

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August 30, 2001

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

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Robstown Independent School District (RISD).

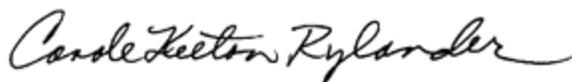
This review is intended to help RISD hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that more of every education dollar goes directly into the classroom with the teacher and children, where it belongs. To aid in this task, I contracted with Trace Consulting Services, Inc.

I have made a number of recommendations to improve RISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations-model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers, and staff. This report outlines 74 detailed recommendations that could save RISD more than \$10.7 million over the next five years, while reinvesting nearly \$600,000 to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach more than \$10.1 million - savings that the district can redirect to the classroom.

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

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

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2001, the Comptroller announced her intent to conduct a review of the Robstown Independent School District (RISD), at the request of the former superintendent and board president. Work began in Robstown in April 2001. Based upon approximately five months of work, this report identifies RISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 74 recommendations could result in net savings of more than \$10.1million over the next five years.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

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

Recognizing that only 51 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to drive more of every education dollar directly into the classroom. Comptroller Rylander also has ordered TSPR staff to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically with all the state's school districts and with anyone else who requests such information. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as a clearinghouse of the best ideas in Texas public education.

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

- ensure students and teachers receive the support and resources necessary to succeed;
- identify innovative ways to address the district's core management challenges;
- ensure administrative duties are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a way that fosters education;
- develop strategies to ensure the district's processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;
- challenge any process, procedure, program or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and

- put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages Test": government should do no job if a business in the Yellow Pages can do that job better and at a lower cost.

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

For more information, contact TSPR by calling (512)475-3676, or see the Legislative Budget Board's Website at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

TSPR in Robstown ISD

On April 2, 2001, when TSPR began its review in Robstown, the district was in an ongoing state of turmoil. In April 1999, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) had assigned a governance monitor after a 1998 investigation found ten incidents where board members interfered in the superintendent's daily operation of the district. And, in early 2000, TEA returned to conduct a financial investigation of the district. Throughout this period, student enrollment has been declining and the district has been outspending its revenues, thereby drawing down its reserves to dangerously low levels. In 1999-2000 the district's expenditures exceeded its revenue by almost half a million dollars. In April 2001, the district began making significant budget cuts and through attrition and a reduction in force, was able to cut its personnel budget for the coming year by more than \$745,000.

Throughout the time that TSPR was gathering and confirming data, the organization and management of the district was in a state of flux. On April 10, 2001, Superintendent Dr. Leo Cano announced his resignation effective June 30. From April 10 to May 22 the district was led by two of the three assistant superintendents. On May 22, the Board of Trustees, with two newly elected members, appointed Ms. Lydia Leal, the district's director of State and Federal Programs, to the position of interim superintendent. On June 12 the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance was replaced and on June 14, the director of Career and Technology Education left the district. Other positions have been eliminated and some have been filled.

Trace Consulting Services, Inc., a San Antonio-based consulting firm, was contracted to assist with the review of Robstown ISD at a cost of \$125,000. The team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held one public forum at the high school, on April 5, 2001 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00

p.m. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted numerous small focus group sessions with teachers, principals, employees, students, parents and community members.

In an effort to ensure that all stakeholders had an opportunity to provide input, surveys were sent to teachers, students, administration and support staff and parents. A total of 336 respondents answered surveys: 50 campus and central administrators and support staff; 157 teachers; 37 parents; and 92 students completed written surveys as part of the review. Details from the surveys and public forums appear in (**Appendices A through F**).

The review team also consulted two databases of comparative educational information maintained by the TEA-the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

RISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The selected peer districts were Hidalgo ISD, Mercedes ISD, Raymondville ISD and Roma ISD. TSPR also compared RISD to district averages in TEA's Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2), in which RISD is located, and to the state as a whole.

Robstown ISD serves approximately 4,116 students in grades PK-12. Ninety eight percent of its students are Hispanic. Economically disadvantaged students make up 91 percent of the district's student population. **Exhibit 1** details the demographic characteristics of the RISD and its peer school districts.

Exhibit 1
Demographic Characteristics of RISD and Peer School Districts
2000-2001

District	Student Enrollment	Ethnic Groups			Economically Disadvantaged		
		Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent of Student Enrollment	5 Year Percent Change
Robstown	4,116	0.60%	97.64%	1.58%	0.18%	90.84%	5.04%
Hidalgo	2,771	0.00%	99.31%	0.40%	0.29%	92.96%	1.76%
Mercedes	4,933	0.20%	98.78%	1.01	0.01%	88.04%	0.64%
Raymondville	2,673	0.30%	96.18%	3.29%	0.23%	86.68%	6.68%
Roma	5,993	0.0%	99.75%	0.20%	0.05%	89.60%	(0.70%)

Region	107,858	3.74%	66.26%	28.71%	1.19%	55.99%	0.79%
State	4,071,433	14.41%	40.54%	42.08%	2.97%	49.20%	2.30%

Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2000-2001.

During its five-month review, TSPR developed recommendations to improve operations and save taxpayers over \$10.7 million over the next five years. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach over \$10.1 million by 2005-06.

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

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller's office and Trace Consulting Services, Inc. wish to express appreciation to the RISD Board of Trustees, Former Superintendent Leo Cano, Interim Superintendent Lydia Leal, district employees, students, parents and community residents who helped during the review. Special thanks go to Assistant Superintendent Everard Walker who arranged for office space, equipment and meeting rooms, organized the findings meeting, responded to data requests and accommodated the review team's needs.

Robstown ISD

Robstown is located in the center of Nueces County about 20 miles from Corpus Christi, Texas. The town has a population of approximately 13,000 and is primarily an agricultural region. The district is bordered on the north by Calallen ISD, on the southeast by West Oso ISD, on the south by Bishop ISD and on the west by Banquete ISD. The district has 9 campuses including four elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, one high school and two alternative education programs. The district also includes a central administration complex, a maintenance and operations building, a transportation facility, a parent involvement center and a special education center.

RISD operates an extended year program, where students are in class 176 days each school year. There are six reporting periods throughout the year each lasting from 28 to 32 days. The academic year begins on July 25 and ends on May 31.

RISD served 4,116 students during 2000-01, a decrease of 7.2 percent over the last five years (**Exhibit 2**). District officials expect enrollment to continue to decline.

Exhibit 2
RISD Enrollment from 1996 through 2001

Year	Enrollment	Change from Previous Year
1996	4,437	N/A
1997	4,393	-44
1998	4,307	-86
1999	4,286	-21
2000	4,232	-54
2001	4,116	-116
	Total Change	-321 Students (7.2%)

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996 through 2000 and PEIMS 2001.

In September 2000, the RISD board approved the same tax rate for 2000-01 that it had the prior year -\$1.61 (\$1.46 maintenance and operations plus \$0.15 debt service). The district's annual operating budget is \$26.8 million for 2000-01, an increase of .74 percent over the 1999-2000 annual budget of \$26.6 million.

RISD's budgeted revenues have shown a steady increase from 1997-98 through 2000-01 as indicated in **Exhibit 3**. The district's total budgeted revenues increased by 13.0 percent, state revenues increased by 15.2 percent and federal program revenues increased by 15.8 percent.

Exhibit 3
RISD Budgeted Revenues
1997-98 through 2000-01

Revenue Source	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Local and intermediate	\$3,266,168	\$3,440,284	\$3,296,853	\$3,211,034	(1.7%)

sources					
State program revenues	\$19,177,849	\$19,567,173	\$21,744,626	\$22,096,619	15.2%
Federal program revenues	\$1,808,904	\$2,057,704	\$2,089,613	\$2,094,588	15.8%
Total revenue	\$24,252,921	\$24,765,161	\$27,131,092	\$27,402,241	13.0%

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

RISD's 1999-2000 TAAS passing rate was 77.3 percent, an improvement over its 1998-99 passing rate of 74.9 percent, but below the state average of 79.9 percent and the regional average of 79.5 percent.

On August 16, 2001, the Texas Education Agency released the TAAS results for the 2000-01 school year. RISD received an overall Recognized rating, the same as its 1999-2000 rating. According to these latest reports, the district has two Exemplary schools, Solomon P. Ortiz Intermediate and San Pedro Elementary; three Recognized schools, Lotspeich Elementary, Martin Elementary and Salazar Elementary and two Academically Acceptable school, Robstown High School and Seale Junior High. Because this information came late in the review process, and because information regarding the cumulative test results will not be available until November 2001, the AEIS data presented throughout the rest of this report reflects 1999-2000 information.

After five months TSPR has found that RISD is facing a number of challenges including:

- stabilizing board and administrative leadership;
- restoring financial controls; and
- Adjusting for declining student enrollment.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Stabilize Board and Administrative Leadership

Encourage board members to complete required training. Some board members have not met training requirements of the Texas Education Code. This lack of training has resulted in numerous problems for the board and the district including the assignment of a TEA appointed monitor in 1999 and investigations of financial wrongdoing in 2000. For the board to regain the trust of the public, board members must understand their roles and responsibilities, as outlined in various training classes

offered by the Regional Education Service Centers and the Texas Association of School Boards.

Develop a board code of conduct. Community members, parents, teachers and administrators said that the school board interferes entirely too much with the district's hiring and firing decisions, as well as its day-to-day operations. Establishing a code of conduct, which includes a mechanism for self-evaluation can provide board members a framework for appropriately dealing with various situations.

Meet the conflict-of-interest requirements as defined in the Texas Government Code. Evidence exists of district purchases that were made outside of competitive bidding laws. Requiring board members to sign conflict of interest affidavits annually ensures that they are reminded of their responsibilities regarding decisions in which they may have a substantial financial interest.

Restore Financial Controls

Establish a strong system of internal controls over fund disbursements. RISD has lost public confidence in its purchasing and contracting operations. Public disclosure and internal controls for approval of purchases prior to disbursement of funds are needed to restore that confidence. Bringing all expenditures over \$500 to the board for approval will make those decisions public.

Enforce the district purchasing policies to ensure compliance with state laws. It is not uncommon in the district for purchase orders to be submitted after the expenditure has been made. This practice violates state purchasing laws in some cases and also prevents the district from buying bulk items at better prices and makes it impossible to ensure that items are used for the benefit of students. The superintendent, the assistant superintendents, principals and department heads should aggressively enforce the district's purchase order policy by holding persons responsible for any purchases made without proper authorization.

Automate the purchase order process. The current purchase order process is manual and takes approximately one month from request to payment. Often purchases are made prior to the approval of the purchase orders. Implementing a better system will expedite the process and ensure that funds are not spent without approval and that individuals are held accountable for expenditures.

Initiate a multi-year budget process. The district's budget process does not forecast long-range changes in revenue or examine the long-range effects of board actions. Appraised property values in the district have

decreased in the last 10 years. Student enrollment has also decreased and further enrollment declines are projected. Understanding the long-term implications of these changes and preparing multi-year budgets will help the district see the projected results of certain decisions as well as plan for inevitable changes.

Establish a general fund balance management policy. The district does not have a general fund balance management policy and is not maintaining an adequate general fund balance. The district's fund balance declined 23.1 percent in 1999-2000. If the district is to avoid financial difficulties in the coming years, there must be a concerted effort to control spending and increase the general fund balance. The policy should establish the optimum balance and provide clear direction as to how to achieve the goal.

Refund bonds at a lower interest rate. RISD is currently paying as high as 7.85 percent interest on bonded indebtedness despite the fact that bond interest rates have dropped significantly in the last year. Refunding outstanding bonds totaling nearly \$11 million with interest rates above five percent will lower interest rates and save the district as much as \$186,683 annually.

Centralize the administration of the student activity funds. RISD's auditor noted in audit reports for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 that the district is not maintaining sufficient internal controls over student activity funds. While copies of the bank reconciliations are sent to the business office, the funds are maintained and accounted for at the campuses with little oversight. Consolidating these bank accounts and administering them centrally will allow the district to regain appropriate control over these funds.

Obtain proper training for the RISD investment officer and increase earnings by using sweep accounts and diversifying investments. RISD's investment officer does not have the state required 10 hours of training. This investment training would not only place RISD in compliance with state law but also would give the investment officer the education needed to maximize the district's earnings on its investment funds. District funds are currently held in local accounts and invested in certificates of deposit. The district could maximize its interest earnings in sweep accounts and diversified investments.

Adjust for Declining Enrollment

Implement staffing allocation formulas and reduce staffing. Although RISD's enrollment has declined by more than 7 percent since 1995-96 it continues to be overstaffed in its schools and its support positions. By

implementing staffing allocation formulas at all levels, including campus administrators, guidance counselors, secretarial/clerks, food service workers and maintenance staff, RISD can save more than \$1.6 million annually.

Close and sell or lease one of the district's schools. The district's total classroom utilization for all available permanent and portable classrooms is 51.44 percent. Closing one of the schools and selling or leasing the space would improve space utilization, reduce maintenance and custodial requirements, cut utilities expenses and eliminate salaries and benefits for positions other than teachers.

Eliminate use of portable classroom buildings. Despite the fact that many RISD facilities are operating under capacity, the district has 41 portable buildings at various campuses. Most are unoccupied and there is space in the adjoining permanent facilities for the activities taking place in those portables that are in use. By selling the portables the district can not only make a profit but also reduce its utility expenses.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

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

- ***The ongoing review and assessment of curricula has contributed to improved student performance.*** RISD's TAAS scores have improved significantly over the past five years. The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations, facilitators, teachers and principals have developed curriculum guides that provide direction for teachers on student objectives and skills to be taught. Assessments in the form of practice tests are given each six weeks on all mandatory TAAS requirements and results are used to monitor and continually improve curriculum and instruction.
- ***RISD's Migrant Program has been recognized for excellence.*** RISD's Migrant Program is a year-round program that begins with a PreK-3 school-based education program exclusively for migrant students. Not only is staff trained to give special attention to students, but services are also provided to parents. In 1999 more than 80 percent of the district's migrant student population passed all TAAS tests taken, the migrant student attendance rate was more than 94 percent and the migrant student dropout rate was less than 6

percent, all criteria needed to be recognized for excellence by TEA.

- ***RISD's Gear-Up program promotes participation in Pre-AP and AP classes.*** The Gear-Up program targets students in grades 6-12 and educates them in the purpose and benefits of Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and Advanced Placement (AP) classes and exams. The Gear Up grant pays student exam fees to encourage participation. University professors travel to the district to talk to students about higher education, including trade schools, two-year colleges, and four-year universities. In the second year of the program the numbers of students enrolling in Pre-AP and AP classes and taking AP test have increased.
- ***Just-in-time delivery of supplies and materials saves money.*** RISD avoids the personnel, maintenance and utilities costs associated with the operation of a warehouse facility by using just-in-time delivery of supplies and materials. Supplies and materials ordered are either delivered to the central administration office where they are subsequently delivered to campuses by the mail clerk or are delivered directly to the originator of the request.
- ***RISD uses an automated inventory system to receive, issue and account for textbooks.*** RISD's book tracking system reduced its lost or damaged book charges by 37 percent between 1999 and 2000. The inventory system tracks the current inventory at each campus and is constantly updated with current TEA textbook information. The district also conducts random checks to verify that students have the assigned textbooks and to be certain textbooks are not lost or damaged.
- ***The district created a Risk Management department that provides safety education and training to employees.*** RISD was having higher than average accident rates, which was causing a rise in workers compensation claims. Safety booklets and manuals were distributed to employees and high-risk groups of employees were provided additional training. Accidents have declined and workers' compensation claims for 2000-01 decreased by 40.8 percent from 1999-2000.
- ***RISD has an automated inventory system allowing electronic ordering of food items with up-to-the-minute inventory at all campuses.*** Knowing current inventory levels is an important first step in controlling costs. RISD cafeteria managers place their food orders through an automated system. Orders can be compared to each respective schools' inventory of goods allowing the district to

know exactly what is on hand in all of its cafeterias so that only the necessary items are purchased.

- ***RISD participates in a multi-regional food purchasing cooperative.*** Oftentimes larger school districts are able to purchase at a lower per-unit cost than smaller districts because they buy at a larger volume. RISD participates in a 35 district multi-regional cooperative to buy in bulk and achieve better per-unit prices. Regional Education Service Center 2 solicits bids on behalf of the member districts, allowing RISD to realize a lower per-unit cost.
- ***RISD has implemented a point-of-sale system in each cafeteria.*** Many districts have problems accurately tracking sales within each cafeteria. RISD's cafeterias use a point-of-sale (POS) system, which protects the anonymity of students, eliminates human error and increases the accuracy of tracking and reporting cash sales. The POS system also helps the district accurately track its sales and thereby maximize federal reimbursements.
- ***RISD has implemented a staggered bell schedule at its campuses to optimize the use of buses and bus drivers.*** When all schools in a district start and end at the same time buses cannot run multiple routes and are consequently less efficient. RISD's staggered daily school start and end times allow drivers to make multiple trips on some routes; serving more than one school and providing timely delivery of students.
- ***The district has created a "Team Approach" to crisis management.*** Crises in schools affect the entire community. A committee of staff, parents, community members and representatives of the City of Robstown and the Coastal Bend-Texas Chapter of the American Red Cross developed the district's crisis management plan. By working together the district, city and American Red Cross can provide a more effective response to any crisis that may occur.

Savings and Investment Requirements

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

TSPR recommended 74 ways to save RISD more than \$10.7 million in gross savings over the next five years. Reinvestment opportunities will cost the district nearly \$600,000 during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of over \$10.1 million by 2005-06.

Exhibit 4
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Robstown Independent School District

Year	Total
2001-02 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$843,959
2002-03 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$2,084,725
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$2,528,703
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$2,463,828
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$2,463,703
One Time Net (Costs) Savings	(\$225,149)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2001-2006	\$10,159,769

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 4**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exhibit 5 Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

	Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1: District Organization and Management								
1	Complete training for RISD board members in accordance with district policy and Texas Education Code requirements. p. 25	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2	Develop and enforce attendance requirements for board meetings. p. 27	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3	Develop and implement a Code of Conduct for the RISD board, including a mechanism for self-evaluation. p. 31	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Meet the conflict-of-interest requirements as defined by Chapter 553 of the Texas Government Code and local board policy. p. 33	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Prepare board packets containing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 2: Educational Service Delivery

11	Review the dropout prevention program and develop new ways to retain students. p. 61	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12	Create a plan to improve student ACT/SAT test scores. p. 64	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13	Develop procedures to verify PEIMS data before submission to TEA. p. 65	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14	Analyze test results for the Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language student population to identify problem areas and develop a plan to raise TAAS scores. p. 72	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15	Eliminate medical clerk positions. p. 83	\$12,498	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$162,474	\$0
Totals-Chapter 2		\$12,498	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$162,474	\$0

Chapter 3: Community Involvement

16	Consolidate all community and parental involvement functions into one department, and designate an individual to serve	\$21,704	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$195,340	\$0
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	as director. p. 90								
17	Aggressively recruit school volunteers for campuses with low volunteer involvement. p. 97	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 3	\$21,704	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$195,340		\$0

Chapter 4: Personnel Management

18	Conduct reduction in force to achieve levels of staffing that more accurately reflect enrollment. p. 110	\$421,188	\$1,263,565	\$1,684,755	\$1,684,755	\$1,684,755	\$6,739,018		\$0
19	Develop a Personnel procedures manual. p. 111	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0
20	Update existing job descriptions and develop new descriptions for positions that require them. p. 112	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0
21	Develop a teacher recruitment strategy. p. 115	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0
22	Develop strategies to address the district's shortage of substitutes. p. 116	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0
23	Improve procedures for employee evaluations and establish a timeline for the completion of all employee	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0

	orders. p. 139							
30	Pursue funding of facility repairs and rehabilitation by applying for and issuing Qualified Zone Academy Bonds. p. 141	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31	Develop a timeline and implementation plan for SECO's recommendations to reduce utility expenses. p. 143	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
32	Involve schools in districtwide energy efficiency and conservation efforts. p. 145	\$8,134	\$10,846	\$10,846	\$10,846	\$10,846	\$51,518	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 5	\$167,736	\$284,027	\$306,940	\$241,940	\$241,940	\$1,242,583	\$0
Chapter 6: Asset and Risk Management								
33	Use a sweep account to increase interest earnings on idle bank balances overnight. p. 151	\$83,268	\$99,922	\$99,922	\$99,922	\$99,922	\$482,956	\$0
34	Diversify into other board-authorized investment vehicles to maximize investment revenue. p. 153	\$0	\$21,693	\$21,693	\$21,693	\$21,693	\$86,772	\$0
35	Obtain training for the investment officer to be in compliance with the Public Funds	(\$125)	\$0	(\$125)	\$0	(\$125)	(\$375)	\$0

	Investment Act. p. 154							
36	Establish a committee to review the state health plan options and devise a plan of action for the district in 2001-02. p. 157	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
37	Assign responsibility for tagging all fixed assets to ensure proper accounting of district-owned property. p. 159	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
38	Hold school principals and other department heads accountable for the fixed assets under their supervision. p. 160	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
39	Perform an annual physical inventory of fixed assets. p. 161	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,000)
40	Increase the district's fixed assets capitalization policy to \$5,000 and include a depreciation policy. p. 162	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 6	\$83,143	\$121,615	\$121,490	\$121,615	\$121,490	\$569,353	(\$2,000)
Chapter 7: Financial Management								
41	Initiate a multi-year budget process. p. 170	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

42	Establish a general fund balance management policy. p. 172	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
43	Refund bonds at a lower interest rate. p. 174	\$93,341	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$840,073	(\$219,849)
45	Develop and implement a policy regarding manual checks and a schedule for computer-prepared checks. p. 177	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
46	Centralize the administration of the student activity funds. p. 178	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals-Chapter 7		\$93,341	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$840,073	(\$219,849)

Chapter 8: Purchasing and Contract Management

47	Establish thresholds for approval of fund disbursements and require board approval in an open board session for disbursements over \$500. p. 190	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
48	Enforce district policy requiring purchase orders for all purchases of \$10 or more. p. 192	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
49	Install the district software purchase order module and train users. p. 194	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,100)
50	Establish a strong svstem of	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	procedures to ensure compliance with purchasing laws and policies. p. 195							
51	Provide training on contract management and contractor evaluation. p. 198	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
52	Adopt and implement a written policy for technology contracting. p. 199	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals-Chapter 8		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,100)

Chapter 9: Food Services

53	Conduct annual surveys of students, parents, teachers and administrators to assess satisfaction with services and the quality, appearance and taste of food provided in school cafeterias. p. 209	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
54	Reduce cafeteria staffing to achieve the recommended Meals Per Labor Hour. p. 211	\$65,962	\$131,924	\$131,924	\$131,924	\$131,924	\$593,658	\$0
55	Develop and implement an incentive program to encourage attendance and superior performance. p. 212	(\$10,600)	(\$21,200)	(\$21,200)	(\$21,200)	(\$21,200)	(\$95,400)	\$0

63	Purchase and implement an automated vehicle maintenance software program. p. 239	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,200)
64	Use cooperative purchasing arrangements to purchase fuel, tires, lubricants and supplies at discounted prices. p. 240	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals-Chapter 10		(\$18,368)	(\$12,018)	(\$12,018)	(\$12,018)	(\$12,018)	(\$66,440)	(\$2,200)

Chapter 11: Safety and Security

65	Establish a districtwide security plan that includes a mechanism for measuring and evaluating security activities. p. 248	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
66	Issue an RFP for security services and notify Accident Reconstruction Specialist of intent to terminate the current contract. p. 249	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
67	Create a committee to develop a course of action for reducing drug abuse. p. 257	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
68	Provide specialized training to all personnel assigned duties at the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Alternative Education Program school. p. 258								
69	Develop a district truancy plan that includes procedures and performance measures to increase attendance rates. p. 260	\$41,871	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$376,839	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 11	\$41,871	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$376,839	\$0	
Chapter 12: Computers and Technology									
70	Eliminate one secretarial position in the Career and Technology Education department. p. 267	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
71	Establish a technology committee led by the director of CATE to develop a technology plan. p. 269	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
72	Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan and test it. p. 271	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
73	Develop a Web-based work order submission and status reporting system. p. 273	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
74	Create and maintain comprehensive software and technology	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

inventories at each school and a master software and technology inventory. p. 273								
Totals-Chapter 12	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Savings	\$909,211	\$2,160,452	\$2,604,555	\$2,539,555	\$2,539,555	\$10,753,328	\$0	\$0
Total Costs	(\$65,252)	(\$75,727)	(\$75,852)	(\$75,727)	(\$75,852)	(\$368,410)	(\$225,149)	(\$225,149)
Total	\$843,959	\$2,084,725	\$2,528,703	\$2,463,828	\$2,463,703	\$10,384,918	(\$225,149)	(\$225,149)

Total Savings	\$10,753,328
Total Costs	(\$593,559)
Grand Total	\$10,159,769

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

In an era in which the focus of educational decision-making is shifting from the central office to the schools, districtwide management, planning and evaluation remain critical. The board must set instructional and operational goals, objectives, and policies for the district in accordance with state laws; ensure that campus improvement plans are consistent with the district's strategic and improvement plans; and ensure the availability of the financial resources needed to carry out those plans.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. BOARD GOVERNANCE

Under Texas Education Code Section 11.151(b), the board of trustees of a Texas independent school district is a corporate body, elected by the public with the "exclusive power and duty to oversee the management of the public schools of the district." The board, as a legal agent of the State of Texas, derives its status from the Texas Constitution and the Legislature. It must function in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes as well as regulations interpreting those statutes and relevant court decisions. Specific powers granted to the board under the Texas Education Code (TEC) include the power and duty to:

- Adopt rules and bylaws necessary to govern and oversee management of the public schools of the district;
- Acquire and hold real and personal property, sue and be sued and receive bequests and donations and other money or funds;
- Dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the school district;
- Levy and collect taxes; issue bonds, including determining the rate of tax to be levied within the dollar limits voted and specified by law (when a specific tax rate has not been adopted through election);
- Adopt and file a budget for the next fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- Ensure that district accounts are annually audited at district expense by a certified public accountant following the close of each fiscal year;
- Approve a district plan and campus-level plans for site-based decision-making (SBDM) and provide for their implementation;
- Publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including school performance objectives and the progress of each school toward these objectives;
- Adopt policies governing the employment and duties of district personnel.

