much simpler and much less time consuming for the fixed assets clerk with a higher capitalization limit.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager revises fixed asset capitalization policy to include those assets with costs of \$5,000 or more and submits to Board of Trustees for approval.	May 1999
2.	The board reviews and approves the new capitalization policy.	May 1999
3.	The business manager revises procedures and makes necessary adjustment to the financial records.	June - July 1999
4.	The business manager begins operating under the new capitalization policy.	Fiscal 1999 - 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 7

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

C. Workers' Compensation

CURRENT SITUATION

Workers' compensation is intended to protect district employees in case of work-related accidents and injuries. MPISD participates in the East Texas Educational Insurance Association for workers' compensation coverage which is considered a self-funded insurance program.

The East Texas Educational Insurance Association is managed by Claims Administrative Services, Inc., a third party administrator and is overseen at the district by the risk manager. Through agreement, the third-party administrator processes the district's workers' compensation claims. The third-party administrator also provides claims administration, consulting, claims adjustments, and risk data management services.

FINDING

The East Texas Educational Insurance Association is a workers' compensation insurance pool with 180 member school districts in East Texas. The maximum cost of the program to each district in any given year is limited to the fixed program costs, which are administrative in nature, and the amount estimated by the pool as the total claims to be paid in an annual period, called a loss fund. If the pool experiences losses in excess of the estimated amount, the pool pays the claims and passes the cost on to all participants in the following year. In any case, the district's liability in any year is limited to the fixed program cost plus the estimated loss fund amount. For 1997-98, the fixed program costs were \$62,197 and the loss fund was \$107,660. Any losses in excess of \$225,000 for any member district in any year, are covered by the pools' reinsurance arrangement. Therefore, the maximum amount that MPISD would pay in a given year would be \$225,000 plus the fixed program costs.

COMMENDATION

MPISD is participating in a workers' compensation pool that spreads the risk among 180 member school districts, thereby limiting the amount the district must pay out in any given year.

FINDING

MPISD's participation in the East Texas Educational Insurance Association is funded by premiums paid from the district's General and Special Revenue Funds. The premiums are recorded as revenues of the district's Workers' Compensation Fund, which is an internal service fund-a fund category used to account for the financing of goods or services provided by one organizational unit of a school district to other units on a cost-reimbursement basis. Internal service funds are widely used by school districts and other governments to account for risk-financing activities such as workers' compensation insurance.

Based on information received from the third party administrator and the district's audited financial statements for the previous three fiscal years, premiums deposited to the workers' compensation program exceed the program's total costs by an average of \$194,287 (**Exhibit 7-7**). Program costs include fixed costs and incurred claims up to the loss fund on an annual basis.

Exhibit 7-7
Workers' Compensation Program Costs and Premiums
1995-6 - 1997-98

Fiscal Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Average
Fixed program costs	\$60,216	\$61,446	\$62,197	\$61,286
Loss fund	\$172,213	\$101,183	\$107,660	\$127,019
Maximum possible cost	\$232,429	\$162,629	\$169,857	\$188,305
Incurred claims	\$102,295	\$17,085	\$56,233	\$58,538
Total program cost	\$162,511	\$78,531	\$118,430	\$119,824
Paid program premiums	\$319,998	\$254,291	\$368,045	\$314,111
Excess Funding	\$157,487	\$175,760	\$249,615	\$194,287

Source: Information from Claims Administrative Services, Inc. and MPISD audited financial statements for fiscal 1996 through 1998

Premiums paid by the district to the Workers' Compensation Fund are calculated as a percentage of the gross salaries of district employees (**Exhibit 7-8**). Different percentage rates apply to each of three categories of employees: bus drivers, administrative, and other. The \$188,258 in estimated premiums for 1998-99 is less by almost half of actual funded premiums of \$368,045 paid 1997-98 and the total program premium budget of \$370,000 for 1998-99.

Exhibit 7-8
Estimated Workers' Compensation Funding
For the Year Ended August 31, 1999

Classifications	Rate per \$100 of Payroll	Estimated Annual Payroll	Estimated Total Premium
Bus Drivers	4.9718	\$304,365	\$15,132
Administration	0.6346	\$15,922,864	\$101,046
Others	4.7892	\$1,505,036	\$72,079
Total	N/A	\$17,732,265	\$188,258

Source: Information from Claims Administrative Services, Inc.

The overestimation of premiums over several years has resulted in a cash balance in the district's Workers' Compensation Fund of \$1.2 million as of August 31, 1998. The \$1.2 million represents more than ten times the average program costs for the most current three fiscal years. The balance in the cash account, when reduced by the current estimate for claims due and claims incurred but not reported of \$204,360 totals over \$1 million. "Claims incurred but not reported" are estimated by the third-party administrator for claims that have occurred but have not yet been reported to the district as of the fiscal year end. The third-party administrator estimates these costs based on the district's claims history.

The district does not use an actuary to evaluate its premiums or to determine if the cash reserves for the Workers' Compensation Fund are appropriate. Based on information gathered from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Workers Compensation Commission, the Texas Association of School Boards, and the Texas Department of Insurance, several criteria should be considered in determining the appropriate amount of retained earnings. TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide indicates that the premiums should be set so that "over a reasonable period of time Internal Service Fund revenues and expenses are approximately equal" and that the premiums should "include a reasonable provision for expected future catastrophic losses."

Since the pool carries excess coverage that pays claims in excess of \$225,000 during any given year, the claims administrator feels that the district should be able to maintain cash reserves of not greater than \$500,000 and be completely covered for all possible contingencies within the year. The total amount of possible losses for the fund have averaged \$188,305 over the past three fiscal years.

Recommendation 48:

Review the district's claims history and retain only those earnings that are required to meet the needs of the fund.

MPISD should determine a reasonable amount to be retained in the Workers' Compensation Fund and set annual premiums to the fund accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager negotiates an annual contract with an actuary to determine the amount of cash reserves that should be maintained in the Workers' Compensation Fund each year.	May 1999
2.	The business manager submits the contract to the superintendent for review and approval.	June 1999
3.	The superintendent submits the actuarial contract to the Board of Trustees for final approval.	July 1999
4.	The business manager initiates a reduction of annual premiums to an amount that equals the annual maximum total cost provided by the claims administrator and/or the amount recommended by the actuary	August 1999
5.	The business manager notifies the payroll director so that the rates may be adjusted to reflect the annual reduction.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the amount of the fund balance and the projected premiums to the Workers' Compensation Fund for 1998-99, the district can withhold the estimated annual premiums for the next five year. This amount was \$368,045 in 1997-98. The savings for the next five years are based on eliminating funding of premiums to this fund until cash reserves are reduced to \$500,000. Actual savings are dependent on the premiums needed to maintain appropriate cash reserves.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Review the district's claims history and retain only those earnings that are required to meet the needs of the fund.	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$368,045	\$368,045

Chapter 7

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

D. Records Management

BACKGROUND

TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* considers the system used to manage historical records as an integral component of a school district's information management plan. School district records provide valuable information such as:

- trends within a school district over time that enable the district to make comparisons between years, projections for the future, or modifications to programs or systems.
- reports on the condition of the school district that are presented to the public and to other entities.

The creation of a formal records management plan establishes explicit procedures for handling all types of information, including records that a school district is legally required to retain, and information retained for management purposes.

The Texas Legislature emphasized the importance of records maintenance and management with the passage of the Local Government Records Act (the "Act"). Section 201.002 of the Local Government Records Act states the following:

Recognizing that the citizens of the state have a right to expect, and the state has an obligation to foster efficient and cost-effective government and recognizing the central importance of local government records in the lives of all citizens, the legislature finds that:

- The efficient management of local government records is necessary to the effective and economic operation of local and state government;
- The preservation of local government records of permanent value is necessary to provide the people of the state with resources concerning their history and to document their rights of citizenship and property;
- Convenient access to advice and assistance based on well-established and professionally recognized records management techniques and practices is necessary to promote the establishment of sound records management programs in local governments, and the state can provide the assistance impartially and uniformly; and

- The establishment of uniform standards and procedures for the maintenance, preservation, microfilming, or other disposition of local government records is necessary to fulfill these important public purposes.

Additionally, the Act "declares local government records created or received in the transaction of official business" to be public property and establishes rules for the destruction and the management and preservation of records. These rules require:

- All local governments to designate a records management officer.
- Establishment of a records management program.
- Creation of records control schedules.
- Establishment of rules for the microfilming and electronic storage of records.

The State and Local Records Management Division of the Texas State Library is the agency designated to oversee the Act. The Texas State Library:

- Provides training on the Act
- Creates and updates record retention schedules applicable to local governments in general and to specific governmental groups. The schedules list the types of records applicable to local governments and the minimum required retention period
- Approves Record Control Schedules submitted by local governments
- Establishes rules related to the long-term storage of records on microfilm and electronic media
- Publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Local Record*, which identifies changes in the Texas Administrative Code related to record keeping

The Local Record tracks changes to the Texas Administrative Code related to record keeping. This publication is available free of charge. It can be ordered by contacting the State and Local Records Management Division of the Texas State Library.

In addition, the Texas State Library publishes bulletins addressing various aspects of the Act. These bulletins are also available free of charge. They can be ordered by contacting the State and Local Records Management Division of the Texas State Library. Bulletins that may be useful resources to a school district, depending on its size and existing records management format, include:

- Bulletin Number One: Microfilming Standards and Procedures.

- Bulletin Number Two: Electronic Records Standards and Procedures.
- Bulletin Number Three: Inventorying and Scheduling Records (provides guidelines for the inventory, appraisal and determination of the appropriate schedule for each record type).
- Bulletin Number Four: Local Government Records Act (contains the text of the Local Government Records Act).

Local record retention schedules are also available through the State and Local Records Management Division of the Texas State Library. The schedules that a school district should have on hand are, at a minimum:

- Local Schedule GR, Schedule for Records Common to All Governments.
- Local Schedule SD, Schedule for Records of Public School Districts.
- Local Schedule TX, Schedule for Records of Property Taxation.
- Local Schedule EL, Schedule for Records of Elections and Voter Registration.
- Local Schedule JC, Schedule for Records of Public Junior Colleges.

Local Government Bulletin Number Three, Inventorying and Scheduling Records, from the Texas State Library provides detailed instructions for conducting a records inventory and using the inventory results as a basis for creating a records management plan. School districts will find this to be a useful method for managing all types of historical records including, but not limited to, those that must be retained according to legal requirements.

The objectives of a records management system as outlined in Local Government Bulletin Number Three include:

- Establishment of appropriate retention periods for all records.
- Determination of which records are active and should be retained in office space.
- Determination of which records are inactive and should be moved to storage, if possible.
- Determination of which records can be destroyed because they have served their usefulness.
- Identification of confidential or sensitive records that need security measures to restrict access.
- Identification of essential records that require backup protection.
- Compliance with legal requirements.

The local record retention schedules published by the Texas State Library specify the legal retention periods for the records listed in each schedule. A school district may have records that are not listed on these schedules but are retained because they have administrative value. A school district should include these records in its records management plan and establish a retention period for each record type.

The process of identifying, analyzing, and appraising a school district's records should include the identification of records that are considered essential or vital to the operations of the district. These records must be protected by adequate backup procedures. In the event of a disaster, the backup copies of the records should then be available to continue operations. The school district should have a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, which may include secure storage and protection for backup tapes, diskettes or records stored in other formats. Typically this plan would include an off-site storage facility.

FINDING

The district's records management program policy, CPC (LEGAL)-P, complies with state laws and regulations.

MPISD records management is the responsibility of the secretary to the superintendent. The district files a written declaration of compliance with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission each calendar year.

The district has used Bulletin Number Three to establish its records management schedule and has defined retention and destruction timelines for all types of records and information.

Other local record retention schedules adopted and on file in the district include: Local Schedule GR, Local Schedule SD, and Local Schedule EL.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has implemented an effective records management program.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

This chapter examines the functions and activities of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District's (MPISD) purchasing, warehouse, and print shop operations:

- A. Purchasing
- B. Warehousing
- C. Print Shop

Ideally, a school district's purchasing department strives to acquire goods and services in the most efficient and effective way possible at the best price, at the right time, and in the right quantity. The school district must ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, and identify opportunities to cooperatively purchase goods with other jurisdictions when mutually beneficial to all parties.

Warehousing and distribution includes the receipt, storage, and distribution of a variety of goods ranging from school supplies and textbooks to vehicle parts. This function must ensure the availability of materials and supplies for teachers and students without stocking excess or unneeded supplies and materials.

School district print shop operations act as a cost-effective source of printed materials for school administrators and campuses in carrying out their service delivery to students and the public.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

A. Purchasing

BACKGROUND

Competitive procurement methods outlined by the Texas Education Code (**Exhibit 8-1**) must be used for all school district purchases valued at \$25,000 or more (exceptions are purchases of vehicle fuel and produce). The 1995 Texas Legislature expanded options for competitive procurement to include design-build contracts, competitive sealed proposals, and request for proposals for personal property and construction contracts. The Legislature added two procurement methods in 1997: job order contracts and contracts using construction managers.

Exhibit 8-1
Texas Education Code Competitive Procurement Methods
1999

Purchasing Method	Description
Competitive bidding	Requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms and conditions, and bid prices.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding, but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after proposal opening.
Request for Proposals	Furnishes a mechanism for the competitive sealed proposal process that generates the receipt of competitive sealed proposals and contains several key elements, including newspaper advertisement, notice to proposers, standard terms and conditions, special terms and conditions, scope of work, acknowledgment form/response sheet, felony conviction notice, and contract clause.
Catalogue Purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software and services only.
Inter-local Contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state, or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build Contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity to take responsibility for

	both the design and construction of a project.
Job order Contracts	Provides for the use of job order contracts for minor repairs and alternations.
Construction Management Contracts	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter, or repair facilities using a construction manager.

Source: Texas Education Agency.

State laws governing procurement for school districts have changed considerably. State law prohibits the use of competitive bidding for certain types of professional services, including engineering, architectural, financial auditing, land surveying, and certain other services. School districts are required to obtain written or telephone price quotations from at least three suppliers for purchases valued between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

The Texas Education Agency's (*TEA*) *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* describes cooperative purchasing as a promising trend. Cooperative purchasing includes one district participating with other districts or governmental entities to acquire goods and services.

The following benefits are possible through cooperative purchasing agreements:

- Cost savings on products or services. A cooperative purchasing arrangement can increase the buying power of a single district with volume discounts.
- Savings on administrative costs. A cooperative arrangement can reduce administrative costs relating to performing the purchasing function. Cost savings can include major areas such as salaries and benefits, supplies, office equipment and contracted services. A cooperative can result in the elimination of redundant costs, which may be associated with individual districts performing their own purchasing functions. Although purchasing cooperatives may charge annual fees for overhead costs, many districts can realize savings on both products and administration.
- Accessibility to more products and services. A cooperative may provide districts the opportunity to buy a greater variety of products and services. The district chooses what is best for its needs at lower costs.
- Cooperative purchasing arrangements may be open-ended allowing all that qualify to join. The General Services Commission's (GSC) cooperative purchasing program is such a program. Others may be selectively formed by two or more entities through an inter-local program.

The GSC cooperative purchasing program provides districts the ability to purchase goods and services at state contract prices. The local government code allows a district to participate in this program after its board executes a resolution certifying that it is an eligible participant and designates authorized administrative personnel to act on behalf of the district.

Inter-local purchasing cooperatives may consist of districts, counties, county education departments, cities, Regional Education Service Centers, community college districts, nonprofit corporations created and operated to provide one or more governmental functions and services to other local governmental entities. The size of the cooperative may vary along with the services and products offered. Some cooperatives have two members, while others have up to 100 members. A district may participate in multiple cooperatives. District boards simply adopt resolutions authorizing participation.

The operating characteristics of cooperatives vary widely. In some cases the lead agency in the cooperative receives and combines orders from participating districts, purchases in bulk, and stores purchases in a centralized warehouse. The lead agency then serves as the member districts' principal "vendor" and distributes goods as they are ordered and invoices each member district. It may offer a catalog of centralized warehouse merchandise. Distribution may be either direct delivery to the district or by pick-up at the cooperative's central warehouse. Other operating arrangements may allow each district to order directly from approved vendors at bulk prices negotiated by the cooperative. A third arrangement may have a lead agency serving as a warehousing site for other districts with each district responsible for pick-up of goods and products.

CURRENT SITUATION

The MPISD superintendent, deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, Business Office accounts payable clerk, and Business Office purchasing agent are responsible for district purchases once purchase requests are made by campus and department administrators. The superintendent reviews and provides final approval on all purchase orders and other purchase requests. The deputy superintendent assists the superintendent in reviewing proposed purchases, reviews all purchase orders and other purchase requests, and approves purchase orders and payment requests in the superintendent's absence. The accounts payable clerk reviews purchase orders and other purchase requests for budget availability and encumbers the requests on the district's financial management system before review and approval by the superintendent and deputy superintendent. The purchasing agent acts as a buyer and expediter

for all district purchases approved by the superintendent and deputy superintendent.

Although the district's organization chart reflects that the business manager has supervisory authority for daily activities of the accounts payable clerk and purchasing agent, the business manager is not actively involved in the district's purchasing functions. The district eliminated one staff position in the business office purchasing operation in January 1999, leaving the superintendent and deputy superintendent responsible for purchase approvals. As a result, the superintendent and deputy superintendent have official purchasing authority, and business office personnel report directly to them in this regard.

The superintendent, deputy superintendent, business manager, and purchasing agent were delegated the authority to act as agents for the district in purchasing activities. Under district policies, the board specifically approves all purchases exceeding \$25,000 (**Exhibit 8-2**).

**Exhibit 8-2
Purchasing Authority by Position
1998-99**

Position	Limit of Purchasing Authority
Board of Trustees	Over \$ 25,000
Superintendent	\$ 25,000
Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Operations	\$ 25,000
Business Manager	\$ 25,000
Purchasing Agent	None

Source: MPISD purchasing policies and procedures.

MPISD uses several purchasing methods for acquiring goods and services (**Exhibit 8-3**). In 1998-99, it executed an average of 40 open purchase orders, 17 competitive bids, 19 competitive sealed proposals, two requests for proposals, and six GSC catalog purchases a month.

**Exhibit 8-3
MPISD Monthly Purchases by Method
1995-96 through 1998-99**

Method	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Purchase Orders	480	480	540	540
Competitive bidding	19	14	14	17
Competitive sealed proposal - price quotations	8	26	22	19
Request for proposals	1	0	9	2
Catalogue purchases	4	12	9	6
Total monthly purchases	512	532	594	584

Source: MPISD business office data.

Sysco Foods was the district's top supplier by purchasing volume in 1997-98, followed by Kirby Restaurant Supply, and TRO Learning, Inc. (Exhibit 8-4).

Exhibit 8-4
Top Ten MISD Suppliers by Dollar Purchasing Volume - All Funds
1997-98

Name	Type of Goods or Services	Location	Amount Paid
Sysco Foods	Food Supplies	Dallas, TX.	\$ 401,330
Kirby Restaurant Supply	Equipment, Supplies and Maintenance	Longview, TX.	\$ 182,907
TRO Learning, Inc.	Computer Software support	Chicago, IL.	\$ 174,000
Segars	Computer Services	Dallas, TX.	\$ 139,156
H&R Foods	Food Supplies	Mt. Pleasant, TX.	\$ 87,293
Evergreen Tech	Computer Supplies	Dallas, TX.	\$ 80,452
Computer Land	Computer Products	Texarkana, TX.,	\$ 60,979
Apple Computer	Computer Products	Austin, TX.	\$ 53,637
Statewide Bus Sales	Transportation Equipment	Irving, TX.	\$ 43,772
Texas School Bus	Transportation Equipment	Austin, TX.	\$ 38,669

Center			
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Source: MPISD business office data.

Expenditures for materials and supplies increased by 58.8 percent from 1993-94 to 1997-98, while student enrollment grew by 7 percent during the same period (**Exhibit 8-5**). This increase is largely attributable to the opening of a junior high campus in 1996-97 and the Child Development Center in 1997-98.

Exhibit 8-5
MPISD Material and Supply Expenditures
1993-94 through 1997-98

Category	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change
Gasoline and other Fuels for Vehicles	\$ 94,344	\$ 53,931	\$ 89,088	\$ 101,896	\$ 107,122	13.5%.
Supplies for Maintenance and /or Operations	\$ 191,926	\$ 201,178	\$ 200,061	\$ 227,530	\$268,467	39.9%
Testing Materials	\$ 7,369	\$ 3,156	\$ 3,808	\$ 3,903	\$ 5,504	-25.3%
Food	\$ 418,990	\$ 438,413	\$ 443,248	\$ 526,228	\$ 568,913	35.8%
Non-Food	\$ 35,812	\$ 45,619	\$ 45,734	\$ 76,607	\$ 71,306	99.1%
Items for Sale	0	\$ 7,453	\$6,032	\$ 3,652	0	0
USDA Donated Commodities	\$ 62,456	\$ 54,240	\$ 54,007	\$ 64,406	\$65,706	5.2%
General Supplies	\$ 630,563	\$ 785,684	\$ 800,314	\$ 1,036,202	\$ 1,202,310	90.7%
Totals	\$1,441,460	\$1,589,674	\$ 1,642,292	\$ 2,040,424	\$ 2,289,328	58.8%

Source: MPISD business office data.

FINDING

The Purchasing Department adopted a purchasing code of ethics more than 10 years ago to ensure that its purchasing activities provide the best support possible for students, staff, faculty, and MPISD taxpayers (**Exhibit 8-6**).

Exhibit 8-6
MPISD Purchasing Code of Ethics

Objective	Description
1	Consider first the interests of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District and the enhancement of its educational impact.
2	Endeavor to monitor obtaining the greatest value for every tax dollar expended in a manner conducive to exemplary business practices and legal statutes.
3	Strive for thorough knowledge of school equipment and supplies in order to recommend items that may reduce costs and/or increase the efficiency of the educational program.
4	Give all responsible bidders equal consideration and the assurance of unbiased judgment in determining whether their products meet the educational needs of the district.
5	Prohibit and decline the offer of gifts or favors, which might influence, or be construed to influence, the purchase of goods or services.
6	Accord prompt and courteous reception to all that represent legitimate business transactions.
7	Hold sacred the goal of the Purchasing Department to provide support to the various entities of the District charged with the responsibility of creating an educational environment of excellence.
8	Seek constantly to identify and implement strategies and techniques that will enhance the level of service and integrity provided by the Purchasing Department.

Source: MPISD Purchasing Procedures Manual.

Although a number of districts prepare codes of ethics, MPISD has developed and maintained formal updates.

COMMENDATION

MPISD's Purchasing Department maintains an updated code of ethics to guide purchasing activities in the district.

FINDING

MPISD staff are expected to follow internally adopted purchasing policies and procedures to procure goods and services. The purchasing policies and procedures are documented in a comprehensive purchasing manual. Purchases under \$10,000 are made through a purchase order process; purchases between \$10,000 and \$25,000 are made through price quotations from at least three suppliers; and purchases of \$25,000 or more are made through competitive bidding. Purchases under \$200 are made through open purchase orders issued to local suppliers at the beginning of each budget year.

The purchasing manual is updated annually to include all changes in policy. The manual outlines procedures for making purchases and helps campus personnel follow established guidelines for purchasing. The manual assists the district's efforts to make the purchasing function as efficient as possible, while providing assurances that all purchasing laws incorporated in the district's adopted policies procedures are followed routinely. The assurances include obtaining the lowest possible prices for needed goods and services.

COMMENDATION

The MPISD comprehensive purchasing manual provides assurances that campus and departmental employees follow state laws and district policies and that the lowest possible prices are obtained for needed goods and services.

FINDING

Prior to 1996-97, payments to MPISD from vending machine sales were on a commission basis. Annual payments were \$45,000 to \$50,000. In August 1996, the district entered into an exclusive soft drink agreement with Pepsi to provide all soft drinks on every campus. The contract called for Pepsi to pay the school district \$270,000 over three years: \$100,000 in the first year and \$85,000 in both the second and third years of the agreement. The district entered into a snack contract with R&M Vending Company in 1996 that pays the district \$15,000 in each year of the contract. The Pepsi and R&M Vending contracts have initial terms of three years with options for renewal after this initial contract period. By changing how vending payments were made to the district, district leaders more than doubled annual vending revenue between 1997 and 1998.

Vending revenue from the contracts has been earmarked for student performance incentives, drug-free school programs, and college scholarships. Student incentives include recognition dinners, awards, and

certificates. College scholarships for a school year range from \$5,000 to \$7,000 and are awarded to honor students. Drug-free program expenditures are used to purchase program materials and supplies. The vending funds are monitored by the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and distributed to individual campuses once students are selected for recognition, scholarships, or inclusion in a drug-free program.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has increased revenues through districtwide contracts for soda and snack vending machines.

FINDING

The district uses both the GSC and the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) VIII purchasing cooperatives. To obtain the best prices available, the purchasing agent often compares prices offered by the GSC and RESC VIII purchasing cooperatives to those offered directly to the district by vendors. This practice helps ensure the district the lowest possible prices for goods and services. MPISD purchases 20 to 30 percent of its merchandise through the GSC and RESC VIII purchasing cooperatives.

COMMENDATION

MPISD obtains goods and services at reduced costs through cooperative purchasing arrangements

FINDING

MPISD processed 5,000 purchase orders in 1997-98, or 350 to 400 purchase orders a month. All MPISD purchase requests are processed by hand. The district processed 5,000 purchase orders in 1997-98 using a manual system of procedures (**Exhibit 8-7**).

Exhibit 8-7
MPISD Manual Purchasing Procedures
1998-99

Step	Description
1.	All purchase orders consist of eight parts and are pre-numbered. The purchase orders are stored in the administrative building vault.
2.	Groups of 25 pre-numbered purchase orders are sent to each school secretary at the individual campus.

3.	The school secretary receives requisition from teachers.
4.	The school secretary then types the purchase order. If the unit price is not known then the school secretary will call the purchasing department to obtain the unit cost.
5.	The school principal then reviews and signs the purchase orders as approved. The back white copy of the purchase order is retained by campus subsequent to sending the purchase order to accounts payable clerk in accounting.
6.	The purchase order is sent via inter-school mail to the accounts payable clerk in accounting.
7.	The accounts payable clerk checks for funds and encumbers.
8.	The purchase order then goes to either the superintendent, deputy superintendent of finance or business manger for final approval.
9.	The accounts payable clerk delivers the approved purchase orders to the purchasing agent.
10.	Purchasing agent then reviews the purchase order for accuracy and questions any items or prices.
11.	The white copy of the purchase order is sent to the vendor via mail or fax. If the goods are to be purchased locally the white copy is sent back to the school campus that originated the request so they can pickup the goods.
12.	The pink copy is sent to the warehouse manager.
13.	The yellow and green copy is sent to the accounts payable clerk.
14.	The gold copy stays in the purchasing department and is filed numerically. A copy of the requisition is attached to the gold copy.
15.	The pink copy is filed in file cabinet sorted by school campus.
16.	The blue copy is sent back to the school campus that originally requested the goods.

Source: MPISD purchasing manual.

The manual processing method described in **Exhibit 8-7** is cumbersome, in contrast to available enhancements afforded by computerized systems. The eight-part forms cost money to print, and time and effort to process.

The district's estimated cost of processing a purchase order using the manual system is \$20.26 per purchase order (**Exhibit 8-8**). The estimate was based on a total of 84 minutes per purchase order for staff positions involved in the district's purchase orders and were based on annual salary amounts, not including associated employee benefits. Based on the

district's annual purchase order volume of 5,000, the annual purchase order processing cost equals \$101,300.

Exhibit 8-8
MPISD Estimated Costs to Process a Purchase Order
Using Current System of Manual Procedures

Position	Hourly Salary	Salary Per Minute	Estimated Minutes to Process One Manual Purchase Order	Estimated Purchase Order Processing Cost
Superintendent	\$38.46	\$.64	2	\$1.28
Deputy superintendent. for Administration and Operations	\$28.85	\$.48	2	\$.96
Principal	\$22.50	\$.38	5	\$1.88
Teacher	\$20.83	\$.35	15	\$5.21
School/department secretary	\$12.50	\$.21	15	\$3.13
Accounts payable clerk	\$12.02	\$.20	20	\$4.01
Purchasing agent	\$9.13	\$.15	20	\$3.04
Warehouse manager	\$9.13	\$.15	5	\$.76
Total		N/A	84	\$20.26

Source: MPISD Business Office.

Automating the purchase order process function could reduce the time required for a typical purchase order to 36 minutes. The eight-part forms would no longer be needed, and on-line processing is faster and more efficient. The district's estimated cost of processing a purchase order using an automated purchase order processing system is \$9.99 per purchase order, a reduction in costs of \$10.37 per purchase order (**Exhibit 8-9**).

Exhibit 8-9
MPISD Estimated Costs to Process a Purchase Order Using an
Automated Purchase Order Processing System

Position	Salary Per Minute	Estimated Minutes	Estimated Purchase
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		to Process One Automated Purchase Order	Order Processing Cost
Superintendent	\$.64	2	\$1.28
Deputy superintendent. for Administration and Operations	\$.48	2	\$.96
Principal	\$.38	2	\$.75
Teacher	\$.35	10	\$3.47
School/department secretary	\$.21	0	\$0
Accounts payable clerk	\$.20	10	\$2.00
Purchasing agent	\$.15	10	\$1.52
Warehouse manager	\$.15	0	\$0
Total	\$.28	36	\$9.99
Cost Avoidance	N/A	N/A	\$10.37

Source: MPISD Business Office.

The district has access to the automated purchase order module in its Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) financial system. RESC VIII representatives said the district could handle necessary computer configuration changes internally and RESC VIII would not charge the district for training employees to implement the system.

Recommendation 49:

Implement the RSCCC automated purchase order system.

The district should implement the purchasing module with technical assistance and training support from RESC VIII. Once implemented, all purchasing forms should be eliminated. Teachers and other staff that initiate purchasing requests should do so on line.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATIGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager and data processing agent implement the automated purchase order processing module of the existing RSCCC financial system with technical support from RESC	June 1999
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	VIII.	
2.	The business manager oversees use of the new system for purchasing activities and ensures that all affected staff are trained.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

No costs are estimated to implement the new on-line purchase order system based on information provided by RESC VIII. Implementing an on line system will, however, allow the district to direct the efforts of MPISD staff to more productive endeavors.

FINDING

According to the district's accounts payable clerk, a vendor control number within the district's RSCCC financial accounting system is not required to pay a bill. One-time non-recurring purchases are not assigned vendor numbers, although recurring purchases are assigned vendor numbers for purposes of data accumulation regarding vendors. The absence of policies requiring that vendor numbers be assigned for all purchases creates a control weakness because the finance system is not equipped to handle queries on all amounts purchased by vendor. This weakness may lead to non-compliance with dollar requirements for quotations and bids and/or the payment of a bill to an unapproved vendor.

Recommendation 50:

Assign numbers to all approved vendors and enter them into the automated finance system.

All approved vendors should be assigned a number in the RSCCC finance system. This prevents payments to non-approved vendors, and allows the district to verify all combined purchases for each vendor. This feature ensures that state law requirements for purchasing are not violated inadvertently.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the business manager to revise procedures to require that vendor numbers be assigned to all approved vendors and entered in the RSCCC financial system.	April 1999
2.	Business office employees discontinue the processing of purchases without approved vendor numbers and track all vendor purchases to ensure state law compliance.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

For purchases between \$10,000 and \$25,000, the purchasing department is required to solicit three quotations from qualified vendors. The purchasing agent is responsible for obtaining the quotations. Although purchasing files are maintained, the quotations were not filed with corresponding purchase orders at the time of review. Quotations were filed in a disorganized manner in a file cabinet, preventing the review team from determining if the required number of quotations were obtained when required. Without this information, there is no assurance that the district has followed state law requirements for purchasing.

Quotation records can more efficiently be stored in a computer file for easier access and less bulky storage.

Recommendation 51:

Establish computer files to maintain all documentation records for required quotations.

The business manager should create a computer file to document each purchase between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The record should include all pertinent quotation information to ensure compliance with state law and district policies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager creates a computer spreadsheet that captures all required quotation information for each purchase.	April 1999
2.	The business manager trains the purchasing agent in the use of the spreadsheet and ensures that it is properly implemented.	March 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

Open purchase orders are issued to allow MPISD staff to purchase miscellaneous supplies and materials, services, or minor repairs as needed. The open purchase orders are not intended to be used to acquire items or

services other than those required for specific one-time job requirements or for tools as outlined in the MPISD purchasing procedures manual. Bids for such purchases are not taken. Between 30 and 40 open purchase orders are issued each month. Purchase orders are issued once a month to approved open purchase order vendors and are valid for the entire month. Total dollar amounts for such purchases are established by individual department heads. The highest annual amount under this system of open purchase orders in 1997-98 was paid to TRIJ's for \$22,340 (**Exhibit 8-10**).

Exhibit 8-10
MPISD Expenditures for Open Purchase Order Vendors
1997-98

Vendor	Annual Expenditure
TRIJ's	\$22,340
Foxworth-Galbraith Lumber	\$20,460
Sherwin Williams Paint Store	\$20,162
Doug's Horn Shop	\$14,888
H & R Distributing	\$13,742
Wal-Mart	\$10,668
Firmin's Office Supply	\$9,359
Big A Auto	\$7,592
Blue Bell Ice Cream	\$5,605
McCoys Lumber	\$5,102
Aratex Uniforms	\$4,487
Pepsi	\$4,426
Mason Hardware	\$3,646
Nortex Rental	\$3,564
Millhouse Supply	\$2,727
Delta Air Gas	\$2,402
Savemore Lumber	\$2,316
Professional Turf of Texas	\$2,243
NAPA Auto Parts	\$2,058
Liberty Bearing	\$1,931

Brookshire's	\$1,706
R&M Vending	\$1,619
Little Giant Tire	\$1,526
Price's Pizza	\$1,465
Economy Auto Supply	\$1,401
Elliott Electric	\$1,318
Freeman Feed & Fertilizer	\$1,258
A&E Mill & Welding	\$721
Bobby's Lawn Mower	\$653
Auto Zone	\$59

Source: MPISD business office data.

While the review team identified no abuses, open purchase orders create control problems by increasing opportunities for employees to abuse established purchasing policies.

Recommendation 52:

Eliminate open purchase orders.

The district should authorize specific employees to purchase goods and services needed through pre-authorized accounts with local vendors. As part of this measure, the district should require participating vendors to submit monthly bills with appropriate supporting documentation, such as work orders, to receive payment. This method provides appropriate financial controls, while still allowing immediate purchases for one-time job requirements. It also shifts administrative burdens from the MPISD Business Office staff to vendors. The district should ensure that the list of authorized employees and pre-approved vendors is reviewed annually and revised as necessary. Improvements in the control process and taking of bids for needed goods and services should provide the best possible prices available to the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager and purchasing agent revise procedures and discontinue the use of open purchase orders.	June 1999
2.	The business manager takes bids from local vendors for the annual purchase of goods and services needed by campuses and	July 1999

	departments on a recurring basis throughout the year.	
3.	The superintendent and business manager review the vendor responses to bids and make selection of vendors.	August 1999
4.	The superintendent submits the list of approved vendors to the board for formal approval.	August 1999
5.	The business manager and superintendent authorize employee and pre-approved vendor lists based on approved bids for the next fiscal year.	August 1999
6.	Campus and departmental employees begin the purchase of needed goods and services under revised procedures.	September 1999
7.	The business manager notifies approved vendors of revised policy requiring them to submit monthly bills with supporting documentation to receive payment.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

B. Warehousing

CURRENT SITUATION

The district's warehouse is in the former gymnasium next to the administration building. Total space in the warehouse is 7,200 square feet. Two district employees administer the warehouse, which stores 480 separate items including custodial, teacher, and office supplies. The warehouse manager is responsible for receiving goods delivered to the district and the delivery clerk makes daily deliveries to campuses and departments (**Exhibits 8-11** and **8-12**).

Exhibit 8-11
MPISD Warehouse Procedures for Purchase Orders
1998-99

Step	Description
1.	All goods are received by the warehouse manager.
2.	When goods are received the packing slip is matched to the pink copy of the purchase order which was previously received from the purchasing agent. Items received are noted on face of the purchase order.
3.	Goods received are recorded on the delivery record form (two-part form).
4.	Goods are delivered by the delivery clerk to the individual campus. Campus staff sign the delivery record. The yellow copy of the delivery record form is left at the campus.
5.	The white copy of the delivery record form comes back to the warehouse and is filed.

Source: MPISD Warehouse Department.

Exhibit 8-12
MPISD Warehouse Procedures for Stock Requisitions
1998-99

Step	Description
1.	The requisition (three-part form) is sent to the accounting clerk who forwards the requisition to the principal, (campus), or the administrative program/department head for approval. School secretaries have a listing of

	items available from the warehouse versus purchase requests requiring an outside purchase orders from vendors.
2.	Once the requisition is approved it is forwarded to the warehouse manager where the goods are pulled from stock.
3.	The goods are delivered to the individual campus by the delivery clerk. The campus staff sign the requisition to acknowledge receipt of goods.
4.	The requisition is returned to the warehouse and entered into the inventory program by the warehouse manager.
5.	The yellow copy is filed in the warehouse. The pink and white copy is sent to the accounting clerk who also enters the requisitions into the inventory program due to the warehouse department not being integrated into the districts accounting system. The white copy is kept by the accounting clerk and filed. The pink copy is sent to the campus where requisition originated and filed to maintain a record.

Source: MPISD Warehouse Department.

Textbooks are ordered annually based on state guidelines, and the warehouse manager is responsible for receiving all textbooks. The textbooks are delivered to the individual campuses and stored in a temperature-controlled room. A school textbook clerk reporting to the principal at each school is responsible for distributing and collecting textbooks, recovering the cost of lost textbooks from students, and storing textbooks not in use. The district employs a districtwide textbook custodian, who has reported no shortage of textbooks. All students have an opportunity to take textbooks home.

FINDING

The district uses an automated inventory tracking system for warehouse goods. The system records the number of items on hand and the average cost of the items. Inventoried items are matched to the purchase order and recorded on a warehouse receiving report (three-part form). The warehouse manager keys the information pertaining to the goods received into the inventory program. One copy of the form is filed in the warehouse, one is sent to the purchasing agent, and one is sent to the accounts payable clerk to process vendor payments for the goods ordered.

The inventory tracking system used by the warehouse supervisor has not been integrated with the district's RSCCC financial accounting software. The warehouse manager uses information in the tracking system to control quantities of warehouse stock on hand and to reorder when supply quantities get low. The Business Office must enter the same transactions in the RSCCC financial accounting system. Information from both

systems must be reconciled when physical counts are performed in the warehouse. This situation results in a duplication of effort on the part of warehouse and Business Office employees. The situation also increases the likelihood of errors in data entry and the potential for purchase abuses by district employees.

Recommendation 53:

Integrate the warehouse tracking system into the financial accounting system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The technology facilitator reviews the existing computer hardware to determine the best strategy for integrating the warehouse tracking system with the financial RSCCC finance system.	March 1999
2.	The technology facilitator builds the linkage for the two systems.	March 1999
3.	The warehouse manager and the business manager revise existing procedures to reflect the change in data entry.	March 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

C. Print Shop

CURRENT SITUATION

The district's print shop provides most of the district's printing services, other than small jobs that can be handled by copiers throughout the district. The print shop employs one individual who is also the print shop teacher. Vocational education students in printing classes provide much of the labor to produce printing jobs requested by schools and departments. The budget to operate the print shop for 1998-99 is \$53,552. Costs included in the print shop are salary and benefits for the print shop teacher, printing supplies, equipment maintenance and repair, and miscellaneous supply items.

FINDING

The district began operating the print shop as an internal service fund (ISF) in 1997-98. ISFs are separate funds that allow districts to operate support functions, such as printing, like a business. To operate effectively, the department providing the service establishes charges for services that are paid by users to cover all operating expenses, such as per-copy charges or labor fees to set up a job. Fees cover all expenses including labor, depreciation, supplies, materials, utilities, facilities use, and maintenance on equipment. The MPISD print shop sustained an operating loss of \$41,461 in 1997-98, while charges to district campuses and departments covered only 7.6 percent of the print shop operating costs (**Exhibit 8-13**).

Exhibit 8-13
MPISD Print Shop Costs
1997-98

Description	1997-98
Revenue from district campuses and departments	\$3,458
Personnel	(\$23,144)
Professional and contracted services	(\$2,099)
Supplies and Materials	(\$19,676)
Total expenses	(\$44,919)
Net Income (Loss)	(\$41,461)

Source: MPISD 1997-98 audited financial statement draft.

The print shop operation uses equipment that has been contributed by the general fund in past years. The operating costs of the activity do not include depreciation on equipment. The oldest equipment item used by the print shop is 28 years old and all equipment is considered fully depreciated (**Exhibit 8-14**).

Exhibit 8-14
Age of MPISD Print Shop Equipment
1998-99

Type of Equipment	Age in Years
Eskofot 245 Platemaker	28
Paper Drill Single Head Model	25
Interlake Stitcher Model A	17
Argyle G18Q Camera 14" X 18"	14
Watkiss WA45 Automatic Collator	13
Printer Jogger	12
Challenge Diamond 30 Paper Cutter	11
17" X 24" Angle Jogger-A.B. Dick	10
Spirit Process Duplication Machine	10
26" 31" Light Table	10
Light Table	10
Light Table	10
11 X 17 Martin Yale Folder	10
Emerald ST-7 Shrink Wrapping Machine	9
Duo Machine	8
Ryobi Press #1	7
Ryobi Press #2	5
Perf. Attachment	1

Source: MPISD print shop records.

Since 1993-94, the print shop has performed an average of 485 print jobs annually (**Exhibit 8-15**).

Exhibit 8-15
Jobs Performed by the MPISD Print Shop
1993-94 through 1997-98

Year	Number of Jobs
1993-94	437
1994-95	537
1995-96	507
1996-97	485
1997-98	461
Average annual number of jobs	485

Source: MPISD

In 1997-98, the print shop performed 461 jobs, but only received \$3,458 in revenues from district campuses and departments. Although the district has discussed the possibility of setting up a fee structure, none is in place, hence most costs are not paid by the users.

Recommendation 54: Establish a fee structure for print shop services and charge customers for all printing services.

The business manager should establish a revised print shop budget that identifies charges for print services that would eliminate the deficit. Print shop charges should be compared to private vendor charges for similar services. In addition, the district should outsource non-instructional printing services for jobs in excess of the print shop capacity.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager develops a proposed budget that specifies printing charges to internal users to eliminate the deficit and evaluates the feasibility of outsourcing non-instructional printing services.	June 1999
2.	The superintendent reviews and approves the budget and approves outsourcing non-instructional printing services if feasible.	July 1999
3.	The board approves the budget and the outsourcing option, if feasible.	August 1999
4.	The print shop teacher implements the board's recommendation.	September

		1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

Additional internal charges will offset the print shop's existing deficit.

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

This chapter of the report describes the Food Services operations of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) and includes the following sections:

- A. Organization and Staffing
- B. Operations
- C. Financial Management
- D. Facilities

The mission of a school Food Services program is to provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch to students and to break even financially. Several factors can be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a school food services operation. These include: a high ratio of meals served per labor hour (MPLH), food costs and the amount of waste, participation in breakfast and lunch programs, nutritional value and the variety of meals served, the wait time per student served, and financial self-sufficiency.

BACKGROUND

The federal government sponsors the National School Breakfast and Lunch programs, which provides food commodities and funds for meals for more than 26 million children annually in more than 94,000 schools across the country. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Child Nutrition Programs Division oversees the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs in Texas public schools.

CURRENT SITUATION

The MPISD Food Services Department operates eight kitchens and cafeterias and employs 63 staff, which serve seven schools and the Child Development Center. The high school kitchen prepares food for the alternative school. The department's annual operating budget for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program in 1997-98 was \$1,143,022. An Enterprise Fund for the Snack Bar had a budget of \$132,884.

The department has operated profitably and has a fund balance from 1997-98 of \$186,536. The department's annual budget is 4.5 percent of MPISD's total budget, compared to an average of 5.3 percent in RESC VIII school districts, and an average of 5 percent for all districts in the state.

MPISD participates in the federally-funded United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Services programs, which includes the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Donated Commodities, and the Food Distribution programs. MPISD receives additional federal funds for participating in the Head Start Program. For the 1998-99 school year, MPISD also will receive approximately \$10,000 in produce from a United States Department of Defense pilot program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Project, administered through the Texas Department of Human Services.

To qualify for federal reimbursement, school meals must meet minimum nutrition standards and appropriate nutrient and calorie levels designated for age group. Reimbursement means federal cash assistance, including advances paid or payable, to participating schools for breakfasts and lunches meeting the requirements and served to eligible children. Cash for meals is also received from the students, faculty, staff, and members of the community who eat in the schools. The district prepares 95 percent of its food from scratch, with tested recipes prepared by the USDA, and uses few, if any, convenience foods. Students are served on permanent ware; only cups, napkins, take-out containers, and a la carte snack bar items are served in disposable ware. **Exhibit 9-1** presents the reimbursable rates for each eligible breakfast and lunch served. These are the amounts the district is reimbursed by the federal government for each free and reduced-price breakfast or lunch served to eligible students.

Exhibit 9-1
MPISD Federal Reimbursable Rates For Breakfast and Lunch
1998-99

	Meal	Amount
Breakfast	Full Price	\$0.2000
	Reduced-Price	\$0.7725
	Free	\$1.0725
	Serve Need Reduced Price	\$0.2000
	Serve Need Free Price	\$0.2000
Lunch	Full Price	\$0.1800
	Reduced-Price	\$1.5425
	Free	\$1.9425

Source: Texas Education Agency.

The actual number of meals served compared to average daily attendance is referred to as the participation rate. Participation data are reported to the TEA, and schools are reimbursed on the percentage of participation for those students who are eligible. MPISD and peer districts are shown in **Exhibit 9-2**. MPISD ranked second among its peer districts in meal participation.

Exhibit 9-2
MPISD and Peer District Percentage
Of Average Daily Participation of Average Daily Attendance
1995-1998

Peer District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Liberty-Eylau	51%	50%	51%
Mt. Pleasant	42%	43%	51%
Corsicana	42%	40%	40%
Greenville	42%	42%	40%
Paris	43%	45%	39%
Athens	34%	30%	32%
Kilgore	32%	33%	29%
Kaufman	31%	28%	27%

Source: Texas Education Agency/WCL Enterprises.

According to the MPISD business manager, the district experienced a 10-percent decrease in reimbursable breakfast sales, a 17-percent increase in reimbursable lunches, 30-percent increase in snack bar and other sales, and an overall 13-percent increase in annual revenues from 1995-1998, as shown in **Exhibit 9-3**.

Exhibit 9-3
MPISD Food Services Annual Revenue Report
1995-96 - 1997-98

Revenue Source	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Breakfast sales	\$11,869	\$9,943	\$10,631	-10%
Sale of reimbursable lunches	\$140,140	\$141,573	\$163,661	17%

Snack Bar ala carte and other sales	\$182,033	\$196,935	\$236,458	30%
Sales to adults	\$34,631	\$32,106	\$35,040	2%
Federal reimbursement	\$780,664	\$779,634	\$862,250	11%
Miscellaneous Income	\$16,859	\$17,415	\$17,301	3%
Interest earned	\$14,124	\$15,335	\$10,882	-23%
Subtotal Income	\$1,166,196	\$1,176,706	\$1,325,342	13%
Total	\$1,180,320	\$1,192,042	\$1,336,225	13%

Source: MPISD Business Manager.

TEA compiles data on school food services revenues from all school districts in Texas. MPISD's peer district comparisons for food service revenues are shown in **Exhibit 9-4**.

Exhibit 9-4
MPISD and Peer District Revenues
1994-95 - 1996-97

District	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Budget 1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Greenville	\$1,527,046	\$1,625,132	\$1,667,394	\$1,658,000	8%
Corsicana	\$1,415,134	\$1,508,429	\$1,651,467	\$1,523,305	7%
Texarkana	\$1,563,395	\$1,634,275	\$1,644,260	\$1,523,672	-3%
Mt. Pleasant	\$1,066,917	\$1,122,625	\$1,224,682	\$1,020,700	-5%
Paris	\$1,202,467	\$1,302,289	\$1,202,467	\$1,387,329	13%
Terrell	\$1,091,925	\$1,1092,272	\$1,179,473	\$1,153,947	5%
Kilgore	\$964,324	\$877,734	\$898,850	\$872,000	-11%
Athens	\$847,544	\$896,193	\$858,747	\$1,015,545	17%
Liberty- Eylau	\$781,101	\$796,944	\$813,694	\$871,145	10%
Kaufman	\$647,694	\$642,846	\$666,261	\$628,201	-3%

Source: Texas Education Agency.

In 1997-98, MPISD served 480,877 total lunches, a 10-percent increase over 1995-96 (**Exhibit 9-5**). The total number of breakfasts served was 211,489; a 15-percent increase. MPISD has increased

participation in all types of meals served, except in breakfasts and lunches served at full price. The most significant increase was the 68-percent increase in breakfasts served at reduced price.

Exhibit 9-5
MPISD Statistical and Fiscal Report
1995-96 - 1997-98

Measure	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Days in operation	175	176	176	N/A
Lunches served at full price	129,593	124,171	123,549	-5%
Reimbursable lunches served at reduced price	25,382	32,784	38,000	5%
Reimbursable lunches served free	281,832	304,832	319,328	13%
Total lunches served	436,807	461,619	480,877	10%
Breakfasts served at full price	25,370	18,917	20,808	-18%
Breakfasts served at reduced price	8,908	11,795	14,995	68%
Breakfast served free	149,147	157,990	175,686	18%
Total breakfasts served	183,425	188,882	211,489	15%

Source: MPISD Business Manager.

TSPR surveyed the employees, teachers, parents, central administration, and support staff about Food Services (**Exhibit 9-6**). The results indicate the respondents' overall approval of the Food Services Department.

Exhibit 9-6
Summary of Survey Data
Management and Performance Review

	Grade
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Statement	A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	No Response
Quality of food served	23%	31%	25%	12%	3%	6%	0%
Efficiency and effectiveness of the Food Services Department	28%	38%	16%	4%	3%	8%	2%
The food served in the cafeteria tastes good	Strongly Agree 11%	Agree 41%	No Opinion 13%	Disagree 15%	Strongly Disagree 0%		7%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

Fifty-four percent of the teachers who responded gave either an "A" or "B" to the quality of food. Sixty-six percent of all respondents gave an "A" or "B" to the statement about the efficiency and effectiveness of the department. In the campus administrator survey, 52 percent of the participants "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the food served in the cafeteria tastes good.

The most recent TEA compliance review was completed in November 1997, resulting in four findings and two recommendations. The four findings were:

1. Some of the free and reduced-price meal applications reviewed in the district were incorrectly approved.
2. Some lunches observed on the day of the review in the district were missing one or more components.
3. The collection procedure used for lunch causes overt identification of those students receiving free and reduced-price meals at Mt. Pleasant Junior High School.
4. Food production records of meals served and claimed for reimbursement at lunch at E. C. Brice Elementary School are incomplete.

The review's two recommendations were:

1. Sack lunches (cold) should not be served to students as punishment; the cafeteria is capable of transporting hot meals safely.

2. Write and submit plan for the use of net cash resources in Food Services account.

The MPISD Food Services department prepared a corrective action plan that was accepted by TEA and implemented on December 11, 1997.

Chapter 9

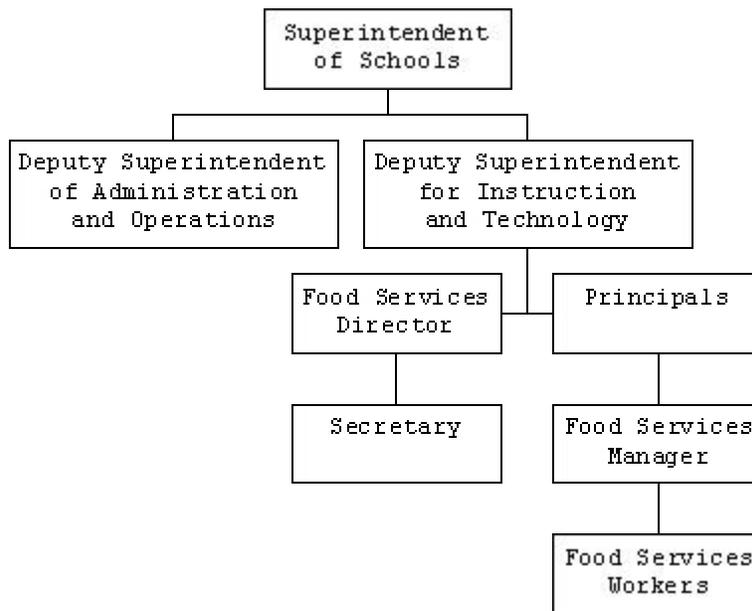
FOOD SERVICES

A. Organization and Staffing

CURRENT SITUATION

The department is organized as illustrated in **Exhibit 9-7**.

Exhibit 9-7 MPISD Food Services Organization



Source: MPISD.

FINDING

The Food Services Director reports to the deputy superintendent of Instruction and Technology on the MPISD organization chart. There is confusion on the part of the director and administration about the reporting structure. For example, many assume that the director reports directly to the superintendent. The director was promoted to her current position in 1993. MPISD created this position as a result of a recommendation from TEA, but no formal job description is on file for this position. Before that time, the department had no director, and each school's kitchen manager reported to the principal and the deputy superintendent.

The director has implemented many programs since 1993, including increases in reimbursement, a second breakfast program at the high

school, educational seminars for staff, new menu items for the secondary students, and the implementation of a new cash management system. The director has served as an officer of Texas School Food Services Administrators (TSFSA) organization, and is certified by the American School Food Services Society (ASFSA).

TEA has not established the qualifications for a Food Services director according to the RESC VIII Child Nutrition Program Specialist. Most school districts in RESC VIII do not have written job descriptions for Food Services employees although some have made efforts to write them. The job description that is used as a prototype in RESC VIII was developed in the Tatum ISD. The qualifications for the director in the Tatum prototype are:

Education/Certification:	Certification with Texas School Food Services Association with hours equal to supervisor level.
	Director of Food Services shall act in a consulting capacity to principals on matters pertaining to the formation and execution of state and school policy dealing with student activities in the cafeteria.
Special Knowledge/Skills:	Knowledge of nutritional requirements of children.
	Knowledge of menu planning based on state and federal regulation.
	Knowledge of purchasing procedures and procurement laws.
	Experience in safety precautions and accident prevention.
	Ability to work with others in a cooperative manner.

In addition, the prototype job description outlines major responsibilities and duties.

Upon review of the activities performed by the director, using the Tatum prototype, most of the responsibilities are being performed. However, the Food Services Director does not hire, evaluate, and dismiss employees, work cooperatively with principals in carrying out programs that require the cafeteria's use, or prepare a budget.

The financial management of the Food Services Department is not under the direction of the Food Services Director. Financial data is gathered in the Food Services Department but is forwarded to the business manager.

The director does not develop the budget, compare actual to budgeted expenses, or keep any accounting of payroll or other expenses. The director is unclear about any budget requirements, revenues, or payroll expenses. She only implements it once it has been approved.

There are two separate budgets for the reimbursable meals and for the snack bars. Most food services directors prepare annual budgets with assistance from the business manager and superintendent. When TSPR asked for financial data for this review, all of the information had to be obtained from the central administration staff.

The Food Services Director's present salary is \$24,164 per year plus benefits. Compared to similar positions in peer districts, the Food Services Director is making much less than directors in all but one other district (**Exhibit 9-8**).

Exhibit 9-8
MPISD and Peer District Food Services Director's Salary

District	Food Services Director Salary	Enrollment
Liberty-Eylau	\$19,936	2,704
Mt. Pleasant	\$24,164	4,281
Corsicana	\$29,925	5,045
Peer district average	\$36,146	4,058
Kaufman	\$34,940	2,960
Kilgore	\$36,917	3,687
Greenville	\$40,032	5,284
Paris	\$40,095	3,926
Athens	\$40,700	3,477
Terrell	\$46,456	4,023
Texarkana	\$48,300	5,200

*Source: Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools
Administrative/Professional
Report 1996-97 and 1997-98.*

Recommendation 55:

Develop a job description for the Food Services Director and increase the salary to be commensurate with the new duties and responsibilities expected of the director.

The ongoing evaluation of the budget during the year will allow the Food Services Director to evaluate actual-to-budget expenses year-to-date and compare them to the previous year. If there are variances, the director can evaluate and justify and make other adjustments to keep within the budget. Labor and food represent the largest expenditures for food services and the director would be able to monitor and control with ongoing evaluation of the budget. The revenues also can be budgeted, monitored, and evaluated. The budget is the tool for the director to use to successfully manage the finances of the department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent and the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology review the Food Services Director's present job duties and develop a job description.	April 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology discusses the proposed job description with the Food Services Director.	May 1999
3.	The Food Services Director is evaluated yearly using the job description.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of increasing the director's salary would cost the district \$14,978 annually (peer district average of \$36,146 minus current salary of \$24,164 = \$11,982 plus \$2,996 or 25 percent benefits for a total \$14,978).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Develop a job description for the Food Services Director and increase the salary to be commensurate with the new duties and responsibilities expected of the director.	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)	(\$14,978)

FINDING

Each MPISD school has a kitchen manager who reports to the principal and the Food Services director. The Mt. Pleasant High School kitchen prepares meals for the Alternative Education School.

In the fall of 1998, the new Child Development Center opened with a kitchen and cafeteria to serve children from infancy to five years of age. The employees in the kitchens report to the kitchen manager but are evaluated by the school principals.

The Food Services director does not have authority to hire, fire, or evaluate managers and employees. In focus groups conducted with managers and employees of Food Services, there were numerous comments about lack of consistency in how often or when yearly evaluations were performed, confusion over whom employees reported to, and inequities in how raises were given. The Food Service director does not review or sign evaluations. These files are kept in the deputy superintendent's office. In the focus groups, some managers stated they evaluate their employees for their own files. Some employees stated that they were never evaluated.

TSPR reviewed a random sampling of 21 employee evaluations of Food Services employees. The evaluation forms were different and used inconsistently. Thirteen did not have a date, and 17 had no written feedback in the categories for performance goals, general comments, and employee comments. The managers or director of Food Services had no review or input into the evaluations. According to the deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations, generic performance evaluation forms for all campus personnel were distributed to each principal to be used for the food services employees.

Recommendation 56:

Give the Food Services Director the authority to evaluate kitchen managers and staff.

The Food Services Director should have full responsibility for evaluating kitchen managers and staff with input from principals. The kitchen manager should provide input into the staff's evaluation. All evaluations should be completed annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services Director, superintendent, and principals evaluate present system for evaluating employees in Food Services.	March 1999
2.	Personnel department assists the Food Services Director in	Anril

	developing an appraisal system.	1999
3.	The Food Services Director presents the new appraisal system to the deputy superintendent of Instruction and Technology and superintendent for approval.	May 1999
4.	The Food Services Director implements the new appraisal system.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented within existing budget.

FINDING

MPISD employs a multi-cultural workforce (**Exhibit 9-9**), some of whom do not speak English. Job descriptions are written in English only, and none of the Food Services managers are bilingual. Employees who are bilingual are often used to translate instructions for the non-English-speaking employees. MPISD job descriptions do not require Food Services employees to speak English. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission requires employers who hire non-English-speaking employees to provide materials written in their native language.

Other districts facing a language challenge translate recipes and material safety data sheets for chemicals into Spanish to ensure safety and consistency. In Spring ISD, the district offers English as a second language classes to help the Food Services department integrate non-English-speaking employees into the workforce. MPISD offers parenting classes in the Child Development Center that include English.

Exhibit 9-9
MPISD Food Services Employee Ethnicity
1998-1999

School	Anglo	African-American	Hispanic
Mt. Pleasant High School	4	2	2
Mt. Pleasant High School Snack Bar	7	3	0
Mt. Pleasant Jr. High School	5	2	1
Wallace Middle School	2	2	3
Corprew Intermediate School	7	1	0
Sims Elementary School	4	2	0

Brice Elementary School	3	1	1
Fowler Elementary School	1	3	1
Child Development Center	4	2	1
Total	37	18	7

Source: MPISD Food Services.

Recommendation 57:

Provide job descriptions, training materials, and recipes for Food Services employees in English and Spanish, and encourage employees to take advantage of literacy courses offered by the district and community.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services director contacts RESC VIII, the Texas School Food Services Association, the Texas Restaurant Association, the local health department, and the MPISD personnel department for information and training materials written in other native languages, such as Spanish.	May 1999
2.	Food Services managers are presented the information and written materials prepared in Spanish for incorporation into present materials.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

B. Operations

CURRENT SITUATION

To qualify for reimbursements, meals must meet minimum nutrition standards and appropriate nutrient and calorie levels designated for each age group. The School Lunch and Breakfast Agreement is a legal contract between the TEA and each school district that participates in the programs. The provisions are identical to those of the TEA and the USDA. The following are the terms of the agreement:

- Serve a lunch and/or breakfast that meets meal requirements;
- Maintain proper sanitation and health standards that conform with all applicable state and local laws;
- Comply with record-keeping requirements;
- Provide free and reduced-price meals to eligible children;
- Comply with financial requirements and provisions;
- Accept and use commodities;
- Operate the program on a nonprofit basis.

To extend its agreement, each school district must complete a renewal agreement on the Child Nutrition Programs Information System (CNPIS) at the end of each school year.

School meal participation rates are calculated by dividing the total number of meals served each month at a school by the average daily attendance the school was in session that month. Funds are received from cash transactions and reimbursements

The objective in setting student meal prices usually is to keep the reimbursable student breakfasts and lunches priced as low as possible. School districts typically price these meals below cost and make up the difference with revenue earned from a la carte sales, catering, and local funds. MPISD meal prices are shown in **Exhibit 9-10**.

Exhibit 9-10
MPISD Meal Prices
1998-1999

Type of Meal	Price
Student High School Breakfast	\$0.50

Student High School Lunch	\$1.50
High School Adult Breakfast	\$0.75
High School Adult Lunch	\$2.00
Jr. High School Student Breakfast	\$0.50
Jr. High School Student Lunch	\$1.25
Adult Breakfast Jr. High	\$0.75
Adult Lunch Jr. High	\$2.00
Elementary Schools and CDC Breakfast	\$0.50
Elementary Schools and CDC Lunch	\$1.00
Elementary School and CDC Adult Breakfast	\$0.50
Elementary Schools and CDC Adult Lunch	\$2.00

Source: MPISD Food Services.

Through cooperation with the Texas Department of Human Services, school districts can obtain a computerized file of all families in the district that are eligible to receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and food stamps. This data can be downloaded into a district's certification program so that students who are eligible for TANF are automatically qualified for free and reduced-price meals offered by the district. This information can be obtained on an ongoing basis to maintain the most current eligibility.

In **Exhibit 9-11**, MPISD participation rates for reimbursable meals is shown. The participation rates vary, with the high school and junior high school having the lowest percentages. Each of these has snack bar lines and only cash is taken.

Exhibit 9-11
MPISD Reimbursable Meal Participation Rates
October 1998

School	Breakfast	Lunch
Mt. Pleasant High School	11%	36%
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	12%	27%
Wallace Middle School	24%	77%
Corprew Intermediate School	31%	77%

Fowler Elementary School	38%	70%
Sims Elementary School	33%	62%
Brice Elementary School	24%	61%
Child Development Center	81%	106%

Source: MPISD Food Services/WCL Enterprises.

FINDING

The Food Services department in comparison with peer districts has increased its federal reimbursements by 20 percent since 1995 (**Exhibit 9-12**); a greater increase than all the peer districts.

Exhibit 9-12
Percentage Change in Federal Reimbursements
MPISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 - 1997-98

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Mt. Pleasant	\$760,252	\$824,670	\$910,853	20%
Corsicana	\$981,063	\$1,037,478	\$1,109,867	13%
Terrell	\$773,051	\$772,963	\$826,942	12%
Greenville	\$967,564	\$999,749	\$1,069,876	11%
Texarkana	\$1,114,463	\$1,139,956	\$1,215,973	10%
Liberty-Eylau	\$566,190	\$584,746	\$607,606	7%
Paris	\$833,297	\$820,843	\$864,224	4%
Kaufman	\$400,919	\$393,069	\$414,464	3%
Kilgore	\$532,091	\$490,686	\$523,822	-2%
Athens	\$520,618	\$571,557	\$518,025	-10%

Source: Texas Education Agency.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has increased its federal fund reimbursements for breakfast and lunch participation by 20 percent since 1995.

FINDING

Beginning this school year, a second breakfast program was implemented during the activity period at Mt. Pleasant High School. This change has resulted in increased revenues of \$1,371 per month, over the 1997-98 school year. Items that count as a reimbursable breakfast meal are sold, including juice, milk, baked items, and cereal. Some students eat breakfast twice, before school and during the activity period. Other students who did not eat at the first breakfast eat during the activity period. Teachers also can purchase these food items. The students are benefiting from the extra nutrition, and the school district is benefiting from the extra revenue.

COMMENDATION

Food Services serves a second breakfast meal during the activity period at the high school, which has increased revenues and improved student nutrition.

FINDING

In 1997-98, MPISD implemented a cash control system from the Texas Cash Register Systems. The system, Café Terminal, runs a point-of sale (POS) software program that processes cafeteria sales quickly, tracks all meals and items sold and generates management reports. The system was first installed in the high school and junior high school. Now, all district schools are on line.

The benefits of the Café Terminal system are: ensuring student confidentiality in the free and reduced-price meal program, compliance with government regulations, reduced processing time, reduced labor hours, and increased student participation. When the students scan their meal cards, student information comes up on the monitor, including a picture. Special dietary needs also are noted, as well as an account balance. The system also records whether the student has already eaten that day. Cafeteria managers report that this system is a great help because in the previous manual system it was hard to keep up with students going back through the line who were getting reimbursable meals.

The Free and Reduced price Meal Application Program (FARMA) contained in the Café Terminal system is designed to process, verify and maintain free and reduced-price applications for the National School Lunch Program. The use of FARMA prevents computational errors in determining eligibility and ensures compliance with state and federal guidelines. The Food Services director reports the program has saved valuable time, reduces paper work and allows audits to go smoothly and error free.

The system capabilities include the processing of sales, photo ID cards, a complete database of all of the information needed to track the status of student accounts. It also issues individual account statements, generates accounting reports and monthly count and cash receipt forms. Studies have shown that school districts that are using Café Terminal have noted increased participation.

COMMENDATION

MPISD has implemented a cash management system that ensures confidentiality in the free and reduced-price meal programs, saves time, reduces errors, includes a complete database of its patrons, and produces more accurate reports on the numbers of meals served.

FINDING

The review team found that the district is not obtaining all of the federal reimbursement funds possible. Unlike other districts, MPISD is not claiming its snack bar a la carte items as a reimbursable meal under the National School Breakfast and Lunch programs.

In addition, while meal participation rates, on which federal reimbursement is based, have increased, opportunities still exist to increase revenue. For example, school districts in other parts of Texas have allowed parents to prepay student meals with credit cards, which has increased revenues. Prepayment ensures that the children will participate in the program and eliminates the problem of their forgetting their breakfast or lunch money.

Moreover, promotional items such as deli sandwiches or food carts also have proved successful in some districts. In districts no larger than MPISD, officials have initiated innovative promotions to increase meal participation rates, which increases revenues, including federal reimbursements. For example, Dripping Springs and Lake Travis ISDs have closed campuses, such as Mt. Pleasant ISD, and have instituted a food court concept. White Oak ISD is an open campus district and operates a snack shack, candy shack, and salad bar at the high school.

Brownsville ISD (BISD) is known for operating an exemplary Food Service Department. BISD has successfully implemented the food-court concept at its secondary schools and increased breakfast participation by 600 percent by delivering sack breakfasts to all classrooms during the second period. Cafeterias are decorated with themes representing different menu plans that are available, and BISD has kiosks located throughout the cafeterias and courtyards that offer sack meals, which qualify as reimbursable meals. These options increase the students' choices and reduce serving time.

Recommendation 58:

Increase meal participation in the breakfast and lunch programs.

The Food Services Director can evaluate the potential increase in revenue if MPISD seeks federal reimbursement for snack bar, ala carte items.