The function of the board of trustees is to set policy. As chief executive officer for the district, the superintendent is responsible for making sure that the board's policies are followed. To meet the challenges of public education, the board and the superintendent must function together as a leadership team. Together that team must annually assess its development needs as a corporate body and as individuals.

RISD is governed by a seven-member board of trustees. Each trustee is elected at large by the entire district for a three-year term. Board elections are held annually on the first Saturday in May for one third of its members. TSPR conducted its site visit in April 2001; in the subsequent May 5 election, two new board members were elected, while another trustee was reelected (**Exhibit 1-1**).

Exhibit 1-1
RISD Board Members
May 2001

Member	Years of Experience	Profession	End of Term
Raul Cabrera, President	0	Chemical Worker	2004
Rosendo Espinoza	1	Mechanic	2003
Bobby Ramon, Secretary	2	Mechanic	2002
Michael Carrillo	1	Businessman	2003
Armando Arias, Asst. Secretary	6	Businessman	2004
Adolfo Lopez	5	Laborer	2003
Noe De Los Santos, Vice President	0	Retired	2004

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Regular meetings are held at 7:00 pm in the central administration building. Notices of board meetings are posted in compliance with state law. Special meetings are not called routinely and are limited to the announced subject.

The public is welcome to attend all meetings, and citizens wishing to address the board may speak for up to three minutes on any agenda item. District policy GF outlines the process to be followed regarding employee, student or parent complaints before the board. This policy requires that board members determine if a person who wishes to make a complaint has attempted to resolve the matter administratively. If not, the person is directed to follow the district process before bringing the matter to the board.

Based upon a review of regular meetings for the five-month period of December 2000 through April 2001, board meetings are orderly and are conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*. Board members have ample opportunity to discuss items before voting and once voted upon, discussion ceases.

The superintendent's secretary records meetings by tape and prepares the official minutes. Board members review all minutes for accuracy before they are accepted and approved. Board policies are maintained and updated as required using the services provided by the Texas Association of School Boards.

FINDING

Some board members have not met the training requirements of the Texas Education Code. This lack of training has resulted in numerous problems for the district, including the assignment of a Texas Education Agency (TEA) appointed monitor in 1999, TEA investigations of financial wrongdoing in 2000 and a poor image in the community. Board actions, both individually and corporately, indicate a lack of awareness or a disregard for the responsibilities established for school board members in the TEC. Board training requirements are defined by the State Board of Education under directive of the TEC 11.159, and are explained in the district's policy BBD, excerpted in **Exhibit 1-2**.

Exhibit 1-2
Excerpt from RISD Policy BBD
Board Members: Training and Orientation

<p>REQUIRED TRAINING</p>	<p>Each Trustee must complete any training required by the State Board of Education (<i>Education Code 11.159</i>). Continuing education for Board members includes orientation sessions, an annual team-building session with the Board and the Superintendent, and specified hours of continuing education based on identified needs.</p>
<p>LOCAL ORIENTATION</p>	<p>All Board members shall receive a local District orientation and an orientation to the Texas Education Code.</p>
<p>NEW MEMBERS</p>	<p>New Board members shall participate in a local orientation session within 60 days before or after their election or appointment. The purpose of this orientation is to familiarize new Board members with local Board policies and procedures and District goals and priorities. Effective January 1, 1997, all newly elected Board members shall receive the orientation to the Texas Education Code within the first year of service. The orientation shall be delivered by regional education service centers and shall be three hours in length.</p>
<p>SITTING MEMBERS</p>	<p>Prior to January 1, 1997, all sitting Board members shall receive a basic orientation to the Texas Education Code and relevant legal obligations. The orientation will have special but not exclusive emphasis on statutory provisions related to</p>

	Texas school district governance. The orientation shall be delivered by regional education service centers and shall be three hours in length.
TEAM BUILDING	The entire Board, including all Board members, shall annually participate with the Superintendent in a team-building session facilitated by the regional education service center or another registered provider. The team-building session shall be of a length deemed appropriate by the Board, but generally at least three hours. The purpose of the team-building session is to enhance the effectiveness of the Board-Superintendent team and to assess the continuing education needs of the Board-Superintendent team. The assessment of needs shall be based on the framework for governance leadership and shall be used to plan continuing education activities for the governance leadership team for the upcoming year.
CONTINUING EDUCATION	In addition to the orientation and team-building training, all Board members shall receive additional continuing education on an annual basis, in fulfillment of assessed needs and based on the framework for governance leadership. The continuing education sessions may be provided by the regional education service centers or other registered providers. To the extent possible, the entire Board shall participate in continuing education programs together.
FIRST YEAR	In their first year of service, Board members shall receive at least ten hours of continuing education in fulfillment of assessed needs.
SUBSEQUENT YEARS	Following the first year of service, Board members shall receive at least five hours of continuing education annually in fulfillment of assessed needs.
PRESIDENT	The Board President shall receive continuing education related to leadership duties of a Board president as some portion of the annual requirement.

Source: Texas Association of School Boards.

In light of these requirements, TSPR noted the following deficiencies:

- One board member has not completed the annual team-building requirements for 2001.
- One board member has not completed an orientation session, has not completed a session in team-building since 1998 and has only two total hours of training during three years as a board member.

Exhibit 1-3 shows the hours of training earned during each board member's tenure.

**Exhibit 1-3
RISD Board Member Training**

Member	Training Period	Annual Training Hours
Raul Cabrera, President	Elected May 2001	0.00
Rosendo Espinoza, Vice President	May 2000 - May 2001	29.50
Bobby Ramon, Secretary	May 2000 - May 2001	0.00
	May 1999 - May 2000	14.00
Michael Carrillo	May 2000 - May 2001	32.75
Armando Arias, Assistant Secretary	May 2000 - May 2001	0.00
	May 1999 - May 2000	0.00
	May 1998 - May 1999	2.00
Adolfo Lopez	May 2000 - May 2001	3.00
	May 1999 - May 2000	10.00
	May 1998 - May 1999	7.50
	May 1997 - May 1998	8.25
	May 1996 - May 1997	6.25
Noe De Los Santos, Vice President	Elected May 2001	0.00

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

Recommendation 1:

Complete training for RISD board members in accordance with district policy and Texas Education Code requirements.

Trustee training should remain a board agenda item until each member has fulfilled the minimum requirements. Local board policy should provide remedies such as mandating revocation of voting privileges, counseling and even suspension from the board for situations in which board members do not complete the requirements. In addition, the school board should establish guidelines and criteria for ongoing self-evaluation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	he superintendent identifies individual and team training requirements for all board members.	October 2001
2.	The school board develops a local policy establishing timelines for the completion of minimum training requirements as well as a corrective action plan for members who fail to meet them.	October 2001
3.	The board members complete their minimum training requirements.	August 2002 - Ongoing
4.	The superintendent monitors the progress of school board training.	September 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Review of attendance at board meetings over the 13-month period from May 16, 2000 through June 7, 2001 revealed that only 11 of 22 meetings were attended by all board members (**Exhibit 1-4**).

Exhibit 1-4
RISD Board Member Attendance of Meetings
May 16, 2000 through June 7, 2001

DATE	ATTENDANCE
May 16, 2000	All Present
May 30, 2000	One Absent
June 13, 2000	All Present
July 18, 2000	All Present
July 27, 2000	All Present
August 8, 2000	All Present
August 15, 2000	Two Absent
August 29, 2000	All Present
September 19, 2000	All Present
October 5, 2000	Two Absent

October 17, 2000	Two Absent
November 16, 2000	All Present
December 14, 2000	All Present
January 9, 2001	One Absent
February 13, 2001	One Absent
March 5, 2001	One Absent
March 15, 2001	One Absent
April 10, 2001	One Absent
April 16, 2001	All Present
May 22, 2001	All Present
June 5, 2001	One Absent
June 7, 2001	One Absent

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

Excessive absences from scheduled board meetings inhibit the effective operation of the district by postponing deliberations and disrupting the decision-making process. Discussion of the RISD superintendent's contract was a board agenda item six times in a nine month period before it was addressed. As the board is comprised of seven members, the absence of any one board member could easily result in deadlocked votes which could force agenda items to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Recommendation 2:

Develop and enforce attendance requirements for board meetings.

A local board policy should address the issue of absences from board meetings and establish a plan of action for members with excessive unexcused absences. Refresher training, outside speakers or mediation may encourage regular attendance and participation in scheduled meetings by board members.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The school board develops a local policy regarding requirements for attendance at school board meetings as well as a corrective action plan for trustees who fail to meet the minimum requirements.	October 2001
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2.	The board members and superintendent enforce these attendance requirements.	November 2001 - Ongoing
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

TSPR survey results reflect a perception on the part of many community members, parents, teachers and administrators that the board interferes entirely too much with the district's hiring and firing decisions, as well as its day-to-day operations. In interviews, board members and the superintendent concurred with this assessment and agreed that the relationship between the board and superintendent is strained and inefficient. One board member stated that the board interferes with the superintendent's responsibilities but does not have the votes to undermine him; three other members agreed that a great deal of interference occurs.

TSPR surveyed students, parents, teachers and campus and district administrators about various district operations. **Exhibit 1-5** provides excerpts of these surveys concerning the RISD board.

**Exhibit 1-5
Survey Results
Quality of District Leadership and Management**

Survey Statement	Agree/Strongly Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.			
Campus Administrators and Support Staff	30.0%	20.0%	50.0%
The school board has a good image in the community.			
Teachers	17.9%	31.1%	51.0%
School board members listen to the opinions and			

desires of others.			
Parents	24.3%	35.1%	40.6%
District Administrators and Support Staff	30.0%	25.0%	45.0%

Source: TSPR survey results, April 2001.

The Navarro ISD board of trustees developed a Code of Conduct to better define its roles and responsibilities, to help the board function as an effective team, to create a mechanism for members to police their actions and to provide sanctions for those members not acting in a manner deemed beneficial to the education of students and objectives of the district. The Code of Conduct addresses four primary educational and ethical standards (**Exhibit 1-6**).

**Exhibit 1-6
Code of Conduct
Navarro ISD**

Function	Standard
Governance	Bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, State Board of Education rules, court orders pertaining to schools and district policies and procedures.
	Make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children in the district, regardless of ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing. These decisions will place the needs of children above the wants of adults.
	Recognize that board must make decisions as a whole and make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise the board. All action should take place in an official board meeting.
	Focus board action on policy making, goal setting, planning and evaluation and insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
	Vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of recommendations by the Superintendent.
	Delegate authority for the administration of the school to the Superintendent. Board members will not engage in micromanagement.

Conduct	Hold confidential all matters that, if disclosed, may have an impact on the district. Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, including closed session agenda items.
	Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings, arrive on time, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
	Make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings, render all decisions based on the available facts, and refuse to surrender judgment to individuals or special groups.
	Refrain from using board position for personal or partisan gain.
	Disagree in an agreeable manner. We will not hold grudges or question another board member's vote on an issue, but will respect other views and opinions.
	Be firm, fair, just and impartial in all decisions and actions.
Communication	Encourage the free expression of opinion by all board members. Make a good faith effort to understand and to accommodate the views of others.
	Seek communication between the board and students, staff, and all elements of the community.
	Communicate to fellow board members and the Superintendent, at appropriate times, expression of public concerns.
	The board President shall make sure that persons addressing the board follow established guidelines.
Board Preparation	Become informed about current educational issues and seek continuing education opportunities such as those sponsored by state and national school board associations.
	Disseminate pertinent information gained at training workshops and conventions with the Superintendent and fellow board members.

Source: Navarro ISD.

Navarro ISD also has a set of standard board operating procedures that indicate how these standards will be upheld from day to day. **Exhibit 1-7** provides a sampling of issues addressed by the procedures.

Exhibit 1-7
Standard Board Operating Procedures
Navarro ISD

Subjects Addressed
Developing the board meeting agenda
Member conduct during board meetings
Voting
Individual board member request for information or reports
Citizen request/complaint to individual board member
Employee request/complaint to individual board member
Board member visit to school campus
Communications
Evaluation of the superintendent
Evaluation of the board
Criteria and process for selecting board officers
Role and authority of board members and/or board officers
Role of board executive session
Media inquiries to the board
Media inquiries to individual board members
Phone calls/letters
Response to signed letters
Required board member training
Addressing issues involving your own children
Reimbursable expenses
Reviewing standard board operating procedures
Campaigning for election or reelection
Goal setting

Source: Navarro ISD.

The superintendent at NISD stated that since the board's Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures have been implemented, interference

between district leadership and management has diminished and TAAS scores have greatly improved due to the board's focus on benefiting the education of the district's students.

Recommendation 3:

Develop and implement a Code of Conduct for the RISD board, including a mechanism for self-evaluation.

Members of the school board should develop a Code of Conduct that considers all applicable federal and state laws and guidelines regarding their roles and responsibilities. Establishing criteria for self-evaluation would allow for objective assessment of board member conduct, participation and performance with regard to accomplishing district objectives. Board members that are not participating regularly or who are performing contrary to district established goals would be subject to sanctions including additional training, counseling or suspension from the board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The members of the board review all federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines regarding their roles and responsibilities.	October 2001
2.	The board develops and adopts a comprehensive Code of Conduct to be adhered to by all members, including stipulations requiring board self-evaluation with measures up to and including suspension from the board.	November 2001
3.	The board conducts ongoing assessment of members and provides orientation training regarding the adopted Code of Conduct for new members of the board.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

During its site visits in April and May 2001, TSPR found no evidence of conflict-of-interest acknowledgements signed by any board member. None could be located or produced by the superintendent's office, the Business and Finance office or the Personnel and Special Programs office. Subsequent to the site visits, the district's external auditor produced copies of conflict-of-interest forms signed by the superintendent, assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and board members. The auditor

had requested documents during its audit of RISD records for the period ending August 31, 2000. The auditor had no conflict-of-interest forms for board members elected in May 2001.

The district's conflict-of-interest policy BBFA (LEGAL) explains what a conflict of interest is and states that board members shall file an affidavit with the official board record-keeper stating the nature and extent of any conflict of interest, and shall abstain from participation in matters that involve a conflict of interest. In addition, Chapter 553 of the Texas Government Codes requires public servants to disclose any interest in property to be acquired by public funds. **Exhibit 1-8** provides excerpts from the district's online policy manual regarding board ethics.

Exhibit 1-8
Excerpt from RISD Policy BBFA
Ethics: Conflict of Interest

CONTRACTS PERMITTED	The Board may contract with a business entity in which a Trustee has a substantial interest if the Trustee follows the disclosure and abstention procedure set out below. <i>Atty. Gen.Op. JM-424 (1986)</i>
AFFIDAVIT AND ABSTENTION	If a Trustee or a person related to a Trustee in the first degree by either affinity or consanguinity has a substantial interest in a business entity or in real property, the Trustee, before a vote or decision on any matter involving the business entity or the real property, shall file an affidavit with the official Board recordkeeper stating the nature and extent of the interest and shall abstain from further participation in the matter if: 1) In the case of a substantial interest in a business entity the action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the business entity that is distinguishable from the effect on the public; or 2) In the case of a substantial interest in real property, it is reasonably foreseeable that an action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the value of the property, distinguishable from its effect on the public.
MAJORITY CONFLICT	If a Trustee is required to file and does file an affidavit, that Trustee shall not be required to abstain from further participation in the matter or matters requiring such an affidavit if a majority of the Trustees are likewise required to file and do file affidavits of similar interest on the same official action. <i>Local Gov't Code 171.004</i>
SEPARATE VOTE	The Board shall take a separate vote on any budget item specifically dedicated to a contract with a business entity in which a Trustee has a substantial interest. The affected

	Trustee shall not participate in that separate vote, but may vote on a final budget if he or she filed the affidavit and the matter in which he or she is concerned has been resolved. A Trustee may perform an act that would otherwise be prohibited when a majority of the Trustees are required to file affidavits of similar interests on the official action. <i>Local Gov't Code 171.005</i>
PROHIBITED ACTS	Except as provided above, a Trustee shall not knowingly: 1) Participate in a vote or decision on a matter involving a business entity or real property in which the Trustee has a substantial interest if it is reasonably foreseeable that an action on the matter would have a special economic effect on the business entity that is distinguishable from the effect on the public or will have a special economic effect on the value of the property, distinguishable from its effect on the public; 2) Act as surety for a business entity that has a contract, work, or business with the District; 3) Act as surety on any official bond required of an officer of the District. <i>Local Gov't Code 171.003</i>
ABUSE OF OFFICE	A Trustee shall not, with intent to obtain a benefit or with intent to harm or defraud another, intentionally or knowingly violate a law relating to the office; or misuse District property, services, personnel, or any other thing of value, belonging to the District, that has come into his or her custody by virtue of his or her office. <i>Penal Code 39.02(a)</i> "Law relating to the office" means a law that specifically applies to a person acting in the capacity of a public servant and that directly or indirectly imposes a duty on the public servant or governs the conduct of the public servant. <i>Penal Code 39.01(1)</i>

Source: Robstown Independent School District Policy Online.

In accordance with Chapter 553 of the Texas Government Code and RISD policy BBFA (LEGAL), board members may not have a direct or indirect interest in any sale to the district or its schools of any services, materials, equipment or supplies. Therefore, boards should follow competitive bidding practices for contracts, leases and other agreements for services, materials, equipment and supplies. In addition, during the annual audit process, an external auditor should check for adherence to this policy.

Recommendation 4:

Meet the conflict-of-interest requirements as defined by Chapter 553 of the Texas Government Code and local board policy.

Each trustee should agree to and sign the district's conflict-of-interest forms.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance delivers the necessary conflict-of-interest forms to each board member for completion and signature.	September 2001
2.	Each member of the board signs and returns the forms to the RISD assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, who files them appropriately.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The superintendent does not provide board members with adequate information on agenda items prior to board meetings. According to interviews with board members, this oversight has lengthened the meetings unnecessarily. During the year from June 13, 2000 through June 7, 2001, seven of 19 board meetings exceeded three and one-half hours (**Exhibit 1-9**). The length of meetings includes time for executive session.

**Exhibit 1-9
Length of RISD Board Meetings
June 13, 2000 through June 7, 2001**

Date	Length of Executive Session	Length of Meeting
June 13, 2000	2 hours, 6 minutes	2 hours, 46 minutes
July 18, 2000	2 hours, 28 minutes	3 hours, 48 minutes
July 27, 2000	26 minutes	2 hours, 17 minutes
August 8, 2000	2 hours, 23 minutes	2 hours, 48 minutes
August 15, 2000	No executive session	1 hour, 50 minutes
August 29, 2000	36 minutes	3 hours, 1 minute
September 19, 2000	40 minutes	3 hours, 23 minutes
October 5, 2000	No executive session	1 hour, 18 minutes
October 17, 2000	No executive session	2 hours, 3 minutes

November 16, 2000	1 hour, 20 minutes	3 hours, 33 minutes
December 14, 2000	2 hours, 17 minutes	5 hours, 28 minutes
January 9, 2001	1 hour, 3 minutes	4 hours, 58 minutes
February 13, 2001	1 hour, 4 minutes	2 hours, 33 minutes
March 5, 2001	1 hour, 13 minutes	1 hour, 38 minutes
April 10, 2001	4 hours, 1 minute	4 hours, 34 minutes
April 16, 2001	1 hour, 27 minutes	1 hour, 34 minutes
May 8, 2001	No executive session	30 minutes
May 22, 2001	1 hour, 6 minutes	3 hours, 6 minutes
June 5, 2001	1 hour, 25 minutes	1 hour, 45 minutes
June 7, 2001	No executive session	3 hours, 45 minutes

Source: RISD Board meeting minutes.

Based upon policy items needing board consideration, the superintendent develops the agenda for each board meeting and a board packet explaining the agenda items is hand-delivered to each board member, generally on the Friday or Saturday morning before the scheduled meeting. Information not included in the board packet is handed to the board at the meeting. Four trustees reported that the informational packets usually are provided in a timely fashion, but three others stated that the packets sometimes are late and should be delivered sooner.

Three board members reported that the packets are not always comprehensive and should contain more detailed information. One member did not perceive a problem with the board packets and stated that when the packet information is incomplete, the district provides full details in the meetings. When detailed information is not provided to the board members for their review prior to a scheduled meeting, key decisions for agenda items are often tabled until such time as the board members are provided full disclosure of information. For example, during the April 10, 2001 board meeting, the superintendent recommended that 16 teacher positions be subject to a Reduction in Force (RIF). Seven of the sixteen positions were vacant leaving a total of nine teaching positions to be eliminated. Total potential savings to the district for the elimination of these positions totaled \$593,149. The board was further informed by the business manager that the district faced a deficit for the coming school year in excess of \$1.5 million. The board queried the superintendent about other possible positions to be cut and why the information had not been provided to them prior to the meeting. The superintendent replied that he

was not ready to make further recommendations at that time. The board then went into executive session to discuss this and other issues and returned to open session four hours later.

Recommendation 5:

Prepare board packets containing comprehensive and detailed background information for all agenda items and disseminate them to board members at least 72 hours before school board meetings.

The board and superintendent should agree on the amount of time the board should have to review packet information before scheduled meetings. Board packets should be comprehensive in nature and be disseminated at least 72 hours before board meetings to allow members to make informed decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The board informs the superintendent of the kinds of materials, information and data that they want included in board packets as well as the format and degree of detail that they prefer.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent acts on the board's preferences; including all the information requested in the board packets and directing all other personnel providing board packet information to do the same.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent ensures that board packets are delivered to trustees within the length of time agreed upon, which should be at least 72 hours before board meetings.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Time spent in executive session reviewing board agenda items not suitable for open session discussion is quite lengthy as shown in **Exhibit 1-9**.

Action items are voted upon in open session following the close of executive session. During 19 meetings over the year from June 13, 2000 through June 7, 2001, time spent in executive session exceeded one hour on seven occasions and two hours on four occasions, while one executive session exceeded four hours.

This process often leaves those in attendance at the open session sitting idle for hours at a time awaiting the conclusion of executive session discussions. Because of its interruption of the regular meeting and the fact that its length is unpredictable, the executive session's timing affects public participation in regular board meetings. It discourages attendance and input by interested parties and may well contribute to the community's perception that the board and district managers do not value public or staff opinion.

Recommendation 6:

Conduct the board's executive session at a regularly scheduled time prior to the regular board meetings.

The board should post the time of its executive session so that citizens interested in attending the regular meeting can come after the executive session when the regular meeting begins. If the board confines its executive session discussions to those items that are allowed by law to be discussed, one hour should be a sufficient amount of time to allot to the executive session. The executive session could take place from 6:00 pm until 7:00 pm, at which time the regular meeting would begin.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board determines the length of time it requires for its executive sessions.	October 2001 - Ongoing
2.	The board recordkeeper posts the time of the executive session before the regular meeting.	October 2001 - Ongoing
3.	The board evaluates the appropriateness of the length of time allotted to executive session and lengthens or shortens it accordingly.	December 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

As specified in Section 11.201 of the Texas Education Code, the superintendent is the chief executive officer of the district and is responsible for:

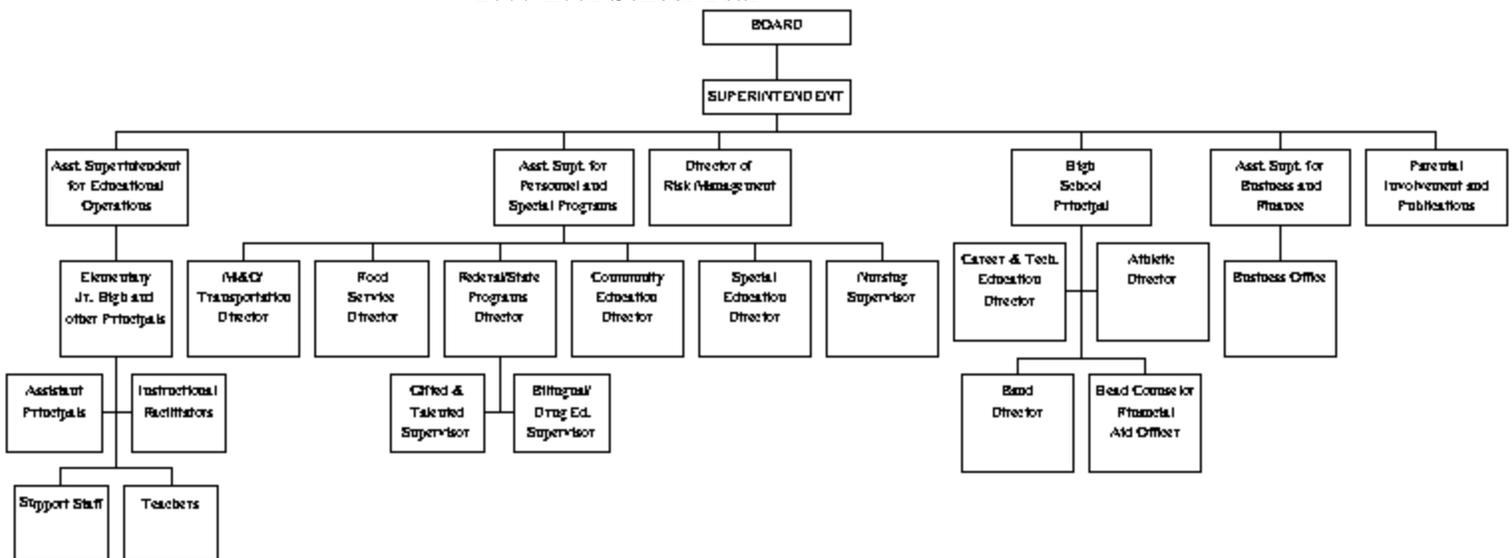
- Assuming administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the educational programs, services, and facilities of the district, and for the annual performance appraisal of the district's staff;
- Assuming administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all personnel of the district other than the superintendent;
- Making recommendations regarding the selection of personnel other than the superintendent, as provided by Section 11.163 of the Texas Education Code;
- Initiating the termination or suspension of an employee or the non-renewal of an employee's term contract;
- Managing the day-to-day operations of the district as its administrative manager;
- Preparing and submitting to the board of trustees a proposed budget, as provided by Section 44.002 of the Texas Education Code;
- Preparing recommendations for policies to be adopted by the board of trustees and overseeing the implementation of adopted policies;
- Developing or causing to be developed appropriate administrative regulations to implement policies established by the board of trustees;
- Providing leadership for the attainment of student performance in the district based on indicators adopted under Section 39.051 of the Texas Education Code and other indicators adopted by the State Board of Education or the district's board of trustees;
- Organizing the district's central administration;
- Performing any other duties assigned by the board of trustees.

RISD's superintendent manages the district with a senior staff that includes an assistant superintendent for Educational Operations, an assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and an assistant superintendent for Business and Finance. Also reporting directly to the superintendent are the director of Risk Management, the coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications and the high school principal.

The organizational structure calls for principals of all schools except the high school to report to the assistant superintendent of Educational Operations. The assistant superintendent of Personnel and Special Programs supervises the director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation, the director of Food Service, the director of Federal and State Programs, the director of Community Education, the director of Special Education, and the Nursing supervisor. The high school principal oversees the director of Career and Technology Education, the Athletic director, the Band director and the head Counselor and Financial Aid officer.

RISD's organization structure is illustrated in **Exhibit 1-10**.

Exhibit 1-10
RISD Current Organization Structure
2000-2001 School Year



Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

FINDING

RISD's organization structure reflects an inequitable distribution of responsibilities and uncoordinated reporting relationships. The superintendent has direct oversight over five positions. Departments involved in educational service delivery report to four different offices. Cohesion and communication among campuses is difficult when the high school principal is the only principal that does not report to the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations. Except for the business office, the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance has no responsibility for business support functions such as Transportation, Food Services and Maintenance and Operations and Risk Management.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs has too many diverse responsibilities, overseeing both educational and business support functions. The magnitude of these responsibilities does not allow enough time to focus on the primary duties of the personnel function, such as management of the district's personnel evaluation processes, documentation and approval of position descriptions, development and implementation of appropriate staffing allocation formulas and oversight of the district's employee benefits programs.

Recommendation 7:

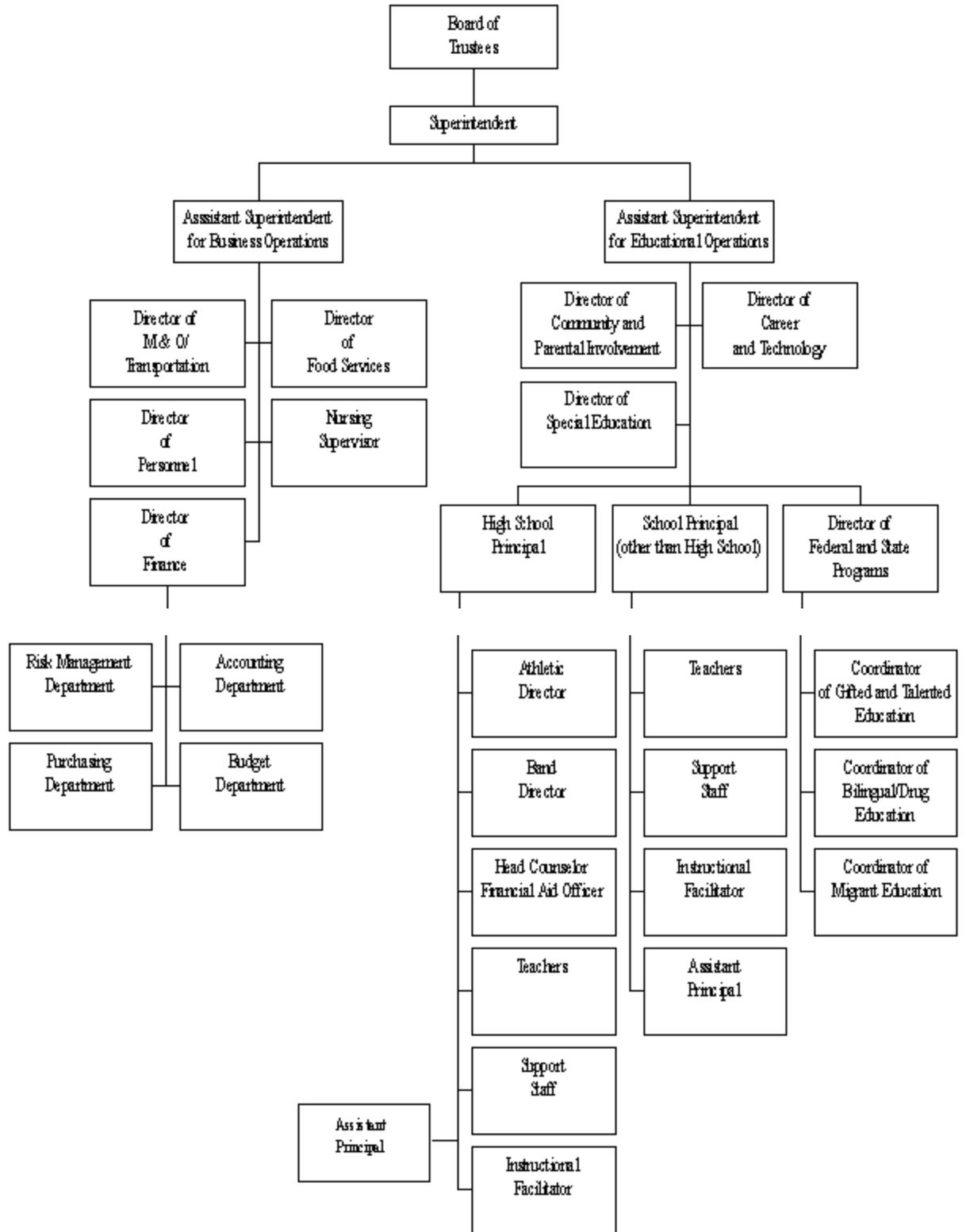
Restructure the district's organization by realigning all education and business operations under two assistant superintendents.

To more efficiently organize the district's structure, RISD should bring the departments of Special Education, Career and Technology Education, Federal and State programs, Community and Parental Involvement and Career and Technology Education as well as the high school principal under the leadership of the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations.

Responsibilities for the Food Services, Maintenance and Operations/Transportation, Nursing, Personnel departments and a Finance director should be aligned under the assistant superintendent for Business Operations. The director of Finance would be responsible for operations of the district's Accounting and Budget functions, Purchasing, and Risk Management.

Exhibit 1-11 illustrates the recommended organizational structure.

**Exhibit 1-11
Recommended Organization Structure**



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent develops a plan to reorganize the district's structure and realign its reporting responsibilities and submits the plan to the board for review and approval.	October 2001
2.	The board approves the reorganization plan.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent and assistant superintendents realign their reporting responsibilities for district support functions.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

At its April 10, 2001 board meeting, the board voted to terminate the superintendent. During the previous 14 months, from February 2000 through April 2001, the superintendent's contract was an agenda item on nine occasions. Deliberations were ongoing and decisions were postponed. After new members of the board were elected, a meeting was held on May 22, 2001 to select board officers and to appoint the director of Federal and State Programs as the district's interim superintendent.

Although RISD's BBA (LEGAL) requires the board to appraise the superintendent annually, no performance evaluations were found in the superintendent's personnel file, and none were produced by the central administrative office. A former board member was quoted in the local newspaper as stating that the superintendent was formally evaluated and rated poorly. However, no evaluation documents available within the district substantiate unsatisfactory performance by the superintendent. Incomplete, undated, and unsigned evaluations were produced by the interim superintendent's office in July 2001.

The TEC, Section 21.354 addresses the appraisal of school administrators and states that criteria for the appraisal process must be based on job-related performance and that each school district must appraise each administrator annually. The TEC and district policy BJCD (LEGAL) further state that funds of the district may not be used to pay a superintendent who has not been appraised in the preceding 15 months.

Recommendation 8:

Conduct annual performance evaluations of the superintendent.

Minimum requirements for administrator appraisal include developing procedures for setting goals that define the expectations and priorities for

the administrator being appraised and conducting formative and summative conferences. Appraisers must provide evidence of training in appropriate personnel evaluation skills related to the locally established criteria and process. As specified in TEC Section 39.054, student performance must also be a part of the locally developed appraisal instrument for superintendents.

Evaluation criteria may include:

- The working relationship between the board and the superintendent.
- The superintendent's relations with staff, students and the community.
- Personal professional growth of the superintendent.
- The district's progress toward the school board's goals.
- The articulation of the superintendent's educational philosophy.
- The board's effectiveness in providing direction to the superintendent.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board and superintendent select criteria for the evaluation of the superintendent.	October 2001
2.	The board and superintendent hold a quarterly evaluation conference with a full discussion of the superintendent's performance and, as a team, make suggestions on the improvements needed.	October 2001 - Ongoing
3.	The board completes the superintendent's evaluation and ensures that copies of the document are maintained appropriately.	October 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Teachers and support staff cite a lack of communication from central administrators to the campus level as a major problem for RISD. Meetings are held between central and campus level administrators and memos are distributed to campuses for further dissemination to teachers and support staff, but dissatisfaction with interaction, communication and support at the campus level was cited in surveys. **Exhibit 1-12** shows excerpts of survey results among campus administrators and teachers.

Exhibit 1-12
Campus Administrator and Teacher Survey Results

"We never see administrators from central office. We have little or no input regarding campus matters. Site based decision making is a joke. Our assistant superintendent has 11 (eleven) assistants, yet the teachers write curriculum and formulate tests. We are top heavy with facilitators. The assistant principals plus head teachers could easily do their job and save the district their huge salaries. The teachers do the most work and get paid the least. It is frustrating. Excellence in teaching is never acknowledged or rewarded. The campus administrators are off campus too often attending meetings. No one ever hears about anything that goes on at those meetings. During the school day, they should stay on campus and do their jobs. Meetings should be scheduled after the school day."

"The school board does not value the input of teachers. They place their highest priority on community opinion. Teachers feel they have no support from school board."

"Teacher morale is very poor. They are not treated as professionals. "

"Teachers are not treated like professionals by administration. Teacher expertise is not valued or sought as an integral part of the instructional program."

"Most of the time, Administration will not back teacher if there is conflict between teacher and student/parent. I thought administration was to help teachers in these situations. Although staff has good rapport on this campus, faculty-admin relationships are often strained."

"As in so many campuses, those who teach, teach. Those who have contacts (administrators), show up. As an educator, it is discouraging to hear how we need to challenge our students, yet I see teachers who are rewarded for having high passing rates. Are they challenging or doing repetition. How can weekly movies replace classroom discussions or debates? You worry about the teachers leaving the field of education. I worry about the ones who stay."

"Principals need to support their teachers 100%. They have a tendency to get too comfortable at their assigned campus and become very critical, demanding, and unsupportive of their teachers. They lack trust and positive feed back toward their teachers, thus creating low teacher morale. They should be designated a different campus every 2 years. Administrators and school board members need to maintain a positive environment and consider the best interest of the students, which in turn is provided by caring and dedicated teachers."

"Teachers do not feel free to voice concerns."

"Administrative staff does not receive support from the superintendent. Parents by-pass the campus principal and go straight to the superintendent and he makes decisions without getting input from the campus administrators. Superintendent is not visible at the campuses. He has no idea what is going on at each campus."

Leadership is being provided by the curriculum director and strong, well trained principals/facilitators."

Source: TSPR Survey Results, April 2001.

Recommendation 9:

Distribute a monthly employee newsletter.

The principal for each campus or their designee should be responsible for collecting newsworthy information on such things as staff training opportunities and vacancies, campus calendar, special events, employee-of-the-month selections and information on such topics as student and employee health and changes to district policies. Campus employees could be surveyed to determine the types of information they would like to see in a district newsletter.

The newsletter could be prepared as a recurring project for the student journalism department at Robstown High School and might be posted on the district's Website to ensure that everyone has access.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Each school's principal submits accumulated newsworthy information to the superintendent's office prior to the end of each month.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent reviews this information and approves the preparation, printing and distribution of the newsletter to each campus.	November 2001
3.	Each campus principal ensures that the newsletter is available to all staff members.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

C. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

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

The TEC requires each school district to establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees consisting of representative professional staff members from the school, parents, business representatives, and community members. These committees advise school administrators on school planning, goal-setting, budgeting, and decision-making.

School districts also must establish a district-level planning and decision-making committee configured like the individual campus committees. At least two-thirds of the professional staff representatives must be classroom teachers. Section 11.252(a) requires that:

...each school district have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards with respect to academic excellence indicators (dropout rates, percentage of graduating students who meet course requirements established for a recommended high school program, results of Scholastic Aptitude Test).

The District Improvement Plan (DIP) development process consists of establishing a district educational improvement council and support team that develops a mission statement, philosophy, and district goals and performance objectives based on a comprehensive needs assessment. The district council assigns initiatives by identifying the need for improvement in such areas as student performance, technology, facilities, safety, benefit programs, staff development and curriculum. Section 11.253(a) also requires "each school principal, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, [to] develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan for the purpose of improving student performance for all student populations." Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) are school level

planning documents used as a guide for individual campuses to carry out the objectives in the DIP. The CIPs must also outline the role of the school committees in goal-setting, curriculum, budgeting, staffing patterns, and school organization.

CIPs should contribute to the mission, goals, and strategies identified in the district's overall improvement plan and should be presented to the board for review and approval. The local board should leave the actual operation of the educational programs, however, to the professionals. The superintendent should develop procedures for the operation of the DIP and CIPs.

Every two years, the law requires each school district to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies, procedures, and staff training activities related to district and campus-level decision-making and planning. The evaluation is designed to ensure that district policies, procedures, and staff development activities are effectively designed to boost student performance.

RISD has the responsibility of determining its mission, philosophy, goals and objectives based on Public Education Academic Goals 4.002, which is to serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The local DIP must constantly keep in mind the variety of youth to be served by the school system. Some students will continue their education at institutions of higher learning, others will go directly into the labor market and others will need educational opportunities because they are either gifted or uniquely handicapped.

FINDING

RISD has implemented a comprehensive process for developing and assessing its district and campus improvement plans. The DIP planning process consists of establishing a district educational improvement council and school support team that develop a mission statement, philosophy, and district goals and performance objectives based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

To develop the district's current DIP and CIPs, RISD provided training in needs assessment to campus team leaders then team leaders and principals trained campus staff in needs assessment. Four groups were formed in the areas of facilities, students, staff, and parents and community to assess improvement needs at individual campuses. At the campus level, team leaders and principals met and assigned initiatives for all needs identified for the upcoming school year.

Central and campus administrators conduct program evaluations, share the results with staff, and conduct training for staff and team leaders on the establishment of campus goals and performance objectives. In addition, groups of principals and central office staff reviewed RISD's district and campus improvement plans and made corrections to programs and curriculum to meet the changing requirements of the plans.

COMMENDATION

RISD has effectively supported the development of its District Improvement Plan and Campus Improvement Plans through the establishment of a district educational improvement council and school support teams.

FINDING

The district's five-year strategic plan is a working draft of "wish list" items. It is incomplete and has not been adopted by the board in the last six years. No one within the district has taken responsibility for the document's development.

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) recommends anticipating a district's future needs. Wise planners will pay particular attention to demographic changes, shrinking financial support, necessary changes to curricula, and the recruitment, training and retention of effective teachers. Districts also must plan to use computers and other new instructional technologies and to prepare students for a labor market that will favor white-collar jobs over blue-collar jobs and service jobs over agricultural employment. AASA authorities agree that everyone concerned with public education should participate in the planning process, including the board and superintendent.

Recommendation 10:

Establish a strategic planning team to develop a comprehensive strategic plan.

A strategic planning team may include board members, the superintendent and his or her assistant superintendents, parents, community business representatives, teachers, principals and support staff.

A strategic plan begins with a mission statement that briefly summarizes the district's purpose and operations and what it hopes to accomplish. All the organization's goals should support the mission statement. Strategic plans should be comprehensive, including everything deemed essential to a district's mission.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent or board establishes a strategic planning team consisting of board members, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, parents, local business representatives, teacher, principals, support staff and community members.	October 2001
2.	The strategic planning team assesses the district's needs and develops a comprehensive five-year strategic plan for board approval.	March 2002
3.	The board reviews, edits and approves the strategic plan.	April 2002
4.	The superintendent publicizes and implements the developed strategic plan.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A common thread in effective school districts is strong educational leadership that is coupled with high expectations of staff and students. The administrators, staff, students, parents and community must have a shared vision of what they want their school district to accomplish. The district as a whole then must communicate and articulate this shared vision through its decisions and actions. Placing an annually revised vision statement in each building demonstrates a commitment to these expectations.

There are some clear qualities that must be present if a school district is to improve the quality of education it offers to all its students. An "out-of-the-box" system cannot automatically produce an effective, efficiently run school district. Besides strong instructional leadership, additional qualities include a properly aligned curriculum, safe and orderly environments conducive to learning, a clear-cut sense of the district's mission and broad-based parental and community involvement and support.

BACKGROUND

Robstown is located in the center of Nueces County, about 20 miles from Corpus Christi. The town has a population of about 13,000 and is primarily an agricultural region. The district is bordered on the north by Calallen ISD, on the southeast by West Oso ISD, on the south by Bishop ISD and on the west by Banquete ISD. RISD has nine campuses that serve 4116 in grades PK-12, including four elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, one high school and an alternative education program.

RISD began an extended year education program in 1992-93, with the goals of improving student academic performance, student and staff attendance and teacher morale. There are six reporting periods throughout the year, each lasting from 28 to 31 days. The academic year begins on July 25 and ends on May 31. Students are in class for 187 days of each school year. RISD's week-long intersessions occur five times during the academic year.

Exhibit 2-1 shows RISD's student enrollment for the 2000-01 school year.

Exhibit 2-1 RISD Enrollment 2000-01

Grade	Number
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	of Students
Early Education	2
Pre-Kindergarten	311
Kindergarten	282
First	290
Second	299
Third	338
Fourth	323
Fifth	287
Sixth	293
Seventh	332
Eighth	300
Ninth	327
Tenth	278
Eleventh	228
Twelfth	226
Total	4,116

Source: TEA, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 2000-01.

Before transferring out of the district, the former RISD superintendent selected four "peer" districts for the purpose of comparison. The districts selected are Hidalgo, Mercedes, Raymondville and Roma. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided comparative information on state-mandated student achievement scores for the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and other demographic, staffing and financial data as reported in TEA's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reports for each district. The reports are sent to each school and district and are available at TEA's website at www.tea.state.tx.us. The most current AEIS data available was published in November 2000 and covers the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 2-2 displays a breakdown of the teacher experience for RISD and peer districts, as a percent of the total teaching staff. RISD's teacher

experience level is well distributed with experienced teachers available to help those who are newer to the district or the profession.

Exhibit 2-2
Teacher Experience and Turnover Rate Percent
RISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

Years of Experience	Beginning	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	Over 20 Years
Mercedes	3.13%	25.26%	18.87%	23.72%	29.02%
Raymondville	7.14%	22.96%	19.39%	21.43%	29.08%
Robstown	5.53%	28.06%	19.01%	26.73%	20.67%
Roma	19.73%	28.28%	17.85%	21.32%	12.82%
Hidalgo	13.81%	20.48%	19.63%	24.00%	22.08%
Region	4.84%	21.48%	19.43%	28.44%	25.81%
State	7.81%	27.32%	18.07%	25.27%	21.53%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Note: Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Exhibit 2-3 compares RISD with the peer districts in average number of years of teacher experience and turnover rates for 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-3
Teacher Average Years of Experience and Turnover Percent
RISD, Peer Districts and Region and State Averages
1999-2000

District	Average Years of Experience	Average Years of Experience with District	Percent Turnover
Mercedes	12.7	10.6	11.0%
Raymondville	12.5	9.1	12.3%
Robstown	12.1	8.7	14.3%
Roma	9.8	8.3	15.2%
Hidalgo	12.6	7.3	15.2%
Region 2	13.1	9.2	14.1%

State	11.9	8.0	15.0%
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Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-4 lists the percent of teachers with bachelor, masters and doctorate degrees. RISD is first among its peers in the percent of teachers holding a master's degree (24.9 percent) and above the state average of 23.4 percent. Less than 1 percent of RISD's teaching staff hold no degree, while

2.5 percent of Hidalgo ISD's and 8.9 percent of Roma ISD's teachers hold no degree.

Exhibit 2-4
RISD and Peer Districts
Teacher Levels of Education
2000-01

District	No Degree	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate
Robstown	0.93%	73.83%	24.91%	0.33%
Hidalgo	2.50%	87.15%	10.35%	0%
Mercedes	1.57%	87.81%	10.62%	0%
Raymondville	0%	84.18%	15.82%	0%
Roma	8.87%	81.16%	9.97%	0%
State	1.34%	74.78%	23.41%	0.47%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Note: Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding.

District teaching permits can be activated by the local school district and approved by the state's Commissioner of Education for degreed persons who are uniquely qualified to teach a particular assignment but lack teaching credentials. RISD had a total of 13 people working with teaching permits during 1999-2000, which was comparable to peer districts (**Exhibit 2-5**). Districts also can activate a temporary exemption permit for certified, degreed teachers who are not certified for a particular classroom assignment; however, this exemption lasts for one year and is not renewable. Exemptions are different from permits in that they are granted to employees who already have a teaching degree.

**Exhibit 2-5
Number of Teacher Permits
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000**

District	Emergency (certified)	Emergency (uncertified)	Non-renewable	Temporary Classroom Assignment	District Teaching	Temporary Exemption
Robstown	3	6	3	1	0	0
Hidalgo	1	10	2	0	0	0
Mercedes	4	2	14	0	0	0
Raymondville	1	9	3	3	0	0
Roma	4	20	11	0	1	1

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

TEA assigns annual ratings to each Texas district and school based on TAAS scores, data quality or factual information about the district submitted to TEA, attendance and dropout rates. The accountability system now consists of five ratings: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable and Unacceptable: Data Quality.

To receive a rating of Exemplary, at least 90 percent of students and 90 percent of African-American, Hispanic, Anglo and Economically Disadvantaged students must pass the TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests.

To achieve a rating of Recognized, 80 percent of all students and the demographic groups of students must pass the TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests. To be rated Academically Acceptable, 50 percent of each student group must pass TAAS. Beginning in 2000, scores for students with disabilities and scores from the TAAS Spanish version of reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 6 are included in accountability calculations. Though the accountability system considers attendance and dropout rates, TAAS is the primary determining factor for ratings.

Exhibit 2-6 shows that RISD and Hidalgo are the only districts among the peers that obtained a Recognized or higher rating for both 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-6
RISD and Peer Districts
Accountability Ratings
1995-96 through 2000-01

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Robstown	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized
Hidalgo	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary
Mercedes	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable
Raymondville	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable
Roma	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable

Source: TEA, AEIS 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

RISD campus accountability ratings for the 1999-2000 school year are displayed in **Exhibit 2-7**.

Exhibit 2-7
RISD School Enrollment and Accountability Ratings
May 2001

School	Grade Levels	Enrollment	1999-2000 TEA Rating
Robstown High School	9-12	964	Acceptable
Wynne Seale Junior High School	7-8	605	Recognized
Ortiz Intermediate School	5-6	577	Recognized
Salazar Elementary School	EE-2	680	Acceptable
San Pedro Elementary School	EE-4	341	Recognized
Hattie Martin Elementary School	3-4	406	Acceptable
Lotspeich Elementary School	EE-4	412	Recognized
Alternative Learning Center	7-12	104	Acceptable
Alternative Education Program	7-12	27	Not Rated

District	EE-12	4,116	Recognized
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Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000 and RISD enrollment records.

RISD ranks fourth among its peer districts in instructional expenditures per student (**Exhibit 2-8**).

Exhibit 2-8
Budgeted Instructional Expenditures in RISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Total Expenditures	Instructional Expenditure Per Student	Percent Regular	Percent Gifted and Talented	Percent Special Education	Percent Career and Technology	Percent Bilingual/ESL	Percent Compensatory
Hidalgo	\$10,059,119	\$3,630	72.21%	0.27%	8.03%	2.29%	3.85%	13.35%
Mercedes	\$17,669,031	\$3,582	77.94%	2.16%	6.43%	4.22%	1.99%	7.26%
Raymondville	\$9,376,317	\$3,508	59.99%	6.41%	10.99%	4.99%	7.11%	10.51%
Robstown	\$13,030,840	\$3,166	67.84%	1.96%	14.58%	5.18%	0.29%	10.15%
Roma	\$16,415,000	\$2,739	66.67%	0.62%	7.95%	3.38%	4.90%	16.48%
Region 2	\$361,654,363	\$6,396	73.1%	1.9%	11.5%	4.3%	0.9%	8.4%
State	\$27,056,013,935	\$3,407	70.0%	1.8%	12.5%	4.1%	4.3%	6.6%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Note: Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Exhibit 2-9 presents demographic information for RISD, peer districts, the average for the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) area, which includes RISD and the state of Texas. From 1995-96 through 2000-01, RISD's enrollment fell by 7.2 percent, while the number of students identified as economically disadvantaged rose by 5 percent. Among the peer districts, enrollment rose only in Hidalgo and Roma ISDs; Region 2 enrollment fell by an average of 3.9 percent. Over the same time period, state average enrollment rose by 8.9 percent.