The high school cafeteria and the junior high school could have additional special meal lines for promotional items that could increase revenues. Examples are deli sandwiches, yogurt machines, grab and go sack lunches, and food carts that would rotate with different ethnic foods every day.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services Director, managers, and the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology discuss ways to increase meal participation.	July 1999
2.	The district implements the credit card payment option districtwide.	August 1999
3.	The Food Services Director and managers develop a customer survey for students and faculty.	September 1999
4.	The Food Services Director and purchasing agent contact food product manufacturers to request help in providing promotional giveaways.	September 1999
5.	The Food Services Director and the business manager begin work to include a la carte sales as a component of average daily participation.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Vending machines are located in the high school, junior high school, and middle school. The machines are left on during meal times. TSPR's review team observed students purchasing food and sodas in the vending machines rather than meals offered in the cafeteria. This has resulted in direct competition with the cafeteria's meal services.

The TEA Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 16.1, states, "School districts must establish rules or regulations as are necessary to control the sale of foods in competition with meals served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program. Such rules or regulations shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value in the foodservice area during the breakfast and lunch periods. The restricted foods may be sold, at the discretion of local school officials, in other areas of the school campus throughout the school day."

In addition to the vending machines' close proximity to the cafeteria, teacher groups and parent booster organizations also frequently offer food of limited nutritional value to students near the cafeteria (**Exhibit 9-13**)

**Exhibit 9-13
Location and Types of Vending Machines**

School	Locations	Types
Mt. Pleasant High School	Outside of the cafeteria doors and inside the snack bar	4 soft drink machines 2 snack machines
Mt. Pleasant Junior High School	Outside of the cafeteria doors	2 soft drink machines 2 snack machines
Wallace Middle School	Outside of the cafeteria, and inside of the cafeteria	2 soft drink machines 2 snack machines
Corprew Intermediate School	None	
Fowler Elementary school	Inside cafeteria	Juice machine
Sims Elementary school	Inside cafeteria	Juice machine
Brice Elementary school	Inside cafeteria	Juice machine
Child Development Center	None	

Source: MPISD Food Services.

Recommendation 59:

Comply with the Competitive Food Policy required by the Child Nutrition Program and as outlined in the TEA Administrator's Reference Manual.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services Director and the principals meet and review the Child Nutrition Program policies on vending machines and rules governing fund raising events during meal times.	March 1999
2.	The Food Services Director and the principals develop new guidelines for vending machine placement and rules governing fundraising events in the area of the cafeteria.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The labor costs for the 1997-98 budget year will be 43 percent of the budget for the National School Lunch program, 40 percent for the snack bar, and 48 percent for the cafeteria. These figures include the costs of the management staff, employees, benefits and retirement. The most common way to determine productivity in school food services is to calculate the number of meals per labor hour (MPLH).

MPLH is used throughout the school food services industry to ensure proper staffing. MPLH is figured by dividing the number of meals served by the total number of hours worked over a given time period. MPISD does not track MPLH at the district or school cafeterias levels. It is difficult to determine if the MPISD kitchens are overstaffed because cash transactions are not counted when measuring meal equivalents. The review team requested a daily revenue report for each school and the revenues converted to meal equivalents. **Exhibit 9-14** shows the MPLH calculated by the recommended methods and shows the variance from industry standards based on the number of meals served.

The industry productivity standards for food services is meals per man-hour, or labor-hour. These productivity indicators are used in health care, business and industry dining, restaurants, and school districts. Meals are units of productivity and labor costs, and are measured using these units. TSPR used the snack bar revenues and calculated a meal equivalent based on \$2 per meal to determine meal equivalents. MPISD does not report the

snack bar revenues as part of its food service operations and does not include a la carte items in the reimbursable meal equation. The productivity for the Food Services is low and does not reflect the actual number of meals that the employees are preparing.

Exhibit 9-14
MPISD Food Services Department
Meal Equivalents Per Labor Hour Comparison
October 1998

School	Average Daily Meal Equivalent	Meals Per Labor Hour	Recommended Meals Per Labor Hour	Variance
Mt. Pleasant High School	1,185	11	18	-7
Mt. Pleasant Jr. High School	598	10	14	-4
Wallace Middle School	691	13	16	-3
Corprew Intermediate School	808	13	18	-5
Fowler Elementary School	541	14	15	-1
Sims Elementary School	532	12	15	-3
Brice Elementary School	451	12	14	-2
Child Development Center	443	8	14	-6
Total			124	-31

Source: Computed from MPISD Food Services.

Recommendation 60:

Implement MPLH standards for each school cafeteria.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services Director contacts other school districts that have been successful at improving productivity and reducing labor costs and determines what practices could be adopted in MPISD.	May 1999
2.	The Food Services Director and the managers develop a plan to reduce labor costs and determine if the meal equivalents are being calculated accurately.	May 1999

3.	The Food Services Director conducts training sessions for managers on increasing productivity and specific strategies to reduce labor costs or increase revenues and participation.	May 1999
4.	The Food Services Director generates productivity/MPLH records each month and shares them with cafeteria managers.	May 1999
5.	The Food Services Director requires each manager to develop a plan for each school to improve productivity/MPLH.	May 1999
6.	The Food Services Director implements MPLH standards districtwide.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Food Services Department has no automated system for purchasing inventory or bid comparisons. Inventories are performed manually and updated in the Food Services Director's office and also in purchasing.

It is estimated that the purchasing agent spends one-quarter of her time each day on Food Services purchasing. Twice a year, the purchasing agent spends three to four weeks preparing bid requests and acceptances.

Automated inventory systems in Food Services departments can reduce food costs by 5 to 12 percent annually. These types of systems usually cost \$4,200 for the system and \$1,000 for the terminals in each school.

The warehouse manager states that the warehouse inventory system could be set up for other departments if it was properly networked.

Recommendation 61:

Integrate the warehouse inventory system with the point-of-sale cash management system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services Director and the warehouse manager evaluate the inventory system's capabilities to determine if it can be networked with Food Services.	August 1999
2.	The Food Services Director evaluates inventory systems by contacting peer districts and food services software companies	August 1999

	and evaluating the components.	
3.	The Food Services Director presents the information about the inventory system preferred and the price to the deputy superintendent of Instruction and Technology for review and approval.	September 1999
4.	The food service inventory system is implemented.	October 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

When the students or teachers do not have their meal cards, the Food Services managers have to stop and look up the identification number and key it into the Café Terminal system. This delay slows down the serving lines. There have been incidents where a teacher in an elementary school lost all of the students' cards and all of the children had to have their identification numbers keyed in. There is no charge for lost cards. USDA has issued a policy on handling lost, stolen, and misused meal cards. Outlined in section 4.2 of TEA's Administrator's Reference Manual for Child Nutrition Programs, the policy states that schools may establish their own procedures on this matter, following specific criteria.

Recommendation 62:

Develop a procedure for replacing lost meal cards.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services Director writes the procedure for lost meal cards and presents to the principals and deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.	August 1999
2.	The principals present the policy to the teachers and staff, and letters are sent to the parents about the new procedure.	August 1999
3.	The principals and the Food Services Director implement the new policy.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

If a student or staff person does not have the money to pay for a meal, they are allowed to charge up to \$15. When that limit is reached, the system is programmed to reject additional charges. However, when charges reach the \$15 limit, some managers void the transaction and the student or faculty member eats free. The review team estimated that approximately six to eight meals per day are voided, costing the district approximately \$12 (\$2 x 6 meals) per day. One manager set up an additional account for those that have not paid so that the transactions can be tracked separately inside the system.

Recommendation 63:

Develop policies to address the payment of meals for teachers, staff, or students who do not pay or who have reached the limit for charging.

Revenues can be increased \$2,184 per year above current annual revenues by enforcing procedures that address the serving of free meals.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services director writes a proposed policy and presents to the principals and the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology.	April 1999
2.	The principals discuss the proposed policy to the teachers and staff.	May 1999
3.	The principals and the Food Services Director implement the new policy.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The \$2,184 of additional revenue is calculated based upon the district losing \$12 per day x 182 days of operation.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Develop policies to address the payment of meals for teachers, staff, or students who do not pay or that have reached the limit for charging.	\$2,184	\$2,184	\$2,184	\$2,184	\$2,184

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

C. Financial Management

BACKGROUND

A major source of funding for school district food service operations comes from the federal government through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Food service operations accounting and reporting information is discussed by the Texas Education Agency in four categories: the appropriate use of funds, accounting issues, revenue recognition (commodities) and fund balance.

According to the TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*, the food service operations of a school district must be accounted for in one of three different funds: the general fund, a special revenue fund, or an enterprise fund (**Exhibit 9-15**). The fund in which a school district records food service operations depends primarily upon the source of the operation's funding; whether general fund revenues subsidize the food service operations; and if the school district's intent is for the food service operation to be self-sustaining.

Exhibit 9-15
School District Food Service Operation Fund Decision Chart

Situation	General Fund	Special Revenue Fund	Enterprise Fund
Students are charged for meals	No	Yes	Yes
NSLP funds are received	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
The general fund subsidizes the food service fund for expenditures in excess of the NSLP reimbursement	Yes	Yes	No
The school district's intent is for the food service operation to be self-sustaining	No	Yes/No	Yes

Source: Texas Education Agency Financial Accountability System Resource Guide 1998.

A school district must record its food service operations in the general fund if one of the following conditions exist: students are not charged for meals and all expenditures are paid from general fund revenues and a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reimbursement; students are not charged for meals and all expenditures are paid from general fund revenues; or the school district does not participate in the NSLP.

A school district must record food service operations in the special revenue fund if the students are charged for meals; the school district receives an NSLP reimbursement; or the school district's general fund revenues subsidize the food service operations.

A school district may record food service operations in the enterprise fund if the students are charged for meals, or the school district's intent is for the food service program to be self-sustaining; that is, general fund revenues do not subsidize the program.

After the school district's management determines which fund most appropriately reflects the activity of the food service operations, several accounting issues must be addressed based on which of the three funds the district decides is more appropriate for its circumstances (**Exhibit 9-16**). In an enterprise fund, fund code 701 is used for food service operations with the exception of the United States Department of Human Services (DHS) Summer Feeding Program, which is accounted for in special revenue fund code 242.

Exhibit 9-16
School District Food Service Fund Accounting Issues

Requirement	General Fund	Special Revenue Fund	Enterprise Fund
Fund Codes	199	240	701, 702
Basis of Accounting	Modified Accrual	Modified Accrual	Accrual
Measurement Focus	Flow of Current Financial Resources	Flow of Current Financial Resources	Flow of Economic Resources
Budgeted Fund	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed Asset Accounting	In General Fixed Assets Account Group	In General Fixed Assets Account Group	Within the Enterprise Fund
Denreciation of	No	No	Yes

Fixed Assets Recorded			
Long-Term Debt Recorded	In General Long-Term Debt Account Group	In General Long-Term Debt Account Group	Within the Enterprise Fund
Profit and Loss Measurement	No	No	Yes
Recognition of Federal Assistance	Recorded as Operating Revenue	Recorded as Operating Revenue	Recorded as Non-Operating Revenue
Recognition of Commodities Received from USDA	Recorded as Operating Revenue	Recorded as Operating Revenue	Recorded as Non-Operating Revenue
Recognition of Interest Revenue	Recorded as Operating Revenue	Recorded as Operating Revenue	Recorded as Non-Operating Revenue
Recognition of Interest Expense	Unmatured Interest on General Long-Term Debt Is Recorded When Due	Unmatured Interest on General Long-Term Debt Is Recorded When Due	Recorded in Accounting Period in Which It Is Incurred

Source: Texas Education Agency Financial Accountability System Resource Guide 1998.

The general fund and the special revenue fund require the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized in the accounting period when they are measurable and available, and expenditures are recognized when an event or transaction is expected to draw upon current expendable resources. The enterprise fund requires the accrual basis of accounting. Under the accrual basis of accounting, income is recognized when earned and expenses are recognized when incurred.

Regardless of the type of fund selected for recording food service operations, the food service budget must be included in the annual budget approved by the school district's board of trustees and reported to the TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

In the general fund and the special revenue fund, a school district may not have a fund balance exceeding three months' average food service operating expenditures. In addition, these balances must be used exclusively for allowable child nutrition program purposes.

FINDING

MPISD uses special revenue funds to account for its main food service programs. However, the district also uses an enterprise fund to account for the operation of its snack bar operations. The snack bar operates in the school cafeterias during normal lunch hours, and students can choose between the snack bar and the regular lunch line during any given lunch period. The enterprise fund's operations are not part of the Food Service Department's budget. The expenditures of this fund are used solely for the benefit of the snack bar's operations.

According to provisions in federal law: "All revenues received by or accruing to the school foodservice must be used only for the operation and improvement of the foodservice program. Revenues include, but are not limited to, receipts from: (1) operations of the lunch and breakfast programs; (2) snack bar and a la carte programs; (3) earning on investment; (4) other local revenues; and (5) federal and state reimbursement received by or accruing to the school foodservice. Foodservice account funds may not be used for expenditures that are not directly related to the foodservice operation although they are part of the district's general fund."

As far as TSPR could tell, the money is staying in the snack bar program and includes ongoing funding for costs of the snack bar, including payroll allocations, food supplies and related materials, and other operating expenses. The problem with the accounting treatment, according to TEA, is that the revenue should be considered program revenue of the federally funded food service program and accounted for in the main food service special revenue fund, thus subjecting it to all of the compliance requirements associated with the federal program.

TEA never cited MPISD for this accounting error because MPISD's external auditor did not point it out in findings in annual audit reports. The TEA relies heavily on school districts' independent auditors for this type of compliance finding.

Handling the snack bar operation as a separate enterprise fund, the district is unable to determine if it is in compliance with the fund balance level requirements and the appropriate uses of food service program revenues. The district's current method of accounting for the snack bar operation does not allow for submitting the financial data associated with all of

district's food service operations to the TEA through PEIMS. The TEA uses financial data submitted through PEIMS to compare school district food service operations. The district is not in compliance with the TEA's budgeting requirements for food service operations because the district uses a separate enterprise fund for the snack bar operation.

Recommendation 64:

Combine the snack bar enterprise fund with the regular food service special revenue fund and amend the annual budget to include the estimated annual revenues and estimated annual expenditures of the snack bar operation.

The snack bar operation is an extension of the regular food service program and should be included in MPISD's annual food service budget.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager prepares a budget amendment to cover the annual estimated revenues and estimated expenditures of the snack bar operation and submits the budget amendment to the superintendent.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent recommends and receives approval for this budget amendment from the board.	April 1999
3.	The business manager closes the snack bar enterprise fund and transfers all snack bar financial activities to the regular food service special revenue fund once trustees approve the budget amendment.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Cafeteria managers are responsible for collecting and depositing the cash that is collected each day. The managers said there is no policy for depositing money each day, and some take the money home and deposit it the next day. There is no check and balance for the cash collection, and kitchen managers should not be held responsible for collection and depositing. There is a safety risk and a chance for misappropriation of funds. There are no established policies and procedures for prevention of theft. The bank where MPISD deposits its funds suggested using a bonded

courier to pick up money from each school cafeteria and deliver the monies to the bank daily.

Recommendation 65:

Hire a bonded courier to pick up money from each cafeteria daily.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The business manager contacts several couriers to get price quotations on the service.	March 1999
2.	The business manager recommends a courier to the superintendent for approval.	April 1999
3.	The business manager develops the necessary audit trail to safeguard the receipts.	April 1999
4.	The superintendent approves and the business manager hires the courier and implements the audit trail procedures.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Bonded courier services are based on the frequency of pick-ups and the number of locations from which pick-ups are made. Based upon telephone discussions with several area courier services, the annual cost should be no more than \$10,000 annually.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire a bonded courier to pick up money from each cafeteria daily basis.	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

D. Facilities

FINDING

The review team conducted site evaluations at five of the kitchen facilities, and tours were conducted at all sites. Some of the kitchens are new and comply with Texas Department of Health and Occupational Safety Hazard Act requirements. The older facilities, such as Vivian Fowler Elementary School and the high school snack bar, have open areas in the walls, exposed pipes, and extreme heat in the cooking areas. In the older kitchens, there is no air conditioning. Fans are used, which are against health code regulations because dust and unclean air and bacteria can be spread to the food. The 1997 Federal Food Code has been adopted by the state of Texas and sets the standards that govern facilities.

In the older schools, all of the managers and employees complained about the high temperatures. Ventilation is poor, and the snack bar kitchen area in the high school is hot with recorded temperatures of 104 degrees when employees are preparing food. The exposed holes in the walls, leaking roofs, and lack of adequate seals around doors and windows allows insects and rodents to come in and breed. In spite of the physical conditions, the kitchen were as clean as possible (**Exhibit 9-17**).

Exhibit 9-17
Kitchen Compliance with Texas Department of Health

School	May 12, 1998 Health Inspection Grade	Reviewer Observations of Non-Compliance
Mt. Pleasant High School	85	Air Conditioning, floors, walls, ceilings , leaks, drains, hoods
Mt. Pleasant Jr. High School	93	
Wallace Middle School	92	Air Conditioning, floors, walls, ceilings , leaks, drains, hoods
Corprew Intermediate School	92	
Fowler Elementary School	92	Oldest kitchen, air conditioning, walls. floors. leaks. termites.

		ceilings
Sims Elementary School	95	Freezer out side, ceilings air conditioning, walls, floors, hoods
Brice Elementary School	87	
Child Development Center	Not open	

Source: MPISD Food Services

Despite the recent good scores on the Food Services Establishment Inspection Reports, the physical conditions of Fowler Elementary School and the Mt. Pleasant High School kitchens are in violation of the Texas Department of Health regulations. There are security issues with the lack of lighting at the back docks, and the exposure of the freezer on the back dock at Annie Sims Elementary School. In focus groups with employees and managers of the Food Services department, concern was expressed about the lack of lights on the back docks when they arrived in the mornings. In discussions with administration, it was determined that the lights were installed and should be turned on. The air conditioning at Frances Corprew Intermediate School is controlled by the principal's office, and sometimes it is turned up if the office personnel are too cold.

The kitchens have been given new equipment but due to the physical size and condition of the older kitchens, placing the equipment is difficult. The freezer at Annie Sims is outside on the back dock. It is exposed and not secure. When the weather is rainy, the freezer hood collects water, and water drips on the floor by the door. This can cause employees to fall. The dripping water from the top of the freezer also falls on the employees. Due to the failure of three bond issues in the early 1990s, the district has had to curtail repair, renovation, and replacement of facilities due to financial constraints. However, the Food Services fund is separate from the general fund, and districts can apply for permission from TEA to use fund balances to repair facilities.

The Federal Food Code of 1997 was adopted in Texas in July 1998. The federal government has allocated \$96 million for consumer education in food safety to aid in the prevention of food borne illnesses. The newly adopted code has outlined very strict requirements for temperatures and physical conditions of all facilities. The Federal Food Code went into effect after the City of Mount Pleasant and TEA inspected the MPISD kitchens.

Recommendation 66:

Complete necessary renovations to the kitchens using excess fund balances and snack bar revenues.

As part of this process, MPISD should develop an integrated plan for preventive maintenance, equipment purchases, and renovation at each kitchen to bring them into compliance. The Food Services Department can be included in the campus master plan for building and renovations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Food Services director and the deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology determine facility and equipment status for all food service operations.	March 1999
2.	The director and deputy superintendent make recommendations to the superintendent for renovations and potential sources of funds.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent reviews the proposal and approves with any modifications.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Until a plan is prepared and integrated with overall facilities needs, it is impossible to determine the fiscal impact of this recommendation.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the transportation services provided by the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) in the following sections:

- A. Bus Fleet
- B. Operations
- C. Organization and Management
- D. Facilities
- E. Other Options

BACKGROUND

State law authorizes each Texas school district to provide student transportation to and from school and for extracurricular activities such as after-school athletic and academic events.

Under state law, each district qualifies for a state-funded transportation subsidy, called an allotment. Transportation allotments are intended to fund transportation for regular and special education students to and from school and for career and technology students to and from remote class sites. Regular students are defined as those students attending regular education classes.

Should the district decide to provide transportation, the regular education transportation allotment helps fund transportation for students living two or more miles from school or who face hazardous walking conditions on the way to school. The federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act also requires districts to provide transportation to students with disabilities.

Extra-curricular or activity busing services are not reimbursed by the state. Transportation exceeding the state allotment plus activity or extra-curricular transportation costs are paid with local funds. The purchase of buses is not specifically reimbursed by the state, although it is assumed that operational costs include the purchase of buses, which is figured in to the state allotment.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD provides home to school transportation for regular education, medically determined handicapped or special education, and pregnant and pre-kindergarten students. Activity busing is not funded by the district, and costs must be recovered from the sponsors.

Students who rode an MPISD bus were surveyed by the review team on their perceptions of drivers, discipline, cleanliness of buses, and convenience. The respondents' overall comments were positive (**Exhibit 10-1**).

**Exhibit 10-1
Student Perceptions of Transportation**

Perception	Yes	No	Percent of Positive Responses
Driver on time	74	2	97%
Driver Courteous	70	4	95%
Discipline consistent	65	9	88%
Bus Clean	66	10	87%
Bus has a history of mechanical failure	10	64	86%
Bus stop convenient	74	3	96%

Source: TSPR survey results.

Exhibit 10-2 shows the miles driven by regular, special education, parenting, pre-kindergarten, and activity buses. During 1997-98, MPISD drove students a total of 591,252 miles. The district does not participate in other state-funded transportation services for bilingual, desegregation, gifted, year-round, or vocational programs.

**Exhibit 10-2
MPISD Mileage Summary by Program
1997-98**

Mileage Type	Regular Program Mileage	Special Education Mileage	Parenting Mileage	Pre-Kindergarten Mileage	Total Mileage	Percentage of Total
Route	303,492	139,579	13,622	58,784	515,477	87.2%
Activity	72,547	3,228	N/R*	N/R*	75,775	12.8%
Total	376,039	142,807	13,622	58,784	591,252	100%

** Not Reported*

Source: TEA School Transportation Route Services Report.

Exhibit 10-3 provides a trend analysis of MPISD costs and mileage over a three-year period.

Exhibit 10-3
MPISD Regular and Special Mileage and Costs
1995-96 through 1997-98

Item	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Trend
Regular Program				
Operation Costs	\$536,360	\$630,362	\$712,057	Up
Total Miles Driven	474,716	393,074	385,618	Down
Cost per mile	\$1.130	\$1.604	\$1.847	Up
Annual Ridership	242,820	253,800	284,040	Up
Linear Density	0.83	0.909	0.987	Up
Special Program				
Operation Costs	\$87,669	\$102,547	\$109,147	Up
Total Miles Driven	127,189	101,199	118,146	Down/Up
Cost per mile	\$0.689	\$1.013	\$0.924	Up/Down

Source: TEA School Transportation Operations Reports.

The district operates 44 daily routes: 27 regular program, 8 special education, and 9 early childhood. On the regular routes, children are picked up and dropped off at designated locations. For the special education and early childhood routes, children are picked up and dropped off at their residences.

Exhibit 10-4 shows the number of students transported on each type of route.

Exhibit 10-4
MPISD Bus Route Summary
1996-97

Route	Time	Total Students Transported
Regular	AM	1,429
	PM	1,600

Special Education	AM	68
	PM	78
Early Childhood	AM	200
	PM	178
Pregnancy	AM	9
	PM	9

Source: MPISD Transportation Department, October 1998.

State transportation reimbursements for special education are based upon the prior year's operations costs as reported to TEA. MPISD received a state reimbursement of \$.689 per mile for its special education costs in 1996-97 (**Exhibit 10-5**). However, 1997-98 reimbursements will go up to \$1.013, the actual costs for the previous year. Reimbursements for 1998-99 will be \$0.924 based on 1997-98 actual costs.

Exhibit 10-5
MPISD and Peer Districts Transportation Costs Per Mile
Special Transportation Program
1996-97

District	Cost Per Mile	Reimbursement Per Mile
Athens	\$0.881	\$1.01
Greenville	\$0.978	\$1.00
Mt. Pleasant	\$1.013	\$0.689
Liberty-Eylau	\$1.066	N/A
Kaufman	\$1.106	\$1.08
Corsicana	\$1.132	\$1.08
Texarkana	\$1.210	N/A
Terrell	\$1.383	\$1.08
Paris	\$1.403	\$1.08
Kilgore	\$1.650	\$1.08

Source: TEA Transportation Operations Reports, 1996-97.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

A. BUS FLEET

At the time of the field work conducted by the review team, MPISD records showed the district's fleet at 56 buses, three vans, and two pick-ups. MPISD has purchased 23 buses since 1994 according to Purchasing Department records (**Exhibit 10-6**).

Exhibit 10-6
MPISD Bus Purchases, Type, and Fuel Type By Year
1994-1998

Purchase Quantity	Year	Type	Cost	Fuel
4	1998	83 passenger	\$58,166	Diesel
1	1997	66 passenger	\$55,585	Diesel
1		24 passenger	\$41,770	Diesel
2	1996	24 passenger	N/A*	Gasoline
1	1995	19 passenger	\$34,376	Diesel
1		24 passenger	\$39,094	Diesel
1		71 passenger	N/A*	Diesel
8	1994	71 passenger	\$57,355	Diesel
2		43 passenger	\$57,355	Diesel
1		20 passenger	\$31,500	Diesel
1		24 passenger	\$39,094	Diesel

Source: MPISD records.

**Not available*

MPISD does not have a policy or procedure to address long-range bus replacements. Long-range planning reduces crisis purchasing and helps avoid excessive purchasing.

MPISD purchased gasoline buses in 1996 and a large number of buses in 1994, including two 43-passenger air-conditioned buses reserved for activity trips. Diesel engines provide greater reliability than gasoline buses and, due to the less explosive nature of the fuel, are much safer to use in a school bus. The 43-passenger buses may only be designed to accommodate 43 passengers, but they are built on an 83-passenger chassis, which means the bus is as costly to purchase and operate as a much larger

bus. A long-range bus replacement policy may have avoided certain of these purchases.

The average age of MPISD's fleet is 9.2 years for regular program large buses and 8.6 years for special education, Headstart, and Pregnancy Education Program small buses. The district's fleet age and miles indicate that a replacement target of 150,000 miles and 15 years for large buses (65 passenger or larger) and 120,000 miles and 12 years for the diesel special education buses is obtainable.

With the present school population of the district, the above replacement cycle for the daily route buses would be three large buses (65 to 83 passenger) and 1.2 special education buses (15 to 54 passenger) purchased each year.

Recommendation 67:

Establish a long-range bus replacement policy.

The district should establish policy to procure buses on a regular schedule to achieve the 15-year replacement schedule of its large buses and a 12-year schedule for its small buses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIME LINE

1.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations recommends a multi-year bus replacement schedule that considers age, mileage, fuel type, and application of buses needed for the program.	March 1999
2.	The board adopts the policy, and the budget is adjusted for 1999-2000.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

To achieve the recommended replacement schedule, MPISD needs to purchase three 71-passenger buses and 1.2 special education buses each year. During the past five years, MPISD purchased one 83-passenger bus and one 24-passenger bus above and beyond what was needed based on this replacement schedule. By adopting the recommended replacement schedule, the district will save \$55,000 for one 71-or 83-passenger bus and \$42,000 for one 24-passenger bus over the next five years for an average savings of \$19,400 per year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
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Establish a long-range bus replacement policy.	\$19,400	\$19,400	\$19,400	\$19,400	\$19,400
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FINDING

Districts require spare buses when vehicles are not available for daily runs or to replace vehicles that break down. The number of spares required is usually measured as a percentage of the number of buses required for daily runs. Most districts maintain a spare bus ratio of between 10 and 15 percent. This ratio increases or decreases in proportion to the age and condition of the buses.

MPISD uses 27 large buses (71 to 83 passengers) and has a large-bus fleet of 34, leaving 7 spares (21 percent). Routes using smaller buses (15 to 35 passenger) include 13 buses; there are 21 buses in the small bus fleet, leaving 8 spares (38 percent).

As shown in **Exhibit 10-7**, many of the larger buses are running significantly under capacity. Reducing the number of spare buses would lessen maintenance costs and reduce vehicle liability insurance premiums. MPISD pays approximately \$1,200 annually to insure each bus.

**Exhibit 10-7
MPISD Routes, Total Students Transported Per Day
and the Capacity of the Assigned Bus**

Route	Total Students Transported Per Day	Capacity of Assigned Bus	Over/Under Capacity
1	46	71	-25
2	64	71	-7
3	69	66	+3
4	73	71	+2
5	49	71	-22
6	53	71	-18
7	41	71	-30
8	55	71	-16
9	30	71	-41
10	22	71	-49
11	39	71	-32

12	Sp Ed 18	24	N/A
13	3 trips total 136	83	N/A
14	5	24	-19
15	28	20	+8
16	54	83	-29
17	46	71	-25
18	69	71	-2
19	48	71	-23
20	63	71	-8
21	Sp Ed 7	21	N/A
22	Parent 9	35	N/A
23	Sp Ed 12	18	N/A
24	2 trips total 89	71	N/A
25	2 trips total 109	71	N/A
26	80	71	+9
27	2 trips total 114	71	N/A
28	56	71	-15
29	71	71	0
30	27	71	-44
31	Sp Ed 9	24	N/A
32	89	71	+18
33	Headstart 24	71	-47
34	Headstart 34	48	-14
35	Headstart 30	83	-53
36	Headstart 30	71	-41
37	Headstart 14	83	-69
38	Headstart 40	71	-31
39	Sp Ed 7	18	N/A
40	64	71	-7
41	Headstart 24	15	+9

42	Headstart 24	19	+5
43	70	71	-1
44	Evenstart 20	19	+1

Source: MPISD Transportation Department, October 1998.

Recommendation 68:

Adopt a spare bus ratio of 15 percent and dispose of older, less reliable buses.

The district should sell nine of its oldest and least reliable buses to achieve the recommended spare bus ratio. This reduction in the number of buses will reduce the workload for mechanics while reducing insurance costs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation identifies the oldest nine buses in the fleet and prepares them to sell.	May 1999
2.	The director sells nine excess buses.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

MPISD reported that at the last bus auction each bus sold for at least \$500. By selling nine buses in 1999-2000, MPISD will achieve a one-time savings of \$4,500 for the sale of the buses, plus an additional \$1,200 each in reduced insurance costs, or \$10,800 in annual savings for the nine buses.

Recommendation	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Dispose of older, less reliable buses.	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Savings from reduced insurance costs.	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$10,800
Total Savings	\$15,300	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$10,800

FINDING

As of October 1998, MPISD had no communication system between the bus drivers and the administration. A bus fleet not equipped with a communication system is a safety concern. When an accident or incident occurs on a bus without a radio, the driver is not able to call for assistance. The driver may not leave a bus with students on it to find a telephone, and has no way to notify the administration of a breakdown, behavior problems, or emergencies in or around the bus.

Districts have two viable options for equipping their buses with communication systems. The first is cellular telephones. The initial unit cost of \$100 and a \$20 per month activation fee for each phone would cost \$17,000 the first year and \$12,000 each year for 50 buses. Excessive airtime would raise this cost.

The second option is a two-way radio system. This type of system has several advantages over cellular phones. For example, no dialing is required, one transmission can go to all buses, and two-way radios require no yearly fees. The system can be acquired through a lease-purchase agreement, whereby at the end of five years the system would be wholly owned by the district. The cost of building a transmission tower would be additional, but one contractor contacted by the review team indicated that many districts avoid these costs by using an existing tower. Two possible options for MPISD include the water tower close to the central services support building and existing facilities owned by the City of Mt. Pleasant or Titus County.

Recommendation 69:

Purchase a communication system to equip each school bus in the active fleet.

MPISD should purchase and install two-way radios in every bus in the active fleet and negotiate the use of an existing tower.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations recommends that the Board of Trustees authorize funds to purchase a communication system.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations and the purchasing agent negotiate with private companies and/or the city and county to tie in to their two-way radio tower and bid a "turn-key" two-way radio system through a lease purchase agreement.	April 1999
3.	The purchasing agent presents to the board a proposal to fund the two-way radio system.	May 1999

4.	The director of Transportation includes a communication system as a requirement for all future bus purchases.	On-going
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FISCAL IMPACT

One contractor estimated that MPISD could acquire a complete 2-way radio system for \$10,125 over five years through a lease-purchase agreement, or \$2,025 per year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Purchase a communication system to equip each school bus in the active fleet.	(\$2,025)	(\$2,025)	(\$2,025)	(\$2,025)	(\$2,025)

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

B. Operations

FINDING

Districts receive their state-funded transportation allotments based on a legislated formula. The formula, referred to as "linear density," is the ratio of the average number of regular education students transported daily to the daily number of miles traveled. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) assigns each district to one of seven linear density groups and allocates dollars based on where the district falls in the groupings (**Exhibit 10-8**).

Exhibit 10-8
Categories of State Reimbursement for Regular Bus Runs

Category	Reimbursement per Mile	Linear Density Range
1	\$0.68	.000 - .399
2	\$0.79	.400 - .649
3	\$0.88	.650 - .899
4	\$0.97	.900 - 1.149
5	\$1.11	1.150 - 1.649
6	\$1.25	1.650 - 2.399
7	\$1.43	2.400 - 9.999

Source: Texas Education Agency, Handbook on School Transportation Allotments.

As shown in the chart, the higher the linear density the greater the reimbursement from the state. In other words, when greater numbers of students can be transported in fewer miles, the level of state reimbursements increases. The linear density of MPISD was 0.83 in 1995-96. TEA uses this figure to calculate reimbursements for 1996-97 and 1997-98. The linear density in 1997-98, which is 0.987, will be used to calculate reimbursements for 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

MPISD, therefore, is in linear density group 3 for 1996-97 and 1997-98, for a reimbursement rate of \$0.88 per mile, which is approximately 55 percent of the MPISD's actual costs of \$1.60 (**Exhibit 10-9**). However,

MPISD reimbursements will go up to \$0.97 in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 because its linear density rate for 1997-98 is 0.987.