Exhibit 2-9
Demographic Characteristics of RISD and Peer School Districts
2000-01

	Student Enrollment	Ethnic Groups	Economically Disadvantaged
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District	Enrollment	5 Year Percent Change	Percent African-American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent of Student Enrollment	5 Year Percent Change
Robstown	4,116	(7.23%)	0.58%	97.64%	1.58%	0.19%	90.84%	5.04%
Hidalgo	2,771	7.78%	0.04%	99.31%	0.40%	0.26%	92.96%	1.76%
Mercedes	4,933	(3.33%)	0.20%	98.78%	.99	0.02%	88.04%	0.64%
Raymondville	2,673	(8.62%)	0.34%	96.18%	3.29%	0.19%	86.68%	6.68%
Roma	5,993	1.28%	0.0%	99.75%	0.18%	0.07%	89.60%	(0.70%)
Region	107,858	(3.90%)	3.74%	66.26%	28.71%	1.29%	56.00%	0.79%
State	4,071,433	8.85%	14.41%	40.54%	42.08%	2.97%	49.20%	2.30%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01 and RISD Child Nutrition Program.
Note: Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding.

In **Exhibit 2-10**, RISD identified 579 students for special education programs, 798 students for Career and Technology programs, 475 students for Gifted/Talented programs and 3,739 students as economically disadvantaged in 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-10
Student Enrollment by Program
2000-01

District	Special Education	Bilingual/ESL	Career/Technology	Gifted/Talented	Limited English Proficient	Economically Disadvantaged
Robstown	579	152	798	475	255	3,739
Hidalgo	197	1,037	555	194	1,463	2,576
Mercedes	449	1,075	825	357	1,552	4,343
Raymondville	301	206	409	97	240	2,317
Roma	513	2,387	911	384	3,311	5,370

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.
Note: District provided updated data.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The purpose of every school district is to provide excellence in educational opportunities for all students. Without appropriate and challenging educational programs, there would be no justification for spending taxpayer dollars on salaries, facilities, supplies, materials or equipment. Educators, boards and community leaders must create and operate appropriate and equitable educational programs.

The current accountability movement emphasizes results in student performance. The Southern Regional Education Board has identified five essential elements in today's accountability systems:

- Rigorous content standards and test results;
- Student progress testing;
- Professional training aligned with standards and test results;
- Publicly reported results; and
- Sanctions and targeted assistance for substandard results.

TAAS performance, the primary factor used in Texas to determine accountability ratings, relies heavily on effective instruction. TAAS is administered in grades 3-8 and 10. Testing includes reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 10 and a writing assessment in grades 4, 8 and 10. Although they are not used to determine accountability ratings, social studies and science are included in TAAS at grade 8. The Spanish version of TAAS is administered in grades 3-6.

TEA plans to make changes in TAAS between 2002 and 2003, particularly at the high school level. By 2003, TAAS will be administered in grades 9-11 with reading and mathematics added for grade 9. Exit-level examinations will be moved to grade 11 and will include social studies, science, language arts and mathematics. Science will also be added in grade 5.

Exhibit 2-11 lists per-pupil instructional expenditures by RISD, the peer districts and the state for the 2000-01 school year. RISD ranks last among the peer districts and well below the state average of 51.3 percent. RISD spends less than 49 cents of every dollar received for classroom instruction.

Exhibit 2-11 **Percent Spent on Instruction**

**RISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

District	Instruction Expenditures	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Percent Spent
Raymondville	\$9,376,317	\$18,071,473	51.9%
Hidalgo	\$10,059,119	\$19,639,733	51.2%
Mercedes	\$17,669,031	\$35,858,861	49.3%
Roma	\$16,415,000	\$33,331,678	49.2%
Robstown	\$13,030,840	\$26,833,343	48.6%
State	\$13,871,475,883	\$27,056,013,935	51.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Attendance rates for RISD and the peer districts are shown in **Exhibit 2-12**.

**Exhibit 2-12
Percent of RISD and Peer Districts Attendance
1999-2000**

District	Percent Attendance			
	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged	All Students
Roma	96.4%	92.7%	96.5%	96.3%
Hidalgo	96.3%	95.5%	96.4%	96.3%
Mercedes	96.1%	95.4%	96.1%	96.1%
Raymondville	95.1%	96.4%	95.2%	95.2%
Robstown	95.0%	95.6%	95.3%	95.0%
Region 2	94.6%	95.7%	94.8%	95.0%
State	95.0%	95.8%	95.1%	95.4%

Source :TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-13 lists RISD attendance rates by individual campuses. With a 92.8 percent attendance rate, Robstown High School is below the district's overall rate of 95 percent. Attendance rates for all RISD elementary

schools and the intermediate school are above the state average of 95.4 percent. Generally, Alternative Learning Centers within a school district have a lower percent of students in their daily attendance.

**Exhibit 2-13
Percent of RISD Attendance by School
1999-2000**

School	Grade Levels	Attendance Percent
Hattie Martin Elementary	3-4	98.4%
Salazar Elementary	EE-2	97.2%
San Pedro Elementary	PK-4	97.1%
Lotspeich Elementary	PK-4	96.7%
Ortiz Intermediate	5-6	96.6%
District Overall	EE-12	95.0%
Wynne Seale Jr. High	7-8	94.4%
Robstown High School	9-12	92.8%
Alternative Learning Center	7-12	83.9%
Region 2	EE-12	95.0%
State	EE-12	95.4%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

RISD retention rates for students in grades 1 through 8 are compared with peer districts and the state in **Exhibit 2-14**. RISD's retention rates for grades 2, 7 and 8 exceed those for the peer districts and the state.

**Exhibit 2-14
Retention Rates for Grades 1-8
Regular Education
RISD and Peer Districts
1998-99**

District	Grade Level							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Robstown	9.3%	5.4%	5.2%	1.3%	0.4%	0.4%	6.9%	9.3%

Raymondville	4.2%	3.6%	6.1%	1.4%	4.4%	4.1%	1.0%	2.7%
Mercedes	9.3%	2.0%	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.3%	4.0%	3.7%
Hidalgo	2.6%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.7%	0.7%
Roma	1.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	3.6%	2.7%
State	5.9%	3.0%	2.3%	1.2%	0.7%	1.5%	2.9%	2.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1998-99.

FINDING

All RISD courses offered are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the TAAS. A master listing of RISD's district wide course offerings indicating which courses have updated curriculum guides was provided to the review team by the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Operations. All core content areas, including language arts, math, science, social studies and elective or additional courses, have a scope and sequence/timeline, curriculum guide and/or are scheduled for review and revision during the 2000-01 school year.

RISD's instructional management system has helped in monitoring student performance. After each reporting period, vertical teams from the various content areas develop a test to assess success for that reporting period. After students take this assessment, scores are returned to the campus and teachers analyze the results and follow up with appropriate changes in curriculum, instruction and pacing. This has proven to be an effective tool for monitoring the success of the district's instructional services.

RISD also uses instructional facilitators, who serve as the instructional link between individual campuses and the central administrative office. The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations meets weekly with RISD's group of instructional leaders to review and revise all items dealing with the primary objective of instruction. The instructional facilitators monitor and oversee the areas of curriculum writing, testing, special programs, staff training, intersessions and any other issues concerning instruction.

COMMENDATION

RISD has established an outstanding curriculum development process involving the use of instructional facilitators at each campus.

FINDING

RISD's TAAS scores have improved from 1995-96 to 1999-2000 through the use of updated curricula and attention to practice testing. The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations, facilitators, teachers and principals have developed curriculum guides and scope and sequence of skills to serve as working plans for teachers to use in their classrooms. These documents provide direction for teachers on student objectives and skills to be taught. Assessments in the form of practice tests are given each six weeks on all mandatory TAAS requirements.

Exhibit 2-15 indicates the percent of RISD students passing all TAAS tests taken in grades 3-8 and 10 compared to results in the peer districts, Region 2 and the state as a whole.

Exhibit 2-15
Percent of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken (Grades 3-8 and 10)
RISD, Region 2 and the State
1995-96 through 1999-2000

District	TAAS Pass Rate All Students 1995-96	TAAS Pass Rate All Students 1996-97	TAAS Pass Rate All Students 1997-98	TAAS Pass Rate All Students 1998-99	TAAS Pass Rate All Students 1999-2000	Percent Change from 1995-96 through 1999-2000
Raymondville	51.6%	60.4%	63.7%	75.4%	78.1%	26.5%
Robstown	51.1%	62.6%	71.0%	74.8%	77.3%	26.2%
Hidalgo	59.9%	68.1%	75.5%	80.2%	80.7%	20.8%
Roma	41.3%	54.2%	64.1%	61.2%	61.1%	19.8%
Mercedes	55.4%	64.3%	68.8%	73.0%	70.4%	15.0%
Region 2	62.1%	69.9%	75.8%	77.1%	79.5%	17.4%
State	67.1%	73.2%	77.7%	78.1%	79.9%	12.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

RISD began TAAS checkpoint testing, or practice tests derived from the TAAS, in 1989-90 for the elementary grades; in 1994-95 for the high school; and further developed testing to cover all applicable subjects in 1998-99.

Pre-TAAS testing is conducted at the beginning of each school year, while post-TAAS testing is conducted at the end of the school year. RISD's academic text objectives are aligned with TAAS. Test results are analyzed and the curriculum is revised based on the outcome. Checkpoint testing is conducted at all grade levels and submitted through the automated Instructional Management System (IMS) to be graded and analyzed. Vertical teams comprising teachers from each campus, grade and teaching specialty, review the test results and adjust the teaching curriculum with assistance from the Region 2. Pre-AP and AP vertical teams also work with the college board to develop appropriate curricula for their courses.

COMMENDATION

The ongoing review and assessment of curricula by the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations and the instructional facilitators have contributed to a steady increase in TAAS scores.

FINDING

RISD's Migrant Program is an award winning year-round program that begins with a PreK-3 school-based education program exclusively for migrant students. Instructional activities include language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Other services include parental involvement activities, graduation enhancement, dropout recovery efforts and professional staff training.

The Migrant Program is funded through federal Title I, Part C. In past years, RISD's Migrant Program has been praised by the TEA Division of Migrant Education because its students have met or exceeded state accountability standards in the areas of TAAS, attendance and dropout rates. Robstown ISD ranks in the category of districts with 1,000 or more migrant students. The purpose of the awards is to recognize school districts and campuses that strive to meet the unique needs of migrant children, their families and help migrant students succeed academically. To receive the award, RISD had to have at least 80 percent of its migrant student population pass all TAAS tests taken, a migrant student attendance rate of at least 94 percent and a migrant student dropout rate of 6 percent or less.

To receive a designation of Excelling, a campus must have 10 or more migrant students tested in one or more areas of the TAAS; at least 80 percent of its migrant students pass all tests taken on the TAAS; a migrant student attendance rate of at least 94 percent; and a migrant student dropout rate of 3.5 percent or less. To receive a designation of Promising, a campus must have 10 or more migrant students tested in one or more areas of the TAAS; at least a 70 percent pass rate on all TAAS tests taken;

a migrant student attendance rate of at least 94 percent; and a dropout rate not to exceed 6 percent. **Exhibit 2-16** shows the ratings given to RISD's individual campuses by TEA's Division of Migrant Education.

Exhibit 2-16
Recognition of RISD Campuses by TEA Division
of Migrant Education
1999-2000

School	Designation
San Pedro Elementary School	Excelling
Ortiz Intermediate School	Excelling
Wynne Seale Junior High School	Promising
Salazar Elementary School	Promising
Hattie Martin Elementary School	Promising
Lotspeich Elementary School	Promising

Source: TEA Division of Migrant Education.

An example of special awards received by RISD for its migrant education program is shown in **Exhibit 2-17** and **Exhibit 2-18**.

Exhibit 2-17
RISD Migrant Program
Identification and Recruitment (ID&R) Track Record
1991-1999

1991	2 nd Place	All State Team ID&R
1992	2 nd Place	All State Team ID&R
1993	2 nd Place	All State Team ID&R
1994	1 st Place	All State Team ID&R
1995	1 st Place	All State Team ID&R
1996	2 nd Place	All State Team ID&R
1997	1 st Place	All State Team ID&R
1998	2 nd Place	All State Team ID&R
1999	2 nd Place	All State Team ID&R

Source: RISD Parental Involvement Center.

Exhibit 2-18
RISD Migrant Program Certificates of Merit
1995-1999

1995	Certificate of Merit for attaining 80 percent or more in the area of migrant student graduation and promotion
1996	Certificate of Merit to RISD Federal Programs for outstanding achievement in the areas of graduation, promotion and attendance
1997	Achievement Award to RISD Federal Programs for outstanding achievement in the areas of graduation, promotion and attendance
1999	Certificate of Commendation awarded to RISD for attaining at least 80 percent migrant student passing rate on TAAS; at least 94 percent migrant students attendance rate; and a dropout rate of 6 percent or less

Source: RISD Parental Involvement Center.

COMMENDATION

RISD's Migrant Program has been recognized for excellence in raising attendance and TAAS passing rates while maintaining low dropout rates among migrant students.

FINDING

RISD fosters student interest in higher education through a program funded by a "Gear Up" grant from TEA. The Gear-Up program targets students in grades 6-12 by educating them in the purpose and benefits of Pre-Accelerated Programs (Pre-AP) and AP classes. Students are encouraged to take the AP exam to gain knowledge and experience in test-taking. The grant has helped the district form a partnership with university professors whereby the professors travel to the district to talk to students about higher education, including trade schools, two-year colleges and four-year universities.

Enrollment in Pre-AP and AP classes was low prior to August 2000, and student scores were relatively low as well. 2000-01 is the second year the district's Gear Up program has been in effect, and the number of students enrolling in Pre-AP and AP classes has increased, as has the number of students taking the AP test. The Gear Up grant pays student exam fees to encourage participation.

"Walk for Success," another Gear-Up-funded exercise conducted in May 2001, was an outreach activity designed to educate parents on the classes available to their children. Volunteers gathered in teams of three or four and made home visits to families of sixth grade children to talk to parents about Pre-AP and AP class offerings.

COMMENDATION

RISD encourages higher education by promoting participation in Pre-AP and AP classes through its Gear-Up program.

FINDING

RISD's overall dropout rate and longitudinal class dropout rate is higher than the state average. RISD's overall dropout rates for 1995-96 through 1999-2000 were higher than both regional and state averages. In 1999-2000, RISD's dropout rate ranked second among the peer districts, with a rate of 2.8 percent (**Exhibit 2-19**).

**Exhibit 2-19
Annual Dropout Percent
RISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 through 1999-2000**

District	Percent of Dropouts				
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Raymondville	4.0%	3.1%	3.6%	3.7%	3.4%
Robstown	2.6%	1.6%	2.7%	4.3%	2.8%
Roma	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	2.8%	2.6%
Hidalgo	2.1%	1.0%	0.8%	1.7%	1.2%
Mercedes	1.8%	2.0%	2.4%	2.6%	1.0%
Region	1.1%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%
State	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-20 compares the longitudinal class of 1999 graduation, completion and dropout rates for RISD, the peer districts, the region and the state. RISD had the second highest dropout rate for the class of 1999 among the peers at 14 percent, a level above the state average of 8.5 percent. RISD also ranked second highest in the share of seniors

graduating (79 percent) and had the lowest share (0.3 percent) of students receiving a GED as compared to the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-20
Graduation and Completion Rates
RISD and Peer Districts
Class of 1999

District	Percent Graduated	Percent Received GED	Percent Continuing High School	Percent Dropped Out
Raymondville	69.6%	2.2%	7.8%	20.4%
Robstown	79.0%	0.3%	6.6%	14.0%
Roma	78.5%	1.4%	8.8%	11.3%
Mercedes	79.2%	1.0%	10.4%	9.4%
Hidalgo	78.3%	2.5%	14.0%	5.1%
Region	76.3%	4.4%	9.6%	9.7%
State	79.5%	4.0%	8.0%	8.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

The state average for dropout rates for the class of 1999 is 8.5 percent and the regional average is 9.7 percent.

While the district maintains an alternative learning center and has pursued dropout prevention measures, including intervention, tutoring, after-school programs and counseling, the dropout rate among high school students remains high.

Effective dropout prevention plans address all of the elements and programs that a district provides for students at risk of dropping out of school. With this approach, a district can more effectively assess any areas of weakness and develop strategies to improve its prevention efforts. These areas include attendance, truancy, dropout recovery, tutorial services, home visitation and staff training.

Accurately tracking students who leave school is critical to a district achieving its dropout prevention goals. A dropout prevention plan should identify the district's method for counting dropouts to ensure the dropouts are accurately reported.

An effective approach to developing a dropout prevention plan is to create a community dropout prevention task force and to ensure that local community agencies are involved in the district's prevention efforts.

Recommendation 11:

Review the dropout prevention program and develop new ways to retain students.

A dropout prevention plan should document all of the district's current initiatives to help students graduate from school. In addition, the plan should include how the district will provide services for students that are at risk of failure. The plan should address how the district will increase attendance, improve dropout recovery, address truancy and tutorial services. The development process should include input from local community agencies, like law enforcement, and social services. One way of doing that would be to form a community task force.

Additionally, a mentoring program involving multiple daily contacts with each student and home visits to his or her family would allow for curfew monitoring, crisis intervention, informal counseling and one-on-one counseling in the home. The district also should provide professional training to aid its staff in identifying students who may be at-risk.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations and the district's principals cooperate in developing a comprehensive plan to decrease student dropout rates.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations creates a community task force to address dropout prevention measures and develop a plan of action.	October 2001
3.	The community task force presents a plan of recommendations to the superintendent for Educational Operations addressing dropout prevention measures.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations identifies professional training opportunities and includes community task force recommendations to provide instruction for staff members on ways to identify at-risk students and promote corrective measures.	December 2001 - Ongoing
5.	The principals implement a comprehensive dropout prevention program at individual campuses.	January 2002
6.	The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations and	January 2002

principals monitor the dropout rate and provide quarterly reports to the superintendent.	- Quarterly
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD students' Academic Competency Test (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores are below regional and state averages. The ACT is a test designed to test higher-order academic skills. The test includes questions in English, mathematics, reading, science and composition. Of the students in the RISD class of 1999 eligible to take SAT and ACT tests, 72.7 percent actually took the exams.

The RISD students' average ACT score in 1999-2000 was 16.5, while the regional average was 19.0 and the state average was 20.2. The average SAT score for RISD students was 820, compared to a regional average of 970 and a state average of 989 (**Exhibit 2-21**). The average RISD SAT test score for 1999 was nearly 170 points below the state average. The average 1999 ACT score was 3.7 points below the state average of 20.2.

Exhibit 2-21
College Entrance Examination Participation and Scores
RISD and Peer Districts
Class of 1999

District	Percent of Students Meeting Criteria	Percent of Students Taking Examinations	Average SAT Score	Average ACT Score
Roma	3.7%	57.7%	836	16.0
Raymondville	14.5%	55.0%	922	18.4
Mercedes	7.1%	45.3%	961	17.4
Robstown	0.0%	72.7%	820	16.5
Hidalgo	6.0%	54.0%	N/A*	16.4
Region	19.6%	63.7%	970	19.0
State	27.2%	61.8%	989	20.2

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.
 *Score not available from AEIS.

RISD's SAT and ACT scores for the last five years are shown in **Exhibit 2-22**.

Exhibit 2-22
RISD SAT/ACT Scores and Statistics
1995-96 through 1999-2000

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Percent of Students Tested	63.3%	63.1%	57.8%	60.8%	72.7%
Mean SAT Score	744	964	856	961	820
Mean ACT Score	16.7	16.3	17.0	17.0	16.5
SAT/ACT Results at or above Criteria for College Entrance	2.2%	6.3%	6.6%	3.0%	0.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

To increase the district's SAT and ACT scores, RISD began offering after-school tutorial services in the 2000-01 school year. During intersession periods, the district also offers enhancement classes designed to teach test-taking skills. During 2000-01, RISD attempted to increase the number of students taking the SAT and ACT tests by offering to pay the examination fee. Pre-Accelerated Programs (Pre-AP) and AP classes have been correlated to the SAT and ACT testing format, and enrollment in those programs has increased significantly.

The ACT sends high school principals a booklet that specifies the performance of high schools that use the ACT test. A district profile, available for an additional nominal fee, compares scores from 1995-96 through 1999-2000 for local schools, the district, southeastern states and the nation. Performance scores are broken down by student sex, race and type of high school program (college preparatory, general, business or vocational). The profile also asks the student questions regarding the school and the education they received. This information provides a great deal of information about how schools are perceived by students for performance.

Recommendation 12:

Create a plan to improve student ACT/SAT test scores.

District principals, facilitators and the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations should identify where deficiencies in the curriculum for core content areas related to ACT and SAT testing, and develop a corrective action plan designed to improve student performance on these exams.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent of Educational Operations, principals and instructional facilitators identify deficiencies in teaching or curriculum related to substandard ACT/SAT scores.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent of Educational Operations forms a committee including principals and teachers from the high school, junior high and intermediate schools to evaluate possible gaps and overlaps in curriculum.	November 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent of Educational Operations and instructional facilitators assess the time on tasks related to teaching and learning and requirements of curriculum guides for all students.	January 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent of Educational Operations, instructional facilitators and principals develop a plan of action to raise student performance standards in core content areas related to ACT/SAT scores.	March 2002
5.	The high school principal and faculty develop a plan of action to use distance learning to teach advanced placement courses in the core content areas of mathematics, language arts, science and social studies as well as courses that do not warrant a full-time staff member, such as foreign languages and advanced math and science classes.	May 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

RISD incorrectly reported its 1999-2000 number of economically disadvantaged students to TEA in its PEIMS submission. The number reported showed 70.5 percent of the district's enrollment to be economically disadvantaged, when in fact 3,379 of 4,116 students, or 90.8 percent met the criteria. The Food Service director submitted correct figures as part of a separate report for federal funding of the Child Nutrition Program. The PEIMS data submission, however, remains incorrect. Because RISD receives funding based on the reported

percentage of economically disadvantaged students, this submission error, according to the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations, cost the district approximately \$30,000 in funding.

In July 2001, RISD submitted a letter of correction to TEA regarding the number of economically disadvantaged students. TEA forwarded the corrected numbers to agency staff; however, the district request to correct the PEIMS database was denied since the deadline for resubmissions had expired. Once deadlines for resubmissions have expired, TEA puts all submitted information from school districts into their computer database and makes it available to other clients.

Many Texas school districts use a system of checks and balances to minimize data submission errors. Appropriate data is collected and given to campus administrators for verification prior to official submission to TEA. Many districts have the staff members responsible for verifying PEIMS data physically sign a check sheet to ensure that they have reviewed the data and agree with its contents. If mistakes are found, they can be corrected before submissions are made in error.

Santa Gertrudis ISD maintains a paper trail of information initially generated by campus principals and counselors who resolve data discrepancies prior to submission to their district PEIMS coordinator. The PEIMS coordinator enters all data into the district's computer system and generates a final report that is physically re-routed to each campus principal and the superintendent prior to submission to TEA.

Recommendation 13:

Develop procedures to verify PEIMS data before submission to TEA.

The district's PEIMS coordinator should compare the district's data with prior years and verify any increases or decreases that could affect the district's performance ratings and funding. To ensure accuracy, data collected should be subject to review and approval by the assistant superintendents before submission to TEA.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendents and the PEIMS coordinator develop guidelines and timelines for the collection of district information required by TEA.	September 2001
2.	The PEIMS coordinator presents a final draft of the district's data to the assistant superintendents for review and approval prior to submission to TEA.	October 2001 - Ongoing

3.	The PEIMS coordinator submits the data to TEA as required.	October 2001 - Ongoing
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

B. SPECIAL EDUCATION

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires districts to provide free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their handicaps. This education must be provided in the least restrictive environment available. The act also requires that students with disabilities must be included in state and district assessment programs. Based on these findings, IDEA directs districts to develop an individualized education program (IEP) for each child receiving special education services. The IEP must include input from regular education teachers and parallel educational plans for children in general population classrooms.

To serve the diverse needs of all students with disabilities and comply with IDEA requirements, a special education program should feature the following:

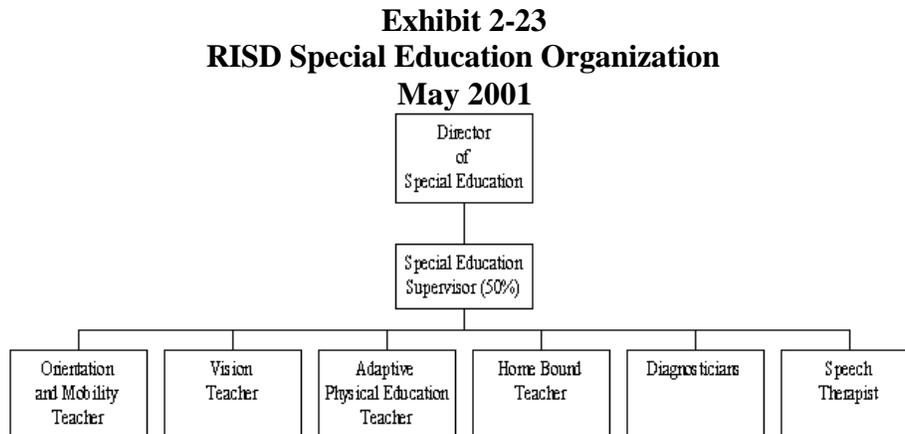
- *Pre-referral intervention in regular education.* When a student experiences an academic problem in the regular education program, intervention should occur to resolve the problem(s). If steps taken by the regular education teacher do not yield satisfactory results, the problem(s) should be referred to special education staff.
- *Referral to special education for evaluation.* Referring a student to special education involves an official, written request supported by documentation. The referral must include an explanation of steps that have been taken in regular education to solve the student's problems prior to the referral.
- *Comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation.* Once a student has been referred to special education, the district must provide a comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation or assessment within a prescribed amount of time.
- *Initial placement through an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee.* After the evaluation or assessment is complete, a meeting is held to discuss the results and determine if the student qualifies for special educational services in one of 13 categories. If the student qualifies, a plan is written for the student's education.
- *Provision of educational services and supports according to a written Individualized Education Program (IEP).* The ARD committee must develop an IEP including information regarding the classes, subject areas, development areas, and life skills courses in which the student will be instructed. The IEP also should

include information on the amount of time the student will spend in regular educational settings as well as related needs such as counseling, guidance, or speech therapy.

- *Annual program review.* Each year after a student's initial qualification and placement, an ARD committee should conduct a review to ensure that the student's IEP is appropriate.
- *Three-year re-evaluation.* Every three years, the student should undergo a comprehensive individual assessment. An ARD committee should meet to discuss the results of the re-evaluation. This evaluation should determine whether the student still qualifies for special education services in the same category.
- *Dismissal from the special education program.* If and when a student no longer meets the criteria for eligibility, the student is dismissed from special education. This decision must be made by the ARD committee.

RISD has campus committees called student intervention teams (SITs) which focus on behavior, social, physical and academic needs of students before a student is referred to special education.

Exhibit 2-23 depicts the organizational chart of RISD's special education department.



Source: RISD Director of Special Education.

RISD students with disabilities range in age from birth to 21 and are served with a full range of instructional arrangements. **Exhibit 2-24** compares RISD's special education program enrollment information with those of the peer districts for 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-24
RISD and Peer Districts

**Special Education Students and Teachers
1998-99 through 2000-01**

District	1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Number of Students	Number of Teachers
Robstown	524	33.8	564	32.9	579	34.0
Hidalgo	178	10.6	170	12.0	197	10.4
Mercedes	471	23.6	468	22.5	449	27.7
Raymondville	331	13.5	327	16.6	301	17.0
Roma	610	23.2	521	23.6	513	20.8

Source: TEA, AEIS 1998-99 and 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

Robstown ISD provides special education instructional programs and arrangements including general education with modifications, homebound educational services, resource services, self-contained classes, vocational adjustment classes (VAC) and modified education. Homebound educational services allow students to continue their education while absent during the school year due to illness, medical or psychiatric reasons. Resource services are provided to students in a structured environment, based on the essential elements of the general curriculum. Also, they are designed to meet the individual needs of special education students to increase their academic competence. Self-contained services are those provided to students in a separate environment or classroom away from regular education students. Vocational classes are designed to teach special education students employability skills and prepare them for the transition from school to adult life. Modified education is a program for students who perform significantly below grade level with an emphasis on academics, socialization and vocational skills.

Related services provided by the district include counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychological services, orientation and mobility training, assistive technology and transportation. Orientation and mobility training are designed to help students with physical disabilities learning to use wheel chairs or canes or other devices used to move in the environment. Assistive Technology includes devices such as talking keyboards for students who may need computers or technological devices to help them communicate. The district also is a member of the Corpus Christi Regional Day School Program for the Deaf, which serves students with severe auditory impairments.

Other RISD programs provided for students with disabilities include accelerated instruction in a computer lab, Accelerated Reader, dyslexia intervention, bilingual education and career and technology education, as well as inclusion in academic and special area classrooms. An example of special area classrooms are physical education, band and art. Students with disabilities also are involved in campus tutorials, extended school year services, counseling, peer tutoring and small-group instruction.

Exhibit 2-25 compares RISD's special education expenditure figures with those of the peer districts. RISD serves the largest special education student population and spends 14.6 percent of its budget on special education, also the highest among the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-25
RISD and Peer Districts
RISD Budget Expenditures for Special Education
2000-01

District	Number of Students Enrolled	Budgeted Special Education Expenditures	Percent of Budgeted Expenditure	Per Student Expenditure
Hidalgo	197	\$807,850	8.0%	\$4,101
Raymondville	301	\$1,030,552	11.0%	\$3,424
Robstown	579	\$1,899,997	14.6%	\$3,282
Roma	513	\$1,305,380	8.0%	\$2,545
Mercedes	449	\$1,135,407	6.4%	\$2,529
Region	14,886	\$41,466,896	11.5%	\$2,786

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-26 compares the rates at which RISD special education students are exempted from the TAAS with rates for the peer districts, the region and the state. While most of the peer districts have decreased the share of students exempted since 1998, RISD has increased its percentage and ranks above regional and state averages. TEA conducted a District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) review of RISD special education records during the 2000-01 school year. The DEC report indicated that students were legally exempted from the TAAS.

Exhibit 2-26
RISD and Peer Districts

**Special Education ARD TAAS Exemption Rates
1998-99 through 1999-2000**

	ARD TAAS Exemption Rates		
District	1998-98	1999-2000	2000-01
Robstown	8.3%	10.8%	10.5%
Hidalgo	6.0%	7.4%	8.4%
Mercedes	8.6%	8.1%	7.3%
Raymondville	8.8%	7.8%	7.1%
Roma	7.3%	7.0%	6.0%
Region	4.2%	7.1%	7.2%
State	5.2%	6.9%	7.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1998-99 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-27 provides TAAS passing rates over the last three years for RISD students receiving services from the Special Education Department. RISD's TAAS passing rates for special education students have been rising in all areas from 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

**Exhibit 2-27
RISD TAAS Passing Rates for Students Receiving Special Education
Services
1999-2000**

Year	All Tests Taken Percent Passing	Math Percent Passing	Reading Percent Passing	Writing Percent Passing
1999- 2000	52.9%	63.2%	54.9%	64.7%
1998-99	49.4%	62.3%	55.9%	53.7%
1997-98	33.6%	43.4%	47.7%	35.7%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. BILINGUAL EDUCATION/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The purpose of the RISD bilingual education program for grades PK-12 is to enable limited-English-proficient (LEP) students to become competent in listening, speaking, composition, reading and comprehension of the English language. This is accomplished through the development of literacy and academic skills in both the student's primary language and English. Such programs emphasize the mastery of English language skills as an integral part of academic goals, allowing LEP students to participate equitably in school. Budgeted funding for RISD's bilingual education/English as a Second Language (BE/ESL) programs for 2000-01 totaled \$65,498 (**Exhibit 2-28**).

Exhibit 2-28
RISD BE/ESL Program Funds
2000-01

Number of BE/LEP Students	333
Salaries for aides	\$39,399
Professional services	\$9,500
General supplies	\$6,399
Travel and subsistence	\$8,200
Capital outlay	\$2,000
Total	\$65,498

Source: RISD BE/ESL Department.

RISD completes home language surveys for each student at the beginning of their first school year. If a student speaks a language other than English, he or she is examined for English proficiency. Once the language determination is made, the student is administered a full individual evaluation in the dominant language.

A high percentage of RISD's students are LEP due to the area's large Hispanic population. The majority of RISD's Hispanic students come from homes in which Spanish is spoken as the primary language.

In 2000-01, 363 RISD students were identified as LEP. Of these, 244 are being served in bilingual education in grades PK-8 and the other 89 in ESL in grades 9-12. The remaining 30 LEP students are not being served in BE/ESL due to parent denials.

FINDING

RISD employs 39 certified BE/ESL teachers in self-contained classrooms with both LEP and non-LEP students. The district's BE/ESL teachers and aides have attended as a whole the following professional staff development sessions during the 2000-01 school session:

- ESL strategies/curriculum;
- G/T, ESL, bilingual education students;
- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) training;
- Math manipulatives;
- Pre-Language Assessment Scales (LAS)/LAS training;
- Your Curriculum: Students' Gains in Critical Thinking.

The knowledge that the BE/ESL teachers gained by attending these training sessions has allowed them to enhance and amend the curriculum for their students. These teachers cooperatively keep abreast of training by frequently checking with Region 2 and other entities offering professional development. They share learned tactics and information with other teachers within their department and schools.

COMMENDATION

RISD'S BE/ESL teachers and aides have enhanced their teaching skills by attending numerous professional training sessions.

FINDING

Despite the fact that RISD's BE/ESL programs are aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and TAAS, RISD's TAAS passing rates for LEP students fell in all TAAS testing categories (**Exhibit 2-29**) between 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-29
RISD TAAS Passing Rates for Bilingual Education Students
1997-98 through 1999-2000

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
All Tests Taken Percent Passing	58.3%	68.8%	58.7%
Math Percent Passing	65.7%	76.0%	73.9%

Reading Percent Passing	67.6%	84.0%	66.7%
Writing Percent Passing	100.0%	100.0%	85.7%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and RISD BE/ESL Records.

RISD's expenditures for BE/ESL programs are shown in **Exhibit 2-30**. As indicated, RISD's per-student expenditure on BE/ESL was lowest among the peer districts and more than 75 percent below the state average.

Many Texas school districts allocate funds to special programs not only according to stated regulations but based upon departmental program evaluation, need and recommendation. Many BE/ESL teachers effectively recommend additional training, equipment and materials needed to improve student performance to department directors prior to district budget submissions. Dallas ISD evaluated one of their special programs by using a team of district stakeholders organized for that purpose.

Exhibit 2-30
RISD and Peer Districts
Bilingual/ESL Expenditures Per Student
2000-01

District	Number of Students Enrolled	Percent of Total Enrollment	Total Budgeted ESL Expenditures	Percent of Budgeted Expenditures	Per Student Expenditure
Robstown	152	3.7%	\$36,870	0.3%	\$243
Hidalgo	1,037	37.4%	\$387,000	3.8%	\$373
Mercedes	1,075	21.8%	\$352,500	2.0%	\$328
Raymondville	206	7.7%	\$666,609	7.1%	\$3,236
Roma	2,387	39.8%	\$803,583	4.9%	\$337
Region 2	2,834	2.6%	\$3,409,490	0.9%	\$1,203
State	510,688	12.5%	\$590,335,700	4.3%	\$1,156

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Recommendation 14:

Analyze test results for the Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language student population to identify problem areas and develop a plan to raise TAAS scores.

The district should consider teacher recommendations made to the BE/ESL coordinator when making their annual budget allocations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The BE/ESL coordinator convenes a committee comprised of regular and BE/ESL teachers to evaluate the program.	September 2001
2.	The BE/ESL coordinator and evaluation committee analyze TAAS test results to identify areas of student underachievement and develop a corrective action plan.	October 2001
3.	The BE/ESL coordinator and members of the evaluation committee work with the ESL teachers and instructional facilitators to develop or adjust curricula appropriately.	November 2001
4.	BE/ESL teachers implement new or revised curricula and periodically test students to gauge their improvement.	December 2001
5.	The BE/ESL coordinator monitors the program for TAAS student performance increases.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

D. STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

In addition to its regular classroom instruction, RISD provides special support for students at risk of dropping out and students who are not performing at the appropriate grade level.

The federal government provides funds to help students who are not meeting performance standards. These Title I funds are sent via TEA to schools based on their number of economically disadvantaged students (typically, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts). The students served, however, are selected based on educational need, not economic status. The federal government allows a school to be designated as a Title I, Part A school-wide program, if 50 percent or more of its students come from low-income households. All of RISD's schools are so designated. These funds must be supplemental in nature; in other words, they must not replace regular funds but must be added to the regular program.

In Texas, state funding for compensatory programs began when the Texas Education Code (TEC) was amended to include reporting and auditing systems covering appropriate use of compensatory education allotment funds. Senate Bill 702 requires state compensatory funds, like federal Title I funds, to be supplemental to the regular education program and must be used to support a Title I, Part A program.

State compensatory fund rules allow a great deal of flexibility in the identification of students and programs to be funded. The funds are distributed on the basis of the school's number of economically disadvantaged students, but the students served need not be economically disadvantaged. Students targeted by the state compensatory program are designated as "at risk." The following are criteria listed in TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* for identifying at-risk students. These definitions do not imply that state compensatory education programs are restricted to the exclusive benefit of these students.

A student in Pre-K through grade 6 who:

- Did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or an assessment instrument at the beginning of the school year;
- Did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument (TAAS);
- Is a student of limited English proficiency;

- Is sexually, physically or psychologically abused; or
- Engages in conduct described by Section 51.03 of the Texas Family Code which addresses delinquent conduct and conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as unexcused voluntary absences.

A student in grades 7-12 who:

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

In addition to these two state and federal programs, several other sources of state and federal funds are available to support special instruction.

RISD has made a strong commitment to providing a wide variety of both remedial and advanced skills programs specifically designed to meet the special needs of all students. The district provides numerous programs funded fully or in part by state compensatory education (SCE) funds. Each of the programs has eligibility criteria and expected outcomes and conducts an annual effectiveness review.

For the 1999-2000 school year, SCE funds supported the NovaNET software program, the Open Court Reading program and the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) program, as well as an alternative learning campus, a reading recovery program and a family counseling program. The NovaNET software program provides an online, interactive curriculum, testing, and assessment program for secondary and adult students. NovaNET lessons include individualized learning and self-paced instruction. The program includes instruction in basic skills, high school subjects, life skills, vocational subjects, ESL and postsecondary courses. The program serves 164 students and is supported with \$145,666 in SCE funds annually. During 1999-2000, 361 students participated in the program, with 65 percent completing attempted coursework. Students completed 110 credits in 1999-2000, versus 79 completed credits during

1998-99. RISD reports that the use of NovaNET aids in the reduction of dropouts and improves test scores and learning skills for at-risk students.

RISD's Open Court Reading program provides accelerated instruction in reading and language arts, serves 565 students in grades K-3 and is supported with \$43,454 in state compensatory funds annually.

The CCC program is intended to develop language skills through continuous practice using examples and patterns. The program serves 401 students in grades K-4, 331 students in grade 7 and 67 students at the high school. The CCC program receives \$52,586 in SCE funds annually.

Exhibit 2-31 summarizes the 1999-2000 SCE campus budgets for RISD.

Exhibit 2-31
RISD State Compensatory Education Campus Budget
1999-2000

School	Students Served	Per Student Expenditure	SCE Budget
Robstown High School	463	\$35.81	\$16,580.03
Alternative Learning Center	109	\$35.81	\$3,903.29
Alternative Education Program	N/A	N/A	\$2,009.11
Wynne Seale Junior High School	130	\$35.81	\$4,655.30
Ortiz Intermediate School	131	\$35.81	\$4,691.11
San Pedro Elementary School	240	\$35.81	\$8,594.40
Lotspeich Elementary School	284	\$35.81	\$10,170.04
Hattie Martin Elementary School	323	\$35.81	\$11,566.63
Salazar Elementary School	389	\$35.81	\$13,930.09
Total	2,069		\$76,100.00

Source: RISD assistant superintendent for Educational Operations.

Note: N/A denotes no recorded expenditures provided.

RISD programs funded in part or in whole by SCE funds are represented in **Exhibit 2-32**.

Exhibit 2-32
RISD State Compensatory Education Programs
2000-01

Program	Robstown High School	ALC	AEP	SealeV Junior High	OrtizV Intern.	HattieV Martin Elem.	Lotspeich VElem.	SalazarV Elem.	San Pedro VElem.
Oral Language Development							X	X	X
Open Court Reading						X	X	X	X
Dyslexia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer Curr. Corp				X			X		X
Compass Learning Lab					X	X		X	
CEI Lab				X					
Family Counseling	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reading Recovery							X	X	X
Academy of Reading	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Math Computer Lab					X				
Reading I, II, III	X			X					
Remedial Activities for Intersession	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pregnancy Related Services	X	X							
Accelerated Reader				X	X	X	X	X	X

NovaNET Lab	X	X	X						
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Source: RISD assistant superintendent for Educational Operations.

Exhibit 2-33 indicates the TAAS passing rates for RISD students in SCE programs. In general, programs supported through SCE funds have had a positive impact on TAAS scores.

Exhibit 2-33
**RISD TAAS Passing Rates for Students in State Compensatory
 Education Programs**
1997-98 through 1999-2000

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
All Tests Taken Percentage Passing	39.0%	55.6%	58.4%
Math Percentage Passing	51.7%	64.3%	69.9%
Reading Percentage Passing	59.9%	67.8%	74.7%
Writing Percentage Passing	74.2%	76.4%	86.2%

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

SCE funds are documented and itemized within district and campus improvement plans. The district's curriculum office monitors all SCE expenditures. The programs are evaluated annually and any changes are implemented for the following year.

Exhibit 2-34 shows the district's expenditures for regular instruction, state compensatory and federal Title I funds.

Exhibit 2-34
RISD Regular, State Compensatory and Title I Funds
2000-01

School	School Enrollment	Regular Instruction	State Compensatory	Federal Title I
Robstown High School	964	\$3,329,377.43	\$141,813.21	\$86,078.14
Seale Jr. High	605	\$1,864,582.64	\$101,692.13	\$86,111.63
Ortiz Intermediate	577	\$1,676,666.38	\$93,800.71	\$72,244.46

Martin Elem	406	\$1,191,416.57	\$48,193.96	\$33,514.81
San Pedro Elem	341	\$945,691.06	\$81,849.53	\$69,001.89
Salazar Elem	680	\$1,442,257.72	\$171,616.14	\$128,037.72
Lotspeich Elem	412	\$1,117,971.68	\$93,494.76	\$55,187.67
ALC	104	\$42,319.99	\$207,647.30	\$3,525.81
AEP	27	\$55,936.93	\$198,754.15	\$0.00

Source: RISD Business Office and TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-35 shows RISD funds for federal and state programs for 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-35
RISD Federal/State Program Funds
2000-01

Campus	Bilingual	Title I, Part A	Title I, Part C	Title VI Innovative	Title VI Class Size Reduction	Grand Total
Federal/State Office	\$29,202	\$273,568	\$301,660	\$21,565	\$17,496	\$643,491
Parent Community Center	\$2,881	\$1,300	\$1,000	\$3,500	\$0	\$8,681
RHS	\$10,912	\$227,559	\$148,919	\$1,115	\$0	\$388,505
ALC	\$583	\$10,882	\$13,305	\$132	\$0	\$24,902
Seale Jr High	\$900	\$148,493	\$105,231	\$665	\$0	\$255,289
Ortiz Interm	\$4,382	\$162,099	\$86,539	\$711	\$0	\$253,731
San Pedro Elem	\$3,032	\$134,819	\$119,106	\$382	\$43,579	\$300,918
Lotspeich Elem	\$3,930	\$115,960	\$121,486	\$505	\$47,393	\$289,274
Martin Elem	\$3,747	\$107,312	\$65,227	\$466	\$78,818	\$255,570
Salazar Elem	\$5,929	\$222,273	\$218,448	\$841	\$109,850	\$557,341

St. Anthony's School	\$0	\$9,779	\$15,110	\$858	\$0	\$25,747
Grand Total	\$65,498	\$1,414,044	\$1,196,031	\$30,740	\$297,136	\$3,003,449

Source: RISD Federal/State Programs Office.

FINDING

RISD has working agreements with numerous organizations that deal with at-risk students and has provided students with a social services resource and referral directory that includes a list of RISD counseling staff members and their contact numbers. In addition, the district has created a program designed to keep at-risk students off the street.

The "21st Century" program, approved in May 2000, provides instructional aid in math, reading and science and extracurricular activities for students in grades 5-8. The RISD Social Services Department works with parents and patrons in making contact with various help organizations as needed.

Exhibit 2-36 describes the social services resource and referral directory, which is continuously updated and revised.

Exhibit 2-36
RISD Social Services Department
Resource/Referral Directory
May 2001

Program	Agency/Organization	Contact
Alcohol/Drug Abuse	Alcoholics Anonymous - Central Information Office	992-8911
	Focus on Recovery - Crack Abuse & Drug Abuse Action Helpline and Treatment	1-800-888-9383
	Drug Abuse Hotline	1-800-662-HELP
	Palmer Drug Abuse Program	887-8900
	Charlie's Place	883-8109
	Coastal Bend Alcohol & Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Center	882-9302

	Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse of the Coastal Bend	884-3436
	Gulf Coast Council of La Raza Runaway Shelter	881-9988
	South Texas Substance Abuse Recovery Service	882-9979
	STSARS Action Helpline & Treatment	1-800-888-9383
	Cocaine Abuse 24 Hour Hotline	1-800-444-9999
	Cocaine Anonymous Information	881-9996
Assistance for Families	Children's Protective Services	387-6571
	C & Y Clinic	387-4571
	Driscoll Health Center (WIC)	387-9036
	Department of Health	387-9233
	St. Anthony's Social Service	387-3467
	Wesley Community Center	387-1451
	Texas Department of Human Services	387-6571
Legal Licenses Assistance	Driver's License	852-4669
	Social Security	1-800-772-1213
	Internal Revenue Service	1-800-829-1040
	Voter Registration (County Courthouse)	888-0111
Crisis Hotline	Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-252-5400
	Texas Youth Hotline	1-800-210-2278
	Abused Women's Shelter	881-8888
	Runaway Hotline	1-800-392-3352
	Texas Department of Human Services	387-6571 or 768-7631

Adult Community Education	Robstown Community Education	387-4425
	Del Mar College	698-1200
	Educational Service Center	561-8400
	Job Training Partnership (JTPA)	387-7281
	LULAC	883-5134
	Gulf Coast Council of La Raza	881-9988
	Adult Learning Center	886-9385
Emergency/Police/Fire	All Areas	911
	Ambulance Service	387-6208
	Fire Department	387-2521
	Robstown Police Department	387-3531
Family Counseling	Family Counseling Corpus Christi	852-9665
	Family Guidance and Counseling	387-5999 EXT 2244
	Anger Insight Resolution	887-8556
Shelters	Abused Women's Shelter Hotline	881-8888
	La Raza Runaway Shelter	887-7766
	Metro Ministries	887-0151
	The Ark Assessment Center & Emergency Shelter	241-6566
	Corpus Christi Hope House for Crisis Pregnancy Situation	852-2273
STD/Aids	Aids Hotline	1-800-590-2437
	Coastal Bend Aids Foundation	814-7001
Support Groups	Compassionate Friends	852-4560
	Family Outreach	881-6041
	Survivors After Suicide	854-1964
	Anger Insight Resolution	887-8556
Women's Health Service	Coastal Bend Women's Center	993-6000
	Corpus Christi Pregnancy Center	991-2008

	Women's Shelter Hotline	881-8888
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Source: RISD Counseling Department.

COMMENDATION

RISD provides a wide array of services to at-risk students and their families.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

E. CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY

The purpose of RISD's Career and Technology education (CATE) Department is to provide students with:

- opportunities to assess and develop their abilities, aptitudes and other resources in relation to requirements for chosen careers;
- specific information concerning education and training opportunities;
- options for future investigation and experience of work settings;
- opportunities to understand and apply academic skills relevant to career opportunities;
- opportunities to enhance their self-esteem; and
- workforce skills that will help them become productive members of the community.

The CATE Department receives both state and federal funding. It serves 215 students in grades 7-8 through courses such as skills for living, career investigation and industrial technology education. Students in grades 9-12 are offered CATE courses in business education, health science technology, marketing, trade and industrial education, technology applications, law enforcement and home economics. RISD's course selections are displayed in **Exhibit 2-37**.

Exhibit 2-37
RISD Career and Technology Program Offerings by Career Clusters
2000-01

Business Education
Course Offerings Accounting I Business Computer Information Systems I and II Business Support Systems
Health Science Technology Education
Course Offerings Health Science Technology I, II and III
Marketing Education
Course Offerings Marketing Dynamics Marketing Management

Trade and Industrial Education
<p>Course Offerings Small Engine Repair Automotive Technician I and II Building Trades I, II and III Heating and Air Conditioning Introduction to Computer Maintenance Inter Networking Technologies I Cosmetology I and II Introduction to Engineering Graphics Introduction to Computer Aided Drafting Engineering and Architectural Drafting Introduction to Graphics Communications Graphic Arts I and II</p>
Technology Applications
<p>Course Offerings Desktop Publishing Multimedia Web Mastering Independent Study in Technology Applications</p>
Law Enforcement
<p>Course Offerings Technical Introduction to Criminal Justice Crime in America Emergency Communications Fundamentals of Criminal Law Basic County Correctional Officer</p>
Home Economics Education
<p>Course Offerings Personal and Family Development Preparation for Parenting Child Development WBL Child Care and Guidance, Management and Service I and II P/L Food Production Management and Service I and II</p>

Source: RISD CATE Course Description.

RISD incorporates CATE instruction with other instructional programs such as BE/ESL, special education, and state compensatory education. The CATE staff conducts program evaluations, including reviews from high school graduates and TAAS student performance results, to assess the quality and effectiveness of CATE programs. Results from these

evaluations are used to document curriculum decisions such as the recent elimination of the agricultural science and technology course due to low demand and changes in the area economy.

Exhibit 2-38 provides TAAS passing rates for students in RISD's CATE programs.