Exhibit 10-9
MPISD and Peer Districts Transportation Costs Per Mile
Regular Transportation Program
1996-97

District	Cost Per Mile	Reimbursement Per Mile	Linear Density Group	Percent Reimbursed
Bowie Co. Coop*	\$1.210	N/A	N/A	92%
Paris	\$1.420	\$1.25	VI	88%
Kaufman	\$1.236	\$0.97	IV	78%
Corsicana	\$1.486	\$1.11	V	75%
Greenville	\$1.518	\$1.11	V	73%
Kilgore	\$1.806	\$1.25	VI	69%
Athens	\$1.733	\$0.97	IV	56%
Mt. Pleasant	\$1.604	\$0.88	III	55%
Terrell	\$2.095	\$1.11	V	53%

*Source: TEA Transportation Operations Reports, 1996-97. * Liberty Eylau and Texarkana are in the Bowie County Cooperative*

Exhibit 10-10 provides an overview of the times the buses are in operation and the total miles driven per day.

Exhibit 10-10
MPISD Bus Number, Times, and Miles Driven
1998-99

Bus Number	Route Starting and Ending Times	Total Miles Driven Per Day
2	6:40-8:00 3:10-4:30	88
8	6:40-8:00 3:10-4:30	72
3	6:45-8:00 3:10-4:30	87

51	6:45-8:00 3:10-4:30	53
33	6:40-8:00 3:00-4:30	70
6	6:25-8:00 3:10-4:45	83
16	6:30-8:00 3:00-4:30	100
29	6:30-8:00 3:00-4:45	91
21	6:45-8:00 3:00-4:30	97
5	6:30-8:00 3:10-4:45	123
22	6:55-8:00 3:10-4:30	57
12	6:30-7:30 2:30-3:30	70
37	6:50-8:00 3:10-4:14	32
18	6:00-8:30 2:30-4:30	101
11	6:00-8:00 2:30-4:15	102
35	6:40-8:00 3:10-4:20	39
25	6:40-8:00 3:30-4:30	67
39	6:40-8:00 3:00-4:30	51
31	6:40-8:00 3:10-4:45	91
28	6:45-8:00 3:10-4:30	30
49	6:30-8:00 2:40-4:00	103
13	6:45-7:45 3:35-4:25	77
40	am 6:00-8:30 10:30-11:00 pm 2:00-2:30 3:00-4:30	66
14	6:25-8:00 3:10-4:30	62
7	6:40-7:30 3:30-4:00	30
17	6:30-7:30 3:30-4:30	74
20	6:40-8:00 3:10-4:30	72
30	6:50-8:00 3:10-4:30	43
4	6:45-8:00 3:10-4:30	36
38	7:00-8:00 3:10-4:30	63
48	6:00-8:00 2:40-4:30	54
15	6:45-8:00 3:10-4:30	61

58	7:00-7:30 3:00-3:30	56
54	7:00-7:30 3:00-3:30	70
57	7:00-7:30 3:00-3:30	67
56	7:00-7:30 3:00-3:30	61
58	11:00-12:00	41
59	7:00-7:30 3:00-3:30	39
27/26	6:20-8:00 2:30-4:45	62
19	7:00-7:30 3:30-4:30	33
46	7:00-7:30 3:00-3:30	19
56	am 7:20-8:00 12:00-1:00 pm 5:15-6:00 8:00-8:30	28
23	After School	9
56	Between Runs	39

Source: MPISD Transportation Department, October 1998.

Although **Exhibit 10-10** shows the starting and ending times for routes, it does not show the actual amount of time the students and drivers are on the bus. However, 50 percent of the student respondents to the transportation survey reported being on the bus from 30 to 90 minutes each run. Associated with this overall concern was the consolidation process at the high school, whereby regular program students are transported to the high school and transferred to other buses for transport to their respective schools. The staff referred to this consolidation process as the "Grand Central Station" effect, which increases the time students spend on a bus.

Although the newly appointed director of Transportation for MPISD is attempting to improve the district's data collection processes, updated information on the specific times of operation and student time on the bus were not available at the time of the review, and other records are also incomplete or missing.

A lack of accurate route, student, and school boundary maps did not allow the review team to conduct an intensive study to discover why the linear density is low compared to the peer school districts. Among the factors that probably contribute to the lower density rate are:

- Regular bus routes terminate at the high school, and students get off their original bus and then take another bus to their respective

schools. As noted in **Exhibit 10-7**, a number of the routes have fewer students than the capacity of the bus, which indicates opportunities for consolidating routes or redesigning the routes to add more passengers.

- MPISD has a single bell schedule, which means that virtually all schools start and end in the same time frame. Many districts use multiple bell schedules allowing a single bus to run more than one route. If one bus is able to run two routes, the number of buses and drivers needed to transport all of the students could be reduced by as much as 50 percent.
- MPISD operates its system with few grade levels in a given building. However, the more grade levels placed on one bus to one area lowers miles driven and increases the number of students transported (linear density). MPISD has attempted to limit the number of overlapping runs by consolidating and redistributing the students at the high school. Unfortunately, elementary and intermediate students who ride the bus must be transported north to the high school to ride south to their school.

The Texas Education Agency's Transportation Department can assist MPISD in finding potential contractors to lend technical expertise in establishing staggered bell times and other routing improvements.

Recommendation 70:

Establish staggered bell times, increase bus ridership, and improve routing efficiencies.

The district should hire a consultant to implement the recommended improvements, which will increase the linear density and the level of reimbursements from the state.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation, with input and support from the TEA Transportation Department, develops a request for proposals for establishing staggered bell times and other routing improvements and sends it to appropriate vendors.	March 1999
2.	The director of Transportation releases the RFP and recommends the best bidder to the assistant superintendent for Administration and Operations and the superintendent for approval.	May 1999
3.	The director of Transportation, along with the selected contractor, creates turn-by-turn maps indicating each regular, hazardous, and	June 1999

	special education route, to include the number of students at each stop and time of each stop.	
4.	The director of Transportation, along with the selected contractor, reviews the routes and bell schedules for possible efficiencies to obtain more students per bus, less miles driven, and fewer bus routes.	July 1999
5.	The board considers bell schedule(s) and building grade level configurations and routing efficiencies for implementation.	August 1999
6.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations evaluates the studies and recommendation(s).	August 1999
7.	The director of Transportation reconfigures the routes to obtain the recommended efficiencies.	Fall 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

MPISD's reimbursement is \$0.880 for 1997-98, but will increase to \$0.97 beginning in 1998-99. The district was reimbursed for 375,898 miles in 1997-98 for the regular programs. Reimbursements for this mileage would go up to \$364,621 in 1998-99 (375,898 x \$0.97). The district received \$322,738 for 1996-97 (\$0.880 x 366,748 miles). It is assumed that MPISD can raise its linear density to at least 1.150, or Category 5, and increase its per-mile state reimbursement to \$1.11 beginning in 2001-02. This increases the district's reimbursements to \$417,246, an annual increase of \$52,625 per year over the \$0.97 per-mile reimbursement level. The cost of a contractor is estimated at \$3,500.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Establish staggered bell times, increase bus ridership, and improve routing efficiencies.	(\$3,500)	\$0	\$52,625	\$52,625	\$52,625

FINDING

TEA normally provides reimbursement for transportation costs for busing students to school for students who live further than two miles from the school to which they are zoned. However, districts can also receive reimbursement for up to 10 percent of its costs for busing students who live less than two miles from their school when the route to school is deemed to pose a safety risk to the students. Although "hazardous" is left to be defined by the district, TEA guidelines suggest areas having few sidewalks, busy roadways, or railroad tracks would qualify as hazardous.

The actual level of funding is figured by determining the number of miles of hazardous routes as a percentage of the number of total miles of regular education routes. MPISD has a hazardous busing policy that allows the district to provide busing to students who live within the two-mile limit on routes (**Exhibit 10-11**).

**Exhibit 10-11
Hazardous Mileage
1995-96 through 1997-98**

Item	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Total
Two-or-more-mile service	325,465	344,226	360,060	1,029,751
Hazardous area service	5,130	22,522	15,838	43,490
Percentage Hazardous	1.6%	6.5%	4.4%	4.2%

Recommendation 71:

Designate all appropriate hazardous routes and apply to the Texas Education Agency for the full hazardous busing entitlement.

The district should account for all students who are transported to school on hazardous routes and apply to TEA for the full 10 percent reimbursement.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation creates maps of the areas and lists of students who are within two miles of the schools and are riding the buses.	March 1999
2.	The director reports hazardous busing in the 1999 route services report.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

If MPISD applies for 10 percent of the regular entitlement for hazardous route reimbursement, it could increase its reimbursements by 5.6 percent based on 1997-98 levels. This would result in 20,163 more miles in 1999-2000 (360,060 x .056). Based on MPISD's linear density, it will receive \$0.97 per mile in state reimbursements beginning in 1999-2000. At this level, MPISD could increase its reimbursements by \$19,560 per year.

Recommendation	1999-	2000-	2001-	2002-	2003-
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	2000	01	02	03	04
Designate all appropriate hazardous routes.	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$19,560	\$19,560

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

C. Organization and Management

FINDING

Approximately 5 percent of the 44 bus drivers, or three drivers, are absent each day. MPISD has two substitute drivers and four maintenance employees who are licensed and certified. However, the maintenance employees are occupied repairing and renovating school property and are only available to drive buses in an emergency.

When a driver is absent or when the department experiences an open route, the director, secretary, and mechanic(s) double as drivers. At the time of the review, the director, secretary and mechanic were driving an average of three days a week, for a total of up to 25 hours per week. This means that vehicles often go without maintenance and other key management functions are not performed.

Numerous school districts have upgraded some driver positions to "lead drivers," who act as substitutes while performing such functions as mentoring newer drivers, providing behind-the-wheel training, observing routes, managing student discipline, providing student safety training, performing office and shop clerical functions, and performing minor vehicle repairs and maintenance.

Recommendation 72:

Hire two part-time "lead" drivers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations to create two "lead driver" positions.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations and the director of Transportation create a job description for the positions and submit them to the board for approval.	April 1999
3.	The board approves the positions.	May 1999
4.	The director of Transportation advertises the positions and hires the most qualified candidates.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Based upon the percentage of time that regular drivers are absent, the combined wages of two "lead" drivers would total \$320 per week or \$10,240 per year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Hire two part-time "lead" drivers.	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)	(\$10,240)

FINDING

MPISD does not have a formal behind-the-wheel training or evaluation program for its bus drivers. Federal and state law require new bus drivers to successfully complete a demanding series of examinations-three written and one behind-the-wheel. There are major differences between the state automobile driver's license and the federal Commercial Driver's License (CDL). As an example, one of the written tests focuses on the concepts and applications of air operated brakes.

MPISD is not providing expert behind-the-wheel bus training, or on-going behind-the-wheel evaluation. There is no one within the district to provide expert training. Although MPISD drivers are properly licensed, the audit team was unable to locate driver files that would indicate the amount of training, date of licensing, etc.

Recognized formal training is available from Texas A&M University, in conjunction with the state and national industry associations. The course includes the theory of driver training, the purpose of record-keeping, and several hours of driving a bus in a variety of weather and road-simulated situations.

Districts regularly send one or two drivers to be trained in this program. The drivers then return to the district and train all other regular and substitute drivers.

Recommendation 73:

Send one driver to training school and use this driver to train other drivers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The assistant superintendent of Administration and Operations directs the transportation director to implement a formal driver training program.	March 1999
2.	The director of Transportation interviews and selects a MPISD bus driver for the training.	April 1999
3.	The trainer attends the one-week course at Texas A&M University at College Station.	Summer 1999
4.	The trainer implements training and evaluation.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The costs for tuition and room and board at the training school are estimated at \$1,000.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Send one driver to the training school and use this driver to train other drivers.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The Transportation Department does not have the logistical support to maintain the existing fleet. During the review team's site visits, safety concerns were noted in the maintenance of the bus fleet. Some of the buses had tires with insufficient tread depth, some had broken windows and door glass, and first aid and bio-hazard kits were missing. The district did not maintain routine brake, transmission, or engine service records.

The department has two mechanics for sixty vehicles or a ratio of one mechanic to thirty vehicles. At the time of the review, one of the mechanics was not on the job due to medical leave. The effective on-site mechanic ratio was therefore one mechanic for sixty vehicles. However, the mechanic drives buses on an average of three times per week which, in effect left no mechanics working on a regular basis. Since then, the mechanic on leave resigned and the district has hired a second mechanic. In a telephone survey, the review team found that the mechanic-to-vehicle ratio for the peer group and the Bowie County Transportation Cooperative averaged one mechanic or mechanic helper per twenty vehicles. The average wage rate for a vehicle mechanic in MPISD is approximately \$10 per hour, while local commercial rates are at least \$13 per hour.

The state and the district recognize relevant education and certification for professional employees. Virtually all recognized commercial vehicle repair facilities promote and advertise to the public the value they place on certified vehicle technicians. However, no MPISD mechanic has recognized certification in their craft, and the district lacks a systematic mechanic training program to address technical changes in the industry.

The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) offers a vehicle technician certification program and provides testing for certification of vehicle mechanics to achieve greater levels of technical proficiency. The registration fee for ASE training is \$25 and the test itself is \$20. Tests are administered in 600 locations throughout the country in May and November, although none are close enough to Mt. Pleasant where travel would not be required.

Districts such as Spring Branch, Cypress Fairbanks, and Katy provide an hourly incentive wage increase to mechanics who obtain certification in such areas as engine repair, electrical systems, and transmission repair. The salary incentives become part of the base rate pay for the certified mechanics.

The new director of Transportation is exploring options for a preventive maintenance program, but none had been established at the time of the review to ensure that the buses are mechanically reliable and safe. The director has since adopted a schedule to regularly maintain buses, but there continues to be a backlog. The purpose of preventive maintenance is to schedule the repair or replacement of parts and assemblies that wear or break with time and miles driven. An aggressive maintenance program can lessen on-the-road bus failure and accidents due to mechanical failure.

Within the city of Mt. Pleasant, the review team found that there are sufficient commercial diesel and gasoline repair businesses that could provide mechanic assistance to MPISD. Some districts, such as Hamilton ISD, use a contractor for major maintenance and repair services. This option could benefit MPISD because the district would not have to set up a comprehensive maintenance program from scratch.

Recommendation 74:

Address routine and remedial maintenance of MPISD's bus fleet by exploring options.

The district must establish a maintenance program to ensure the safety of its students. One option is to hire one additional skilled mechanic and provide salary increases and training for all mechanics. This option would raise the salary of MPISD mechanics to a level closer to the commercial

salary level. These improvements would enable the district to begin a viable maintenance program.

Although MPISD already contracts out some services, such as recoring radiators and rebuilding alternators, it may be feasible to outsource the entire mechanic and maintenance functions, depending on available vendors and the district's cost comparison. The district should evaluate this option by putting out a request for proposals with vendors in and around the Mt. Pleasant area. In comparing costs, the in-house option should include the upgraded salaries of three mechanics and all maintenance-related costs such as facilities, utilities, parts, and supplies. Should this option be exercised, the district should ensure through contract negotiations that qualified district mechanics are allowed to apply for the contractor mechanic positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIME LINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops a formal routine and remedial maintenance plan and reviews it with the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations.	March 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent reviews the plan, makes any modifications, and approves it.	April 1999
3.	The director of Transportation prepares and releases a request for proposals that includes all elements of the approved maintenance plan.	June 1999
4.	The director of Transportation compares costs and quality of services between the best proposal and the in-house option, and gets approval from the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and the superintendent to implement the best option.	July 1999
5.	The board authorizes the director of Transportation to outsource the mechanic function, if this is the best option, or to hire an additional mechanic, establish a training program, and raise the mechanics' wages.	July 1999
6.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations recommends to the board that an additional position be added to the transportation department should the outsourcing option prove infeasible.	July 1999
7.	The director of Transportation contracts with the best vendor for maintenance functions or advertises and hires a mechanic, ensures that all mechanics salaries are increased, and implements certification training.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Although outsourcing the maintenance function may produce quality improvements at a comparable cost, it is not possible to estimate costs because a routine and remedial maintenance program has not been defined for the district.

Should the district establish a comprehensive in-house maintenance program, an additional mechanic will cost \$27,040 (2,080 hours per year x 25 percent benefits for a total of \$33,800 x \$13/hour). Raising the wages of the two existing positions from \$10 per hour to \$13 per hour will cost \$12,480 (2,080 hours x \$3/hour x 2 mechanics) plus 25 percent benefits for a total annual cost of \$15,600.

Certification training will cost approximately \$200 per year per mechanic x 3 mechanics = \$600.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Hire one additional skilled mechanic.	(\$33,800)	(\$33,800)	(\$33,800)	(\$33,800)	(\$33,800)
Adjust salary of existing mechanics	(\$15,600)	(\$15,600)	(\$15,600)	(\$15,600)	(\$15,600)
Provide certification training for all mechanics.	(\$600)	(\$600)	(\$600)	(\$600)	(\$600)
Total Cost	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

D. Facilities

FINDING

The transportation facility is located at the high school complex. The vehicle repair bays are adequate for maintenance and staff.

To sustain the size, scope, and growth of the MPISD Transportation Department, there must be adequate facilities. On-site review of the present transportation facilities by the review team found major deficiencies:

- There is no perimeter security fence (an invitation for theft and vandalism).
- There is no outside lighting of the parking areas (a security and health risk).
- The parking lot surface is a dirt and rock mix (a safety and health risk).
- The parking lots are not of sufficient size to accommodate the buses and employee's automobiles (a safety and vehicle liability issue).
- There is no driver "ready room" (no inside area to allow the driver to report for work), where "clocking in" could provide an opportunity to assess the physical and emotional state of the driver. In addition, the "room" would serve as a classroom for safety and operations meetings as well as a breakroom.
- There is a lack of proper restrooms (health and legal issues).

Recommendation 75:

Include transportation facilities in a districtwide facilities master plan.

The district should prepare cost estimates to correct the deficiencies. Creative options should be considered, including leasing upgraded facilities from a private vendor, or including upgrades in a contract with a private contractor if the district chooses to outsource all transportation functions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations directs a physical plant review for the Transportation Department to be included the facilities master plan.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent approves the recommendation.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

E. Other Options

BACKGROUND

The key elements of a district's transportation operation are: management and operations; maintenance; routing and scheduling; driver training; vehicle ownership; terminal facility ownership; and transportation liaison to the public, parents, and schools. School districts have several options for how to operate these elements. Besides operating them all in-house, districts can establish a cooperative with one or more other districts, or contract some or all transportation elements to a private pupil transportation provider.

Both of the above options can provide economies of scale, especially for small districts, that can reduce costs, while leaving the day to day operations to a more experienced entity. Some districts have found that these options allow them to devote more management attention to the district's primary function - the education of students.

CURRENT SITUATION

Although the director of Transportation is beginning to address some of the deficits of MPISD's transportation services, this chapter has identified a number of improvements that will be needed whether transportation services continue to be provided in-house or are delivered through a private contractor or a cooperative. The needed improvements are summarized in **Exhibit 10-12**.

Exhibit 10-12 **Areas Needing Improvement for MPISD Transportation Services**

Transportation Element	Improvements Needed
Quality of bus fleet	Procurement policy; eliminate safety hazards.
Communication system	Two-way radios or cell phones on buses.
Scheduling and Routing	Staggered bell times; routing; increase bus ridership.
Drivers	Formal training; driver evaluations; substitute drivers or lead drivers.

Maintenance	Number of mechanics; wages; certification training.
Costs	Cost per mile; overall operating costs.
Facilities	Parking lot; lighting; ready room; fencing; restrooms.

Source: Texas Performance Review Team.

Although MPISD could improve its in-house operations by following the recommendations contained in this report, alternative options for managing and operating transportation services could provide a higher-quality, faster, and more cost-effective approach.

FINDING

The National School Transportation Association estimates that 40 percent of all school districts in North America outsource, or contract for some or all of their student transportation services. This option has been available to districts in the state of Texas since 1983. A contractor can provide some or all of the following: home-to-school transportation, transportation for desegregation purposes, transportation for special education pupils, and extracurricular transportation services.

The qualities of a contract with a private provider may include the elements contained in **Exhibit 10-13**

Exhibit 10-13 Qualities of a Transportation Private Vendor Contract

Accountability	A contractor is accountable through the provisions of its contract with local districts.
	It is possible to entirely replace the organization performing transportation services if performance is not satisfactory depending on available competitors.
Flexibility	Fewer restrictions exist concerning hiring or terminating specific employees, and the district is not responsible for managing employees.
	Service quantity can be increased or reduced relatively easily and quickly but there can be costs depending on provisions in the contract.
	Service quality characteristics are relatively inflexible and are described in the contract.
Cost	Competition and the profit motive can help minimize costs.

	A contractor that cannot recoup its costs may default on the contract, forcing a district to make other service provision arrangements on short notice.
Liability	A district that contracts for transportation services usually requires that the contractor assume primary liability as part of the contract.
Management Attention	Provision through a contract with a private provider usually reduces the need for day-to-day district management attention, though contract negotiations, administration, and operations monitoring and review require periodic attention in order to ensure that service quality is acceptable.

Source: California Department of Education, TSPR review team.

Ideally, outsourcing can increase safety, service, and accountability of transportation services while guaranteed performance levels can be negotiated as part of the service contract. Generally, because of liability issues, transportation contractors hire all related employees, including drivers. However, there are a number of options to ensure a smooth transition from district to private operations, such as offering positions to current qualified district employees.

One small district in Texas that outsources its transportation function is Wimberley ISD. WISD contracted its entire transportation operation beginning in 1995-96. The contractor, under a five-year agreement, provides pupil transportation for regular and special education routes and other transportation such as extracurricular events and field trips. The contractor is responsible for providing bus drivers, using either WISD's bus fleet or its own; liability and workers' compensation insurance; bus driver training; and maintenance on all transportation vehicles. WISD pays the contractor monthly based on rates that take into consideration bus capacity, hours driven, and miles driven for regular, special, and other transportation routes.

The WISD contractor has a director of Transportation for the district with an office in the district's maintenance and transportation facility. The director is paid by the contractor and provides management and supervision for WISD's day-to-day operations. The director works closely with the assistant superintendent to ensure the overall quality and timeliness of pupil transportation services. In addition, the director prepares the TEA School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Report that are used to determine the reimbursements from the state allotment.

WISD has expressed satisfaction with the contracted arrangement, and plans to continue its contract. WISD's assistant superintendent indicates that the transportation operation has been more efficient, while the headaches from operating buses and transportation services have been greatly reduced since the contract began. Some districts, however, have terminated their transportation contracts and returned to in-house operation of their transportation services, including Giddings, Gonzales, and Corpus Christi ISDs.

Recommendation 76:

Consider outsourcing the entire transportation function.

The district should compare the cost of district services with contracting. This analysis starts with the district's transportation budget. However, while the budget generally includes such costs as driver and mechanic wages and benefits, fuel, and buses and parts, other student transportation costs may be listed in different areas of the district's budget, such as utilities, overtime, insurance, depreciation on buses, equipment, facilities, and legal fees. The costs of in-house improvements discussed throughout this chapter should also be included because, whether provided in-house or by a contractor, these improvements will benefit the district.

It is not always in the best interests of school districts to outsource. There may be few other organizations willing or capable of providing the resources and operating the transportation services. This is especially true in less-populated areas. If a district sells its buses, it may find few parties willing to provide transportation services that includes provision of buses. And if buses are owned by the contractor, it may be very difficult for the district to later provide services directly because it will need to acquire a fleet. The director of Transportation should contact vendors that could potentially provide all transportation services for the district to discuss these issues and determine what is in the best interest of MPISD.

School districts can get assistance from potential vendors before making a decision about outsourcing. At least one potential contractor has expressed to the TSPR team a willingness to conduct an initial assessment of the Mt. Pleasant ISD to determine feasibility of contracting transportation services. An initial feasibility study does not obligate the district to contract. It does provide a brief analysis of the district's fleet, maintenance schedules, safety risks, prevailing wages, facilities, and other data. Should the district want to proceed from that point, a more in-depth analysis and costs would be prepared.

Following the initial assessment, the district can request non-binding preliminary quotes from several contractors. Along with this request,

however, the district should provide as much detail as possible about services it desires, along with descriptions of current service characteristics. Each facet and type of service needed by the district, such as route schedules and distances, insurance requirements, and vehicles provided or required should be included.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIME LINE

1.	The director of Transportation contacts potential vendors and arranges for an initial assessment of outsourcing feasibility.	May 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent of Administration and Operations and the director of Transportation identify the full costs of providing transportation services and compares the costs and quality of services to those that could be provided by private vendors.	June 1999
3.	The superintendent reviews the analysis and recommends to the board to outsource the entire transportation function should this option provide higher quality services at a comparable or lower cost.	July 1999
4.	The board approves outsourcing if this is the most viable option and the superintendent negotiates a time frame for bidding, selection, and implementation.	May - June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Should the feasibility study show that outsourcing is viable, it is likely that the district could achieve long-term savings.

FINDING

A cooperative or consortium is formed by several districts that join together to provide one or more facets and types of transportation services. The geographic and political boundaries of MPISD and other school districts in close proximity to MPISD lend themselves to the study of the possibility of forming a transportation cooperative. The principal qualities of consortiums are contained in **Exhibit 10-14**.

**Exhibit 10-14
Qualities of a Transportation Consortium**

Accountability	Service provision is less directly accountable to district managers if the persons actually providing services are employed by an agency other than the district.
Flexibility	Management decisions require consensus, which can be

	difficult to achieve.
Cost	Economies of scale: fixed costs for one or more facets of the transportation operation need not be duplicated by each agency, and small districts can take advantage of more efficient and specialized methods of neighboring districts.
Effectiveness/ Service Quality	More expertise allowed by larger-scale service provision allows a higher-quality service as well as more efficient service.
Liability	A district that contracts with another district or another public agency may choose to retain the liability surrounding service provision or may require the contracting agency to accept the liability as part of the contract.
	As with other aspects of transportation service, insurance may be purchased more economically on a larger scale by the cooperative rather than by individual districts.
Management Attention	Generally, if an independent administrator manages transportation services, less day-to-day district attention is necessary; however, the level of attention may drop.

Source: California Department of Education.

The Bowie County Transportation cooperative is one of three transportation cooperatives in Texas. It provides home-to-school bus services for 13 districts in Bowie County through an Interlocal Agreement with each district under provisions of Chapter 791 of the Texas Government Code. Superintendents for each of the districts sit on the cooperative's management board, which establishes policy and operational procedures for the cooperative. The cost-per-mile achieved by the cooperative is far lower than state averages. Bowie County Transportation cooperative staff have attributed this low cost to a number of factors:

- Continuous analysis of routing and scheduling;
- Keeping bus ridership levels (i.e. students on bus versus number of seats available) at optimum levels, ranging from 70 to 90 percent;
- Using staggered school starting and ending times; and
- Using buses and drivers for multiple routes rather than using two buses and two drivers for individual routes.

Recommendation 77:

Explore the possibility of forming a transportation cooperative with other school districts in Titus, Morris, and Franklin counties.

MPISD should convene a meeting with Harts Bluff, Chapel Hill, Mt. Vernon, and Daingerfield ISDs to discuss the possibility of forming a transportation cooperative after making improvements called for in this chapter. The district should explore the feasibility of a cooperative that is contracted to a private vendor.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts the superintendents of the named districts and sets up a meeting to discuss the possibility of transportation cooperative.	August 1999
2.	A working committee of the named transportation directors explores the possibility of a cooperative.	Fall 1999
3.	A formal presentation of the study results are produced and presented to the named districts, including the option of contracting all transportation service to a private contractor.	January 2000
4.	The transportation cooperative is established through inter-local agreements and transportation services through the cooperative are initiated if this option proves to be viable.	August 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the evaluation of the cooperative. Over the long-term, based upon the experience of the Bowie County cooperative, participating districts can improve services and reduce overall costs.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter examines the programs used by the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) to ensure the safety and security of its students, teachers, administrators, and visitors. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- A. Discipline Management
- B. Safe Drug-Free Schools and Communities
- C. Security
- D. Alternative Education Program

BACKGROUND

One of the most critical issues facing school districts is the need to provide safe and secure schools. All children have a fundamental right to be free from harm as they attend school, and teachers and other district employees deserve a safe environment in which to educate children.

Over the past decade, crime has spread to all categories of the nation's schools: urban, suburban, and rural. In the past, districts have relied upon local law enforcement to provide assistance. Those agencies, however, do not always have adequate personnel to patrol city streets in and around schools or to provide the level of service needed to safeguard students, teachers, employees, and district assets. To address these problems, many districts have established their own security forces, often using sworn peace officers.

The Texas School Performance Review's (TSPR) report on *Keeping Texas Children Safe In School* cited many promising statistics. Since the 1995 Texas Legislature addressed school violence by revising the Texas Education Code (Chapter 37), which required that each school adopt a student code of conduct, improvements in safety and security have occurred. The results of a statewide survey of teachers in 1993, conducted by the Texas Federation of Teachers (TFT), indicated that 7.5 percent of teachers reported being physically assaulted by either a student or a non-student intruder, and 36 percent reported being verbally assaulted. Verbal assaults in a 1996 TFT survey dropped to 30 percent, and physical assaults dropped to 6.5 percent. In addition, although more than 7,800 weapons were confiscated in 1997 from Texas students, that number was down by 8 percent from 1995.

TSPR's report also stated that the most disturbing statistic in the TFT's 1996 survey was that only 34 percent of the teachers said their school

districts were taking the enforcement of the law seriously. In its reviews of more than 30 school districts, TSPR found that school districts and individual campuses are struggling with enforcing and applying state laws. While most districts, including MPISD, have codes of conduct, as required by the Texas Education Code, some lack critical elements needed to comply with the law, and even those codes that contain all the necessary provisions of law are not consistently applied.

The Florida Commissioner of Education recently held a summit on safety and security in Florida schools. Included in the summit were all types of people involved in education and in safety and security. The result of the summit was a summary of best practices that schools with successful safety and security programs have in common. The summit stressed the fact that every segment of the community must work together to ensure a safe school. Some of the key suggestions for specific groups, as published by the Florida Department of Education, are listed below:

- Students and Parents - Become actively involved on a team to develop a common vision and goals for school safety and security, and implement proactive, problem-solving, preventive strategies to avoid crisis situations.
- Teachers - Emphasize the peaceful resolution of conflict throughout the curriculum at all levels through the development of skills in conflict resolution, anger management, aggression replacement, socialization, multicultural sensitivity, life skills, communications, team building, and character education.
- Schools - Respond quickly and meaningfully to student reports of weapons and crimes on campus. Establish local interagency agreements that are necessary to ensure the community is providing a safe learning environment. Build an advisory council that reflects the diversity of the community served by the schools and includes students and parents.
- School Districts - Train students, staff, and parents to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities in school safety and security. Design and renovate school facilities that promote school safety. Address school safety and security issues from a prevention perspective.
- Community and Business Partners - Enlist the cooperation of all stakeholders in fostering the "village concept," recognizing that school safety and security is not just a school-based issue. Become actively involved on a team that develops a common vision and goals for school safety and security, and implements proactive, problem-solving preventive strategies to avoid crisis situations.

A memorandum from the summit lists the responsibilities of the Florida Department of Education, colleges and universities, state legislatures, and the United States Congress.

A safety and security program should be governed by board policy and clearly documented in an operations manual, with crisis management and student discipline plans. School security officers should be capable of enforcing board policy and the law as well as serving as a deterrent to unruly or criminal behavior.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A. Discipline Management

BACKGROUND

Maintaining a safe and secure educational environment requires comprehensive planning, policies, and appropriate programs that address the needs of all types of students. State law mandates that each school district adopt a student code of conduct that establishes standards for student behavior and complies with provisions outlined in Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.

The Texas Education Code also gives increased authority to teachers to remove disruptive students; establishes juvenile justice alternative programs for counties with 125,000 in population, under the oversight of the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission; and increases the requirements to interface with the juvenile justice system.

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD's Student Code of Conduct complies with the requirements of the Texas Education Code. Like other districts around the state, MPISD faces an increasing variety of disciplinary problems. While districts once dealt with behavior such as talking in class, smoking in the bathrooms or the occasional fight, today the problems range from gangs, to drugs and alcohol, to the possession of firearms and other weapons. Law enforcement officials have identified one gang at MPISD; approximately seven gangs have been identified in the City of Mt. Pleasant by the City of Mount Pleasant Gang Unit. **Exhibit 11-1** compares the disciplinary incidents at MPISD schools during 1996-97 and 1997-98.

Exhibit 11-1
MPISD Campus Disciplinary Incidents
1996-97 and 1997-98

	Elementary Schools		Intermediate and Junior High School		High School		Total	
	96-97	97-98	96-97	97-98	96-97	97-98	96-97	97-98
Students referred for	0	2	8	35	23	12	31	49

disciplinary actions related to possession sale or use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs								
Student arrests for offenses related to possession, sale or use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs	0	0	1	1	6	2	7	3
Incidents of school-related gang violence	0	0	5	15	8	5	13	20
Students placed in alternative education programs due to possession, sale or use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs	0	0	2	1	10	9	12	10
Other students placed in Alternative Education	0	0	15	11	49	31	64	42
Out-of-school suspensions related to possession, sale or use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs	0	2	1	25	0	9	1	36
Other out-of-school suspensions	4	22	20	10	6	17	30	49
Expulsions related to possession, sale or use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Other expulsions	0	0	0	1	4	1	4	2
Assaults against students	23	39	4	15	9	3	36	57
Assaults against teacher/staff	1	0	1	1	2	1	4	2
Acts of vandalism/criminal mischief against school property	0	4	19	40	19	1	38	45
Acts of vandalism/criminal mischief against student property	0	28	5	20	11	0	16	48
Acts of vandalism/criminal	0	8	1	10	8	0	9	18

mischief against teacher/staff property								
Number of firearms confiscated	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Number of other weapons confiscated	0	6	6	15	18	0	24	21
Total	28	112	89	199	173	93	290	404

Source: MPISD 1996-97 and 1997-98 TEA Report.

FINDING

During teacher focus group sessions at the high school, several teachers indicated that they did not feel safe at school and that they had a hard time controlling their students. Some focus group participants mentioned that when they disciplined students by sending them to the office or issuing detention slips that campus administration did not support them, and did not require students to attend detention. These statements are supported by the 39-percent increase in the number of incidents districtwide (**Exhibit 11-1**). However, the number of incidents at the high school actually decreased. District management believes that some of the unusual variances in incidents reported is due to inconsistent reporting by school principals.

In addition, **Exhibit 11-2** reveals that 58 percent of campus administrators and 62 percent of teachers believe that behavioral problems are handled effectively by the assistant principals and administrators. In contrast, only 41 percent of parents think behavioral problems are handled properly.