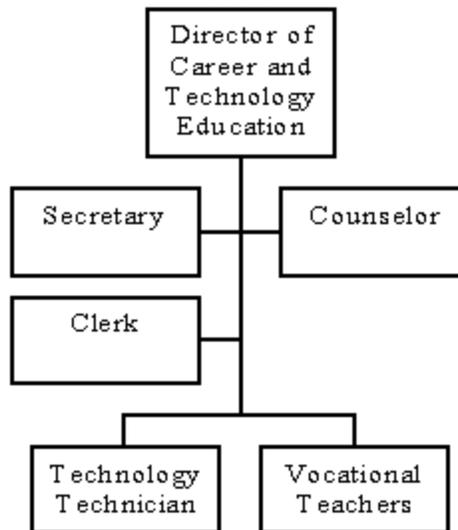
Exhibit 2-38
RISD TAAS Percent Passing Rates for Students in CATE Programs
1999-2000

Year	All Tests Taken	Math	Reading	Writing
1999-2000	79.4%	88.1%	85.6%	91.7%
1998-99	66.3%	77.6%	76.9%	86.7%
1997-98	61.2%	69.1%	79.8%	87.0%

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

RISD's Career and Technology Department is organized as shown in **Exhibit 2-39**.

Exhibit 2-39
RISD Career and Technology Organization
2000-01



Source: RISD Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs.

Exhibit 2-40 compares RISD's number of CATE students and teachers and the percentage of budgeted expenditures devoted to CATE with similar figures for the peer districts. The district ranks highest in the percentage of instructional dollars devoted to CATE and also has the largest share of total enrollment in CATE (19.4 percent).

Exhibit 2-40
RISD and Peer Districts
Student Enrollment and Budgeted Expenditures in Career &
Technology Programs
2000-01

District	Number of Teachers	Student to Teacher Ratio	Student Enrollment	Percent of Total Enrollment	Budgeted Expenditure	Percent of Total Instructional Budget	Per Pupil Expenditures
Raymondville	9.7	42.2	409	15.3%	\$467,601	5.0%	\$1,143.28
Mercedes	16.8	49.1	825	16.7%	\$746,433	4.2%	\$904.77
Robstown	13.9	57.4	798	19.4%	\$675,456	5.2%	\$846.44
Roma	16.2	56.2	911	15.2%	\$555,208	3.4%	\$609.45
Hidalgo	5.9	94.1	555	20.0	\$229,900	2.3%	\$414.23
State	11,786.1	65.2	768,226	18.9%	\$564,377,617	4.1%	\$734.65

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

FINDING

In addition to a wide variety of in-house CATE program courses, RISD has entered into agreements with Del Mar College and Texas State Technical College - Harlingen to provide RISD students with the opportunity to receive college credit for instruction received while in high school. College credit can be earned for certain introductory courses in areas such as business, industrial/technical education, tech-prep criminal justice technology, and automated office technology.

COMMENDATION

RISD provides its students with a wide variety of training and postsecondary educational opportunities through agreements with nearby colleges that allow students to receive college credit for instruction received while in high school.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

F. STUDENT SERVICES

FINDING

2000-01 is the first year in which RISD has conducted graduate follow-up studies of any type. Information provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) indicates that, of RISD's 1999 graduating class of 220 students, 94 could not be located in fall 1999. Of the remaining students, 126 or 57.3 percent were pursuing higher education. RISD intends to develop graduate tracking methods of its own.

Exhibit 2-41 shows 1999 graduates for Robstown and the peer districts as tracked by THECB. RISD ranked second among the peer districts in its percentage of graduating students who went on to pursue higher education.

Exhibit 2-41
Students Pursuing Higher Education
RISD and Peer Districts
Class of 1999

District	Total Graduates	Number Pursuing Higher Education	Percentage of Total Graduates
Robstown	220	126	57.3
Hidalgo	127	67	52.8
Mercedes	212	103	48.6
Raymondville	163	76	46.6
Roma	295	176	59.7

Source: THECB, 1998-99 Texas High School Graduates.

COMMENDATION

RISD is in the process of developing graduate follow-up studies by obtaining data and statistics from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

FINDING

RISD's Department of Health and Wellness provides a variety of health services to RISD students, including the maintenance of health records, especially those associated with special education, immunization requirements, medication in accordance with proper policies and procedures and record storage, safety and release according to appropriate procedures.

RISD employs seven nurses and three medical clerks that provide clerical assistance to the nurses (**Exhibit 2-42**).

Exhibit 2-42
RISD School Enrollment and Nurse Allocation
May 2001

School	Grade Levels	Student Enrollment	Number of Nurses	Number of Medical Clerks
Robstown High School	9-12	964	1	1
Wynne Seale Junior High School	7-8	605	1	0
Ortiz Intermediate School	5-6	577	1	0
Hattie Martin Elementary School	3-4	406	1	1
San Pedro Elementary School	EE-4	341	1	0
Lotspeich Elementary School	EE-4	412	1	0
Salazar Elementary School	EE-2	680	1	1
Alternative Learning Center	7-12	104	Part-time	0
Alternative Education Program	7-12	27	0	0
Total	EE-12	4,116	7	3

Source: RISD.

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommends a student/nurse ratio of no more than 750:1. Robstown ISD's student to nurse ratio is 588:1. Three medical clerks or nurse assistants in the district perform work that could be absorbed by the school nurses or by existing clerical staff.

Recommendation 15:

Eliminate medical clerk positions.

RISD's current nursing staff or its clerical staff should be able to absorb the workload of the three medical clerks.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs prepares a report on nurse staffing needs and presents recommendations to the superintendent.	November 2001
2.	The superintendent implements a hiring freeze and does not fill any clerk positions if they are vacated.	December 2001
3.	The superintendent analyzes these recommendations and develops and determines appropriate nurse staffing formulas.	February 2002
4.	The superintendent implements new nurse staffing guidelines for the district in the coming school year's budget process.	March 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated savings from eliminating these positions is calculated from the minimum pay schedule for an entry-level, pay grade 2 clerical/technical employee with a starting hourly rate of \$7.04. \$7.04 per hour times eight hours per day times 180 days per year amounts to \$10,138 for each of three positions. Adding benefits of 5.5208 percent plus \$1,800 for each position equals a total of \$12,498 times three, for an annual savings of \$37,494. This estimate also assumes that the equivalent of one position can be saved in the first year through attrition.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Eliminate medical clerk positions.	\$12,498	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$37,494	\$37,494

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community involvement activities enable parents, business leaders and others with a stake in public education to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing the district and to become involved in its activities. Collaborative partnerships with businesses, educational institutions, community agencies and civic organizations are an excellent way to expand the resources of a school district and involve the community in the schools.

BACKGROUND

Robstown ISD believes that the involvement of parents in the education of their children is of crucial importance to students and to the district and has adopted goals to meet parental involvement requirements of the federal Public Law 103-382 (Title I) and the monitoring standards of the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

With enrollment for the 2000-01 school year at 4,116, RISD has budgeted \$3 per student for community services, while peer districts averaged \$14 per student. The district, however, receives other monies through grants and Title I funds to assist in their community efforts.

Exhibit 3-1 compares RISD and peer district budgeted expenditures for community services for 2000-01. Community services expenditures are spent on activities or services related to the whole community or some segment of the community. This includes providing resources to non-public schools, institutions of higher education, parenting programs, community related recreation services and some expenditures related to parent advisory committee meetings.

Exhibit 3-1
RISD and Peer Districts
Budgeted Expenditures for Community Services
2000-01

District	Enrollment	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Per Student
Robstown	4,116	\$13,634	\$3
Hidalgo	2,771	\$4,600	\$2
Mercedes	4,933	\$112,680	\$23

Raymondville	2,673	\$67,553	\$25
Roma	5,993	\$25,000	\$4

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

RISD's community involvement program is located in two separate areas, the Community Education Department and the Parental Involvement and Publications Department. Both departments serve the needs of RISD's community, parents and students.

The main focus of the Community Education Department is to provide education programs for community members as well as the surrounding communities in the areas of pre-employment training, GED classes, computer classes and college courses. While the Parental Involvement program deals mainly with the coordination of parent volunteers at each campus and training programs for many parents of Title I students. The program ranges from improving academics to recreational activities.

RISD's Community Education Department operates with a staff composed of the program director, one full-time secretary, one part-time evening custodian, one day instructor, one evening instructor, one evening English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor and one case manager/counselor. The program has been in existence for about 10 years, and sponsors training specifically tailored for welfare recipients, dislocated workers, adults seeking citizenship instruction or English language instruction and other areas of need within the community.

In addition, the Community Education program works with the Texas Workforce Commission to refer GED graduates into vocational trade apprentice programs. These graduates can enroll in electrical, plumbing, carpentry and other general trade areas. They can earn up to \$8 per hour while in training and are offered a job once they earn their certificate.

The Community Education program has an open, year-round enrollment policy for adults and has served anywhere from 75 to 350 students in the course of a year. The program has been in existence since 1991. Although the program was initially designed for adults 22 years and older it also serves an annual average of 50 to 60 students aged 17 to 21 who are at a high risk for dropping out of school. Most of these younger students remain in the program for one or two years for remediation.

The second area of community involvement in RISD is through the Parental Involvement and Publications Department, which is headed by a coordinator who oversees seven aide/recruiters. One aide/recruiter is assigned to each of the district's seven campuses and is responsible for

parent volunteers and programs at their respective campus. Fifty percent of the salary for these aide/recruiter positions is paid by Title I funds, while the other 50 percent is paid from district funds. The Parental Involvement and Publications Department, organizes free programs on a regular basis to assist parents in several areas of parent training such as family counseling services, family violence and sexual assault information, computer classes, typing for beginners, internet training, ESL classes for Spanish speakers and self-help classes.

FINDING

While the city of Robstown has few businesses, the district has successfully involved some of them with RISD's students and schools. RISD has a number of collaborative partnerships in place with local businesses. During focus group sessions conducted by the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) team, members of the business community expressed a desire to continue to partner with RISD. Many business and community members believe they can assist the district's schools in areas other than monetary contributions.

Part of the district's success with the business community can be attributed to RISD's community involvement policy. The policy addresses the need to facilitate work/coordination with community-based organizations and businesses. Implementation of this policy promotes active partnerships. Examples of collaborative partnerships between individual schools, businesses and nonprofit organizations are shown in **Exhibit 3-2**.

**Exhibit 3-2
RISD Business Partnerships**

School/ Department	Business/ Organization	Activity
Robstown High	Wesley Community Center	Sponsors early childhood classes
Robstown High	HEB Food Store	School-to-Work program
Robstown High	McDonald's	School-to-Work program
Robstown High	Robstown City on Turtle Park	Community Clean-Up
Salazar Elementary	McDonald's	Supplied Happy Meals for perfect attendance
Salazar Elementary	HEB Food Store	Provided supplies for parent meetings

Adult/Community Education Department	Corpus Christi ISD Adult Learning Center	Sponsors Adult and Continuing Education classes
Adult/Community Education Department	Texas A&M University, Kingsville	Sponsors Internet Courses

Source: TSPR Focus Group Comments, April 2001; RISD Community Education Department.

The district is also involved in other collaborative partnerships with Del Mar Community College, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Corpus Christi ISD (CCISD) and Tuloso-Midway ISD.

Area businesses like HEB sponsor the district's annual Science Fair, while the Robstown Area Development Council sponsors an annual community clean-up involving high school students. The district's ROTC program has partnered with Tuloso-Midway ISD, and in exchange, Tuloso-Midway ISD has reciprocated by allowing RISD students to participate in their vocational programs such as building trades and cosmetology.

The district is also working with Del Mar Community College in Corpus Christi to recruit migrant participants who need to obtain their GED. These students participate in a federally funded program at Del Mar that pays for their exam, gives them a monthly stipend and offers chartered bus transportation to and from the college.

COMMENDATION

RISD's collaborative partnerships with businesses and community organizations benefit students and parents.

FINDING

To maximize funding, RISD's Community Education Department collaborates with other local school districts, community colleges and universities such as Texas A&M University-Kingsville and Del Mar Community College.

The district participates in a partnership with CCISD, a Nueces County Adult and Continuing Education Consortium. CCISD is the consortium's fiscal agent, receiving state and federal grant money for family and adult literacy programs. CCISD's adult basic education family literacy grant provides more than \$40,000 to assist RISD in paying part of the salaries for teachers, a case manager/counselor, part-time coordinator and teacher

assistants involved in adult education. The grant also provides additional funds for supplies and materials for the program. Services not covered under the adult basic education grant, such as free computer classes are funded separately through local funds.

In addition, Texas A&M University-Kingsville provides funds to RISD to offer special education classes for paraprofessionals who want to earn their teaching certificate in special education. The university also provides a small stipend of \$100 per course to RISD's facilitators to monitor the Saturday classes. A stipend based on a calculation of \$10 per student per course is also provided to the district for the use of their facility.

COMMENDATION

RISD combines funding resources to maximize grant-funded programs.

FINDING

While RISD is involved in several community initiatives, the district lacks central planning, coordination and evaluation of all their community and parental programs. Program planning and delivery is important when programs are housed in different departments and target the same parents, students or community members. Having community involvement housed in two separate areas does not contribute to the most effective coordination and communication among the programs districtwide or on campuses.

In RISD, no single department is responsible for overseeing or managing all community and parent participation. Instead, the Community Education Department and the Parental Involvement and Publications Department work as separate entities, with both focusing efforts on their respective programs. The two departments have occasionally worked together in various activities in the past, but have not consistently coordinated their efforts.

Some districts have successfully combined all their community and parental involvement activities under one department reporting to one director, in an effort to improve communication and more importantly to avoid duplication of similar programs and increase efficiency in the use of their limited resources.

Recommendation 16:

Consolidate all community and parental involvement functions into one department, and designate an individual to serve as director.

RISD should consolidate the Community Education and Parental Involvement and Publications departments under one director in one central location. The director would be responsible for developing a strategic plan tied to funding, with input from a community involvement committee composed of program staff, principals, teachers, parents and community members. The plan should inventory all community and parental involvement programs on each campus, and create a new set of procedures to manage the department. These procedures would specify day-to-day job duties and responsibilities of personnel formally working in the two separate departments. After creating a strategic plan, the new department of Community and Parental Involvement should train program staff and principals on the new procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent recommends to the board that the Community Education Department and the Parental Involvement and Publications Department be consolidated into one Community and Parental Involvement Department headed by one director.	September 2001
2.	The board approves the consolidation of the two departments and approves the elimination of the coordinator's position and the creation of the position of director of Community and Parental Involvement.	September 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs develops a job description for the director's position.	October 2001
4.	The superintendent hires or assigns a new director.	October 2001
5.	The new director of the Community and Parental Involvement Department inventories all community and parental involvement programs in the district and with input from a community involvement committee develops a strategic plan tied to funding.	November-December 2001
6.	The superintendent approves the plan and staffing changes are made.	January 2002
7.	The director of Community and Parental Involvement trains program staff in coordination and collaborative procedures and informs principals about the procedures.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating the Community Education director and creating a new director of Community and Parental Involvement will have no fiscal

impact. Eliminating, the Parental Involvement coordinator position will save \$43,409 (\$39,432 salary and benefits [$\$39,409 \times 5.5208 + \$1,800$]), beginning in January 2002.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Consolidate all community and parental involvement functions into one department, and designate an individual to serve as director.	\$21,704	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$43,409	\$43,409

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

B. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

FINDING

RISD communicates on a regular basis with groups and individuals in the community through a variety of publications. The district disseminates information through district and school newsletters, board briefs, press releases, public service announcements and by posting information on the district web site. The district also maintains a good relationship and works closely with the local newspaper on education articles and district operations and activities. All media releases regarding district and school-level operations and activities are reviewed, edited and distributed by the superintendent and his secretary.

The district communicates with parents and the general public primarily through the district newsletter, articles in the local newspaper, *The Nueces County Record Star* and through bulletins or memoranda sent home to parents with their children. An independent contractor gathers information for the district newsletter from the superintendent and campus principals. The superintendent reviews the contents of the newsletter and approves it for printing. It is then sent to the Robstown High School print shop to be printed and assembled for mailing.

The district Web site is very user-friendly and can be used to link the reader to many different sources of information such as the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board and the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2).

Information regarding district emergencies or school closures is also posted on the high school marquee, announced on the radio and distributed to the local newspaper. Board meeting notices are posted in the front window of the district's central office.

Exhibit 3-3 lists the different types of external publications being used by RISD.

Exhibit 3-3
RISD External Publications

Internal/External Publication	Description	Issued By	Target Audience
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District Newsletter	Articles about the district, Region 2 and individual schools.	RISD	Parents, Students
School Newsletter	Articles about individual schools.	Individual Schools	Parents, Students
Board Briefs	Highlights of school board meetings.	RISD Board of Trustees	Parents, Community
RISD Internet Home Page: www.robstownisd.esc2.net	District information, including Texas Assessment of Academic Skills scores, district policies and goals.	RISD	Anyone with Internet access

Source: RISD Parental Involvement Department 2000-01.

The review team also found that parents felt they were being kept informed. **Exhibit 3-4** shows the results of TSPR surveys of campus administrative and support staff, teachers and parents. More than 86 percent of Campus Administrative and Support Staff surveyed either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "the district regularly communicates with parents," 61.2 percent of teachers either strongly agreed or agreed, and 59.4 percent of parents either strongly agreed or agreed with the same statement.

Exhibit 3-4
TSPR Survey Results
"The district regularly communicates with parents."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Campus Administrative and Support Staff	13.3%	73.3%	6.7%	6.7%	0.0%
Teachers	9.6%	51.6%	14.6%	15.3%	7.0%
Parents	13.5%	45.9%	13.5%	18.9%	8.1%

Source: TSPR Survey Results, April 2001.

COMMENDATION

RISD publishes a variety of publications for communicating with parents, students and the community.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

C. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The district is designated as a Title I district funded with monies from the federal government. As such, the district is mandated to follow federal regulations that require the district to establish a comprehensive parental involvement program.

Parents in RISD are involved in various ways. While RISD has no Parent/Teacher Organization or Association, most schools have a parent center that consists of a room designated for parent volunteers to work from. Parent centers at each school are staffed by an aide/recruiter who reports to the Parental Involvement coordinator. The Parental Involvement coordinator is responsible for developing a program that assists Title I parents in various forms of training. Parental centers at each school sponsor a wide range of activities for parents throughout the year as well as during the intersession.

During intersession week the Parental Involvement and Publications Departments are open from 8:00 am until noon at Seale Junior High, Ortiz Intermediate, Martin Elementary, San Pedro Elementary, Salazar Elementary and Lotspeich Elementary. Parents are provided a list of activities they may choose from during the week.

Exhibit 3-5 gives examples of parent training activities that take place during intersession (the district's periodic one-week break from their regular year-round school session) in some of RISD's schools.

Exhibit 3-5
RISD Parent Training Activities by School
2000

School	Training Activity
Seale Junior High	Preparing Parents for Junior High Cooking Lessons
Ortiz Intermediate	Money Management Computer Training
Martin Elementary	Immunizations Workshop Vocabulary and Reading
San Pedro Elementary	Diabetes Class

	Drug Awareness
Salazar Elementary	Reading Techniques Homework Strategies
Lotspeich Elementary	Summer Writing and Math Activities Positive Reinforcement Skills

Source: RISD Curriculum Department.

FINDING

RISD has created a special parent room (parent center) at some of its schools that has become more of a community center than just a workspace. For example, parents at Seale Junior High use the room for sewing band uniforms, making costumes for holiday plays, computer and technology training, helping students with reading and meeting with guest speakers.

At some schools the parent room is also being used by a group of parental involvement aides/recruiters and assistants who have formed a budget committee and a hospitality committee.

All volunteers must sign in and out, and volunteer hours are tabulated weekly. Volunteers are invited to public meetings held by the RISD Federal and State Programs department, and receive certificates of appreciation. Top volunteers from each school are also recognized at an end-of-the-year meeting. A Parent Volunteer of the Year is selected based on the quality of work the volunteer has done and the number of volunteer hours. Examples of volunteer efforts are shown in **Exhibit 3-6**.

Exhibit 3-6
RISD Examples of Volunteer Efforts, by School

School	Summary of Activities
Salazar Elementary	Practical Parent Education Training American Education Week - Open House Family Reading Night
San Pedro Elementary	Can goods collection Christmas Appreciation Luncheon Back to School Ice Cream Social
Lotspeich Elementary	TAAS celebration Parental involvement meeting

	Proposed dress code survey
Hattie Martin Elementary	Parent/Teacher social Texas Public Schools Week - Open House Parental Involvement Volunteer Breakfast and Luncheon
Solomon P. Ortiz Intermediate	Parent Advisory Council Meeting Provided cupcakes for teachers Christmas bags for all Ortiz students
Seale Junior High	Assembled TAAS test booklets Arts and Crafts Made quilts for Driscoll Hospital
Robstown High School	Band Booster meeting to recruit volunteers Helped with intersession notices Gear-Up Walk for Success training

Source: RISD Parental Involvement Department.

COMMENDATION

RISD has increased volunteer participation by recognizing the efforts put forth by volunteers and by designating a specific parent room for volunteers to use.

FINDING

While the district has increased participation by parent volunteers in 2000-01, levels of volunteer involvement vary widely among the schools, as shown in **Exhibit 3-7**. Volunteer involvement is highest at Lotspeich and Martin Elementary schools and lowest at Ortiz Intermediate and Robstown High. Among the elementary schools, San Pedro reported the lowest number of volunteer hours. Ortiz Intermediate School did not have a Parental Involvement Aide/Recruiter for the 1999-2000 school year, which could explain why their level of volunteers for that year was zero.

Exhibit 3-7
RISD
Number and 3-Year Average of Parent Volunteers, by School
1998-99 through 2000-01

School	2000-01 Student Enrollment	Volunteers 1998-99	Volunteers 1999-2000	Volunteers 2000-01	3-Year Average
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Salazar Elementary	680	34	34	24	31
San Pedro Elementary	341	14	15	14	14
Lotspeich Elementary	412	32	28	44	35
Hattie Martin Elementary	406	29	23	38	30
Solomon P. Ortiz Intermediate	577	29	0	12	14
Seale Junior High	605	18	16	21	18
Robstown High School	964	15	9	12	12
Total	3,985*	171	125	165	154

Source: RISD Curriculum Department and RISD Parental Involvement Program.

** Does not include 131 students in alternative education programs.*

It is not unusual for volunteer involvement to decrease at the middle and high school levels or for schools with high numbers of at-risk students to exhibit lower levels of volunteer involvement. Inflexible work schedules and the absence of non-traditional avenues for volunteering often keep the parents of at-risk students from volunteering. However, some RISD schools have recruited a core of several dependable volunteers who work frequently in the schools, some on a daily basis as seen in **Exhibit 3-8**.

Exhibit 3-8
RISD's Parental Involvement Hours, by School
2000-01

School	Total Volunteers	Core Volunteers	Total Hours Volunteered
Salazar Elementary	24	11	4,761
San Pedro Elementary	14	8	2,514
Lotspeich Elementary	44	14	3,411
Hattie Martin Elementary	38	13	2,544

Solomon P. Ortiz Intermediate	12	9	1,585
Seale Junior High	21	6	2,099
Robstown High School	12	4	524
Total	165	65	17,438

Source: RISD Parental Involvement Program 2000-01.

Some districts' community involvement programs identify the campuses within their district that have low volunteer involvement and make these schools a priority when recruiting volunteers and training staff in community involvement strategies and retention plans. Volunteers distributed equitably within the district give all students the benefit from these much-needed resources, especially when they are used in areas like tutoring and mentoring.

Recommendation 17:

Aggressively recruit school volunteers for campuses with low volunteer involvement.

The Parental Involvement and Publications Department should work with schools to help them equitably place volunteers across its campuses. This project should start with the coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications visiting each school to assess the level of involvement and reasons for the high or low participation levels. The coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications should provide training to all school personnel on the importance of parent and community involvement. Training should include everything from working with teachers and principals on encouraging parental visits, to training office personnel and security guards on good customer service techniques. The coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications also should help schools in the development and evaluation of their plans, directing them to set specific goals, deadlines and ways to evaluate their successes. Schools might start by inviting a representative from those campuses with exceptional numbers of volunteers and asking them to share some of the ways they have successfully increased the numbers of volunteers at their campus.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications visits schools to assess levels of parent involvement.	September - October 2001
2.	The coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications	October -

	meets with school personnel to explain guidelines for each school to follow when developing their participation plan.	November 2001
3.	Each school develops a plan establishing goals and methods for assessing progress towards these goals and invites a representative from other campuses with large numbers of parent volunteers to share their successes.	December 2001 - January 2002
4.	Each school submits these plans to the coordinator of Parental Involvement and Publications for approval.	January - March 2002
5.	Each school submits a report to the coordinator of Parental Involvement to reflect the levels of volunteer participation for the year.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Human resource management is an essential part of school district operations. District human resources departments typically are responsible for organization, consistent staffing patterns, efficient recruiting and hiring practices, regular performance evaluation and employee training.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

RISD's human resource management functions involve several offices. The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and one secretary manage recruiting and hiring, orientation materials, the use of substitutes, contracts, employee compensation, evaluations and employee relations. The assistant superintendent for Educational Operations manages staff training programs, while the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance handles employee benefits.

Exhibit 4-1 show the division of RISD's human resources responsibilities.

Exhibit 4-1
RISD Human Resources Responsibilities
2000-01

Responsibility	Department
Recruiting staff	Personnel Office
Hiring staff	Personnel Office, board, superintendent, all departments
Background checks	Personnel Office
Teacher Certification verification	Personnel Office
Salary determinations	Superintendent and board
Salary adjustment calculations	Superintendent and board
Attendance monitoring (employees)	Supervisors, Offices of Business and Finance and Personnel
Benefits administration	Finance
Payroll management	Finance and Personnel Offices
Employee grievances	Supervisors, Personnel Office and board
New teacher orientation	Offices of Educational Operations, Personnel and Business and Finance
Substitute orientation	Personnel Office

Staff development	Educational Operations
Termination	Personnel Office, superintendent and board
Planning for staffing level	Personnel Office

Source: RISD Personnel Office.

The district's 2000-01 operating budget for the Personnel Office is \$114,832. Of that, \$93,096, or 81 percent, is salaries (**Exhibit 4-2**).

Exhibit 4-2
Budget for RISD Personnel Office
2000-01

Expenditures Categories	2000-01
Salaries	\$93,096
Contracted Services	\$1,700
Supplies & Materials	\$3,700
Other Operating Expenses	\$16,336
Capital Outlay	\$0
Total	\$114,832

Source: RISD Personnel Office.

Exhibit 4-3 shows the total number of RISD full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) for 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-3
Number of RISD FTEs
2000-01

Staff Classification	2000-01	
	Number	Percent of Total
Teachers	302	43.9%
Professional Support	53	7.7%
Campus Administrators	14	2.0%
Central Administrators	9	1.3%

Educational Aides	100	14.5%
Auxiliary Staff	210	30.5%
Total Staff	688	100%*

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2000-01.

*Total may not add due to rounding.

Exhibit 4-4 profiles the ethnicity of RISD students, teachers and all staff members.

**Exhibit 4-4
Ethnicity of RISD Students, Teachers and All Staff
2000-01**

Ethnicity	Students		Teachers		All Staff	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic	4,019	97.6%	218	72.2%	581	84.4%
Anglo	65	1.6%	74	24.5%	95	13.8%
African American	24	0.6%	7	2.3%	9	1.3%
Other	8	0.2%	3	1.0%	3	0.4%
Totals	4,116	100%	302	100%	688	100%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-2001.

Exhibit 4-5 compares Personnel Office staffing to overall district staffing for 1998-99 through 2000-01. In 2000-01, RISD employs one Personnel Office staff member for every 344 employees.

**Exhibit 4-5
Ratio of RISD Personnel Office Employees to Total Staff
1998-99 through 2000-01**

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Number of students enrolled	4,286	4,232	4,116
Number of Total FTEs	708	703	688

Ratio of Students to FTEs	6:1	6:1	6:1
Number of FTEs in Personnel Office *	2	2	2
Ratio of Personnel Office Department employees to total staff	1:354	1:352	1:344

Source: TEA, AEIS 1998-99, 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

**RISD Personnel Office.*

Exhibit 4-6 compares RISD's Personnel Office to those of its peer districts.

Exhibit 4-6
Personnel Office Staffing Compared to Peer Districts
2000-01

Positions	Mercedes	Raymondville	Hidalgo	Robstown	Roma
Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs	1	0	1	1	1
Director of Human Resources	0	1	0	0	0
Clerk	2	0	1	0	1
Secretary	1	1	0	1	0
Number of Total FTEs	805	427	478	688	995
Ratio of Human Resources/Personnel Offices to total staff	1:201	1:214	1:239	1:344	1:498

Source: RISD Personnel Office and telephone interviews with personnel offices in peer districts.

RISD district policy DEA(LOCAL) states that:

...the superintendent shall recommend approval pay structures and compensation plans for all staff within the district. Pay structures shall be designed and administered for the purpose of attracting and retaining qualified employees to achieve the goals of the district.

RISD has salary schedules for four groups of job classifications: teachers and librarians, administrative and professional, clerical and technical and manual trades.

The district's pay schedules for both teachers and librarians are calculated by years of experience. The salary schedule is based on a 187-day working year.

Exhibit 4-7 profiles the salary schedule for teachers and librarians. Teachers with a masters degree receive \$500 extra annually, while the additional annual salary for teachers with a doctorate is \$1,000 extra.

**Exhibit 4-7
RISD Salary Schedule for Teachers and Librarians
2000-01**

Years of Experience	Annual Salary (187 days)	Daily Rate
Beginning	\$27,040	\$145
1 Year	\$27,876	\$149
5 Years	\$30,786	\$165
10 Years	\$36,346	\$194
20+ Years	\$43,756	\$234

Source: RISD Personnel Office.

Exhibit 4-8 shows salary trends by employee classification.

**Exhibit 4-8
RISD Average Salaries
1996-97 through 1999-2000**

Classifications	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Increase
Teachers	\$30,296	\$32,192	\$33,227	\$36,227	19.6%
Prof. Support	\$38,834	\$40,391	\$40,769	\$42,329	9.0%
Campus Admin.	\$49,759	\$51,073	\$53,625	\$53,202	6.9%
Central Admin.	\$59,167	\$62,761	\$66,633	\$63,477	7.3%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-9 compares RISD's average teacher salaries with those of the peer districts based on years of experience. RISD ranks at the bottom in two of the five categories and is below the peer average in every category.

**Exhibit 4-9
Teacher Average Salaries
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000**

District	Beginning	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	More Than 20 Years
Hidalgo	\$28,197	\$29,953	\$36,729	\$43,587	\$48,965
Mercedes	\$28,903	\$30,446	\$35,227	\$42,356	\$46,056
Raymondville	\$28,572	\$30,383	\$35,837	\$42,779	\$45,938
Roma	\$21,591	\$29,825	\$35,407	\$41,170	\$44,843
Peer Average	\$26,816	\$30,152	\$35,800	\$42,473	\$46,450
Robstown	\$24,942	\$28,513	\$33,882	\$41,446	\$45,611

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-10 compares RISD's average salaries for teachers, professional staff members, campus administrators and central administrators with those of the peer districts. RISD pays below the peer average in every category.

**Exhibit 4-10
Average Actual Salaries
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000**

District	Teachers	Professional Staff	Campus Administration	Central Administration
Hidalgo	\$39,463	\$46,104	\$58,071	\$66,369
Mercedes	\$38,351	\$44,857	\$56,795	\$71,380
Raymondville	\$38,098	\$44,728	\$54,074	\$68,516
Roma	\$33,278	\$38,101	\$52,163	\$61,589
Peer Average	\$37,298	\$43,448	\$55,276	\$66,964
Robstown	\$36,227	\$42,329	\$53,202	\$63,477

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

FINDING

Although RISD's enrollment has been falling steadily over the last four years, reducing the amount of state money the district receives, its schools are overstaffed. During TSPR's review, anticipating a deficit in excess of \$1.5 million for the coming school year, RISD personnel began reviewing their current staffing and eliminated 27 positions. **Exhibit 4-11** details those positions and the estimated savings that will be realized.

Exhibit 4-11
Robstown Independent School District
Reduction In Force
May 2001

Position Classification	Number of Positions	Estimated Salary and Benefits Savings
Teacher	13	\$459,699
Para-professionals	8	\$112,364
Librarian	2	\$89,113
Maintenance & Operations	4	\$83,962
Totals	27	\$745,138

Source: RISD Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs, May 2001.

RISD schools are overstaffed with assistant principals, guidance counselors, secretaries and clerks, teachers and aides. Instructional facilitators at several of the district campuses perform administrative duties of a vice principal position. As each school is adequately staffed with a principal and, in many cases a dual-hatted instructional facilitator, the district's need to staff a vice principal at each campus is diminishing.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredits more than 12,000 public and private educational institutions, from pre-kindergarten through university levels, in eleven states in the Southeastern United States (including Texas) and in Latin America.

SACS recommends staff assignments in programs for three and four year old students as shown in **Exhibit 4-12**.

Exhibit 4-12
SACS Maximum Class Sizes
for Three- and Four-Year Olds

Classes	Enrollment	Teacher(s)	Paraprofessional(s)
3-year olds	1-15	1	1
	18-22	1	2
4-year olds	1-11	1	0
	12-22	1	1
	23-30	1	2

Source: SACS, Elementary Standards for Accreditation 2001-2002.

SACS recommends *minimum* personnel requirements for elementary schools, based on enrollment, in its 2000-2001 *Policies, Principles, and Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools*. The minimum standards for elementary schools are represented in **Exhibit 4-13**.

Exhibit 4-13
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for Elementary Schools

Number of Students	Principal	Professional Admin. or Supervisor Assistants	Library or Media Specialists	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretaries or Clerk
1-263	.5	0	.5	0	.5
264-439	1.0	0	1.0	0	1.0
440-659	1.0	0	1.0	.5	1.0
660-879	1.0	.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
880-1099	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
1100-1319	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
1320+	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0

Source: SACS Policies, Principals, and Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, 2000-2001 School Year.

SACS further recommends *minimum* personnel requirements for guidance services at the elementary school level based on enrollment as shown in **Exhibit 4-14**.

Exhibit 4-14
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements
for Guidance Services in Elementary Schools

Number of Students	Professional Personnel
1-499	.5
500-749	1.0
750-999	1.5
1,000-1,249	2.0
1,250-1,499	2.5
1,500+	3.0

Source: SACS Policies, Principals, and Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, 2000-2001 School Year.

Texas Education Code (TEC) section 25.112 limits student to teacher ratios in grades kindergarten through four at 22:1. TEC section 25.111 further requires school districts to employ a sufficient number of teachers to maintain an average student to teacher ratio, except as limited in TEC 25.112, of 20:1.

SACS additionally recommends student to professional staff ratios not to exceed 22:1 and states that teachers, principals, guidance personnel, librarians and other professional personnel assigned to the school may be included in computing the student to professional ratio, but they must be considered on the appropriate fractional part of full time equivalency (FTE). Paraprofessionals who assist teachers with instruction may be used in computing the ratio, but should not exceed 10 percent of teaching positions. Each such full time paraprofessional should be considered the equivalent of .5 of one professional. System level staff should be excluded from the computation. Students in self-contained classes for the disabled and their teachers and assistants should be excluded from the computation while special education teachers serving students on a resource basis should be included.

SACS recommends *minimum* personnel requirements for middle schools, based on enrollment, in its 2000-2001 *Policies, Principles, and Standards for Middle Schools Accredited by the Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools*. The minimum standards for middle schools are represented in **Exhibit 4-15**.

Exhibit 4-15
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for Middle Schools

Number of Students	Principal	Administrative Assistants	Guidance Professionals	Library/ Media Specialists	Library/ Media Assistants	Secretaries
1-249	1.0	0	.5	.5	0	.5
250-499	1.0	.5	1.0	1.0	.5	1.0
500-749	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
750-999	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
1,000-1,249	1.0	1.5	2.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
1,249-1,499	1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
1,500+	1.0	2.0+	3.0+	1.0+	1.0	2.0

Source: SACS Policies, Principals, and Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, 2000-2001 School Year.

SACS further recommends *minimum* personnel requirements for high schools, based on enrollment, in its *Standards for Secondary Schools, 1998 Edition*. The minimum standards for high schools are outlined in Standard 4.10.1 and represented in **Exhibit 4-16**.

Exhibit 4-16
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for High Schools
SACS Standard Reference 4.10.1

Number of Students	Principal	Administrative or Supervisor Assistants	Guidance Professionals	Library or Media Specialists	Secretaries or Clerks
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1-299	1.0	0	.5	.5	1.0
300-499	1.0	.5	.5	1.0	1.5
500-649	1.0	.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
650-749	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.5
750-999	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	3.5
1000-1249	1.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	4.0
1250+	1.0	(A)	(A)	(A)	(B)

Source: SACS Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools, Standards for Secondary Schools, 1998 Edition, Standard 4.10.1.

A) SACS recommends adding one position for each additional 250 students beyond 1,249.

B) SACS recommends adding one clerical position for each additional 400 students beyond 1,249.

Comparing the personnel staffing standards referenced in **Exhibit 4-12** through **Exhibit 4-16** and student to teacher ratios cited in TEC to RISD's actual level of staffing for administrators, secretaries and clerks, guidance personnel, and teachers indicates that the district is overstaffed for these positions as shown in **Exhibit 4-17**. Student to teacher ratios of 22:1 for elementary and intermediate grades and 25:1 for middle, junior and senior high school grades were applied in determining minimum needs for teacher staffing and is rounded to the next whole number.

San Pedro, Lotspeich and Salazar Elementary schools include teachers for the 3 and 4 year old students with a maximum student to teacher ratio of 26:1. Robstown High School and Seale Junior High School include teachers and administrative staff for the Career and Technology program offerings, which are in addition to the core curriculum.

RISD instructional facilitators sometimes perform duties of an assistant principal and as such, are considered administrators and are included in the calculation of the number of administrators for each campus.

Exhibit 4-17
RISD Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing

	RHS*	ALC	AEP	Seale JHS*	Ortiz Interm	San Pedro	Lot- speich	Hattie Martin	Salazar	District
Enrollment	964	104	27	605	577	341	412	406	680	4,116
Recommended Minimum Number of Campus Administrators	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11
Actual Number of Campus Administrators	5	1	1	4	3	2	2	2	2	22
Variance	3	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	11
Recommended Minimum Number of Guidance Counselors	3	.5	.5	1.5	1	.5	.5	.5	1	9
Actual Number of Guidance Counselors	6	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	17
Variance	3	.5	.5	.5	1	.5	.5	.5	1	8
Recommended Minimum Number of Secretaries/ Clerks	7	1.5	1.5	3.5	2.5	1	1	1	1.5	20.5
Actual Number of Secretaries/ Clerks	14	2	1	6	2	2	2	3	3	35
Variance	7	.5	(.5)	2.5	(.5)	1	1	2	1.5	14.5
Recommended Number of Teachers	69	5	2	33	27	20	23	19	35	233

Actual Number of Teachers	81	9	6	43	39	24	28	29	40	299
Variance	12	4	4	10	12	4	5	10	5	66
Total Staffing Variance	25	5	4	15	14.5	6.5	7.5	13.5	8.5	99.5

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards, RISD enrollment data and Personnel Roster.

**CATE programs for 766 students at the high school and 215 students at the junior high are staffed separately.*

Recommendation 18:

Conduct reduction in force to achieve levels of staffing that more accurately reflect enrollment.

Assuming that only about 75 percent of the staff identified in excess of standards can be reduced, RISD could reduce its number of campus administrators by seven and its number of guidance counselors by six. As 13 teaching positions and one clerk position have already been eliminated for the 2001-02 school year, RISD should seek to reduce teaching positions by another 36 positions (75 percent of 66 less the 13 already eliminated) and secretaries and clerks by 10 (75 percent of 11 less the one already eliminated) in the coming year. It is further assumed that it will take two years for the district to phase in these reductions so as not to jeopardize the educational delivery process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent implements a hiring freeze on all non-critical positions.	September 2001
2.	The board approves staffing allocation formulas submitted by the superintendent.	February 2002
3.	The superintendent announces reduction in force for the coming school year and forwards appropriate notice to affected employees.	March 2002
4.	The superintendent imposes reduction in force effective for the 2002-2003 school year for positions not already vacated during	August 2002

the 2001-02 school year.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

Estimated cost savings are based on beginning salary levels for each of the categories of employees affected by the proposed RIF. Using the minimum rate of pay for an assistant principal in the job grade 4 category of the administrative/professional job classification of \$35,160 plus benefits of \$3,741, the savings from the elimination of seven positions is \$272,307 (\$38,901 x 7). The minimum rate of pay for a guidance counselor in the job grade 2 category of the administrative/professional job classification is \$30,710 plus benefits of \$3,495. Eliminating six counselors will save \$205,230 (\$34,205 x 6). The minimum salary for a clerk in the pay grade 1 category of the clerical/technical job classification is \$6.40 per hour, at 8 hours a day for 180 days amounting to \$9,216 plus benefits of \$2,307. Reducing 10 positions will save \$115,230 (\$11,523 x 10). The minimum salary for teachers is \$27,040 with benefits of \$3,293. Reducing 36 additional teaching positions would save \$1,091,988 annually (\$30,333 x 36). The total savings from all reductions will be \$1,684,755 annually when fully implemented. Assuming that about one-fourth of these positions will be eliminated through attrition during the 2001-02 school year, \$421,188 is estimated in savings for the first year. In the second year, 2002-03, another one-half of the reductions should be made, with full reductions in place by 2003-04.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Conduct reduction in force to achieve levels of staffing that more accurately reflect enrollment.	\$421,188	\$1,263,565	\$1,684,755	\$1,684,755	\$1,684,755

FINDING

The Personnel Office has no procedures manual. The Personnel Office annually issues to all employees an *Employee Handbook* that summarizes some district personnel policies. The current handbook, scheduled to be available in the 2001-02 school year, summarizes information related to compensation and benefits, leaves and absences, complaints and grievances, employee conduct and welfare, employment and the termination of employment.

While this information is important to all employees it does not address the processes used by employees in the Personnel Office. Without a

procedures manual that outlines in written detail its current operations procedures the Personnel Office is unable to ensure consistency in the implementation of its process when there is a change in staff.

Recommendation 19:

Develop a Personnel procedures manual.

The Personnel Office should develop a department manual that includes a mission statement and detailed procedures. The mission statement should describe the department's purpose and goals and detail procedures for hiring, recruiting, salary, evaluations, applications, posting of positions, training, compensation and benefits, leaves and absences, and termination.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs develops an outline of the department's procedures.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs assigns responsibility for developing the procedures to the appropriate staff.	November 2001
3.	Staff meets together to review the written procedures and make necessary changes.	November 2001- January 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs reviews the procedures for accuracy and efficiency.	January 2002
5.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs has the procedure manual printed and distributed to all Personnel Office employees.	February 2002
6.	The manual is updated as needed.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Many of RISD's job descriptions are outdated or are simply unavailable. Outdated job descriptions hinder an employee's performance if the duties and responsibilities change over time and the employee is not aware of what is required or expected of the position. An employee must have a

written job description outlining duties and responsibilities to protect both the employee and the employer.

Most of RISD's written job descriptions are several years old. Through the years, new positions have been created and others eliminated, but these changes have not been accounted for in job descriptions.

One example of this is in the job descriptions of the assistant principal and instructional facilitator positions. The job descriptions and qualifications are identical except for the title of the positions (**Exhibit 4-18**).

Exhibit 4-18
Job Description for Assistant Principal and Instructional Facilitator

Title	Assistant Principal	Instructional Facilitator
Qualifications	Master's degree; administrative certification; three years' classroom experience	Master's degree; administrative certification; three years' classroom experience
Supervisor	Principal	Principal
Supervises	All personnel assigned	All personnel assigned
Job goals	To assist in coordinating and administering the various programs of his/her school.	To assist in coordinating and administering the various programs of his/her school.
Instructional Management	Assist in monitoring instructional and managerial processes.	Assist in monitoring instructional and managerial processes.
Human Resources Management	Participate in interviewing, selection and orientation of new staff.	Participate in interviewing, selection and orientation of new staff.

Source: RISD Personnel Office.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs recently stated that he intends to appoint a committee to review and revise the job descriptions by late September or early October of 2001.

Recommendation 20:

Update existing job descriptions and develop new descriptions for positions that require them.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs should conduct a review of all job positions within the district's different departments. The Personnel Office should have all employees summarize their job duties for their supervisors. Department heads then should revise the descriptions for accuracy and submit them to the Personnel Office. To ensure that job descriptions remain current, the department should establish a schedule to review each job description at least once every three years.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations create a master list of positions.	September 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs distributes the master list to department directors who review the list and solicit accurate job descriptions from their employees.	October 2001
3.	Employees review these job descriptions for updated information.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs meets with department directors to finalize the updating of job descriptions.	January 2002
5.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs approves revised job descriptions.	January 2002
6.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs disseminates the approved job description to all employees.	February 2002
7.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs oversees the updating of job descriptions annually and conducts position audits at least every three years.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

B. RECRUITING, EMPLOYMENT AND RETENTION OF PERSONNEL

RISD has 688 employees, of whom 302 are teachers. Teachers and principals are employed under contract. Teachers must renew their contracts every year.

Subchapter B, Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires teachers to hold a teaching certificate awarded by the State Board of Educator Certification. According to TEC Section 11.202, the superintendent has sole authority to recommend a teacher to the board for employment, but the principal must approve each teacher appointment to his or her campus.

RISD policy DAB (LOCAL) sets the following requirements for district employment:

- Academic or technical preparation, supported by transcript;
- Proper certification for grade level, subject, or assignment, including emergency permits;
- Endorsements for specific subjects, programs, or positions;
- Experience;
- Recommendations and references;
- Evaluations;
- Suitability for the position and professional competence;
- A district need.

Exhibit 4-19 profiles RISD's teacher staffing from 1996-97 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-19
RISD Teacher Staffing
1996-97 through 2000-01

Years	Teachers	Students	Teacher/Student Ratio
1996-97	305	4,393	1:14
1997-98	308	4,307	1:14
1998-99	317	4,286	1:14

1999-2000	312	4,232	1:14
2000-01	302	4,116	1:14

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-20 shows the total number of full time equivalent (FTE) positions by type at RISD over the past four years.

Exhibit 4-20
Number of FTE Employees and Students at RISD
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Staff Classifications	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total						
Teachers	304.6	43.7%	307.8	44.3%	316.7	44.6%	312.2	44.4%	302	43.9%
Professional Support	47.1	6.8%	48.1	6.9%	52.3	7.4%	53.1	7.5%	53	7.7%
Campus Administrators	18.0	2.6%	15.8	2.3%	16.5	2.3%	16.4	2.3%	14	2.0%
Central Administration	7.0	1.0%	7.0	1.0%	6.0	0.8%	6.0	0.9%	9	1.3%
Professional Staff	376.6	54.1%	378.7	54.5%	391.5	55.2%	387.7	55.1%	378	56.9%
Educational Aides	97.7	14.0%	99.3	14.3%	100.1	14.1%	101.1	14.4%	100	14.5%
Auxiliary Staff	222.0	31.9%	216.9	31.2%	218.1	30.7%	214.4	30.5%	210	30.5%
Total Staff	696.3	100%	694.8	100%	709.7	100%	703.1	100%	688	100%*
Student Enrollment	4,393	100%	4,307	100.0%	4,286	100%	4,232	100%	4,116	100%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

FINDING

RISD offers employees and job-seekers the opportunity to obtain district contact names, e-mail addresses and phone and fax numbers and view job vacancies on the district's Web page. The district's Web site is linked to

the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) Web site. Applicants also can download a job application from the Web site.

COMMENDATION

The RISD Personnel Office facilitates the job application process by posting vacancies and applications on its Web site.

FINDING

RISD often has vacant teaching positions as late as July. RISD's assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs assumed responsibility for recruiting new teachers in June 2000, when the district had about 50 job openings. The district was able to fill these positions by the beginning of school. As of July 2001, the district had three job positions to fill.

RISD's job openings are posted on the district's page on Region 2's Web site and advertised in the local newspaper and the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. Recruiting efforts, however, are very basic; the district has made little effort to attend job fairs or visit nearby universities to contact potential applicants. The Personnel Office has no strategic plan with goals to enhance recruitment efforts.

Districts around the state are taking steps to attract teachers. Ysleta ISD offers a signing bonus for certified teachers. Comal ISD staff visit Southwest Texas State University, the University of Texas at Austin and Trinity University at least once each year to recruit teachers.

Recommendation 21:

Develop a teacher recruitment strategy.

Filling vacant teaching positions in the last month before a new school year begins limits districts to a smaller pool of applicants and could result in the hiring of teachers that are not as qualified as others. Recruitment strategies should target earlier hiring of the best qualified teachers. The Personnel Office and other administrative employees should develop a strategy to recruit the most qualified teachers available. RISD should research recruitment strategies to identify successful methods and develop a plan that includes recruiting goals, timeline, activities and procedures.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs should contact local universities that have teacher-training programs, to seek their assistance in reaching certified teacher candidates through job fairs or other means.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs researches data to identify successful recruitment plans.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent, assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations identify effective teacher recruitment strategies.	October 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs develops a teacher recruitment plan and submits it to the superintendent for approval.	November 2001
4.	The superintendent presents the recruitment plan to the school board for approval.	December 2001
5.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs implements the plan.	December 2001
6.	The Personnel Office updates the recruitment plan as needed.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD has a shortage of qualified substitute teachers. The district requires substitutes to have a GED or high school diploma. Applicants are required to attend a half-day orientation organized by the Personnel Office before being called for an assignment. The employees receive a manual with district information, a substitute's code of ethics, hints for classroom management and board policies addressing standards of conduct. Applicants who are state certified, however, are not required to attend this training in order to act as substitute. After the first orientation, substitute training is supplied informally, on an as-needed basis.

Substitute teacher positions are posted on the RISD Web page on a continuous basis. According to RISD, the district faces a shortage of substitute teachers in large part because the area simply does not offer a large enough pool of qualified candidates. In August 2000, about 52 people participated in the half-day training and the district conducted about six additional substitute teacher orientations in the 2000-01 school year.

The district has a particularly difficult time finding substitutes on Mondays and Fridays. A district employee begins calling substitutes each

morning at 5:30 a.m. and calls for two hours. This individual has been reporting to the central office at 5:30 a.m. since January 2001 and earns \$20 for two hours of calling each day. The school district's draft strategic plan calls for the district to improve hiring procedures, increase the daily rate for substitutes and redesign its procedures for contacting substitutes.

Recommendation 22:

Develop strategies to address the district's shortage of substitutes.

Strategies should concentrate on recruiting and retaining substitutes. The Personnel Office could conduct a summer training session that is open to the public, to develop a pool of qualified substitute teachers. The session could be used to encourage parents and others to substitute. Other strategies could include newspaper ads, contacts with local college placement offices, flyers at open house functions and PTA meetings, advertisements at any temporary employment placement offices in the area, and incentives for substitutes to work on Mondays and Fridays.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs researches the successful substitute recruitment strategies used by other districts.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations develop strategies to increase the pool of available substitutes.	November 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs distributes the strategies to campus principals for their review and response.	December 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs finalizes the strategies and implements them.	January 2002
5.	The Personnel Office reviews the strategies annually, eliminating those that are ineffective and adding new ones.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

A review of employee personnel records revealed that several employees' folders did not contain evaluations for 1999-2000 and prior years. The Texas Education Code, Section 21.203(a) requires that "each teacher shall

be given a written evaluation annually or at more frequent intervals." The district uses the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), a standardized appraisal form, which is administered by the district's Educational Operations Office.