Exhibit 11-2
Survey Results of Parents, Teachers, and Campus Staff
on Statement
"MPISD Schools Effectively Handle Behavioral
Problems and Provide Proper Discipline"

Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
Parents	8%	33%	15%	26%	18%	0%
Teachers	17%	45%	6%	26%	6%	0%
Campus administrators	5%	53%	13%	18%	9%	2%

Source: TSPR survey results.

During the review, the review team observed several discipline and security problems on MPISD campuses. The most severe involved four Mt. Pleasant High School students who were arrested for making and discharging a pipe bomb in a city park. It is alleged that the students purchased the pipe bomb from other students in the student parking lot at the high school.

In another incident, a student at the high school reportedly threw a battery at a teacher that struck the teacher in the eye. Recently seven students assaulted two other students, inflicting significant wounds. Security personnel mentioned that there was little involvement of the MPISD police force in these incidents. In the matter of the assault, the MPISD police chief indicated that he had to persuade campus and central administration to issue citations and arrest the students.

The MPISD Student Code of Conduct lists assaults of a teacher or any other individual as one of the nine "Most Serious Offenses." The code of conduct, in accordance with Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, also requires that certain offenses, such as a severe assault, be reported by the principal to the school district police and any local or municipal police department.

Based on interviews with members of the MPISD police force and principals at the high school and junior high school, it appears some misunderstanding exists over the roles and responsibilities of each party. The principals want to make the final decisions about what constitutes an offense, while police believe that they are not allowed to treat all incidents fairly. There is also a misunderstanding regarding what constitutes an offense that must be reported by the principal to the police department. The MPISD Discipline Management Plan indicates that the principal is not required to report an offense if "the district's principal or designee reasonably believes that the activity does not constitute a criminal offense." As a result, an educator, as opposed to a commissioned peace officer, is making the final decision about whether an activity constitutes a criminal offense.

The turnover in principals at the high school has added to the frustration of the district police officers. For example, during the 1997-98 year, the previous high school principal instructed the police force to write citations to students for virtually every infraction. Hundreds of citations were issued for discipline incidents. The review team was told that many of the citations were not enforceable in court and were dismissed by the local judge. In contrast, in 1998-99 the new high school principal did not advocate writing citations. As a result, very few citations have been

written in the school year. This inconsistency in the application of the code of conduct sends a mixed signal to students, teachers, and parents.

While principals are the leaders of their campus, decisions about security and law enforcement should not be based on individual preference. These decisions should be based upon the district's clearly articulated and communicated policies and procedures for security.

As one MPISD administrator said, "We will get a handle on safety, security, and discipline when everyone works together, not just teachers, principals, and security force - each working alone-but when the students see all of us in the halls, around campus, and we are all involved in the discipline process."

Some districts have developed standard operating procedures (SOP) that eliminate or reduce the need to exercise discretion. The SOP describe in detail a violation of the code in simple terms that students can understand. The detailed information in the MPISD student code, however, recites Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, and quotes sections of the penal code that most students and parents are not familiar with. The SOP will typically describe in detail the responsible parties in a specific situation and indicate the exact duties of all involved, including the principals, assistant principals, and the police officers.

In general, there appears to be a lack of communication, coordination, and assignment of roles and responsibilities for the security function at MPISD. All parties, including teachers, principals and assistant principals, administrators, security personnel and police officers, as well as parents and students, need to know what their roles, responsibilities, expectations, and boundaries are regarding disciplining MPISD students.

TSPR has found that some districts do not have a vision and plan for their safety and security function that enables them to be proactive, rather than reactive, to discipline problems. Before a vision is established, the district should determine:

- What is the teacher's role in security situations?
- What is expected of the principal and assistant principal?
- When is a uniformed, certified police officer appropriate?
- When would a trained security guard be preferable?
- Should the security force carry weapons?
- Are patrol cars or other equipment needed?
- Who will respond to calls and how will calls for assistance be communicated?
- What is the role of local law enforcement agencies on the campus or within the school district?

According to TSPR's report, *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School*, a good safety and security plan for a district should be developed and continually examined to determine whether it contains clear expectations for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Expectations as well as job descriptions for school district staff and contract employees should include details about each individual's role in discipline management.

Finally, *everyone* must know the rules. Rules concerning student conduct should serve as a contract between students, parents, faculty, and administration. No one should be able to claim that he or she did not know the rules. The most successful programs require a signature from parents and students acknowledging the rules up front. This way, students know when they commit an offense.

Recommendation 78:

Establish goals and objectives for MPISD's safety and security function.

MPISD should establish goals, objectives, and a vision as well as define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for students, teachers, principals and assistant principals, police officers and security personnel, and parents concerning student discipline.

A task force made up of MPISD representatives, including the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, police and security personnel, one principal, one assistant principal, one teacher from an elementary school, middle school, and high school, and one parent representing each minority group, could be established. The task force's role should be to evaluate MPISD's existing safety and security policies and procedures, including the Student Code of Conduct, to ensure that discipline management practices are consistently communicated and carried out in the district.

Once goals and objectives have been established, they should be contained in the MPISD Discipline Management Plan and/or the Student Code of Conduct and shared with students and faculty.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent convenes a task force of the police chief and security personnel, parents, a teacher, a principal and an assistant principal, the deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations, students, and local law enforcement.	April-June 1999
2.	The task force prepares a draft of goals and objectives for the	August

	MPISD safety and security function, including what the roles, responsibilities, and expectations are of all parties involved and presents it to the superintendent.	1999
3.	The task force modifies the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Management Plan, if necessary, and presents its draft to the superintendent.	September 1999
4.	The superintendent approves and provides the draft to the board for review, comment, and approval.	September 1999
5.	The goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities, and expectations are included in the district's school safety and security program and communicated to teachers, students, campus and district administrators, parents, and security personnel.	October 1999
6.	The superintendent ensures that all teachers, principals, and assistant principals job descriptions are updated to include their expectations in responding and acting upon student disciplinary problems	November 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The survey (**Exhibit 11-3**) and interviews of MPISD police department personnel, parents, and teachers, indicate that parents are less certain of the safety of schools than teachers and other campus staff.

Exhibit 11-3
Survey Results of Parents, Teachers, and Campus Staff
on Statement "MPISD Schools Are Safe From Crime and Provide a
Secure Learning Environment"

Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
Parents	9%	33%	14%	30%	14%	0%
Teachers	27%	50%	2%	13%	7%	0%
Campus Staff	4%	65%	7%	13%	9%	2%

Source: TSPR survey results.

The survey results indicate 77 percent of teachers and 69 percent of campus staff either agree or strongly agree that they are safe on their campus. However, 44 percent of parents, who are not on the campus every day, do not agree that the schools are safe from crime or provide a secure learning environment.

Districts that effectively involve parents and the community often find this disparity reduced. Gathering comprehensive information about various student discipline and safety-related incidents, activities, and programs and regularly communicating this information to parents and the community, not only help the district to assess its programs and modify procedures, but can lead to joint efforts to address issues that involve the entire community.

During the 1997-98 school year, two MPISD students got into a fight during which one student threatened retaliation. Some bystanders mistakenly believed that a gun was involved. While the exact circumstances were unclear at the time, the principal responded swiftly, locked the campus, and sounded the emergency alarm. Complying with prescribed procedures, the teachers appropriately secured their classrooms. While some students and their parents were naturally alarmed, the community as a whole reacted favorably, praising the principal and staff for their fast action to protect the children.

Given the recent school shootings in other parts of the country, district officials are keenly sensitive to any threat to students, with or without firearms. Still, some parents were unnecessarily confused about the exact nature of the incident. Had the district clearly communicated the facts to the parents, they would have had little doubt that the principal and teachers had safeguarded their children at the time and would behave similarly should any similar incident occur in the future.

Recommendation 79:

Increase the amount and frequency of communication with parents and the community about security issues, and regularly solicit support for district efforts.

Regular communications should be issued in cooperation with the security force and school principals. All parties involved, including teachers, principals, assistant principals, administrators, security officers, parents, and students need to know what their roles and responsibilities are concerning disciplining, removing, and arresting MPISD students.

The first communication should build upon the Student Code of Conduct that is sent home at the beginning of each school year. This

communication should clarify MPISD's security and discipline policies and procedures for all parents, students, teachers, and administrators.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations prepares a communication of security issues, statistics, roles, and responsibilities for the superintendent's review and approval.	May 1999
2.	The superintendent and board discuss, review, and modify the communication for publication.	June 1999
3.	The public information officer develops a press release and a press conference to discuss the purpose of the new communication.	August 1999
4.	The superintendent and president of the board conduct press conference and mail the communication.	September 1999 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

As seen in Exhibits 11-4 and 11-5, the ethnic composition of the county is predominantly Anglo, while the majority of MPISD students are either African American or Hispanic. The ethnicity of the teachers mirrors that of the community.

**Exhibit 11-4
Change in Ethnicity of MPISD Student Population
1990-91 - 1997-98**

Ethnic Group	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Anglo	61%	58%	57%	55%	52%	50%	48%	42%
Hispanic	20%	21%	23%	25%	29%	31%	34%	39%
African American	19%	20%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	18%
Other	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Source: 1990-91 - 1993-94 MPISD, AEIS 1994-95 - 1997-98

Exhibit 11-5
Projected Change in Ethnicity of Titus County
1990 to 2000

Ethnicity	1990 Census	2000 Projection	Increase	Percentage Increase
Anglo	18,136	18,878	742	4.0%
African American	3,191	3,711	520	1.6%
Hispanic	2,553	3,532	979	38.3%
Other	129	145	16	12.4%
Total	24,009	26,266	2,257	9.4%

Source: 1990 U. S. Census, 2000 Data from Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Winter 1995-96 County Forecast; and the Texas State Data Center at Texas A&M University

Parents told the review team that many teachers have not had adequate training in how to handle students of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

Other districts that have seen similar shifts in the student populations have taken steps to address the situation. For example, in Spring and Longview ISDs, minority employees were hired or transferred into a position to serve as a liaison to the minority community. In Longview, where the minority community was concerned about unequal treatment of students, the liaison oversaw the discipline management program of the district and became personally involved in disciplinary problems. The liaison also conducted training courses in cultural diversity, educated teachers about certain inherent cultural differences, and provided teachers with successful discipline management techniques.

Recommendation 80:

Develop a cultural diversity training program for teachers that focuses on discipline management using input from representatives of the minority community.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology contacts other school districts, Regional Education Service Center (RESC) VIII, and education associations to request information on cultural diversity programs for teachers.	April 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology solicits representatives of minority groups for their input on the cultural diversity training programs.	June 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent for Instruction and Technology and minority representatives help develop the training program.	September 1999
4.	The district implements the cultural diversity training program.	October 1999
5.	The district evaluates the cultural diversity training program.	Ongoing
6.	Cultural diversity training is included in teachers' professional development plans.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with the district's existing staff development budget.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

B. Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

FINDING

MPISD has received funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools for the last 10 years. The purpose of the program is to encourage students to make better informed decisions about drug and alcohol use. The program uses a districtwide curriculum developed by the DARE organization or Education for Self-Responsibility - Prevention of Drug Use. Some of the activities provided, the length of times the activities have been conducted, and the number of people reached is shown in **Exhibit 11-6**.

Exhibit 11-6
Drug Awareness Activities and
Number of People Reached

Type of Activity	Year Implemented	Grades/ Groups Included	Number Reached
Education for Self Responsibility II	1990	K - 12	4,400 students and 450 employees
D.A.R.E.	1995	5 th and 7 th	300 students and 10 employees
Student Assemblies	1988	K - 12	4,400 students and 450 employees
Guest Speakers	1988	6 th - 12 th and Community	2,500 students, 200 employees and the community
Red Ribbon Festivities	1995	K - 12 and Community	4,400 students and 700 employees
Red River Council on Drug Abuse	1998	6 th Grade	300 students and 5 employees
Community/Business Partnerships	1998	7 th - 12 th	1,900 students and 15 employees

Drug Testing Program	1998	7 th - 12 th	1,500 students and 50 employees
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Source: MPISD Department of Administration and Operation

The student assemblies used by the district are unique and provide drug awareness and positive motivational information in an entertaining way.

Exhibit 11-7 explains some of the unique assemblies.

**Exhibit 11-7
Description of Student Assemblies
For Drug Awareness and Motivation**

Assembly	Description of Event
Miss Texas - Miss Texas USA	Makes presentation to Intermediate, Junior High, and High School students, focusing on the importance of making good choices and believing in yourself.
The Morris Brothers	This musical group meets with elementary students providing entertainment with a positive message of self-esteem, self respect, and conflict resolution.
Dave "Travelin" Davlin	Dave is a basketball "whiz" who captures the students' attention with amazing basketball tricks, many of which involve the students. His message program builds self-esteem, illustrates tragedy involved with drugs, teaches students to have a dream/goal, and promotes education.
Community Drug-Free Rally	The last three years MPISD has held a drug-free rally at the football stadium with guest speakers, community dignitaries and a live band. The focus is choosing to be drug-free.
Motivational Media Assemblies	During fall 1999, MPISD will present a multimedia program for all students. The program content ranges from character and self worth for elementary students, to personal responsibility and the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse.

Source: MPISD.

In addition to the drug awareness assemblies, all new teachers receive an orientation at the district level in the drug prevention program. Any follow-up training is handled by campus administrators to ensure that the program is implemented. The district is using the "Education for Self-Responsibility II - Prevention of Drug Use" curriculum. Teachers are

expected to use this curriculum throughout the school year. Teachers are also expected to have follow-up discussions with their students after a guest speaker appears at a student assembly. Principals are required to conduct at least one walk-through evaluation while each teacher is addressing the district's drug-free instruction curriculum.

The district is working with RESC VIII to update the drug-free instruction curriculum to one that is more subject specific and allows for easier integration into the core curriculum.

To monitor the impact of the drug awareness program, the district conducts an annual survey, sponsored by the Public Policy Research Institute. The survey allows the district to compare MPISD students to other students across the state. In addition, annual discipline reports are used to monitor new and ongoing problems in the district.

The results of the 1997-98 surveys of students indicate that student drug use decreased from the previous school year. The district plans to continue emphasizing the drug-free curriculum in an effort to reduce the rate of increase.

COMMENDATION

The district has developed a unique, attention-getting, and effective approach to educating students about the dangers of drug use.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

C. Security

CURRENT SITUATION

MPISD has operated a districtwide police force for the past three years. The MPISD chief is physically located on the high school campus, along with an additional officer, a guard shack officer, and one officer who patrols the high school parking lot. The officer who patrols the parking lot at the high school also patrols the junior high school parking lot a few times each day. All district officers work during school hours and often work after hours at various school activities such as sporting events. The district also contracts with local law enforcement officers for assistance with sporting and other special events that require additional security.

Exhibit 11-8 provides the costs of operating the police force for the past three years and the budget for 1998-99. The full salaries of the chief and the high school officer are not charged to the security budget. Instead, the chief's salary and 50 percent of the high school officer's salary are charged to the DARE program. The other 50 percent of the high school officer's salary is charged to a vocational instruction program because this officer also teaches criminal justice classes.

Exhibit 11-8
MPISD Costs to Operate Security Force
1996-97 - 1998-99

Budget Category	Actual 1996-97	Actual 1997-98	Budgeted 1998-99
Salaries and benefits	\$46,116	\$46,741	\$42,900
General supplies	\$1,684	\$2,334	\$2,000
Travel and other	\$2,752	\$3,681	\$4,600
Capital outlay	\$2,999	\$0	\$1,000
Total	\$53,552	\$52,746	\$52,746

Source: MPISD Finance Office and Budget, 1998-99.

The district does not provide vehicles to any of the officers. Some of the officers such as the guard who patrols the parking lot, and the chief who goes from school to school to deliver DARE activities, are provided a

travel allowance that is recorded in the travel and other category in **Exhibit 11-8**.

The district does not have 24-hour security patrols but relies upon local law enforcement to provide some coverage. The schools have alarm systems and when the alarm goes off at night, the MPISD chief is called or paged to respond. Maintenance personnel indicated that they also receive calls when the alarms are tripped because they have keys to all the buildings.

FINDING

As indicated in **Exhibit 11-9**, some of MPISD's peer districts have no security force, others have only one officer, and others have a "full-blown" department as one security officer said.

**Exhibit 11-9
Comparison of Security Operations of MPISD
and Peer Districts**

District	Does District Have a Security Force?	Number of FTE Security Personnel	Comments
Kaufman	No	None	District has no security force.
Terrell	Yes	8.0	Includes three sworn officers and five security aides to provide security on each campus.
Paris	No	2.0	Contracts for three officers provided by City of Paris police department. Partially funded by School Resource Officer (SRO) program.
Texarkana	Yes	8.0	Fully funded and staffed police department, including district-provided vehicles, partially funded through grants.
Liberty-Eylau	Yes	1.0	Have only Chief of Police.
Athens	Yes	1.0	Only has a chief. However, just received COPS grant for \$99,318 and will hire two additional sworn

			officers in spring 1999.
Kilgore	No	3.0	Contracts for three sworn officers provided by Gregg County Sheriff's Department.
Greenville	No	1.0	Contracts for one officer provided by the City of Greenville, through SRO grant program.
Corsicana	Yes	2.0	Two sworn officers and plans to add two more next year.

Source: Telephone survey conducted by TSPR, November 1998.

For several years the Texarkana ISD has had a fully-funded police department including eight to 10 full-time sworn officers. All officers are provided a marked, Texarkana ISD Police Department vehicle. The Texarkana public information officer said the district's police department has been effective in decreasing discipline problems, and its presence in all schools has been strong.

Corsicana ISD is developing a fully-funded and staffed police department. The district had only one sworn officer last year. It added another officer this year and has budgeted two more officers in the next year. According to the chief of Corsicana ISD's police force, the presence of officers on campus has curbed security and discipline problems significantly.

MPISD has not committed to a fully functioning police department. Although the district has hired a sworn officer who serves as police chief, the chief has not been able to set up a true police department. In reality, both the chief and the only other sworn officers spend significant amounts of their time teaching DARE and criminal justice classes. Although the district technically has its own police force, it operates with one full-time equivalent officer.

The district's chief was formerly an officer with the City of Mount Pleasant Police Department (MPPD). His relationship with the MPPD has proven to be very beneficial. For example, at a recent football game, there were some problems with a large group of students, and the district's police force plus contract officers had some difficulty controlling the crowd. The chief contacted the city, which stationed some members of the local police force and the SWAT team on the street where the problem had occurred. As a result, there have not been any problems at the football games. In addition, the city has helped in setting up the district police department and providing some research capabilities. MPISD is fortunate that the chief has a good working relationship with MPPD.

The community benefits when school districts and local law enforcement work together to keep the schools safe, monitor truancy, and handle citations written by the district's police force. Some districts have formed alliances or task forces of all local law enforcement agencies to share information and provide each other assistance when necessary. Many of the problems with crime in the community can be linked to problems in the schools. If a city is having gang-related problems, the city works with the district's police force to locate problem students or help educate the other students about potential problems or threats.

Many districts work in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies to provide security in their schools. For example, Port Arthur ISD employs City of Port Arthur off-duty police officers to work security in the schools. The off-duty officers working as security guards are paid \$20 per hour and usually work two four-hour shifts, so that the same guard works an entire school day. The guards at each school report to the school principal. This practice allows the district flexibility and economy in providing security, while giving the local law enforcement officers a presence in the schools.

Cooperative arrangements are used extensively in the Socorro ISD (SISD). Three different law enforcement agencies including the El Paso Police Department, the El Paso County Sheriff's Department, and the Socorro Police Department, assist SISD.

According to MPISD administration, the district considered a joint venture with local law enforcement approximately three years ago. Instead, the district decided to develop its own police department.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program is an effort by local police departments to work with local school districts to curtail juvenile conduct as defined in the Texas Family Code. The Community Officers Policing School program is similar to SRO. It is a grant funded by the State of Texas criminal justice system and is designed to hire sworn police officers to work specifically with youth in the area of crime prevention.

MPISD has been reluctant to pursue grants for the police department function, yet several peer districts have been successful in obtaining both the SRO grants and Community Officers Policing School (COPS) grants. Port Arthur ISD has used the SRO program with the City of Port Arthur to fund a sergeant and four police officers. In this program, the district received five officers, while only funding 20 percent of the cost.

MPISD has not pursued grants because it does not have a dedicated grant writer, although the district is planning to have the police chief become active in writing grants in the future.

Implementing grant programs can provide significant savings to a district. In Athens ISD, with a student enrollment of 3,450, the district police force received a COPS grant in excess of \$99,000, to be used to hire sworn officers.

Recommendation 81:

Formalize cooperation with local law enforcement and pursue grants.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and the police chief meet with key local law enforcement officers to discuss cooperative efforts.	April 1999
2.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and the police chief contact peer districts to assess their cooperative efforts.	May 1999
3.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations and the police chief identify all grant opportunities, like SRO and COPS, which can be implemented in MPISD.	May - June 1999
4.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations submits plan for working with local law enforcement officials to the superintendent for review and approval.	August 1999
5.	The board reviews and approves local law enforcement cooperative efforts and applications for grants.	October 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Students and teachers told the review team that when a potential security or discipline situation occurs they are not sure who to call or what to say. Some students may fear the repercussions of turning in a fellow student.

In response to this concern, MPISD implemented a "Hotline" at the high school that allows students, teachers, and citizens the opportunity to call anonymously to let district officials know of an alleged violation of district security or discipline rules. The hotline allows an individual to speak up and let the appropriate authorities know about a problem without fear of reprisal.

COMMENDATION:

The MPISD security hotline at Mt. Pleasant High School allows student, teachers, and citizens to call and report discipline incidents anonymously.

FINDING

MPISD is to be commended for implementing a hotline at the high school. However, the district could get additional coverage if a hotline was installed for all schools. In addition, the district should aggressively promote and market the hotline to all students.

Most hotlines are answered by an answering system that lets callers know that their calls are secure and confidential, without caller identification or call tracing. Once a message is left, the system pages the police chief or designee with a code that indicates that a hotline message has been left. The call is then retrieved and appropriate action taken.

Recommendation 82:

Establish additional coverage for a districtwide hotline.

The district could consider using a pool of community, parent and student volunteers to staff the hotlines.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The deputy superintendent for Administration and Operations contacts phone company and inquires about ability to equip all schools with a hotline.	March 1999
2.	The district installs additional hotlines.	April 1999
3.	The public information officer develops marketing campaign to increase public awareness of hotline.	May 1999
4.	The district solicits volunteers from the community to staff the hotline.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. This recommendation assumes that there is no additional cost to the hotline because the district should be able to use the same number for all schools in the district.

FINDING

The police force, teachers, and principals alone cannot solve MPISD's disciplinary problems. Students also must play a role by finding more effective ways to deal with problems, especially those that could escalate into violence. Given the many concerns that were expressed to the review team about discipline by teachers, administrators, students, and parents, some significant changes should be made.

Other districts have found student mediation programs, such as student courts, quite effective in curbing discipline problems. Student mediation trains students to intervene and help settle disputes between fellow students through discussion and negotiation. A student mediation program encourages students to take more responsibility for their classmates' actions and in a sense "take back" their schools from students who may be disrupting the classroom or causing problems for other students. Most importantly, many problems can be solved with very little intervention from traditional authority figures, such as principals and assistant principals. The process involves training several students in the mediation program. Some districts, such as Northside ISD in San Antonio, begin the program in lower grades so that those students can continue to serve as mediators throughout their years in the district. In Northside ISD, 33 students at John Glenn Elementary are trained in conflict resolution as well as cultural diversity.

The peer mediation program at Matilija Junior High School in Ojai, California has trained 15 mediators from grade eight; in the first year of the program, students conducted 10 mediations to help fellow students resolve differences in a peaceful manner. The school also requires a class in conflict resolution for students in grade seven. The peer mediation program has reduced student conflicts.

Recommendation 83:

Pilot a student mediation program in MPISD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent or designee contacts other districts in Texas and across the country to obtain information on successful student/peer mediation programs.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent reviews the data to determine if such a program should be established.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent selects one or two schools to pilot the program.	May 1999

4.	A committee from each pilot school is selected to develop the training curriculum.	May 1999
5.	The committee selects the first groups of students for training.	August 1999
6.	Student mediators conduct mediation sessions in their schools under the guidance of principal or designee.	November 1999
7.	The principals evaluate the results and decide whether to expand to other school.	April 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

D. Alternative Education Program

CURRENT SITUATION

An alternative education program (AEP) is defined in the MPISD Student Code of Conduct as "a setting other than the student's regular classroom, located on or off campus, that separates AEP students from the regular classroom and focuses on English, language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self discipline." The AEP is to provide for the students' educational and behavioral needs as well as provide supervision and counseling.

The MPISD student discipline policy provides specific guidelines describing offenses that result in placement in the AEP. **Exhibit 11-10** presents the types of offenses that can result in placement in the AEP, the number of incidents, and the number of placements.

Exhibit 11-10
AEP Placements During 1997-98
School Year

Type of Offense	Number of Incidents	Placements in AEP
Disruptive behavior	25	25
Conduct punishable as a felony	3	3
Assault or terroristic threat	9	9
Possessed, sold, or used marijuana or other controlled substance	13	13
Possessed , sold, used, or was under the influence of an alcoholic beverage	1	1
Public lewdness or indecent exposure	2	2
Retaliation against school employee	1	1
Used, exhibited, or possessed a firearm	2	2
Used, exhibited, or possessed an illegal knife	1	1
Aggravated assault or aggravated sexual assault	4	4

Other infractions	17	9
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Source: MPISD Administration 1998 TEA Report

The AEP, which is located adjacent to the high school, is staffed with three full-time teachers and two instructional aides. **Exhibit 11-11** shows the operating costs of the AEP for each of the last three years.

**Exhibit 11-11 MPISD AEP Operating Costs
1995-96 - 1998-99**

Budget Category	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual	1998-99 Budget
Salaries and benefits	\$116,905	\$103,411	\$143,846	\$148,860
General supplies	\$888	\$4,813	\$5,711	\$11,000
Travel and other	\$100	\$0	\$0	\$200
Capital outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$117,893	\$108,224	\$149,557	\$160,060

Source: MPISD Finance Office and Budget

According to MPISD's Alternative Education Department, 85 percent of the students in the program are high school students with the exception of one to three seventh or eighth grade students attending from time to time. Some members of the community told the review team there was some disparity in the ethnic makeup of students placed in the AEP. However, enrollment data provided by the district does not support that assertion (**Exhibit 11-12**).

**Exhibit 11-12
MPISD Ethnicity of Students in AEP
Comparing Fall Enrollment 1995 - 1998**

Ethnicity	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Total District Enrollment
Anglo	36%	45%	43%	46%	42%
African American	40%	34%	31%	33%	39%
Hispanic	24%	21%	26%	21%	19%

Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
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Source: MPISD Alternative Education Department

FINDING

Based upon interviews with teachers, administrators, and principals, MPISD's AEP has been successful in serving more at-risk students. **Exhibit 11-13** shows the increase in enrollment and graduates from MPISD AEP.

Exhibit 11-13
Enrollment and Graduates
MPISD Alternative Education Program
1995-96 - 1997-98

Year	Total Enrollment	Long-term Enrollment	Graduates
1995-96	53	12	3
1996-97	57	23	3
1997-98	79	21	10

Source: MPISD Alternative Education Program

Although the AEP was started just four years ago, the district has developed a program that is helping students become successful. Contributing to this program are dedicated teachers who enjoy working with at-risk students.

For the 1998-99 school year, MPISD is including a Drop-Out Recovery Program that will be more comprehensive than previous programs for at-risk students. In addition, the district has purchased Plato and Nova-Net, computer-based learning courseware that allow students to take school courses for high school credit while placed in the AEP. The district plans to have the program fully implemented by spring 1999.

COMMENDATION

The district continues to upgrade and improve its alternative education program.

Appendix A

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

This appendix summarizes comments from public forums at the Mt. Pleasant Junior High School and Frances Corprew Intermediate School cafeterias on October 8 and several focus groups with community, civic and business leaders, principals, teachers, and parents. These comments, generally presented verbatim, help illustrate community perceptions of the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD), but do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the MPISD community were encouraged to attend the community meeting where people were asked to write comments related to each chapter of the report.

Focus groups were assembled with the assistance of MPISD staff. Members of the focus groups were asked to comment on each area covered in the report. Community and civic leaders, former schoolteachers and administrators, and business and religious leaders representing various interest groups, were also interviewed.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Key findings based on comments:

- Citizens were divided on support for new facilities for the district due to issues such as high taxes, an influx of minority students, leadership of the district, and division on the school board.
- Parents said the needs of average and non-college-bound students were not being met as well as those that were academically advanced.
- Programs that received strong praise were the MALL, the gifted and talented program, special education, and the dual language program.
- Most parents said the schools were safe, but they expressed concerns about the high school.
- Concerns were raised in all groups about the district's method of transporting students, as in bringing them all in to a central point and then dispersing them to the schools.
- The school board was viewed as divided by most groups, hurting the district's image in the community.

- The district was generally viewed as having good financial management, but concerns were raised about an increase in taxes over the past few years.
- Food served in the cafeterias was viewed by all, especially students, as very good and nutritious.

The following sections group comments by individuals.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Good site-based input! Easy to talk to anyone.

Board changed in May for the better.

One (board) member has a personal agenda; people do things just for him and (it is) a negative reflection on the community.

(Board members) don't appear to have any training (several have personal agenda).

Some issues always bring a 5-2 (board) vote, mostly (having to do with) money, staff development, and travel.

(The board) didn't extend administrators' contracts, and seems not to have confidence in the administration.

The administrative group is the best in 20 years, but it is also most fragmented, by philosophy.

Two board members always say no to more money; five of the board members think it through and then vote.

Board has improved in the last 16 months.

Board president does great job of pulling all together; she's a reason for improvement.

Community that cares is aware.

Some residents are resentful about changing demographics, as evidenced by the bond issues that failed.

People in the community are coming to the board to get change and the board resents it.

The board and administration operate the district in a professional way, like a company. I think they have a good image in community.

The board is doing a great job.

The bond issue failed because younger people don't vote, and old people don't want their taxes increased.

There is no voter registration program. Before the last bond issue, they had a great campaign.

Increasing taxes was the primary reason the bond issue failed.

Due to state dictates, the board's hands are tied.

The 1992 bond issue was handled badly. There was not much time to promote the issue.

The first bond issue was rushed to the public.

The public was still unhappy about the 1992 bond issue when the 1994 bond issue was presented.

The board and superintendent are well respected.

The community is just not interested; as a result, the community doesn't know the direction the district is going.

On the day of the bond election, the newspaper headline stated that "MPISD Has \$2 Million Surplus." There was no surplus.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

District has specialists not being utilized on campus because some principals do not want them on or around the campus.

Experience with the board has been positive; they have taken action when required.

The board has a split vote on some issues and sometimes displays a negative attitude.

The board and superintendent plan things that the teachers do not agree with, like field trips. The teachers have no voice in the decisions.

The district seems to put a Band-aid on the whole school instead of dealing with each problem specifically.

Some schools have a problem with rats and while several people have been blamed, the problem has not been corrected.

There are problems with the sewers and no bathroom for the kids.

The community wants long-term solutions to problems, not Band-aids.

There is no forum for issues to be discussed.

The health department was called to Corprew Intermediate School because of severe pest problems.

The district has good Head Start, Even Start programs. They also have immigrant and homeless programs, yet there is nothing for other minorities.

Dyslexia programs are needed. Some regular kids get left out.

The mentoring program needs help.

There is a lack of communication between campuses and central administration.

Distrust in the community is very evident, due to ethnic changes.

There are problems with all learning levels being taught in one class.

There are lots of non-college-bound kids and the district doesn't have good programs for them; students end up in trouble.

Teachers are given opportunities to present ideas, but most don't feel their opinions are considered.

Some teachers are afraid to speak and have been called down on it.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) remediation needs a nudge.

Advanced Placement (AP) program needs help, but it's getting better.

Literacy really needs lots of work for optimal improvement.

Need reading intervention for Hispanic kids.

Transition of kids from Bilingual to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes is not adequate and needs a nudge.

The Site-Based Decision-Making Committee has a campus plan, and they think they are well received.

As a school district, we are caught in a fight that is going on in the community over changes in demographics.

School-based governance is very good, but needs improvement and we need more staff development.

Schools seem to be micro-managed by a few parents in the district. There is no forum to discuss issues.

Have changed the programs many times. The accelerated reading program may be going down, because we haven't gotten it fine-tuned.

The district's vocational technology department has been destroyed. Most kids aren't going to college.

Test scores may go down with block schedules.

Site-based committee went along with the move to block schedule. The teachers didn't know about it until they got here in August. There was no planning.

Block scheduling was implemented by the new principal.

We are teaching college preparatory classes. French and Special Education kids are in the same class. Why? Counselors have placed students in the wrong classes.

Special Education teacher does not place students in the wrong classes.

District needs to improve internal communication; the teachers are the last ones to know.

There is a lack of communication.

Worried about the math program; pre-Algebra not being taught and kids need it.

District requires excessive amounts of computer training.

Some teachers have no computer to call their own; most are floating teachers.

Time for class and lesson preparation has been reduced. The teaching process has become secondary.

Teachers seem to be considered second to buildings and computers.

Some teachers only get \$225 a year for supplies.

The ESL program is great.

The district now has the biggest group of students ever who can't speak English at all. There was a 20-kid increase this year.

In history class, teachers can't handle the problems of Gifted/Talented (G/T), Special Education and average students. These kids know they are different.

Is the inclusion of different groups in one class mandated?

The public perception is that teachers aren't professionals.

The district is missing a middle group of kids, while special groups get personal attention.

This year, it seems teachers are doing crowd management instead of teaching.

Teachers are having to do stuff on Saturdays that they don't get paid for.

We are continuing the trend with the quality of education getting watered down due to a broad student population.

It is impossible to teach the kids at their individual levels when so many different groups are in one class.

All kids are not getting the teachers' best.

Four kids in one class can't speak English at all.

The kids are losing out; none of them get the attention needed.

ESL and bilingual teachers had their first paychecks cut back, \$3,000 for bilingual teachers and \$1,200 for ESL teachers.

In order to pass the Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT), one teacher went to Mexico for instruction and spent their own money for class.

The district provides no incentive or help to pass the TOPT. Instead, they must pay for emergency certification.

There is no bilingual instruction after fifth grade.

The district needs an ESL / bilingual coordinator position.

Kids still don't have the reading skills needed when they come in to regular classrooms, and they can't pass TAAS.

Need to spend more time on vocabulary for ESL students.

ESL staff doesn't meet district wide for planning purposes.

The Language Arts reading teacher never sees ESL kids because the ESL kids don't go to Language Arts.

G/T programs don't have Hispanics and Blacks.

ESL students couldn't be G/T until this year.

Parental involvement looks good on paper, but they aren't doing it.

Technology; these kids don't have computers at home.

They aren't helping parents that can't teach third grade math.

The Saxon math program used discovery thinking; it was adopted and teachers used it a couple of years, but it has been forgotten. This has been brought up to curriculum people and they are working on it.

Information is not freely given to counselors.

Counselors don't seem to be focused or optimally utilized.

Is there a formal way to share information on kids as they go from school to school?

G/T kids are bored in general classes in the eighth grade.

Lots of mention of the "inclusion" process for kids, lots of complaints, no textbooks in some classes.

Seems like teachers have low expectations of the students.

Started Junior Achievement here in Mt. Pleasant last year.

Teacher turnover at the high school is huge, some due to competition.

Hear a lot about discipline problems.

Most kids are going to college and excelling.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

On Wednesdays, the daily newspaper has a special supplement all in Spanish.

TV gives school news.

Academic blanket program awarded 105 blankets last year.

Texas Scholars get a banquet paid for by the district; these kids are doing well based on how hard class is.

What needs to be done, expectations need raising, and:

- Financial - raise pay of teachers;
- Retain quality teachers;
- Don't let the kids fall through the cracks;
- Staffing/teachers - need consistency and the right mix;
- Lot of blending, and lots of student enrollment growth including minority growth; we need to do a good job of this;
- More motivation for teachers and principals, need some incentives;
- Challenging quality education at every level, and
- Still need more space for kids

Parent Involvement Council, mentoring, parent school, Parent-Teacher Organizations have set up committee.

We have a bad attitude toward Mexicans and we need to be learning from them; they love kids and the kids revere and respect parents.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Must attract and retain teachers, pay more money, we are \$500 over the state base rates.

Accounts Payable has procedures, yet no one is following them.

Salaries are not fair; two years ago, a salary study for paraprofessionals was done.

Need to pay more money for masters degrees, the stipends are also too low.

Some compensation needed for work outside of classroom, either in time or money.

The district must obtain ESL or Bilingual certification that the district requires and they don't all get stipends. All teachers are required, but only the ESL-designated teachers get the stipend.

ESL courses taken are at your own expense.

At junior high, lots of courses are being required of teachers, yet when they ask to get off, they get grief.

The substitute teacher pool is not large enough.

Cannot attract new or quality teachers and there are no good foreign language teachers.

Teachers must get ESL certification in two years or they are not hired.

ESL teachers sign a contract not knowing what the stipend will be. They get salary amount with their first pay check.

Teachers pay supplements were lost for building issues.

The bond issue failed because community groups didn't come together and didn't get information.

Need bilingual teachers; the district did not go out and try to recruit and can't get them because the "word is out" about the failed bond issues and no support for teachers.

All teachers that have bilingual class load and are ESL certified get a stipend.

Paraprofessionals weren't moved up to pay step. Instead they are moved up with double steps; one campus secretary will not catch up until 2002.

Decisions of the Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC) are taken seriously.

SDMC is an open forum; lots of their stuff is done.

Morale is very low. Teachers are demoralized, turnover is really bad, and morale progressively worsens.

Need to pay teachers more money; in 1984, teachers received \$3,000 above the state base, which has been reduced to \$500 above the base. To get the best teachers, we need money.

High turnover rate because of extra duties like training for computers and teachers must have ESL. Lots of required training in technology and the training is all after school.

Teacher salaries too low. The French teacher and Spanish teacher have 39 kids, trying to get upper level kids to higher level.

FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE

Some portable buildings in very bad shape.

Portable building, can't lock it.

Fowler Elementary has bad custodial staff, in an old building.

Because of some discipline problems, boys can't have paper towels in the bathroom.

Traffic bad around school due to junior high and road construction.

Mice in high school locker rooms.

Condition of facilities at Fowler Elementary; oldest school and everything leaks, including rooms, and the kitchen; it rains in there.

Sims Elementary, 34-year-old building and it is leaking.

Termites are tearing stuff up, walls are falling down, they are holes in the walls at Corprew.

Corprew Intermediate, roaches and mice.

Sims, leaks in lights, messed up carpet.

Panel boards at Sims Elementary are so old, district can't even buy parts.

Snack bar at high school always hot, all year long, no air conditioning.

Need brand new cafeteria at high school, not enough room.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Regional Education Service Center, due to new system, had data base problem; high school only got final schedules two weeks ago.

PURCHASING

Get supplies easy, not a problem to get books.

FOOD SERVICE

Students like burritos, chicken fingers, onion rings, pizza, steak fries, chicken and dumplings, cheeseburgers.

Most buy their own lunch.

Least favorite choices are foods with rice, chicken and dumplings, corn; too much pepper in the macaroni and cheese, hamburgers, Mexican rice and corn, peas, beans and rice, chicken fingers, burritos and rice.

Lunch is only 30 minutes long, not enough time; need more lines and more choices.

TRANSPORTATION

Buses seem too crowded; students switch buses at high school.

Some kids get there before 7 a.m.

Young kids ride the buses.

No discipline on the buses, heat and air conditioning a problem.

Need bigger buses; roofs leak in rain.

Problems with crowding, big kids and little kids. Some students stand up on buses even when there are seats available.

Longest bus route is one hour and 15 minutes

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Some teachers do not feel safe and will not walk down the hall; kids will get in front of you and slow down.

Gangs are started at junior high level. Administration sees problem at junior high level, need gang prevention at junior high.

Kids are scared to go to ball game, fearing they will get beat up; only way to stop is to go to community.

Junior high not involved in drug prevention program.

Too many kids in classrooms and teachers can't control students.

Drug problem is big problem. Principals and teachers are more worried about candy than drugs.

No one goes to detention and if you go there are no rules.

What about a student court?

Teachers don't know how to manage a class.

High school teachers don't feel safe; there is fear of correcting kids.

Have trouble at high school parking lot; kids have knives, high school girls were fighting Friday; they live with a fear every day that something could break out. During changing of buses in afternoon, they need more people available to supervise.

Principals don't know about drug and violence problems.

Parents are concerned that campus security has decreased.

There are very infrequent surprise searches.

The Hispanic kids are more accepted and are excelling, reading at or above grade level.

Appendix B

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix summarizes surveys of teachers in the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) during the review, including responses to open-ended questions. The survey results do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

During the week beginning October 12, 1998, survey instruments were provided to all MPISD teachers. The surveys were delivered to the principal at each school and either placed in individual teacher boxes or personally distributed to each teacher.

Each of the surveys were self administered and all those surveyed were asked to return their surveys by October 22. The deadline was extended, and all surveys received are included in these results. All survey respondents were provided with a postage-paid reply envelope to provide maximum security and allow for candid, confidential responses.

Information requested from those surveyed included rankings of the various areas covered by the chapters included in this report. Additional space was provided for any other comments that the respondent cared to make. Data included in this appendix includes a portion of the comments and responses to the open-ended questions.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Response to the teacher survey was very good with a 70 percent response rate (**Exhibit B-1**).

Exhibit B-1
Number of Teacher Respondents by Grade Level

Grade Level	Number of Teacher Respondents
Elementary school	94
Intermediate school	38
Middle school	19

Junior high school	35
High school	42
Other	14
Total	242

Exhibit B-2 presents the actual number of completed surveys by teachers based upon years of experience.

Exhibit B-2
Number of Teacher Respondents by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Number of Teacher Respondents
1-5 years	125
6-10 years	48
11-15 years	30
16-20 years	18
20+ years	21
Total	242

Significant findings are as follows:

- Teachers said that campus-level administrators and counselors are performing very effectively, with the administrators graded as an "A" or "B" by 79 percent of the respondents and counselors receiving the same grades from 72 percent of the respondents, respectively. Eight-nine percent said that principals and assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs.
- Seventy-eight percent of the teachers said their school is safe and secure, but 62 percent of the high school teachers disagreed.
- Ninety-three percent of the teachers indicated they have the supplies and materials necessary to support the instructional process.
- Over 70 percent of elementary and intermediate school teachers said that parents are involved in school activities and made an effort to assist their children. However, less than 40 percent of the teachers at the junior high school and 50 percent at the high school felt that way.
- Only 35 percent felt that MPISD operations are cost effective, while 38 percent disagreed.

- Communication was an issue: 43 percent of the teachers said that central and campus administrators do not regularly communicate with teachers and one quarter of the teachers said there was not an effective line of communication from the principal.
- Teachers said the needs of college-bound students are being met but not those of average, below average, non-college bound, and at-risk students.

The remainder of this appendix provides the actual survey results by each question for teachers.

Mount Pleasant Independent School District

Management and Performance Review

Teacher Survey

The Texas State Comptroller's office is conducting a management and performance review of the

Mount Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD). The three main objectives of the performance review are to (1) enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, (2) identify ways to improve management practices, and (3) identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Teacher input is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like as many teachers as possible to complete and return the survey instrument via the attached postage paid envelope no later than **October 22, 1998**. You may also put your completed survey in the box provided in the front office of your school.

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that the performance review team understands teachers' opinions in your district

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. How many years have you been a teacher in the MPISD?

1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
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52%	20%	12%	7%	9%
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2. In what campus level do you work?

Elementary	Intermediate	Junior High	Middle	High	Other/Special
39%	16%	14%	8%	17%	6%

As a teacher you often give your students a grade of A, B, C, D, or F for the quality of their work. What grade would you give MPISD's performance in the following areas?

3. MPISD school board

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
12%	48%	19%	8%	1%	11%	1

4. Superintendent of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	29%	18%	14%	13%	9%	2%

5. Counselors at your school

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
45%	26%	12%	8%	5%	3%	1%

6. Campus-level administrators in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
39%	40%	15%	2%	3%	1%	0%

7. Teachers in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
38%	50%	8%	0%	1%	2%	0%

Now please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

8. Student learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
26%	55%	5%	12%	4%	0%

9. Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
15%	45%	23%	14%	3%	0%

10. The school where I teach is safe from crime and provides a secure learning environment

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
27%	50%	2%	13%	7%	0%

11. Principals and assistant principals effectively handle behavioral problems and provide proper discipline

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
17%	45%	6%	26%	6%	0%

12. Supplies and materials are made available to my school to support the instructional process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
40%	54%	2%	5%	0%	0%

13. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
31%	61%	6%	2%	0%	0%

14. Teachers care about the educational needs of the students in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
40%	54%	2%	5%	0%	0%

15. Principals and assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
29%	59%	4%	7%	1%	0%

16. Parents are involved in school activities

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
5%	45%	9%	37%	4%	0%

17. Parents make an effort to assist their children in the learning process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
2%	38%	19%	36%	5%	0%

18. Parents are satisfied with the education students receive in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
3%	46%	36%	16%	0%	0%

19. District operations are cost-effective and efficient

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
3%	32%	27%	32%	7%	0%

20. Site-based decision-making is implemented effectively in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
11%	42%	18%	21%	7%	0%

Going back to the grading scale, A, B, C, D, or F, please rate the effectiveness of the following MPISD programs:

21. Mathematics

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
21%	42%	17%	4%	0%	16%	0%

22. Science

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
21%	37%	19%	2%	0%	20%	0%

23. English or Language Arts

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
35%	38%	11%	2%	0%	14%	0%

24. Computer Instruction

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
26%	39%	15%	4%	2%	15%	0%

25. Social Studies

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	44%	17%	2%	0%	21%	0%

26. Special Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	33%	16%	11%	4%	18%	0%

27. Bilingual/English as a Second Language

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
31%	38%	12%	4%	2%	14%	0%

28. Fine Arts

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
24%	43%	11%	2%	1%	19%	0%

29. Physical Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
37%	39%	9%	1%	0%	14%	0%

30. Business Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
8%	17%	5%	1%	0%	68%	0%

31. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
12%	14%	7%	2%	2%	62%	0%

32. Foreign Language

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
8%	21%	13%	5%	5%	48%	0%

33. Library Services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
29%	31%	14%	5%	2%	19%	0%

34. Honors/Gifted and Talented

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
22%	37%	15%	3%	2%	21%	0%

Now please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

35. MPISD central and campus administrators regularly communicate with teachers

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
10%	38%	7%	33%	11%	1%

36. An effective line of communication exist between teachers and campus level administrators

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
19%	48%	7%	21%	5%	1%

Going back to the A, B, C, D, or F grading scale, please rate the following:

37. Teacher salaries

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
1%	12%	27%	28%	32%	0%	0%

38. Benefits provided to teachers

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
4%	19%	36%	24%	18%	0%	0%

39. Health insurance provided by the district

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
3%	24%	35%	23%	11%	3%	0%

40. Quality of food served at my school

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
22%	31%	26%	12%	3%	6%	0%

41. Quality of buses used on school trips

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	39%	17%	7%	4%	16%	0%

42. Your principal's work as manager of school staff and teachers

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
42%	36%	14%	5%	2%	1%	0%

43. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
15%	44%	22%	12%	5%	1%	0%

44. Amount of classroom time dedicated to TAAS preparation

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
22%	36%	13%	2%	1%	24%	1%

45. Amount of classroom time dedicated to basic educational requirements, such as reading, math, science, and history

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
37%	42%	10%	2%	2%	7%	0%

46. The district's response to use of drugs and alcohol at your school

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
35%	33%	12%	7%	5%	8%	0%

47. Quality and helpfulness of office support staff at your school

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
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52%	38%	7%	3%	1%	0%	0%
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48. Quality of staff development you are provided

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
22%	38%	26%	10%	4%	0%	0%

49. The district's use of technology as an instructional tool on your campus

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
31%	37%	20%	6%	5%	1%	0%

50. Cleanliness of your classroom and your school

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
26%	27%	25%	13%	9%	0%	0%

51. Curriculum guides

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	33%	27%	9%	5%	8%	0%

52. Support from my fellow teachers

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
51%	35%	11%	3%	0%	0%	0%

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being least effective and 10 being most effective, please rate how the needs of the following are being met:

53. Academically-advanced students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
2%	1%	4%	2%	14%	5%	17%	28%	17%	8%	2%

54. Average students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
2%	0%	4%	4%	18%	12%	16%	18%	14%	10%	2%

55. Below average students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
4%	4%	8%	6%	12%	7%	16%	16%	17%	8%	2%

56. Non-college bound students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
6%	6%	5%	%	19%	7%	15%	11%	8%	5%	10%

57. Students at risk of dropping out of school

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
5%	5%	8%	7%	17%	9%	14%	13%	9%	6%	7%

58. Students with learning disabilities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
3%	5%	7%	9%	12%	7%	15%	18%	14%	8%	1%

59. Students with physical disabilities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
2%	2%	6%	3%	9%	7%	13%	23%	18%	13	3%

Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

60. MPISD fills vacancies and make promotions based on individual qualifications

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
6%	29%	28%	26%	11%	0%

61. I have sufficient time to plan and deliver curriculum for my classes

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
12%	45%	7%	26%	10%	0%

62. In what ways could MPISD operate more efficiently? Use additional pages if necessary.

We need to replace some of the negatives with positives. My main negative is with Central Administration. Demands on teachers in this district without compensation has created low morale. We need help with our Special Education students in the inclusion classes.

MPISD could provide more enrichment activities for the average and below average student. This would put more interest in their learning and hopefully break the rut that so many students get into.

We have too many "deputy superintendents" and people in other "central support" positions.

Raise teachers' salaries. Classroom aids. Include dental and vision benefits in the health benefits. Reduce time teachers have to spend in training which takes them away from classroom (we feel very pressed for time).

To have more training for classroom / school teachers' aides.

Communication from the top down needs to improve. When answers are being sought from principals to superintendent or deputies - the top administration doesn't respond. Superintendent is feared. Opinions and concerns cannot be expressed at a Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) meeting without later reprimands from him.

Too many deputy superintendents. Cost raises are not passed onto teachers. No incentives! Too many programs are signed up for grants and then teachers have to do all of the training and paperwork.

More communication - face to face - not memos.

Provide better communication between administration (central office) and faculty (e.g. computer opportunities, English as a Second Language (ESL) training, etc.) available by district.

Stronger discipline!

Administration is top heavy!! We don't need three assistant superintendents. Money is wasted on half-done jobs by maintenance and when reported one response by administration was "What do you expect?" I expect my tax dollars to be spent more wisely.

Higher teacher salaries. Friendlier assistant superintendent. If so, reward. Assist Superintendent that take action on requests made by teachers - Yes or No.

Get teacher input before spending money on programs and curriculum. Communicate!!!!

Better communication with administrators and staff is one of the main problems. Also, inconsistent discipline and not following up on discipline problems also causes problems. I think that the principals at the high school are given too many responsibilities and they cannot manage all of them effectively. I think for a school that is this size, there should be more principals and security people to keep the school in good working order where it is also more safe.

Have less administrative staff and more teachers. Have classrooms for all teachers so students would be better served.

Allow teachers to be in the classroom without being sent to workshops which are theory. Teachers should select workshops which would benefit their students.

Reduce class size for K-2 to 18 to 1. Foundations for literacy are set in these grades and students would benefit from more individual attention.

In the school where I teach - Child Development Center - I am either on a "honeymoon period" or everything is great. I am so grateful for all the enrichment provided for teachers - to keep us pumped up and excited about teaching. I would love to see in all Texas schools more help and preventative measures for kids that are "at risk" or can become "at risk" during the teenage years.

Discipline and consequences may help - but so does kindness, caring and finding another route to the kid.

Use the site-based management system the way it was designed to work instead of a few hand-chosen people to constantly make all of the decisions. The work should be evenly distributed.

Find one insurance program and stick with it. Changing year after year is not a confidence builder. Let academics drive the school instead of athletics! Find ways to do most, if not all, of the training during inservice rather than after school / Saturdays.

Higher pay. Discipline - stop nurturing the criminals. Have consequences that are feared.

The district needs to do something about the high teacher turnover. Too many new teachers each year - district does not seem to mind this. This is not good for the students. There are no incentives to keep quality teachers.

More pay for teachers - less administrative costs.

Have monthly statements of special accounts for extracurricular teachers.

Do preventive maintenance on buildings - i.e. a/c, plumbing, pests (ants, termites) and spend \$ needed to fix problems - not Band-aid.

I feel that "first priority" should be the procurement and in the keeping of the best teachers they can get. Better salaries and working conditions are a way of fulfilling the above mentioned needs of this district. I believe that if this were satisfied we would be well on our way to being a better district and subsequently we would improve our instruction and do better by our students.

They could quit doing things on maintenance on a get-by basis, and then having to redo it the right way. I believe we are a little top heavy at central administration. The superintendent could praise teachers for the strides we have made and not just complain about the things we have not been able to accomplish. The counselors at the high school level could appropriately place incoming freshmen, not just do whatever they feel like. They drive the curriculum. They disregard the input from the junior high.

To give training to hired teachers who are having trouble passing their Excet's so they wouldn't have to move districts.

Our superintendent is a very weak leader. He has very little interest in classroom instruction and teachers. And his weaknesses really hurt the district. Our school board is trying hard to do a good job. They care about the students but some of them are very misinformed by the superintendent.

We have four janitors at our school. It takes two or three to do a one person job. If they worked independently, we could get more work done. The janitor who takes care of the gym quit a couple of weeks ago. No one has been assigned to cover until someone is hired! Floor has not been swept or trash emptied. Whenever you ask "head" janitor to do anything she complains so much..... some teachers just do it themselves.

Get corporate sponsors to help fund technology, offer mentoring, provide list of tutors in each subject who are available for high school students having difficulty.

Better support for teachers when discipline problems arise. Hiring on the basis of qualifications instead of "who someone is." Paid maternity leave or locally added sick leave - 3-5 sick days per year is not adequate if you have an extended illness. Better support between peer teachers.

More communication between administrators and teachers. More instructional staff.

Tries to begin too many new programs at once. Then doesn't stick with any of those programs long enough to see if they work before jumping into something else.

Give us a better prescription plan. It is not conducive to people who take daily maintenance medication.

Too many meetings.

Perhaps have a cleaning service come and clean the school after students leave.

Communications and cooperation between the different campuses and central administration could be improved.

By using instructional aides as a last resort, not a first one. Special Education aides need to be the last to pull instead of the first because of the type of kids the Special Education teacher is dealing with.

Each bus driver and aide need more rewards, incentives, and a salary increase for greater morale and efficiency.

Hire more Special Education teachers. Hire more bilingual teachers. Pay the teachers better to avoid or reduce turnover. Reduce duplication in bus routes. Get rid of some dead wood in upper level administration.

Teachers and teaching are the lowest priority of the district.

Our district spends a great deal of money on problems without providing solutions. Thousands of dollars were spent fixing the roof on the high school academic building last year - the roof still leaks.

One priority of MPISD should be to attract and retain highly qualified and experienced teachers. Although that is an official goal, in practice I have seen too many good teachers leave for higher pay, or better working environments. Keeping trained personnel is one way of becoming more efficient. Secretarial staff needs to be paid more than the pittance they have now, and should have regular promotions.

Money is wasted on block scheduling. Coaches teach two classes a day and walk out around noon to play the rest of the day. Block scheduling cuts six weeks of class time. This district is squandering money. The athletic director teaches no classes. A school district of this size does not need an athletic director.

Fewer administrative positions. Too many "special program" officers that are paid high salaries. Count how many program officers are in our administrative office.

More emphasis on the basics and less on technology. Thousands of dollars being spent before thorough understanding of needs takes place.

Support teachers in curriculum, discipline, salary, and materials.

Develop a discipline policy and be able to stay consistent - see that it is enforced. The principals need to be supported by the superintendent and the teachers need to be supported by both the parents and principals. There also needs to be communication between all groups. We are a very fractured school district.

Give teachers what they're due, especially salary if they're certified for something, and give everyone the same opportunity to advance.

Give teachers support they need : a) financial - pay raise or paid insurance for teachers; b) discipline - all students receive same punishment; c) communication - notify of how rules are going to be enforced; d) support - back-up teachers.

Allow teachers and principals to discipline students. Parents should not be allowed to override discipline decisions. Allow teachers and principals to make grading and curriculum decisions. Influential parents should not have gang-like, terroristic power in this - or any - regard. A few "big shots" are holding these kids' futures to stage their huge egos.

Monitoring curriculum in classroom to see that teachers are following through with programs. All of our Special Education students being served by qualified teachers and practices.

Bilingual coordinator.

By eliminating so many meetings. Teachers here meet constantly. Plus, we have way too much emphasis on computer training. Teachers are snowed under with things that have zero relevance to the education of children.

To actively practice equal rights for all. Use provided funds appropriately. Provide services needed for each child to be successful regardless of economic status, academic learning abilities, or color of skin.

MPISD needs to evaluate salaries versus the amount of time teachers are required to put in. We are tired of working extra hours for no pay. Our administrators at Central Office do not require this of themselves!

MPISD is more concerned about public opinion than the needs of our students. For example, we are short of classrooms and we had to beg for the 3 portables we have! They stated it would look bad; we just want our students to have classrooms!

MPISD needs to look at the structural needs of each campus and create a plan to make repairs.

MPISD has a lot of programs in place, but they are not monitored to ensure effectiveness.

Insurance staff does not solve problems, refuses to answer questions, and does not return phone calls. It is now 10/19/98 and I still do not have an insurance card.

I would like to know why it takes one superintendent and three deputies to run this school district! They continue to get raises and we don't

They don't tell us how much we are going to get paid until our September check is put in our hand!

We used to make \$2,000 over base; we now make \$500!

We have a decrease in salary, but the requirements have tripled!

High school teachers could use compassion and common sense when dealing with students' needs. Care and consideration for students' individual needs are not being met.

Stay consistent with implemented programs and follow through with new Programs implemented are not evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. Promotion is political. Too many chiefs (not enough Indians) at administrative levels. \$\$\$ go to administration - three raises for them in past 3-5 years. Gifted and Talented program fosters cliques: students are completely ignored - especially in Jr. Hi / HS.

Employing three deputy superintendents at high salaries to do the same job that one person has done until our superintendent took over seems to be a terrible waste of money.

Telling teachers three years ago to "bite the bullet" and lose our stipend and then turning around and asking for and receiving a raise for administrators and the superintendent was a slap in the face and continues to be.

Take care of discipline problems - in the classroom, on the bus, etc. A slap on the hand or a talking to DOES NOT get it. Need security on all campuses. Get those students who have committed crimes OUT of the classroom, if they are not going to suffer consequences!

Spend less money on administration and more on students - too many administrators at the "White House" (central office).

The Texas Assessment Academic Skills (TAAS) shouldn't be the most important thing. Administration should be more positive towards teachers instead of providing low pay and stressing the importance of TAAS scores.

The high school campus is very crowded and space is limited. Discipline on the high school campus is a problem. There are a minority of students that continuously cause problems. These students are threatening the safety of both teachers and students. Our discipline is not consistent and not strict enough. We need more aides to assist the teachers. Teachers need more time to plan and less paper work and extra duty.

Providing the proper professional help to non-English speaking students - a bilingual counselor is needed to help the Hispanic students.

More organized form of parental involvement (schoolwide). This would help with discipline. Better discipline would allow everyone to do their job more efficiently.

I only know about my own responsibilities. I have worked for many years at another school district and this district is far superior in every way to what I am accustomed to. I think we should support our place of employment and those hired to be administrators.

More bilingual teachers - bilingual special education.

MPISD could strive to put programs in place to help students and eliminate massive "training" (of teachers) to justify certain administrative jobs. We need time to actually teach and plan, not just learn things we never have time to implement.

Less paperwork; better in-service training; wider knowledge given concerning budget.

Instead of patchwork jobs, knowledgeable people should be hired to do the job right at the start.

Get a new superintendent and do away with the three deputy superintendents.

If the goals of our school system were made more clearly from the top, then the lower echelons could either democratically agree or disagree. Instead we have a semi-dictatorship which is sometimes

on the wrong side of an issue. The "good ol' boy" network lives on in Mt. Pleasant.

Too many teacher requirements. I feel time is taken away from lesson preparation.

More money spent on supplies for teachers and students.

We need to put more support in the MALL area. This area is less effective than it should be due to lack of resources. There are not enough teachers available when students need assistance.

Restructure upper management in MPISD.

Eliminate at least two of the unnecessary positions of deputy superintendents.

Raise base pay for teachers as an incentive to attract and keep quality teachers.

Department heads should assist with adequate training for new teachers.

Discriminatory practices in receiving disciplinary practices for example; if your parents are aristocrats in the community, their child may be exempt from the rules stated in the handbook. If you don't fit into that category, all the rules are applied.

Classrooms are too crowded.

Culturally unbalanced.

Too much emphasis on sports.

Enforce more vocational programs.

Behavioral problems have skyrocketed, and are out of control.

Stiffer actions of punishment need to be enforced.

PPCD class in special education could be formatted into two half-day sessions to meet the increase in enrollment. Most of the afternoon session is devoted to non-academics such as nap time. The constant attention needed by these special needs children on a complete day schedule precludes any planning time for the teacher.

Eliminate administrators that are "hanging on" until retirement and not being effective.

Better communication at all levels.

Allow teachers to collaborate on a regular basis on school time like inservice for a half-day more often.

MPISD should immediately focus on alleviating time required of teachers outside of class time for training (i.e. Saturdays, after school) and also focus on programs to assist teachers in discipline procedures that take an awesome amount of classroom time. Students need to be instructed and led. Someone else needs to discipline.

Hire more speech therapists. Our caseloads are too large to service the students we see fairly.

We have a 50 percent Hispanic student body - bilingual needs are not met; gifted and talented, special education - we need a bilingual administrator that knows what bilingual is.

I believe that if salaries were more on line with other districts we would get the professionals that we need in certain areas - bilingual, special education.

There is not enough instructional staff to meet the needs of the students on my campus. Aides and resource teachers are being pulled to fulfill other duties, and students who are needing extra help are not being served.

More buses so that not everyone has to quit learning early because of away games.

Over the years teacher stipends have decreased. When I started here, Mt. Pleasant paid \$2,400 over base. Every time the state gives us a raise, our district takes off more of the stipend so that basically we really don't get a raise. Teachers do need a raise from the state without the district taking it.

We have no personnel services. We need people who know policies and procedures and can implement them and answer questions. Our health insurance is awful. We were switched without regard to our personal needs (doctors).

There needs to be more campus-level decision-making. A bilingual supervisor would be beneficial because of the rapid growth of our second language students. This would help the consistency of the bilingual program throughout the district.

Less requirements outside of classroom - i.e. inservice, meetings, technology hours, site-based and district site-based meetings; too often we have late meetings.

Better communication.

Better computer management.

Better teacher salaries and teacher support by administration.

One of the most important things MPISD could do is to stop promoting people based on who they are related to or how big a favor an administrator owes someone and start promoting people based on their knowledge and experience! We could also stop losing good teachers if we recognized their innovative ideas and learned from them. Instead they leave our district due to low pay and most often because they are sabotaged by people who are intimidated and are afraid of anyone who knows anything!

Anyone who was honest wouldn't dream of putting this (survey) in the office for fear of what they would have to fight as a consequence!

Again, using the grading system, please rate the efficiency and effectiveness of each of the following MPISD services:

63. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	52%	20%	4%	0%	5%	1%

64. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
11%	31%	31%	17%	8%	3%	0%

65. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
21%	34%	25%	14%	5%	0%	0%

66. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
12%	40%	23%	8%	2%	14%	0%

67. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	48%	23%	7%	1%	7%	0%

68. Food services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
24%	38%	25%	5%	2%	5%	0%

69. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
10%	29%	24%	10%	2%	24%	1%

70. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
17%	48%	20%	10%	3%	1%	0%

71. Management Information/Computer Services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	36%	24%	10%	5%	7%	1%

72. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
12%	29%	27%	9%	3%	19%	1%

73. Planning and Budgeting

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
9%	31%	26%	10%	5%	18%	1%

74. Overall operations of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
11%	42%	29%	9%	4%	6%	0%

75. We have left the remainder of this page blank to allow you to provide us with any additional comments, suggestions, or complaints. Attach additional pages if necessary.

We put our kids first, which is the motto of this system. Yes, we are tired from all of the added pressures; the extra time needed to complete district requirements. There have been many mistakes made with the communication between central administration and teachers. It has left us with the feeling that we will do it our way and if you don't agree leave. Many good teachers have left. We need to be able to trust our administration and school board members. We are a team and if we all work together with faith and reachable goals we will achieve our goal. Thank you.

I enjoy teaching in MPISD and feel that we are treated fairly and democratically at most times. Our administrators for the most part are receptive to our needs. I strongly feel that we are underpaid. I would like to teach for the remainder of my working career, and would like to benefit monetarily from doing so.

The morale at our school is so low because our principal has taken on the attitude of our superintendent - "don't bring me a problem unless you have a solution." Sometimes I feel like I'm wading in quick sand trying to do my job. I see other campuses doing really neat innovative things. But when we bring it up at our meetings, the attitude is "we don't want to copy them." Well, why not, if it's a good idea? I love teaching kids, but the bureaucracy and politics that come into the picture take the joy out of it.

If the district is going to require all hires to obtain bilingual or ESL certification, then they should be allowed to receive

stipends for passing the test and meeting qualifications. The courses and expenses are out-of-pocket expenses. If these people do not pass, then they are reprimanded, reassigned, and/or fired.

I am having to be out of the classroom too much. The district is requiring a lot of training. MPISD needs to be more honest with their teachers. We need a pay raise.

The upper administration plans for programs to be implemented. They leave the teachers to do the training and planning themselves. Too much is scheduled for the teachers, plus trying to teach the kids.

As a Pre-K teacher, I am concerned about the bilingual issues of my students. I wish this district would provide more ESL training to prepare the teachers to become ESL certified. Our campus could certainly benefit from this training. Possibly future inservice days could be used for this training.

I believe most of our problems are the result of an influx of Hispanics. This has brought many gang and drug related problems to our school that were not here before.

The alternative school needs to be allowed to develop a work program for the students. If we are going to recover drop-outs, we need to be able to assist with the opportunity to work - not deny them the opportunity.

We have site-based decision making, but if our choices are not what administration thinks they should be - so what!

Our counselor is excellent.

Salaries are low; no incentive to want to stay employed at MPISD.

We have to earn money to pay to use school buses and hire drivers to make field trips.

Discipline is not consistent; the district rewards bad behavior by letting "bad" students be office assistants, etc.

Teachers are asked for their opinion, but if they do not agree with administrators they are labeled as negative

people. Administration uses an abundance of paper to issue memos, etc., but constantly complains about the teachers' use of too much paper. More emphasis is put on TAAS than on learning is a complaint I hear from other teachers.

We have had a big influx of Hispanics to our area, and we are not prepared for this.

This is the first year that I have had major problems with the Hispanics. I have several who skip class frequently.

We have several gangs in our school, one of which has tried to establish the upstairs boys' restroom as their territory. It is known they are dealing drugs and causing problems, yet they are still in school. We should be allowed to get rid of this type of student because it has caused our school to be a volatile, dangerous place to work.

I have been very happy at my job and I am pleased that my job is evolving. I have met with optimistic administrators when sharing ideas. I believe that the staff is always trying to raise productivity and teaching skills. The lower grades seem to have a greater grasp on achievement-oriented approaches to teaching, while the higher grades seem to be more geared toward structure and rules.

With respect to change, I would like to see more shared teaching and letting students excel in areas that they like and enjoy. Students who are "good" at math should be allowed to go to higher levels - like at high school. Younger students who are culturally, environmentally or linguistically deprived should get special expenses, trips, and visits.

I feel I spend more time on paperwork and meetings than I do planning and teaching.

It's too early in the year for this much burnout!

I do have a say in curriculum and what I teach, but I'm having to write much of it myself.

The district does not even provide basic supplies.

There are too many people afraid of losing their jobs if they talk.

Campus-level administrators do not follow through on punishment to students, too much movement in halls all day. No discipline at all by assistant principals.

MPISD needs to do many things to attract and retain teachers. We have had a very high turnover rate and lack of continuity for our students.

They also need a superintendent who will stand behind his principals and open his eyes to the problems we have. Our schools are very unsafe. We need help!

We also need to prioritize our educating of children. We have high school kids who read only on a kindergarten level. Help.

We also have many problems in the area of special education. Counselors have moved children from one course to another without having ARDS. IEP's for resource classes are not approved in ARDs. As teachers we are told by one director and diagnostician to just put one in the child's file. IEPs for our children are not appropriate to their abilities.

Technology constantly has us jumping through hoops to "justify their grant." I believe their technology trainers are under-qualified for their position and technology installers haven't got a clue. Planning ahead is not in their vocabulary. They install wires where they are not needed or are inconvenient. Teachers are treated like second-class citizens.

Pay for our own buses! Students are required to pay \$1 per mile to use buses for field trips! Is this a statewide requirement? There has got to be a better way!

Although we are elementary teachers, our concern is that the high school has problems with teacher morale, student self-esteem, poor attitudes of teachers. A few make an attempt to use strategies to teach all kids, but the majority just show up and lay out the material - test it and go on, whether kids get the concept or not. Look at the failure rates.

Elementary teachers do a wonderful job with most of these areas - high school level is lacking in many, if not most, of the areas.

It can be said that in MPISD "the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing" - poor communication.

Our chief administrator does not want to hear about "problems"; therefore, problems continue and are not solved. A good rule of thumb to go by in this district is if you want to keep your job - "don't rock the superintendent's boat." Some very good campus administrators have had to seek positions elsewhere because they refused to be puppets to the chief administrator.

I believe that Elementary teachers are very dedicated and work hard to meet the needs of their students. High school teachers need to devote more time to teaching the students and preparing them for graduation - college or workforce.

Spanish students need more ESL before entering regular classes.

We are required to use technology (computers) in the classroom, but we don't have enough equipment. Everyone has only one computer. Our computer lab is awful. Something is wrong with over half of the computers and no one is in the lab to help.

Keep roping troubled, at-risk kids in - every time they stray - keep pulling them back - don't make them have "eternal consequences" when they are still kids.

This is a tough socio-economic and ethnic community to serve with much "small town" politics at play. It is by far the most difficult place that I have worked. Surprisingly enough, the teachers and administrators for the most part work hard at trying to produce educated, motivated students.

I have only been here three months and cannot make a judgment about most of this.

Comments from administrators that "there was a teacher in your job before you got here and there'll be one when you leave" shows where their loyalty lies. A \$5 million surplus

in the budget this year and absolutely no talk of raising salaries says a lot. This added to the increasing requirements for additional hours from each teacher for technology, G/T training, one to two hour staff meetings and various committees let us know our time is not valued. That is a big part of the reason for the large turnover in teachers here!

My biggest complaint is the continued unconcern by the district in keeping and attracting quality teachers. All raises have been given to administration, while teacher supplements have been cut, this is not conducive to high teacher morale. In the past few years, many good teachers have left this district for those that pay better and appreciate teachers. The ultimate losers are our students. This district has too many high paid administrative positions that have no direct impact on the education of our children --CUT SOME OF THE FAT! Departmental budgets are extremely poor.

Teacher morale is low because of technology training being required after hours. Our personal time is not valued as such.

Fine arts are used to fill out schedules. More electives need to be offered so that students who want a program are not robbed by the students that are "dumped" in the programs.

MPISD is doing a lot of good in education. We are truly striving to put children first. We have a lot of areas to be fine tuned, but we are headed in the right direction.

We need a specific process for screening dyslexic/learning disabled students. I feel we have many of these types of students who are not being served. Research says that there are as many dyslexics as true G/T students, yet we have very few, if any, students in remediation classes for reading difficulties and over 30 G/T in one grade alone. I think this is true throughout the district.

I feel that some students should be sent to alternative school quicker. The students are often left on campus too long! Often these same students return and cause another student to get in trouble. Drug dogs need to be brought without warning during school hours. Administration tends

to ignore the gang issue. "If you don't acknowledge it, it doesn't exist."

Teachers are penalized by central administration if we have an opinion that is different from the administration's. School buses are not state inspected, but inspection stickers are bought many at a time.

Maintenance: We are required to turn in any maintenance requests (in writing) to our assistant principal. I turned in a request in 1995 for repair of rotten wood on gym floor. This has not been repaired. It is now a "hole" in the gym floor where several rotten boards are missing. I have written this up at least five times over the past three years. It is now dangerous to students! I have been given many excuses, but it is still not repaired.

Our district spends too much money on technology. Computers are nice, but most of the students' work involves game playing. Whenever we try to do big projects it takes an inordinate amount of class time away from instruction. Our students are way below grade level in basics. Too much is also spent on fancy inservice programs. Once the money is spent and the program is taught, we never hear another word about it. Nothing is changed; all it does is enhance someone's resume. Too much emphasis is being placed on inservice by the state. Teachers on the campus could be more effective in teaching inservice. Our salaries are TOO LOW. Whenever the state gives a raise it is deducted from our supplement. Our benefits have also been "cut to the bone" as our past school board president put it.

We have a complete communication breakdown with district administrators. Teachers and other staff are strongly reprimanded for making any kind of negative comment about how the district can improve or problems that arise at the schools. As a result of these reprimands, teachers have become increasingly afraid to speak out for fear they might lose their jobs. Teacher opinions are not valued.

We teach for the TAAS all year. Reading and Language Arts teachers have two preparations, Math only one and all the other teachers have no preparation at all. This is at the fourth grade level. The burden is put on a few. We have entirely too much paper work to do and too many unnecessary meetings to attend. The required computer

training for teachers should be optional. Teachers' morale is very low.

Fences needed around all of school(s) for added security. Science books confusing, difficult to find answers for questions, and dated. Some students' behavior is excused or passed over because of who the student is, while other students are dealt with most harshly for similar misbehavior.

Some of the employees are concerned that the administrators gave themselves a salary raise, but lowered the salary of our bus drivers.

The "children first" motto is used as an excuse by MPISD administration. Teachers are required to do things and do without things in "the best interest of the children." Upper administrators seem to get what they need or want. I guess their whims don't affect the children because they never come in contact with students. People that run schools should spend some time in them.

There are many, many good things about this district but those are due to individual efforts that go largely unrewarded. There is no discipline where children of friends of central office are concerned. Teachers can be attacked, drugs found, violence engaged, but if the student has an "in" with the downtown administration or the board, nothing will be done.

I did not appreciate losing my above-base stipend due to the district's lack of funding. This action became harder to stomach when the superintendent asked for and received a pay raise for himself. I have worked as many as three part-time jobs simultaneously to replace that lost income.

MPISD should look into a more comprehensive site-based decision-making in which administrators promote and request input from all sectors of school personnel.

There should be more communication between teachers as a group and between administrators and teachers. We need to set aside time to have meetings to communicate priorities and plans of concentrated effort to solve problems.

In the past, during times of "crisis" there used to be a better atmosphere of congeniality, collegiality and cooperation among the teachers and administration at the high school.

The high school went six weeks without an official roll check the first six weeks. Student schedules were incorrect. Students were in the wrong classes. Students were unaccounted for and still are unaccounted for. The administration has had to get on the Public Address system and call a student to the office when a parent came to see their child, because they could not locate the student. Students are still wandering around because they have not withdrawn from a class.

Inconsistent enforcement of discipline. If you are a part of the "country club" and white, the punishment may be less severe. If you are friends with the right people you can get your way.

People feel jobs are at risk when they speak the truth or buck the administration. We need intelligent leadership that is open to suggestions and listens. Why does our district need three deputy superintendents while other districts do not?

We spend a great deal of money and place a disproportionate amount of emphasis on athletics rather than academics. Our superintendent is an ex-coach.

The school district cannot hire enough qualified teachers because our pay is not competitive with many schools in the area. The pressure the school experiences; the drop out rates and failure rates have resulted in lower academic standards. Students do not see the value in an education and parents do not help by not being involved and non-supportive. School districts buckle to try to prevent lawsuits. All responsibility is shouldered by the school district.

I suggest that the district straighten up their act or it's gonna flop.

We, as teachers, feel threatened to talk to the administrators at the "White House". Many times I have been dismissed by [the superintendent] when I have approached him with concerns. I really feel that dishonesty plays a big part of our

school system. I feel the blame for problems are always being shifted to someone else. I guess I am really ready for a school system with honesty and integrity.

The size of this school demands better organization and more personnel. The deficiency in this regard adds to the overall chaos.

Counselors should not be allowed to usurp the powers of teachers and principals.

New teachers are thrown to the wolves with no support. No wonder there is a revolving door of teachers here.

Thugs roam the halls and the sidewalks. This school is not safe. This school should either be transformed as soon as possible or shut down.

Teachers don't speak out for fear of retaliation. The present stipend was taken away. We went from \$2,000 a year above base to \$500 a year.

I want to know how much everyone gets paid, from superintendent to custodial staff!

Too much focus on remediation/intervention programs - reading recovery drives regular Language Arts instruction.

Have a great math program K -3 when implemented curriculum director stated "a necessary program, but not sufficient" - did absolutely nothing to provide training with regard to how to supplement to make it complete - did not monitor or evaluate (until third grade TAAS math scores) - now we're in danger of losing it - K-3 kids are very successful with program.

The technology trainers that we have know nothing about what we need at the high school level. We are forced to participate in senseless technology training that is of no benefit and it is always after school and on weekends. Training could be provided on school time if it were really necessary. Again, we just seem to be paying salaries to people who don't know what they are doing and really aren't necessary anyway.

We are asked to go and to do so many extra things that we don't have time to teach. For example, we have hours of computer training --we have to do class projects (two a year). How can you do that when there is only one computer in the room and no other time? (Time is needed to teach for the TAAS tests). I am so stressed that I am thinking of leaving the teaching field - I love to teach!

We never seem to know where the money is, how much, or where it goes. The teachers in our district are afraid they will lose their jobs if they speak out. There is a lot of intimidation.

Discipline of the students is out of control!

As a professional my wages are not reflective of that fact. Health insurance is extremely high, especially considering the restrictions.

The 10 years I have worked for MPISD have been great. I have enjoyed every day I worked here. I honestly believe the MPISD puts children first and are always trying to better the education for the students. The administrators are doing an excellent job. I love teaching and my ultimate goal is to make a difference in every one of my students' lives.

There are some people who complain about everything if given the opportunity. I think performance reviews such as this are harmful in many respects because dissatisfied employees will use this opportunity to harm those they don't like for reasons non-related to the job they are doing. Your time and ours could be better spent.

Teachers need to be allowed to use their conference time for planning and conferencing. They also need to have some free time away from school instead of spending after-school hours in continuous meetings, technology training, and other time-consuming activities. Teachers also need more pay.

Because of our community not agreeing on bond issues and educating all students, it has made it difficult to address issues with a positive attitude. The district does strive to meet the needs of all students, but sometimes we fall short.

When the state gave teachers a state-funded raise, MPISD took away our supplements, city lack of funds - however; administrators - every one got raises at the same time as teachers were having supplements taken away. Why can the administrators get raises each year (or almost each year) that are funded by the district but teachers cannot? I do not understand that. The district has enough money to pay a superintendent and three assistants (where one used to be sufficient) and allow these four people to get constant raises, while not reinstating the full supplement that was taken away. We are told we never have money for stuff, but if it is for football or such we have plenty.

The good old boy network is an archaic way to operate a school system. It is time that was put aside and a more efficient method was used to operate.

Rooms are not cleaned like they used to be. Trash bag in wastebasket is only emptied - not changed. Not enough money for classrooms. New teachers come in with nothing and only have \$225 to use for the entire year.

Mt. Pleasant is an outstanding place to work, but respect for teachers is lacking at central administration. Turnover is too high; morale is too low. Building administrators don't get the backing they need from central administration.

Teachers are assigned an excessive amount of training hours, leaving us too little time to plan effective lessons. We want to implement technology, but it has become a "negative" because of the way administration implemented training requirements. Free training was a plus.

There are many very capable at MPISD. Unfortunately, some who are not are running the show.

The high school is over-run with problems. Safety is not a consideration. There has been a 200 percent increase in fights in nine weeks than all of the previous year. However, many of these fights are undocumented so the numbers "look" good. Senate Bill 1 is not followed as a rule. In this district, who parents know is correlated to the treatment and education of the child.

From my personal experience, I think that principals tend to pay more attention to teacher complaints/needs than they

do to student needs. There are kids that don't fit into the disciplinary procedures that are set up by the district. Punishment is not black or white. There are degrees of transgression. Let punishment fit the crime.

I think the level of education and caring quality of teachers decreases at the middle school, junior high, high/senior high level. I did not begin to be concerned about my own children's education until the sixth grade.

Inclusion of Special Education students is not working. The Special Education child is forced to sit and listen to the regular teacher explain a concept then has to go to the MALL to get it explained again or some peer tutor "helps" them -by telling the answer. This doesn't help anyone's self-esteem. Each Special Education student should be evaluated for the amount of time needed to be in the regular classroom (K-2). These students need small group (qualified) instruction from the get-go.

As a teacher of 13 years who is certified and has taught in many other states, I am surprised to find the effectiveness of Texas schools does not rank higher. Texas schools have some of the most talented and dedicated teachers I've ever worked with. In regard to quality of education, I feel that Texas has accepted the impossible task of educating such a broad and diverse population of students, that certainly the level of quality is lowered without increasing and supplementing all programs. Not just programs to meet the needs of at-risk students, but programs that enhance and challenge average and especially above-average students. We are certainly planting trees in the way of progress and construction. When an average to above-average student comments, "The teachers never pay any attention to us," something is seriously wrong with our education program.

Please understand and work with teachers who enjoy teaching and are certainly struggling to do so. It is our goal to prepare students to meet and prosper in society. We will always need sharp minds and progress. Instead of educating all children well, we are spending an amazing amount of time developing strategies to assist at-risk and bilingual students.

Please help! I am excited that your office is concerned and eager to fulfill all our obligations.

It's becoming increasingly harder to teach, the students seem to be lacking respect for authority - discipline has become an increasing problem. I blame TV and media for the increased violence. We have an increasing Hispanic population - many from Mexico - it causes an attendance problem at our school as well as lowered scores.

There are some things that the district takes for granted that a new teacher should know and often don't teach incoming teachers.

There has been added stress and low teacher morale with the threat of contract renewals as a result of low TAAS scores. When a subject needs to be discussed with a teacher or teachers, it is talked about with other members of the staff beforehand, and the subject matter is found out about from other staff members not involved.

MPISD is a great place to work. As a Special Education teacher, I often feel left out as to what the mainstream is doing. Our in-services are usually different. My administrator really tries to "fill me in" on what is happening. Overall, I am very happy to be working for MPISD.

My room has flooded about 12 times over 10 years. My books have been ruined and the carpet has mildewed. The teacher across the hall had a toilet overflow in her room - smelled horrible. The carpet needs to be replaced for health reasons.

Salaries in the state are low. Class size is average but would be great if around 18. The Hispanic children come out of our schools bilingual and our children (unless they take foreign language in high school) come out speaking only one language.

I feel very fortunate to be at my campus. I feel the students, teachers, and staff are priorities. Special needs students need help.

Special programs do not facilitate appropriate integration of second language learners. The bilingual program needs more support and that teachers of monolingual students increase their awareness of our local program.

If my principal leaves, I think I'm looking for a new job. She has been to me a family, a mentor and friend. I aspire to be just like her someday. I love teaching Spanish-speaking students. They are the fuel behind my energetic and effective classroom.

The population of students in the bilingual program is increasing every year, while the books (class and library) and instructional materials have not. Bilingual supervisor needed to coordinate activities, curriculum and facilitate program.

The district adopted art textbooks for this '98-'99 school year. After repeated attempts, I still have not received my fourth grade textbooks and support materials. I had received third grade in plenty of time previous to school starting. We are beginning the third six weeks soon and I have no explanation from administration.

The cleanliness of our campus is a disgrace. My art room, which has tile floors, is swept once a week (if I am lucky). That is the only thing they do. I teach all 670 students. This is the same problem in music, library, and gym.

I am very disappointed in the above state minimum money paid to teachers. \$200 for an advanced degree is a slap in the face. Taking away our \$2,000 over base pay and replacing it with \$500 also was disappointing. The high turnover rate, especially at Mt. Pleasant High School, reflects these conditions along with the lack of communication and apparent lack of appreciation of the hard work and dedication of the teachers.

Our district has its priorities way out of line. We spend tons of money on athletics - including buying the varsity football team dinner prior to each game, but we have rats at our three or four school and many classrooms do not have an overhead or adequate classroom libraries! The reality is we are a community of poor people who lack much, most importantly language! Yet, a majority of our school and teachers set up and treat kids "like we've always done it." Our high school especially is a huge mess! Ninety percent of the "teachers" are assignment-makers who care little to nothing about children unless they have the right last name! Our administrators' response is we really can't do anything about it. My hope? That you all can!

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Legislative Budget Board's office, you may call (512) 475-3676.

Appendix C

Parent Survey Results

SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix summarizes surveys of parents in Mt. Pleasant Independent School District during the review, including responses to open-ended questions. The survey results do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

During the week beginning October 12, 1998, surveys were mailed directly to the homes of sampled parents using address labels provided by the district.

Each of the surveys were self administered and all those surveyed were asked to return their surveys by October 22, 1998. The deadline was extended, and all surveys received are included in the results. All survey respondents were provided with a postage-paid reply envelope to provide maximum security and allow for candid, confidential responses.

Information requested from those surveyed included rankings of the various areas covered by chapters in this report. Additional space was provided for any other comments that each respondent cared to make. The data included in this appendix includes a portion of the comments and responses to the open-ended questions.

SUMMARY OF DATA

The total amount of responses received from parents surveyed was 68. Over 400 surveys were mailed to parents, and any survey returned due to delivery problems was replaced by another survey mailed to another home.

Of the parents responding, **Exhibit C-1** shows the percentage by ethnicity. The percentages closely mirror the student population of the district.

Exhibit C-1
Percentage of Parent Respondents by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage of Parent Respondents
Anglo	48%

African American	18%
Hispanic	30%
Other	0
No response	4%

Exhibit C-2 shows the grade levels of the children of the parents responding.

Exhibit C-2
Percentage of Parent Respondents by Grade Level of Their Children

Grade Level of Children	Percentage of Parent Respondents
Grades pre-K - K	22%
Grades 1-5	38%
Grades 6-8	24%
Grades 9-12	16%

Some significant findings are as follows:

- Seventy-five percent of the parent respondents felt that learning and education are the main priorities of MPISD. Forty-eight percent felt that the emphasis on learning has increased in the past three years, and 52 percent are satisfied with the education students receive.
- Seventy-two percent felt that MPISD communicates regularly with parents.
- Forty-five percent felt the schools are safe from crime but 43 percent disagreed.
- Only 41 percent of respondents felt the schools handled student behavior and discipline problems effectively while 42 percent did not feel the schools did a good job.
- Respondents felt that parents were involved, with 70 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with that idea, and 77 percent said that parents make an effort to assist their children with the learning process.
- Parents felt the needs of average, below average, non-college bound, and at-risk students are not being met.

The remainder of this appendix provides survey results by each question for parents.

**Mount Pleasant Independent School District
Management and Performance Review
Parent Survey**

The Texas State Comptroller's office is conducting a management and performance review of the Mount Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD). The three main objectives of the performance review are to (1) enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, (2) identify ways to improve management practices, and (3) identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Input from parents is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like you to complete the survey instrument and return it via the postage-paid envelope provided no later than **October 22, 1998**. You can also send the completed survey back to school with your child to put in a box in the front office of their school.

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that the performance review team understands the opinions of parents in your district.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

- How many years have your children been students in MPISD?

Less than 1	1-3	4-5	5-10	10+	N/R
17%	24%	12%	32%	14%	2%

- Ethnicity

Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Other	N/R
52%	15%	27%	2%	5%

- How many of your children currently attend MPISD school(s) by grades?

Pre K to K	1st - 5th Grade	6th - 8th Grade	9th - 12th Grade
21%	35%	22%	22%

4. Why did you select MPISD for your children? (Check all that apply)

24%	Caring teachers	5%	Special Education programs
36%	Schools are close to home	15%	Extracurricular activities like sports and band
17%	We had no choice	79%	We live in the district
24%	Good academics	0%	N/R

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to indicate the quality of their work. Please grade the various areas of MPISD shown using the same grading scale.

5. MPISD's school board

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	30%	21%	8%	6%	20%	2%

6. Superintendent of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	23%	17%	8%	12%	20%	3%

7. Campus-level administrators in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	39%	14%	8%	3%	17%	2%

8. Teachers in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
35%	33%	17%	3%	3%	8%	2%

Now, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

9. Learning and education are the main priorities in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
12%	64%	3%	20%	2%	0%

10. Central administrative operations are cost effective and efficient

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
11%	29%	41%	17%	3%	0%

11. Central administration does a good job of supporting the MPISD educational process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
9%	36%	32%	20%	3%	0%

Going back to the grading scale, A, B, C, D, or F, please tell us how you rate the effectiveness of the following MPISD programs:

12. Mathematics

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
33%	38%	12%	5%	3%	8%	2%

13. Science

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
35%	41%	11%	0%	3%	9%	2%

14. English or Language Arts

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
39%	36%	14%	2%	0%	8%	2%

15. Computer Instruction

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
36%	24%	15%	6%	3%	14%	2%

16. Social Studies (History, Geography, etc.)

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
38%	29%	14%	3%	2%	14%	2%

17. Fine Arts

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
26%	32%	14%	6%	0%	21%	2%

18. Physical Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
32%	36%	9%	5%	2%	15%	2%

19. Business Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
17%	20%	11%	3%	0%	48%	2%

20. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	20%	8%	2%	0%	56%	2%

21. Foreign Languages

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
26%	23%	12%	2%	11%	26%	2%

22. Library Services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
47%	27%	8%	2%	2%	14%	2%

23. Honors/Gifted and Talented

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
30%	12%	18%	5%	2%	32%	2%

Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

24. MPISD regularly communicates with parents

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
24%	45%	9%	17%	5%	0%

25. An effective line of communication exists between parents, central administration, and schools

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
14%	38%	23%	20%	6%	0%

26. Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
12%	36%	26%	20%	6%	0%

27. MPISD schools are safe from crime and provide a secure learning environment

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
9%	33%	14%	30%	14%	0%

28. Schools effectively handle behavioral problems and provide proper discipline

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R

8%	33%	15%	26%	18%	0%
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29. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
11%	70%	9%	8%	2%	2%

30. Teachers care about the educational needs of the students in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
15%	61%	11%	9%	3%	2%

31. Principals and assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
15%	50%	17%	14%	5%	0%

32. Parents are involved in school activities

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
9%	59%	12%	18%	2%	0%

33. Parents make an effort to assist their children in the learning process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
18%	55%	17%	9%	2%	0%

34. Parents are satisfied with the education students receive in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R

11%	42%	23%	15%	9%	0%
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On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being least effective and 10 being most effective, please rate how the needs of the following are being met.

35. Academically-advanced students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
5%	8%	5%	5%	21	8%	11%	18%	6%	11%	5%

36. Average students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
6%	2%	6%	6%	26%	12%	14%	6%	6%	14%	3%

37. Below average students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
9%	8%	8%	8%	18%	11%	12%	6%	5%	11%	6%

38. Non-college bound students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
9%	0%	9%	12%	18%	8%	11%	8%	3%	8%	15%

39. Students at risk of dropping out of school

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
17%	6%	12%	11%	8%	11%	11%	6%	5%	6%	9%

40. Students with learning disabilities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
11%	5%	3%	11%	15%	9%	9%	9%	9%	12%	8%

41. Students with physical disabilities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
11%	6%	3%	8%	14%	9%	9%	11%	8%	14%	9%

42. In what ways could the MPISD operate more efficiently? Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Again, using the grading system, please rate the combined efficiency and effectiveness of each of the following districtwide services:

43. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
17%	29%	21%	3%	27%	3%	0%

44. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
17%	32%	15%	12%	21%	3%	0%

45. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
21%	39%	17%	8%	15%	0%	0%

46. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
29%	30%	12%	9%	18%	2%	0%

47. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
21%	32%	17%	5%	24%	2%	0%

48. Food services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
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21%	33%	18%	12%	11%	5%	0%
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49. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	29%	14%	5%	38%	2%	0%

50. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
15%	26%	20%	3%	33%	3%	0%

51. Management Information/Computer Services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
15%	35%	11%	8%	29%	3%	0%

52. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	24%	11%	6%	44%	2%	0%

53. Planning and Budgeting

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
9%	23%	17%	6%	41%	5%	0%

54. Overall operations of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
14%	26%	21%	9%	26%	5%	0%

The next few questions relate to MPISD's school bus and transportation services. Using a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the efficiency of each aspect of the transportation functions with 1 being least efficient and 10 being the most efficient.

55. Timeliness of your child's driver

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
2%	0%	8%	3%	11%	3%	3%	9%	6%	21%	35%

56. Courteousness of your child's driver

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
9%	2%	11%	2%	8%	3%	3%	2%	8%	18%	36%

57. Bus cleanliness

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
5%	2%	5%	5%	9%	12%	3%	5%	8%	14%	35%

58. Frequency of mechanical failure on your child's bus

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
8%	2%	0%	2%	2%	6%	8%	5%	11%	18%	41%

59. Convenience of the bus stop to your house

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
8%	2%	2%	2%	8%	2%	3%	3%	8%	30%	35%

60. Discipline on your child's school bus

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
6%	2%	3%	3%	8%	8%	3%	3%	5%	27%	33%

61. The remainder of this page has been left blank for you to write down any additional comments, suggestions, or complaints about MPISD. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

This survey wasn't designed properly. You had positive answers on left-hand (page 1 - 4) then switched to right (page 5) back to left (page 6) and finally on right (page 7). I am working on Masters in Business and I nearly missed the switch on last page. This should have been more simple for majority of parents.

My child's bus driver drives way too fast. On cold, rainy days she doesn't even slow down if your child is not standing on the road. She's so bad that we've been sitting in the driveway in a pickup and she didn't think my child got out of the truck fast enough and drove off. My child has asthma and she can't be left in the cold.

My two daughters have told me many times that the bus driver always takes off before they have time to sit down, which sometimes makes them fall down. I think he could wait until every child is seated before the bus moves.

My son's bus driver always waits for him to be seated before she takes off.

There have been many times things happen on my daughter's bus that she reports and nothing is done about it!

We do not ride the bus we think the buses are unsafe.

Get a new superintendent, someone from the outside who won't play favorites.

Everything is fine, just more help on drugs, sex and how to stay away from this. They need people so they go in schools and talk about this.

I would like to congratulate everyone at MPISD because of the low rate of violence in the school system, but also would like to make a recommendation. Security at the high school should be improved! Nobody checks any identification and they release kids to people who are not listed as parents or relatives on their records. This should not be permitted.

Lack of money is a problem for most school districts. I understand this. But, the district needs more aides to help with classes, especially special classes. The younger students (3rd & 4th) get no break except for lunch each day. This isn't enough time for young children to play. The teachers have two conference periods, but the children have only 15 minutes each day. Does that make sense? I am not sure my children are challenged to their fullest because their teachers have to deal with the slow learners and discipline problems throughout the day.

Ideally, I would like to see the children grouped according to their ability. The huge influx of Hispanics has shocked many parents who question where MPISD is headed. We have lost Anglo students to Chapel Hill ISD or Harts Bluff because of this. I really want to keep my children in MPISD, but I need to be assured that they will be challenged and that adequate and effective curriculum will be in place for them at every grade level. I need to be assured that they will be safe too.

It is especially important for children to have at least one friend in class when they start school. It helps them emotionally and mentally. If a parent requests a teacher, then it should be honored.

At the 3rd and 4th grade campus, a child can have anywhere from five to eight different teachers. They are too young to have that many instructors - one each for: Language Arts/Reading; Math/Social Studies; Music; PE; Art; GT; Library; Spanish; Enrichment

Don't understand why there is such an overwhelming need for so many substitute teachers. Why aren't the teachers staying in the classroom with their students? There are always teachers out for some kind of workshop, training, convention, etc. Why are they not left alone for a year or so to stay in the classroom? Maybe a workshop every six months or so? This is very disruptive for students also.

The teachers have been told not to tell the Texas Education agency (TEA) anything negative when they talk to them. This type of instruction is not a new thing in the administration system of intimidation of the teachers. They did the same thing under the last superintendent. All of this is just "business as usual."

It has never been an option for my child to ride a bus. We live close to a school but the bus stop is not close. Transportation from school and to school in the after school hours is non-negotiable according to our bus system.

Field trips for our children are few to none because the school or teachers are required to "pay" for the buses.

Stop serving our children cold food!

I feel that there is a need in MPISD for a more effective leadership in the Superintendent's position. It seems that the current administration takes "knee-jerk" reactions to problems rather than doing what is best for students in the long run. Once quality administrators are put in place, the school board and community need to support decisions made for the district's overall wellness.

There are programs for the Gifted/Talented (G/T) child, there are programs for the lower child, the average to high child is being left out and forgotten.

Special Education needs a life skills class on the age appropriate junior high campus.

The high school Special Education class needs to be re-evaluated - too many levels in one class.

They need to have the right to punish the student by spanking or whatever is needed in order to get control of the student or problem with them. Even in Head Start. Maybe they could even have a condition set in place with the parent. An understanding on the type of punishment that fits their problem.

A general lack of discipline at the high school makes for a very stressful and unproductive learning environment, especially for the above-average student, who really wishes to excel. Some teachers seem to have absolutely zero control over their students, some teachers don't seem to care.

Overall, I believe MPISD is a good district. A few problems exist that need more attention. The teachers in this district are caring and giving and they have the most contact with my children and therefore a good influence.

MPISD concentrates too many resources toward Texas Assessment Academic Skills (TAAS) objectives. This is a minimal skills test. I would like to see our district raise its expectations of our students beyond the attainment of minimal skills. We should not settle for having our kids labeled mediocre at best.

The school board is not representing the majority of the district. They are yes men for a superintendent who should

have never been hired. It's time to give the job to another candidate who cares about children, parents and teachers. He's not afraid to get things done. There are some excellent teachers in our district and my children have been fortunate to have some of them. Unfortunately, some good teachers can't effectively do their jobs because of lack of discipline and too many different levels of students in their classrooms.

My child drives to school.

The school counselor is rude!

Teachers have always worked with me to help my children.

MPISD needs stronger discipline in certain areas.

Bus drivers drive too fast.

Teachers do not have the control they need.

The questionnaire will be skewed to a WASP upper economic viewpoint by the nature of its request. Also, the easiest response to areas of concern is to blame the leadership without factoring in the inherent deficiencies in any system of public education. The biggest concern of mine is that one subject, the most important subject, is not being taught at all; discipline, both self and imposed.

If you are in the junior high and if you are not on the A Team you are [not treated equally]. So, you ride the worst bus, stay out in the cold waiting on the A Team to finish, miss your Homecoming to hurry up and get out of cold in Mt. Pleasant, but sit in cold if you play Paris. B Team leaves straight from school - A Team doesn't - B Team sits in cold while A Team sits on the bus. Kids are not stupid. Things get stolen, which is stupid.

My son is in the Head Start program and I do work at the school when I can. But I've seen some of the teachers not be as patient and caring as they should be. And that concerns me as a mother. My mother has also noticed this. Teachers should want to teach and not just do it because it's a job. My child's wellbeing is most important to me.

Thank you for your participation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Legislative Budget Board's office, you may call (512) 475-3676.

Appendix D

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix summarizes surveys of central administrators and support staff in Mt. Pleasant Independent School District during the review, including comments made to open-ended questions. The survey results presented here do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

During the week beginning October 12, 1998, survey instruments were provided to all central administrators and staff within the district. The surveys were delivered to each participant personally.

Each of the surveys were self administered and all those surveyed were asked to return their surveys by October 22, 1998. The deadline was extended, and all surveys received are included in the results. All survey respondents were provided with a postage-paid reply envelope to provide maximum security and allow for candid, confidential responses.

Information requested from those surveyed included rankings of the various areas covered by chapters in this report. Additional space was provided for any other comments that each respondent cared to make. The data included in this appendix includes a portion of the comments and responses to the open-ended questions.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Twenty-five responses came back from Central Administration and support staff.

Exhibit D-1

Percentage of Respondents by Area

Area	Percentage of Respondents
Elementary/intermediate school	4%
Middle/junior high school	4%

High school	0
Office support	25%
Counseling	0
Instruction	8%
Special education	0
Personnel	0
Finance/business	21%
Food services	0
Transportation	0
Maintenance	0
Technology	17%
Other	21%

Some significant findings are as follows:

- Only one-third of the respondents gave the school board an "A" or "B" for their work and only 21 percent said the board had a knowledge of the educational needs of the students.
- Eighty-eight percent felt the superintendent deserved an "A" or "B" for his work.
- Ninety-six percent felt that central administration does a good job of supporting the educational process.
- Seventy-one percent of the respondents felt that the quality of staff development for their department was good.
- Ninety-six percent indicated that technology for administrative purposes deserved an "A" or "B".
- All the respondents gave current salaries an "A" or "B", but only 69 percent felt that way regarding employee health benefits.

The remainder of this appendix provides survey results by each question for central administrators and support staff.

***Mount Pleasant Independent School District
Management and Performance Review
Central Administrators and Support Staff Survey***

The Texas State Comptroller's office is conducting a management and performance review of the Mount Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD). The three main objectives of the performance review are to (1) enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency,

(2) identify ways to improve management practices, and (3) identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Input from central administrators and support staff is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like you to complete the survey instrument and return it via the postage paid envelope provided no later than **October 22, 1998**. You may also place your completed survey in the box in the front office of a school.

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that the performance review team understands the opinions of central administrative personnel in your district.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. How many years have you been employed by the MPISD?

1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
44%	20%	8%	12%	16%

2. Circle the department/area within the district where you are employed.

Elementary Intermediate	Middle Junior High	High School	Office Support	Counseling
4%	4%	0%	20%	0%
Instruction	Special Education	Personnel	Finance/Business	Food Services
8%	0%	0%	24%	0%
Transportation	Maintenance	Technology/Computer	Other	N/R
4%	0%	16%	20%	0%

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the following areas in MPISD are graded in the same way. Circle your response.

3. MPISD school board

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
0%	33%	40%	4%	4%	16%	4%

4. Superintendent of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
44%	40%	4%	0%	8%	4%	0%

5. Other district-level central administration in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
36%	52%	4%	4%	0%	4%	0%

6. Campus-level administrators in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
40%	52%	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%

7. Teachers in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
36%	44%	16%	0%	0%	4%	0%

Now please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

8. Student learning and education are the main priorities in the MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
52%	44%	4%	0%	0%	0%

9. Central administration operates effectively and efficiently

Strongly	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly	N/R

Agree		Opinion		Disagree	
36%	60%	4%	0%	0%	0%

10. Central administration does a good job of supporting the educational process at MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
52%	44%	4%	0%	0%	0%

11. I am part of the annual planning and budgeting process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
20%	16%	44%	8%	12%	0%

12. Salaries are equitable within MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
12%	28%	20%	20%	20%	0%

13. Salaries are competitive with salaries paid to similar employees outside of MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
8%	8%	28%	36%	20%	0%

14. Central administration does what it can to ensure the necessary supplies and materials are made available to support instruction at MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
52%	36%	12%	0%	0%	0%

15. Facilities are kept clean and well maintained in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
16%	64%	4%	12%	4%	0%

Going back to the grading scale, A, B, C, D, or F, please rate the following.

16. The school board's knowledge of the educational needs of students in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
8%	12%	40%	16%	0%	20%	4%

17. The school board's ability to establish effective district policies

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
8%	32%	32%	4%	4%	16%	4%

18. The superintendent's role as instructional leader of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
36%	36%	16%	0%	8%	4%	0%

19. The superintendent's role as chief administrator (manager) of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
52%	36%	0%	0%	8%	4%	0%

20. Current process for posting positions and hiring central administration personnel

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
40%	32%	8%	0%	8%	12%	0%

21. Current process for evaluating central administration personnel

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
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24%	32%	12%	4%	0%	28%	0%
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22. Administrative policy and procedure manuals within your department

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
32%	40%	12%	4%	4%	8%	0%

23. Overall effectiveness of your department

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
52%	44%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%

24. The budget development process

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
32%	32%	12%	4%	0%	20%	0%

25. Staff development provided for your department

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
40%	28%	4%	16%	4%	8%	0%

26. School district's use of technology for administrative purposes

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
68%	24%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%

27. School district's relationship with various groups in the community (i.e., parents, businesses, and civic groups)

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
48%	28%	8%	4%	4%	8%	0%

Again, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

28. An effective line of communication exists between central administration and schools

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
20%	56%	8%	16%	0%	0%

29. An effective line of communication exist between central administration and parents

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
20%	52%	12%	16%	0%	0%

30. In what ways could MPISD operate more efficiently? Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Look at more vocational programs.

When a district identifies student problems, don't just stop there, but work with student and help her/him.

Better communications between departments.

I think that if we had a more supportive school board, it would make a big difference. We need to educate our board to better serve the children of MPISD in every aspect. This also includes business with teachers' pay. If we have high turnover with new teachers, the children will suffer.

At this time I have a very short time working with this district; therefore, I do not know how things are operated. The only thing I can comment on are the teachers and that's because my son is a student at MPISD.

Communication between central administration (business office) and campuses could be improved. It appears as if the campuses disregard purchasing policies and procedures and travel request deadlines. A better understanding and respect for those rules would save some time and headaches.

MPISD could operate more efficiently in that the school board needs to work with the upper administration. They need to know their role as board members. The district's demographic is

changing. They should try to hire more minorities. Children need to identify with professionals in the district.

Have some of their board members educated [to avoid unnecessary] questions (i.e. procedures).

Better communication with community. Better communication between central administration and teachers - many are unaware and are distrustful of central administration. Policies and procedures need to be explained yearly to all staff - that would make things run more efficiently - at present things need to be done two or three times before they're done according to policy.

I think upper administration should delegate more authority in departments; then certain tasks could be completed faster.

Bring in new central support administrators. There is no team spirit in central administration, there is no communication.

The board needs to pay close attention to money matters.

Using the grading system again, please rate the following:

31. Central administrators and support staff salaries

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
20%	32%	12%	20%	8%	8%	0%

32. Benefits provided to employees

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
28%	40%	20%	0%	8%	4%	0%

33. Health insurance provided by the district meets my needs

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
44%	16%	12%	12%	4%	8%	4%

Please grade the combined efficiency and effectiveness for each of the following districtwide services of MPISD:

34. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
44%	44%	4%	0%	0%	8%	0%

35. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
12%	56%	12%	0%	4%	16%	0%

36. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
12%	60%	12%	4%	0%	12%	0%

37. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
20%	36%	16%	4%	0%	24%	0%

38. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
40%	36%	8%	0%	4%	12%	0%

39. Food services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
44%	44%	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%

40. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
36%	48%	0%	0%	0%	16%	0%

41. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
44%	36%	8%	0%	4%	8%	0%

42. Management information/computer services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
48%	40%	4%	0%	0%	8%	0%

43. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
52%	40%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%

44. Planning and budgeting

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
44%	36%	8%	0%	0%	12%	0%

45. Overall operations of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
36%	52%	4%	4%	0%	4%	0%

46. We have left the following space blank to allow you to add any other comments, suggestions, or complaints. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Discipline within all schools is becoming a great problem. It is not the schools' fault but everyone blames schools. Classroom behavior is awful. Student behavior at sports activities is rude. Parents are responsible but they expect the schools to do something about it. We need to develop some positive behavior modifications that work! - NOT JUST WORDS.

Improve teacher/employee morale.

The board seems to have no understanding of accounting rules and procedures. Rather than looking at the overall picture of the financial aspects of the district, they consistently dwell on small, petty details.

In my opinion, I feel that the district tries hard to put children first. The superintendent believes if we put children first then all other issues fall into place. Because the district has made every effort to do this, they have excelled in areas where other districts have problems; for example, technology. In East Texas Mt. Pleasant has surpassed other districts. In

staff development, hardware/software, and Internet capabilities for the entire district.

Ladies in the business department are underpaid and overworked. We've added three campuses and no help in this area - we need at least one more full time person in this department.

We need unity or purpose among our administrators. Educating our children requires all of our energy when we work toward a common goal. When we pull in different directions, we waste much energy. Principals must have the desire and capacity to be instructional leaders.

I believe that MPISD needs to listen more to students and try to work with students instead of against them. We need to have better communication between students and teachers. Teachers need to sympathize and listen to help students out.

Micromanaging of the board has affected all of us. We have lost some good people and almost lost others because of their negativity.

Too strong a focus has been placed on technology tying up funds needed through Compensatory Education and Title 1.

Too many "big bosses" not communicating well with each other to keep clear direction/purposes established.

Lack of follow-through on good implementations/changes - VISION.

Until the superintendent leaves, things will "never" operate smoothly.

The salaries of support staff are totally unfair.

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Legislative Budget Board, you may call (512) 475-3676.

Appendix E

CAMPUS SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix summarizes surveys of campus staff in Mt. Pleasant Independent School District during the review, including responses to open-ended questions. The survey results presented here do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

During the week beginning October 12, 1998, surveys were provided to all campus staff in the district. The surveys were delivered to each participant personally.

Each of the surveys were self administered and all those surveyed were asked to return their surveys by October 22, 1998. The deadline was extended, and all surveys received are included in the results. All survey respondents were provided with a postage-paid reply envelope to provide maximum security and allow for candid, confidential responses.

Information requested from those surveyed included rankings of the various areas covered by chapters in this report. Additional space was provided for any other comments that the respondent cared to make. The data included in this appendix includes a portion of the comments and responses to the open-ended questions.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Fifty-five responses were received from campus staff. The percentage of responses received from each area is shown in **Exhibit E-1**.

Exhibit E-1

Percentage of Respondents by Area

Area	Percentage of Respondents
Elementary/intermediate school	30%
Middle/junior high school	15%
High school	13%

Office support	15%
Counseling	2%
Instruction	0
Special education	17%
Food services	0
Other	7%
No response	2%

Exhibit E-2 presents the actual number of completed surveys by teachers based upon years of experience.

Exhibit E-2
Percentage of Respondents by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Percentage of Respondents
1-5 years	41%
6-10 years	28%
11-15 years	11%
16-20 years	13%
20+ years	6%
No response	2%

Some of the significant findings are as follows:

- Eighty-one percent of the respondents graded campus administrators as either an "A" or "B".
- Eighty-one percent of the respondents graded teachers as either an "A" or "B".
- Eighty-two percent agreed that learning and education are the main priorities of the district, and 65 percent that the emphasis on learning had increased in the past three years.
- Only 27 percent felt that salaries are set equitably, and only 23 percent felt that they are competitive to similar employees outside the district.
- Fifty-eight percent felt that the schools are safe and that behavioral and discipline problems are handled properly.
- Only 24 percent felt that parents take responsibility for their children's behavior.

- Sixty-three percent gave the superintendent an "A" or "B" in his role as the chief administrator of the district, but only 56 percent gave him the same grades for his role as the instructional leader.

The remainder of this appendix provides survey results by each question for campus staff.

***Mount Pleasant Independent School District
Management and Performance Review
Campus Survey***

The Texas State Comptroller's office is conducting a management and performance review of the Mount Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD). The three main objectives of the performance review are to (1) enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, (2) identify ways to improve management practices, and (3) identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Input from campus level administrators is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like as many campus professionals as possible to complete the survey instrument. Please complete and mail your survey in the postage paid envelope provided, no later than **October 22, 1998**. You may also return your completed survey to the box provided in the front office of your school.

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that the performance review team understands the opinions of the campus professionals in your district.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. How many years have you been employed by MPISD?

1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+	N/R
42%	27%	11%	13%	5%	2%

2. Circle the department or area within the district where you are employed.

Elementary Intermediate	Middle Junior High	High School	
31%	15%	13%	
Counseling	Office Support	Special Education	
2%	15%	16%	
Instruction	Food Services	Other	N/R
0%	0%	7%	2%

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the following areas in MPISD are graded in the same way. Circle your response.

3. MPISD's school board

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
9%	49%	29%	2%	0%	11%	0%

4. Superintendent of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
25%	36%	15%	7%	5%	5%	5%

5. Other district-level central administrators in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	49%	15%	4%	4%	5%	5%

6. Campus-level administrators in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
33%	48%	7%	4%	0%	2%	6%

7. Teachers in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
35%	51%	7%	0%	0%	2%	5%

Now please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

8. Student learning and education are the main priorities in the MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
31%	51%	2%	11%	0%	5%

9. Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
24%	42%	18%	9%	0%	7%

10. Salaries are set equitably for all employees in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
7%	20%	15%	31%	22%	5%

11. Salaries are competitive with salaries paid to similar employees outside the district

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
4%	18%	11%	42%	20%	5%

12. Schools are kept clean and well maintained

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
4%	58%	7%	20%	5%	5%

13. School buses run on time

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
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4%	55%	27%	9%	0%	5%
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14. The food served in the cafeteria tastes good

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
11%	40%	27%	15%	0%	7%

15. MPISD schools are safe from crime and provide a secure learning environment

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
4%	65%	7%	13%	9%	2%

16. Schools effectively handle behavioral problems and administer discipline properly

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
5%	53%	13%	18%	9%	2%

17. Supplies and materials are made available to support instruction in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
9%	62%	9%	16%	4%	0%

18. My health insurance meets my needs

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
2%	58	%16%	16%	7%	0%

19. Staff development is made available to all employees of the district

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R%
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15%	64%	5%	16%	0%	0%
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20. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
16%	64%	18%	2%	0%	0%

21. Teachers care about the educational needs of the students in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
16%	69%	4%	11%	0%	0%

22. The staff development I receive is very useful in my job

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
16%	53%	11%	18%	2%	0%

23. Principals and assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
22%	62%	13%	2%	0%	2%

24. Parents take responsibility for their children's behavior in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
0%	25%	16%	55%	2%	2%

25. Parents are satisfied with MPISD's educational process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
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2%	45%	33%	20%	0%	0%
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26. District operations are cost effective and efficient

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
5%	42%	25%	25%	2%	0%

27. Site-based decision-making is implemented effectively in MPISD

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
5%	36%	36%	16%	0%	5%

28. Communication between the central office and campuses is good

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
4%	49%	13%	18%	11%	5%

29. I am made a part of the annual planning and budget process

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
7%	24%	20%	29%	13%	7%

Going back to the grading scale, A, B, C, D, or F, rate the following:

30. The school board's knowledge of the educational needs of students in MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
13%	33%	25%	7%	0%	15%	7%

31. The school board's ability to establish effective district policies

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
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11%	40%	25%	5%	0%	11%	7%
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32. The superintendent's role as instructional leader of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	38%	16%	9%	2%	9%	7%

33. The superintendent's role as chief administrator (manager) of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
27%	38%	9%	7%	4%	7%	7%

34. The principals as instructional leaders in MPISD schools

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
33%	51%	7%	0%	0%	4%	5%

35. Principals as managers of school staff and teachers in MPISD schools

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
35%	45%	13%	0%	0%	2%	5%

36. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	36%	27%	11%	0%	4%	5%

37. Amount of classroom time dedicated to TAAS preparation

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
31%	40%	4%	0%	0%	20%	5%

38. Amount of classroom time dedicated to basic educational requirements, such as reading, math, science, and history

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	-------------------	------------

25%	44%	7%	9%	2%	13%	0%
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39. Parents' efforts in assisting with the education and learning process

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
2%	27%	49%	9%	4%	9%	0%

40. Parent's participation in school activities/organizations

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
4%	29%	51%	7%	4%	5%	0%

41. The district's relationships with various groups in the community

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
9%	40%	31%	5%	0%	15%	0%

42. The district's use of technology as an instructional tool on your campus

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
45%	36%	11%	0%	2%	5%	0%

43. The district's use of technology for administrative purposes

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
53%	33%	7%	0%	2%	5%	0%

Continuing with the grading scale, A, B, C, D, or F, please rate the effectiveness of the following MPISD educational programs:

44. Mathematics

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
24%	38%	13%	2%	0%	24%	0%

45. Science

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
22%	35%	22%	0%	0%	22%	0%

46. English or Language Arts

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
27%	35%	13%	4%	2%	20%	0%

47. Computer Instruction

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
25%	33%	18%	2%	0%	22%	0%

48. Social Studies

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
20%	38%	15%	4%	0%	24%	0%

49. Special Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
22%	33%	18%	7%	0%	15%	5%

50. Bilingual/English as a second language

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
33%	29%	9%	2%	0%	22%	5%

51. Fine Arts

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
20%	38%	13%	0%	2%	22%	5%

52. Physical Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
20%	42%	13%	2%	0%	18%	5%

53. Business Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
11%	24%	9%	0%	0%	51%	5%

54. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	25%	4%	2%	0%	47%	5%

55. Foreign Language

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
15%	16%	9%	5%	2%	47%	5%

56. Library Services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
29%	35%	9%	0%	0%	22%	5%

57. Honors/Gifted and Talented

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
25%	35%	5%	4%	0%	25%	5%

Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

58. MPISD fills vacancies and make promotions in staff/administrative positions based on individual qualifications

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
7%	38%	16%	24%	9%	5%

59. Salaries for campus professionals are appropriate

Strongly	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly	N/R

Agree		Opinion		Disagree	
4%	31%	13%	35%	13%	5%

60. Health insurance and other benefits provided by the district meet my needs

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/R
2%	58%	16%	11%	9%	4%

61. In what ways could MPISD operate more efficiently? Attach additional pages if necessary.

Give teachers true input.

Be more equitable in hiring more minorities.

Provide more opportunities for working parents to be able to meet after hours/during school to participate in conferences and meetings pertaining to their children (working parents' PTA).

Provide more vocational opportunities for high school students.

More/Better communications between central administration, school board within schools and community - less personal agenda.

Hire more paraprofessionals to do more of the non-managerial tasks presently done by campus administrators.

Remove candy and drink machines from campuses. Provide money for field trips. Train teachers in the summer. Do not train teachers when students are in school.

One less deputy superintendent. Areas of responsibility for curriculum and special programs cross too much. This causes confusion. Understanding of expectations in curriculum by bilingual department is an example of this.

Reevaluate stipends - many are unnecessary or extravagant in relation to job performance or duties.

There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians in Mt. Pleasant, Texas.

Be concerned with support staff, not just administrators and teachers. Without support staff, the teachers would be hard pressed to do all they do. Even to the point of making support staff perform duties of teachers but at much less pay.

Cut down on some ordering of supplies by teachers that aren't supplies, such as stickers, treats, etc. Others order expensive ink pens and other such items not really needed.

Need better communication. Administration to campus. Campus to staff.

Increase communication with parents and community.

Better pay for teachers and paraprofessionals; less money spent on babysitting (free) to children not involved in school - also feeding them and providing transportation for all this Spanish organized (that the district pays for)! Stop letting Spanish students leave school for two or three weeks to go to Mexico! The [Anglo and African American] students are not allowed to do this - its definitely not good for our overall statistics.

We certainly do not need three deputy superintendents! Teachers could spend more time in the classroom and less time on trips and at workshops.

As with any organization, I see some positions as being unnecessary, while other functions are understaffed/under budgeted.

Counselors need a separate pay schedule. They are grouped with the teachers when the administration gets an increase and then grouped with administration when the teachers get an increase. There needs to be a separate salary schedule with well-defined increases.

Get a better prescription plan. The deductible is not fair for people who need daily maintenance drugs. Our family will have to shell out \$400 (\$100 per person) to meet deductibles before prescription card starts to kick in.

Keep elementary teachers in the classroom rather than workshops almost every week taking them out of classroom - too many substitutes to have effective learning. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being least effective and 10 being most effective, please rate how the needs of the following are being met.

62. Academically-advanced students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
0%	0%	0%	4%	5%	2%	11%	31%	29%	11%	7%

63. Average students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
2%	0%	2%	5%	15%	4%	18%	36%	7%	4%	7%

64. Below average students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
0%	0%	9%	7%	11%	5%	%	27%	13%	5%	7%

65. Non-college bound students

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
0%	5%	5%	7%	11%	7%	22%	29%	2%	2%	9%

66. Students at risk of dropping out of school

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
2%	2%	7%	5%	18%	5%	24%	16%	7%	4%	9%

67. Students with learning disabilities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
0%	0%	4%	7%	16%	5%	22%	13%	18%	9%	9%

68. Students with physical disabilities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/R
0%	0%	2%	4%	16%	4%	16%	25%	13%	15%	5%

Again, using the grading system, please rate the efficiency and effectiveness each of the following MPISD services:

69. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	47%	15%	2%	0%	9%	11%

70. Maintenance and repair services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
9%	35%	27%	16%	5%	0%	7%

71. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	35%	27%	7%	5%	0%	7%

72. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
13%	51%	18%	0%	2%	9%	7%

73. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
18%	49%	18%	2%	4%	2%	7%

74. Food services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
24%	38%	16%	4%	2%	9%	7%

75. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
11%	42%	18%	5%	4%	13%	7%

76. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
7%	64%	13%	5%	2%	0%	9%

77. Management Information/computer services

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	45%	22%	5%	2%	2%	7%

78. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
16%	40%	22%	0%	2%	13%	7%

79. Planning and budgeting

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
13%	33%	25%	7%	2%	13%	7%

80. Overall operations of MPISD

A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	N/R
7%	53%	20%	4%	2%	5%	9%

The remaining space is being left blank to allow you to add any other comments, suggestions or complaints. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

If I could improve one area in the MPISD it would be in the area of two-way communications. Bottom up communication is expected. Top down is not available to all.

I would like to see better distribution of college and scholarship information at the high school level. I would like to see better communication between the students and the counselors at high school level. Counselors should better inform the junior high students (all students not only the Gifted/Talented (G/T) students) of the classes they must take in order to be part of the Honor Society. Also, there should be a better way to choose the students to be part of yearbook and school paper

other than by choosing friends or only GT students because "all" students should have the opportunity to join these staffs.

The Accelerated Reader (AR) program was made to be an incentive to students to read. This school district has turned it into a grade on their report cards. Some students who used to enjoy reading are now told they can only get books on the AR list and that they "have" to have a certain number of points each six weeks to be able to pass this class. I know reading is very important and I myself love to read and would rather a child read than watch TV, but I think it is wrong to take something that was made to make reading fun and turn it into a mandatory class and/or grade. I am sure there are lots of books in our school library that are good but cannot be read because of this problem. Talk about censoring books, sure they have not been pulled from the shelves, but students are told they have to get an AR book and not to get the ones not marked AR.

Sometimes sufficient information is not passed along to help with the job. There is an air that if one complains or questions the wrong people, their job is in jeopardy. Since the reputations of elected officials are in question, perhaps the background, history, and conduct of the superintendent and one of his secretaries should be checked into. The pay schedule is very unfair.

I'm concerned regarding students in the hallways between classes. I've been in the high school and seen students laying on the floor sleeping, sitting on stairs talking or sitting by classroom doors. What is the purpose? No teacher is with them.

I don't understand why support staff from other schools (smaller) make more money and have smaller insurance premiums. It's sad when some of the staff can't afford insurance for their families and also have to apply for food stamps.

We need more security on campus, especially on buses. It would be wonderful if the bus drivers could have someone to ride with them to assist with discipline on the bus so that the driver could concentrate on driving.

Don't understand why someone in an office position who has been with the district only a few years can make more than several people who have worked with the district 10+ years and who does not work as many days a year. Also, positions come open and are filled before job openings are posted or anyone already in the district has a chance for them.

I believe the school insurance needs to cover, or at least help pay the cost of, a mammography, no matter what the age of the person.

MPISD spends too much money on the bilingual program. They should be concerned with teaching the Spanish population "English" instead of Spanish. Are we in Mexico or Texas? MPISD spends too much money on substitute teachers (we can't keep enough on the payroll - what's the problem?). If they would leave the teachers in the classroom, maybe our teachers would enjoy their jobs better and substitute teachers would not be in such demand. Classroom teachers are pulled out of class constantly to attend workshops, conventions, training on this or that - why can't this be cut down to some kind of minimum? MPISD pays some administrators too much and others, such as paraprofessionals, not even close to what they should be making. We are the lowest paid district in our area! Also, back to the classroom, our students are not in their classrooms for long enough either. Students are pulled out of class so much for "special classes" that there is absolutely no time for one teacher to be able to attend to the rest of the class and get very much hard core work done I wonder how many are falling through those cracks! MPISD has been overrun and run over with Spanish (Mexicans). You are not even to call them Mexicans at school! MPISD needs to serve each ethnic group the same and not cater to only one. Everyone should be treated equally! Also, discipline has gone rampant - no corporal punishment in elementary schools - it's no wonder students are bringing guns to school and shooting their teachers and fellow students!

All employees are not treated the same. Depends on who you are! MPISD has some very good teachers and employees but employee morale is at an all time low - Thanks to [the superintendent]!

The 20+ years I have worked for this district have been a wonderful experience. I feel we are current and supportive of technology in all areas. I am proud to be a part of this district.

I feel entirely too much attention is paid to the lower 10 percent of students and the higher 10 percent of students. The majority of our students are just good average folks and we spend most of our time and money on those two groups mentioned above. It seems wrong to spend 80 percent of our time and money on 20 percent of our students.

Inclusion does not seem to be working for all students. Some of these students do not benefit from mainstreaming for the entire day. The MALL is not working for the majority of Special Education kids. Speech services are emphasized on billing not student needs. Groups of six or more are not effective in some cases. I have observed too much of sitting students in front of a video to group them all together and make sure every child is seen so that we can bill for these services - most of the time there is no speech instruction.

Why is there a need for three deputy superintendents?

Shouldn't elementary classroom teachers be in the classroom rather than be constantly sent to workshops?

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Legislative Budget Board office, you may call (512) 475-3676.

Appendix F

THE SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT MODEL FOR INCREASING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH MORE CAMPUS-BASED DECISION MAKING

Legend		
Code	Meaning	Definition
I	Input	Opportunity to share/provide information/advice
D	Decide	To make choice/judgement
R	Recommend	To present as worthy of acceptance
A	Approve	To give formal or official sanction

Function	CAT	Principal	Central Office	DAT	Supt.	Board
Planning						
District Improvement Plan (DIP)						
• Identify core team/stakeholders responsible for developing the improvement plan		R	R	I	A	
• Gather data and information related to the district improvement plan	I	I	I	I	I	I
• Develop strategies that ensure strong commitment to goals/objectives outlined in plan	I	I	I	I	I	
• Approve District Improvement Plan					R	A
• Ensure ongoing evaluation of District Improvement Plan			D	I	A	
• Assess district needs in relationship to a communications/marketing plan and develop a plan as needed to reach target audiences/stakeholders		I	R	I/D	A	

Campus Improvement Plan (CIP)						
• Develop Campus Improvement Plan	I	D	R		R	A
• Align campus plan to district improvement plan	I	D				
• Assess campus needs in relationship to a communications/marketing plan and develop a plan as needed to reach target audiences/stakeholders	I	A				
Staffing Patterns						
Recruitment						
• Research and design recruitment strategies, materials, and schedules		I	D			
• In both formal and informal settings, encourage prospective applicants to apply at Spring Branch	I	I	I	I	I	I
• Communicate to Personnel Office performance of substitute and student teachers		I/D	I			
Selection/Placement						
• Determine certification requirements of applicants			D			
• Make final recommendations for the selection of new personnel and assignment of new and current campus staff		D	R			
• Offer contracts		D	R		R	A
• Determine staffing patterns for campus staffs	I	D	R		A	
• Manage teacher transfers and assignment of excess teachers		R	A			
• Select new building principal	I		I		D/R	A
Evaluation/Discipline Contract						

Renewal						
• Coordinate evaluation, discipline, and contract renewal procedures		I	D		A	
• Evaluate, document, and make contract recommendations		D	R		R	A
Personnel Units and Staffing						
• Develop staffing guidelines based on:						
1. Personnel units to be allocated based on enrollment		I	D		A	
2. Minimum staffing levels for specific programs and/or staff		I	D		A	
3. Equity issues		I	D		A	
• Determine staffing for special programs such as vocational, special education, federal programs, band, athletics, etc.		I	R		A	
• Develop a campus staffing plan based on personnel units allocated and staffing guidelines	I	R	R		A	
Staff/Organizational Development						
Campus Advisory Team (CAT) Development						
• Identify skill/processes needed of campus leaders	I	D	I	I		
• Define needs and scope of training	I	D	I	I		
• Develop training	I	D	R		A	
• Train campus leadership teams	I	D				
• Evaluate CAT training	I	D	R		A	
District Advisory Team (DAT) Development						
• Identify skill/processes needed of District Advisory Team			I	I	D	

• Define needs and scope of training			I	I	D	
• Develop and implement training			D	I	I	
• Evaluate DAT training			R	I	A	
Campus Staff Development Plan						
• Search for promising practices/identify topics	I	D	I	I		
• Create staff development plan as part of CIP	I	D	I		R	A
• Allocate resources within approved budget	I	D	R		A	
• Implement, monitor, and evaluate staff development	I	D	I			
District Staff Development Plan						
• DAT monitors district and/or campus staff development address training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies		I	D	I	R	A
Budgeting						
Budget						
• Determine per student allocation amounts			R		A	
• Determine amounts allocated within campus budget	I	D	R		A	
• Determine allocations for capital outlay replacement programs		I	D		R	A
• Determine supplemental allocations to provide equity between schools		I	D		R	A
• Determine allocation for specific fixed costs (Add-on accounts)		I	D		A	A
• Determine allocations for federal and state special populations/special programs such as vocational and special education			D		A	

• Determine use of funds awarded to a school under Texas Successful School Award System	I	D				
• Determine use of funds awarded to the district under Texas Successful School Award System			D	I		
• Determine the use of campus allocations for special populations/special programs	I	D	I		A	
Technology						
• Determine technology funding level based on District Technology Plan		I	R		D	A
• Determine the distribution of the campus technology fund	I	D	I		R	A
Budget Management						
• Monitoring of district budgets			I		I	I
• Approval of district budget adjustments			D		R	A
• Monitoring of campus budgets	I	D	I			
• Recommended campus budget transfers and adjustments	I	D	A			
Facility Improvement Program						
• Determine allocations per school		I	I		R	A
• Determine priorities to be completed with school allocations	I	D	I		R	A
Curriculum						
Curriculum Development						
• Determine a curriculum framework that provides maximum flexibility for campuses to develop specific curriculum to meet the needs of their students. Consider:						
1. State mandates, curriculum documents, district philosophy, district mission/ beliefs		I	D		A	

2. PreK-12 alignment						
3. Strategies from current research						
4. Assessment standards and evaluation design						
• Select processes that involve campus personnel in district curriculum development, implementation, and revision		I	D			
• Monitor campus curriculum development and implementation as it relates to student performance and mandated assessment	I	R	A	I		
• Specify administrative criteria for evaluation, use of data, and grading/ reporting	I	I	R		A	
• Determine framework and monitoring practices within which classroom teachers decide:						
1. Optional components to use/not use	I	D	I			
2. Enrichment						
3. Lesson plan content and activities						
4. Assessments						
• Develop curriculum and programs to meet unique interests and needs of students and select instructional strategies that are research based, data driven, and ensure learning for all	I	D	A	I		
• Review district and campus test data to evaluate student mastery of curriculum, instructional improvement, and campus/ district planning	R	A	I	I	I	
Curriculum/Instructional Innovation						
• Ensure adequacy of assessment	I	R	A	I		

and equity in program opportunity for all students						
• Suggest, review, and approve new district-wide courses/programs. Identify the external and internal forces that impact curriculum change	I	I	D	I	R	A
• Create and recommend new campus courses/ programs for inclusion in CIP	I	D	I		R	A
• Implement innovative programs at campus level and monitor the impact on learning	I	D	I			
• Determine human resources for CIP involving external experts (central office or other) as needed	R	A	R	I		
Curriculum Resources						
• Support and facilitate campus curriculum/ instruction needs with staff development and material resources	I	I	D			
• Organize resources at campus for accessibility to staff and programs	I	D	I			
School Organization						
Mandates and Schedules						
• Interpret and communicate mandates (federal, state, local policy, mission/beliefs)		I	R		A	
• Develop district-wide waivers of state mandates at district level	I	I	D	I		
• Develop waiver requests of district or state mandates or procedures at campus level	I	D	I	I		
• Approve or disapprove waivers of state mandates or local policy	I	D	R	I	R	A
• Approve or disapprove waivers of administrative procedures	I	D	R	I	A	I
• Determine start/end times student	I	D	R		R	A

school day						
• Determine internal scheduling of campus staff	I	D	I			
Grouping						
• Establish instructional grouping guidelines/ philosophy at district level	I	I	R	I	R	A
• Utilize flexible implementation of instructional grouping within campus and district guidelines/philosophy	I	D	I			
Program Organization						
• Provide personnel to assist in delivery/ monitoring of non-negotiable programs (special education, prekindergarten, vocational education, ESL, bilingual)		I	I		R	A
• Develop federal/state applications	I	D	D	I	R	A
• Determine location of special programs and courses to best serve student needs	I	R	D		A	
• Determine schedules for students and staff within district program schedules such as itinerant staff, special program campuses	I	R	A			
• Determine campus participation in inter-scholastic activities	I	D	R		R	A
Communications						
Parent/Community Involvement						
• Provide ongoing opportunities for two-way communication through the Community Relations Advisory Committee, community town hall meetings, and board of trustee meetings		I	I	I	R	A
• Provide ongoing opportunities		I	R	I	A	

for two-way communication through the Community Relations Advisory Committee, advisory committees, PTA, various coordinator/ directors program meetings, and forums						
• Involve parents/community in campus events, student learning, and monitoring or identifying campus issues	I	D				
• Involve parents/community in district events, student learning, and monitoring or identifying district issues			D	I		
Partnerships in Education (PIE)						
• Provide a facilitator and appropriate resources to coordinate the development and recognition of community/business/school partnerships for companies and district programs	I	I	I		R	A
• Develop, perpetuate and recognize partnership activities	I	R	R		A	
• Implement partnership activities and document needed information at district level		I	R		A	
• Implement partnership activities and document needed information at campus level	R	A				
Climate						
• Assess district-wide climate/physical environment in relationship to district discipline management plan and safety issues; determine strategies as needed	I	I	D	I	A	I
• Monitor the effectiveness of strategies in district through formative and summative evaluations	I	I	D	I		

• Assess campus climate/physical environment in relationship to discipline management plan and safety issue; determine strategies as needed	I	D	I		I	
• Monitor the effectiveness of strategies at campus through formative and summative evaluations	I	D				
• Determine appropriate actions in campus emergency situations		D	R			
Monitoring						
Data Collection						
• Determine minimum standards and content of data collection for school improvement purposes inclusive of student achievement archival, survey, and informal data			R	I	A	
• Develop computerized assistance to aid data collection	I	I	R	I	A	
• Organize processes for collection of all relevant data as outlined in district form		I	D			
Data Use and Analysis						
• Continue CAT training updates/renewal each spring including data analysis, when needed	I	D	I			
• Provide time for district advisory team to analyze data and develop DIP and to involve district in the decision-making process		I	I	I	R	A
• Provide time for campus advisory team to analyze data and develop CIP and to involve faculty in the decision-making process	I	I	I		R	A
• Use collected data/research as the basis for formative evaluation of DIP development/ progress related		I	D	I		

to DIP objectives and student achievement						
• Use collected data/research as the basis for formative evaluation of CIP development/ progress related to CIP objectives and student achievement	I	D	I			
• Create unique efforts and methods to collect, disaggregate and use data	I	D	I	I		
• Determine how district advisory team will be involved in data analysis and select district advisory team members to attend training			D	I		
• Determine how staff and parents will be involved in data analysis and select campus advisory team members to attend training	I	D	I	I		
• Monitor data to drive decision making by the district advisory team	I	I	D	I		
• Monitor data to drive decision making by the campus advisory team	I	D	I	I		
Accountability						
• Structure technical assistance and/or available monetary resources to promote campus achievement of CIP goals, objectives, and positive student achievement	I	I	I		R	A
• Use collected data as basis for summative evaluation of DIP			D/A	I		
• Use collected data as basis for summative evaluation of CIP	I	D/A	I			
• Structure work of staff and resources for accountability to accomplish the DIP goals/ objectives and annual			D/A	I		

improvement of learning outcomes						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure work of staff and resources for accountability to accomplish the CIP goals/ objectives and annual improvement of learning outcomes 	I	D	I			