The district's policy DN (LOCAL) states that "all district employees shall be periodically appraised in the performance of their duties." But evaluations for non-professional staff were not kept current prior to 1999-2000. Evaluations for non-professional staff are handled by the superintendent's office.

Since May 2001, the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs has initiated a drive to conduct evaluations for each district employee. The Personnel Office is tracking the progress of these evaluations on a chart and checking off each employee's name as the office receives the evaluation. In past years, some departments failed to complete annual evaluations for all employees.

Recommendation 23:

Improve procedures for employee evaluations and establish a timeline for the completion of all employee evaluations.

The Personnel Office should include other departments in improving its evaluation procedures. Evaluation procedures should ensure that all employees have at least one performance evaluation annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs assembles a team of directors to revise procedures for evaluating all employees.	October 2001
2.	The team develops procedures including an evaluation format, timelines and a chain of command for the review and approval of every employee's evaluation.	November 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs distributes the proposed procedures to all staff that will perform evaluations for review and response.	December 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs revises the procedures as necessary and submits them to the superintendent for approval.	February 2002
5.	The superintendent approves the procedures.	March 2002
6.	The superintendent submits the approved procedures to the	March 2002

board.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

C. TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff training helps ensure that employees have the information they need to enhance their job performance. Staff development allows teachers to learn new teaching techniques and skills and to exchange ideas with other educators.

FINDING

RISD's district SBDM committee coordinates staff training days that the district schedules and posts in the school calendar. The Educational Operations Department manages the training activities that take place on those days. Facilitators and principals help coordinate the presentations.

RISD encourages its employees to seek training that can help them serve students more effectively, and provides training on various issues related to student needs. Region 2 also offers staff training throughout the school year.

Orientation for new teachers is a one-day districtwide event. New employees receive information from the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs, the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations, professional organizations, the district's Business and Safety Offices, the gifted and talented program, Food Services, federal programs, Career and Technology Education, the Maintenance and Transportation Department, section 504 coordinator and the Special Education Office. RISD also operates a mentoring program for new teachers through Region 2 at no cost to the district.

Exhibit 4-21 shows some of the staff training available to RISD employees.

Exhibit 4-21
Training and Staff Development in RISD
2000-01

Training and Staff Development
Gang Awareness
Drug Awareness
Conflict Resolution (Peer Mediation)

Section 504
Special Education
Autism Overview
Gear Up Training
Blood-Borne Pathogen Exposure Control Training
Discipline Training
PDAS Update Training
Gifted and Talented Program
Pre AP/AP Training
Math Curriculum
Preventing Sexual Harassment
Child Abuse Prevention Kit
Regional Staff Development Day

Source: Office of Education Operations.

Exhibit 4-22 provides survey responses to the questions about staff development.

Exhibit 4-22
Survey Question
"The district operates an effective staff development program"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers	7.0%	50.3%	12.7%	22.3%	5.7%
District Administrative and Support Staff	15%	60%	10%	5%	10%

Source: TSPR survey.

COMMENDATION

RISD provides extensive training opportunities for its employees.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MAINTENANCE

Efficient operation of facilities helps districts keep up with changing enrollment and the needs of instructional programs while building confidence and trust in district management. A comprehensive facility, maintenance and energy conservation program coordinates all the district's physical resources. Facility management ensures that district facilities are designed and maintained in a manner consistent with the educational process. This process includes providing a clean school and work environment, ensuring that facilities comply with local, state and federal regulations and minimizing the district's utility and maintenance expenses.

BACKGROUND

Robstown is located 20 miles from Corpus Christi, Texas, in the center of Nueces County. RISD maintains facilities including 41 portable classroom buildings on nine campuses that serve approximately 4,116 students in grades PK-12. Facilities within the district include one high school, one junior high school, one intermediate school, four elementary schools and two alternative education programs. The district also includes a central administration complex, a maintenance/operations and transportation facility, a parent/community center, a special education/warehouse complex, old football stadium offices and field house and the Dulin Building. Square footage for these facilities totals just under 699,000. **Exhibit 5-1** lists RISD facilities and totals square footage for each.

Exhibit 5-1
RISD Facilities
2000-01

Facility	Total Square Footage
Central Administration Office	12,311
Robstown High School	226,353
Wynne Seale Junior High School	91,809
Ortiz Intermediate School	104,816
Lotspeich Elementary School	45,177
Hattie Martin Elementary School	51,141
Salazar Elementary School	54,642

San Pedro Elementary School	36,843
Alternative Learning Center	21,964
Alternative Education Program	11,008
Parent/Community Center	5,652
Special Education/Warehouse	14,275
Maintenance & Operations/Transportation	14,141
Dulin Building	4,704
Old Football Stadium Offices/Field House	3,960
Total	698,526

Source: RISD Property Appraisal, August 25, 2000.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MAINTENANCE

A. FACILITIES

A district's long-range comprehensive master plan provides a basis for planning the facilities that are necessary to meet its changing educational needs. The plan incorporates district policies with information and statistics to become the district's basis for allocating resources. Effective school facilities master planning incorporates the following elements:

Facility Capacity: Each school's capacity should be established by setting standards that govern student-to-teacher ratios and the required square feet of classroom space per student. These standards should also deal with the minimum size of core facilities such as cafeterias, libraries and gyms.

Facility Inventory: An accurate inventory of facilities is a tool for managing the efficient utilization of facilities. Each school inventory should identify the use and size of every room to enable planners to judge the school's capacity.

Enrollment Projections: Accurate enrollment projections are vital to effective facilities planning. Projections should examine neighborhood demographics and track new construction in the school district. Working with county and city planners is a good way to track growth patterns.

Attendance Zones: The use of portable classrooms can temporarily alleviate overcrowding, but can also become a detriment to the district if they are overused when handling the overflow from core facilities. Effective enrollment management dictates attendance zone adjustments to ensure all students have equal access to school facilities.

Capital Improvement Master Plan: Effective planning requires the district to anticipate future needs and balance them against resources. A capital master plan charts future improvements to school facilities and identifies funding sources. The planning process, which should involve members of the community, should identify district goals and objectives and prioritize projects based on those goals and objectives.

Exhibit 5-2 shows a facilities planning process model that could be used to organize and plan for facility growth.

Exhibit 5-2

Recommended Facilities Planning Process

Program Element	Mission	Responsibilities	Deliverable
Planning	Needs Assessment	Identify current and future needs	Demographics, enrollment projections, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis
	Scope	Outline required building areas, develop schedules and costs	Programming, cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis
	Strategy	Identify structure	Facilities project list, master schedule, budget plan, organization plan, marketing plan
	Public Approval	Implement public relations campaign	Public and media relations
Approach	Management Plan	Detail roles, responsibilities and procedures	Program management plan and systems
	Program Strategy	Review and refine details	Detailed delivery strategy
	Program Guidelines	Provide educational, design and construction standards	Educational specifications, design guidelines and Computer Aided Design standards

FINDING

While there has been a facilities needs assessment and a repair and renovation plan developed, the plan has not been embraced by the board or the community. Prior to the 2000-01 school session, the RISD director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation and campus personnel accumulated a listing of identified facilities improvement needs as part of the district's efforts to develop a five-year strategic plan. This report has never been used as a planning document.

Exhibit 5-3 lists the proposed repair and renovation projects identified by campus personnel and the director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation. Completed projects are identified.

Exhibit 5-3
RISD Proposed Facilities Maintenance Projects
2000-05

School	Project	Timeline	Estimated Cost
Robstown High School	Replace chiller system with rooftop package units at the library and vocational wings.	TBD	Proposals
	Replace the BARD air conditioning units in the 100, 200 and 300 wings with 5-ton units.	TBD	Proposals
	Replace sub-feeder electrical wiring and 112 KVA transformer that serve the 100, 200 and 300 wings.	TBD	\$6,500
	Replace air conditioning units in auditorium with (2) 3.5-ton, (1) 15-ton and (1) 20-ton units.	2001-2002	\$34,000
	Replace 12-14 exterior brick wall panels in east and west walls of 400 wing.	Dec 2000 Completed	\$45,000
	Repair/replace roof on athletic/P.E. building.	TBD	Proposals
	Finalize remodeling plans for library and remodel accordingly.	TBD	TBD
	Resurface west parking area.	TBD	Proposals
Wynne Seale Jr. High	Refurbish the chiller system.	Summer 2001	\$20,000
	Replace the chiller system with smaller chiller system.	TBD	Proposals
	Replace chiller system with 5-ton split system units.	TBD	Proposals
	Replace air conditioning units in 800 wing with (2) 10-ton and (1) 15-ton units.	2002-2003	\$29,000

	Replace air conditioning units in band hall with (1) 10-ton and (1) 15-ton units.	2003-2003	\$20,000
Ortiz Intermediate	Replace east chiller unit and refurbish west chiller with new compressors.	Spring 2001	Proposals
	Construct canopy to provided covered play area.	TBD	Proposals
	Refurbish surface of gymnasium floor.	Spring 2001	\$2,500
San Pedro Elementary	Replace chiller system with rooftop package units.	TBD	Proposals
	Replace administrative area rooftop air conditioning units.	TBD	Proposals
	Install motion detectors for main classroom area.	Sept/Oct 2000 Completed	\$2,500
	Construct canopy to provide covered play area.	TBD	Proposals
Lotspeich Elementary	Install motion detectors for main classroom area.	Sept/Oct 2000 Completed	\$2,500
	Construct canopy to provide covered play area.	TBD	Proposals
Salazar Elementary	Re-roof and repair covered walkway.	TBD	\$35,000
	Replace air conditioning unit in kindergarten wing with (2) 10-ton units.	TBD	\$20,000
Hattie Martin Elementary	Construct canopy to provide covered play area.	TBD	Proposals
Maintenance and Transportation Facilities	Construct a bus wash rack area.	June/July 2001	TBD
	Repair/replace security wire top of security fencing.	Spring 2001	TBD
	Resurface mechanic shop area with concrete overlay.	June/July 2001	TBD
	Repair/replace bus parking area.	2001-2002	Proposals

	Install fuel system for district vehicles.	TBD	Proposals
Districtwide	Inspect/repair/replace security wire top of perimeter fencing at all facilities.	Spring/Summer 2001	TBD
	Repair/replace parking areas at all campuses.	TBD	Proposals
	Demolish old restrooms at old stadium.	Feb 2001	\$0
	Resurface and stripe tennis courts at high school and junior high school.	TBD	\$30,000
	Inspect/repair/replace sidewalks that are uneven and/or broken.	2001-2002	TBD
	Contract a study of existing power distribution equipment for possible upgrade and/or replacement and/or expansion.	2000-2001	Proposals

Source: RISD Draft Strategic Plan 2000-05.

Though not included in **Exhibit 5-3**, items identified as necessary to enhance safety and security for the district included the installation of surveillance cameras, replacing or adding lights to parking lots and the installation of two-way intercoms in all classrooms.

Timelines for some of the proposed projects have passed and the strategic plan remained in draft form without board approval in July 2001.

Recommendation 24:

Establish a facilities planning committee to confirm facility needs and develop a master plan, complete with implementation steps for board action.

RISD should establish a facilities planning committee to review recent needs assessments and work completed since the time of the assessments, develop a priorities listing for maintenance and repair projects by campus and for the entire district and deliver a formal facilities master plan to the board.

As part of the facilities planning process, the committee should determine if district facilities are in compliance with requirements established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Compliance deficiencies, strategies for resolving each deficiency, specific project costs to bring each deficiency into compliance, anticipated funding sources and projected timelines and responsibility assignments should be documented in the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes a facilities planning committee and asks members of the community to participate.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent selects RISD staff to serve on the facilities planning committee.	September 2001
3.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation provides the committee with a tour of all district facilities.	October 2001
4.	The facilities planning committee develops a priority list based on the facilities assessment tour and requests input from campus officials.	November 2001
5.	The committee provides the director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation with the completed and prioritized facility needs assessment.	November 2001
6.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation develops cost and timeline information for each proposed project and provides the information to district management for review and approval.	January 2002
7.	The board reviews, amends and approves the facilities plan and directs the Maintenance and Operations department to implement projects for the first year.	March 2002
8.	The facilities committee evaluates project progress and conducts annual reassessments.	April 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD has too much facility space for the number of students it supports. In addition, the district's enrollment has been declining since 1996 as shown in **Exhibit 5-4**. Interviews with the assistant superintendent for Personnel

and Special Programs and the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations indicated that the district expects the pattern to continue.

**Exhibit 5-4
RISD Enrollment from 1996 through 2001**

Year						Percent Change from 1996 to 2001
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	
4,437	4,393	4,307	4,286	4,232	4,116	(7.23%)

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996 through 2000 and PEIMS 2001.

RISD calculates classroom capacity at 22 students per classroom for elementary and intermediate schools and portable classrooms and 25 students per classroom for junior high and high schools. The district's total classroom utilization for all available permanent and portable classrooms is 51.44 percent. **Exhibit 5-5** details the district's total classroom capacity, enrollment and classroom utilization. Hattie Martin Elementary School is the most efficiently used facility with a classroom utilization rate of 76.89 percent.

**Exhibit 5-5
RISD Schools Capacity and Utilization
2000-01**

School	Number of Permanent Classrooms*	Permanent Classroom Capacity	Number of Portable Classrooms	Portable Classroom Capacity	Total Classroom Capacity	Current Enrollment	Total Classroom Utilization
High School	81	2,025	14	308	2,333	964	41.32%
Alternative Learning Center	0	0	18	396	396	104	26.26%
Alternative Education Program	0	0	11	242	242	27	11.16%
Seale	34	850	10	220	1,070	605	56.54%
Ortiz	50	1,100	0	0	1,100	577	52.45%
San Pedro	22	484	4	88	572	341	59.62%

Lotspeich	30	660	2	44	704	412	58.52%
Martin	24	528	0	0	528	406	76.89%
Salazar	46	1,012	2	44	1,056	680	64.39%
Totals	287	6,659	61	1,342	8,001	4,116	51.44%

Source: RISD Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs, May 2001 and PEIMS, 2000-01.

**Special purpose rooms such as libraries and computer labs deducted in determination of the number of available permanent classrooms.*

RISD's schools are operating under capacity, resulting in inefficient assignment of campus staff and excessive operating expenses. With utilization at only 51.44 percent, RISD is spending a great deal of money heating and cooling, maintaining, insuring and staffing underutilized space. In addition to teaching professionals, each school employs administrators and secretaries, its own crew of custodians, cafeteria managers and kitchen staff, as well as a counselor and librarian. **Exhibit 5-6** lists the average campus administrative and support staffing costs. Salary and benefits are based on the district's minimum salary or wage rates per position.

Exhibit 5-6
RISD Average Staffing and Utilities Expenditures
2000-01

Position	Total Salary and Benefits
Principal	\$44,275
School Secretary	\$19,221
Counselor	\$34,207
Library Aide	\$14,875
School Nurse	\$32,086
Cafeteria Manager	\$20,168
Assistant Cafeteria Manager	\$17,903
Custodians (2)	\$21,408
Utilities	\$47,527

TOTAL	\$251,670
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Source: RISD 2000-01 Salary Survey and District budget data.

The estimate for utilities expense is calculated by multiplying the district's utility costs of \$1.29 per square foot as reported by the State Energy Conservation Office by the square footage of the smallest school facility (San Pedro Elementary School with 36,843 square feet), shown in **Exhibit 5-6**, or \$47,527 for utilities. The elimination of two custodian positions amounts to \$21,408 in annual savings for a total of \$68,935 for utilities and custodial maintenance.

Recommendation 25:

Close and sell or lease one of the district's schools.

The district has too many classroom facilities and needs to sell or lease excess space. Closing one of the schools would increase space utilization, reduce maintenance and custodial requirements, cut utilities expenses and eliminate salaries and benefits for unnecessary positions.

An alternative to selling one of the schools would be for the district to lease out space as offices for the City of Robstown, local businesses or other organizations

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The school board and superintendent analyze school facility utilization to include current rates and projections for future enrollment.	September 2001
2.	The district conducts surveys and public meetings with the local community and district staff to discuss issues involved with closing a school.	October 2001
3.	The school board determines the appropriate school to close based on analysis of enrollment projections, utilization, attendance zoning input from the community and facilities assessments.	December 2001
4.	The superintendent prepares a schedule for closing a school and a plan for redirecting students.	February 2002
5.	The superintendent and school principals provide information to parents regarding school closure and student reassignment.	March 2002
6.	The school principals work with parents to identify individual	April 2002

	student placement needs.	
7.	Students are reassigned to different schools for upcoming school years.	May 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Because staffing reductions are assumed as a result of the implementation of an overall staffing allocation formula only the utility and maintenance expenses shown in **Exhibit 5-6** are included as savings.

Selling the property and returning that property to the tax rolls will also produce savings, but because of the soft economy for real estate in the area, this amount was not estimated.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Close and sell or lease one of the district's schools.	\$0	\$68,935	\$68,935	\$68,935	\$68,935

FINDING

Despite the fact that many RISD facilities are operating under capacity, the district has 41 portable buildings at various campuses. Most are unoccupied but there is space in the adjoining permanent facilities for the activities taking place in those portables that are in use. As shown in **Exhibit 5-5**, the ALC and AEP campuses have no permanent classroom space and use only portable buildings. Classroom utilization for these two campuses is extremely low. There is space at the Alternative Learning Center to accommodate approximately 396 students, but the enrollment is only 104, which is a utilization rate of only 26.26 percent. Classroom utilization at the AEP campus is even lower, at 11.16 percent. **Exhibit 5-7** shows the classroom utilization rate without portable buildings at any campuses with permanent facilities.

Exhibit 5-7
RISD Recommended Use of Permanent Classrooms

School	Number of Permanent Classrooms*	Permanent Classroom Capacity	Current Enrollment	Total Classroom Utilization
High School	81	2,025	964	47.60%
Seale	34	850	605	71.18%

Ortiz	50	1,100	577	52.45%
San Pedro	22	484	341	70.45%
Lotspeich	30	660	412	62.42%
Martin	24	528	406	76.89%
Salazar	46	1,012	680	67.19%
Totals	287	6,659	3,985	59.84%

Source: RISD Maintenance Department and PEIMS 2001.

**Special purpose rooms such as libraries and computer labs deducted in determination of the number of available permanent classrooms.*

As shown, the high school's permanent facility could physically accommodate the AEP and DAEP programs if appropriate physical barriers were installed.

Recommendation 26:

Eliminate the use of portable classroom buildings and sell them as excess property.

Eliminating the use of portable buildings would result in higher classroom utilization rates, decreased utility expenses and less maintenance for underutilized or unused property.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation submits a report to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs identifying all portable buildings.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and the assistant superintendent of Educational Operations formulate a plan to eliminate the use of portable classroom buildings and redirect students to permanent classroom space and submit the plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	November 2001
3.	The board directs the superintendent and director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation to execute the sale of portable buildings.	December 2001
4.	The assistant superintendents implement the plan and students	January

	are moved into permanent classrooms.	2002
5.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation advertises and sells the portable buildings.	January 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated costs savings is based on the sale of 41 portable buildings over a three year period, selling 14 the first year and second year and 13 in the third year at a conservative profit of \$5,000 per building. The estimate for savings in utilities expense is calculated by multiplying the per square foot costs of \$1.29 by the total square footage of portable building space (67,620 times \$1.29 per square foot in utility expenses results in annual utilities savings of \$87,229). A percent of this amount is assumed in each year as the buildings are sold.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Sell portable classrooms.	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$65,000	\$0	\$0
Utility savings.	\$29,658	\$59,316	\$87,229	\$87,229	\$87,229
Net Savings	\$99,658	\$129,316	\$152,229	\$87,229	\$87,229

FINDING

RISD does not maintain an inventory of its facilities. The district's property appraisal, reported in August 2000 by the North American Group of insurance companies, indicates total square footage of 640,451 for the district campuses, administration office, parent involvement center, special education complex, maintenance and operations building, Dulin building, and offices and field house at the old football stadium. The appraisal also includes 37 portable buildings for an additional 58,345 square feet for a total space of 698,796 square feet. Information was collected from the RISD energy conservation program manager, but the data conflicted with the district's property appraisal and did not include square footage information for other district facilities. A districtwide portable building survey conducted by RISD in July 1996 indicated a total of 41 portable buildings with a total of 67,620 square feet, bringing the district total to 708,071 square feet.

The Maintenance and Operations department could not provide information regarding the number of permanent classrooms or data relative to the number of acres of land owned and maintained by the district.

Square footage data is important in measuring overall space capacity and utilization, identifying insurance needs, ensuring accurate energy costs and monitoring efficient use of facilities. An accurate inventory of RISD land and facilities coupled with data from the district's financial operations would enable the district to identify and report valuable statistics such as utilities and maintenance expenses per square foot.

Recommendation 27:

Develop and maintain a comprehensive facilities and property inventory.

The inventory should include and continuously track and update information regarding site size measured in acres, total square feet and student capacity for both permanent and portable buildings, facility name, facility plat and year of construction.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation and the energy conservation program manager gather or measure square footage data for each of the district's facilities.	September 2001
2.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation develops a comprehensive facilities inventory and submits it to the superintendent and school board for review.	November 2001
3.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation monitors and updates the facilities inventory when changes are made to facilities.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

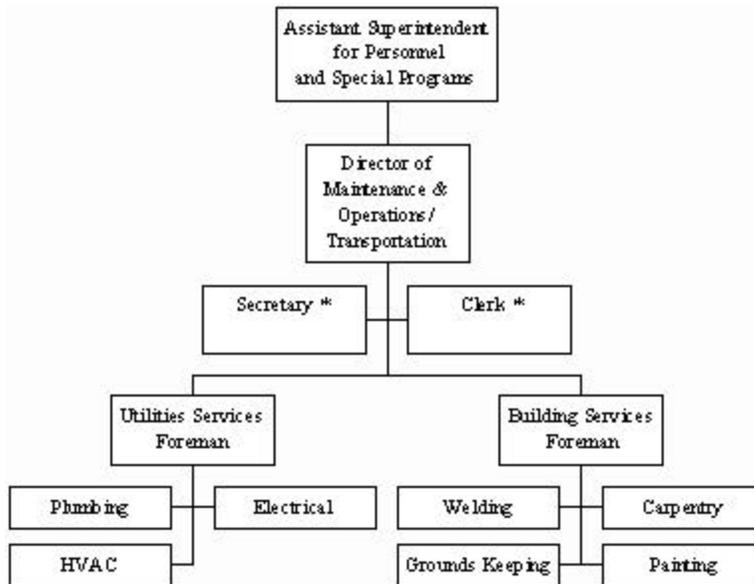
Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MAINTENANCE

B. MAINTENANCE

RISD maintains just over 708,000 square feet of facilities space at nine campuses and other locations within the district. Maintenance staff handles the district's routine repair needs and major equipment repairs and replacement within the scope of their technical expertise. The organization of the office of Maintenance and Operations is displayed in **Exhibit 5-8**.

Exhibit 5-8
RISD Maintenance and Operations Organization
2000-01



Source: *RISD Maintenance and Operations Department April 2001.*
 *Also supports Transportation Department

Total expenditures for the Maintenance and Operations Department for 1997 through 2000 are shown in **Exhibit 5-9**. As indicated, the department's expenditures for salaries and wages and contracted repairs have decreased while the expenditures for rentals and utilities have increased.

Exhibit 5-9
RISD Maintenance and Operations Expenditures
1997 through 2000

Expenditure	1997	1998	1999	2000	Percent
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					Change from 1997 to 2000
Salaries, Wages and Benefits*	\$1,337,282	\$1,348,158	\$1,313,644	\$1,344,944	0.6%
Supplies for Maintenance/Ops	\$159,056	\$196,131	\$147,542	\$144,395	(9.2%)
Contracted Maintenance & Repair	\$119,588	\$115,488	\$69,488	\$86,775	(27.4%)
Insurance and Bonding Costs	\$132,170	\$70,102	\$195,548	\$120,353	(8.9%)
Rentals - Operating Leases	\$8,002	\$7,096	\$6,976	\$16,474	105.9%
Utilities	\$887,753	\$998,441	\$1,029,842	\$1,023,140	15.3%
Other Operating Expenses	\$61,566	\$14,443	\$15,245	\$47,161	(2.4%)
Total	\$2,705,417	\$2,749,859	\$2,779,285	\$2,781,242	2.9%

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

*Includes Function Codes 6119, 6121, 6129, 6141, 6142, 6143, 6146, 6149 and 6411.

Exhibit 5-10 shows RISD's maintenance expenditures as a percentage of the total budget for 1999-2000 compared to its peer districts.

Exhibit 5-10
Maintenance and Operations Budgeted Expenditures
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Maintenance and Operations Expenditures	Total District Expenditures	Percent of Total
Robstown	\$2,817,895	\$26,637,417	10.6%
Mercedes	\$3,500,107	\$33,308,832	10.5%
Roma	\$3,049,140	\$30,186,038	10.1%

Hidalgo	\$1,672,000	\$17,724,296	9.4%
Raymondville	\$1,579,785	\$19,276,922	8.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

The RISD Maintenance and Operations Department has 21 employees as shown in **Exhibit 5-11**. The director also serves as the Director of Transportation and both the secretary and clerk provide support to the Transportation division.

Exhibit 5-11
RISD Maintenance and Operations Staff
2000-01

Position	Number
Director	1
Secretary	1
Clerk	1
Building Services Foreman	1
Carpenters/Helpers	4
Painter/Helper	2
Welder/Helper	2
Grounds/Utility Worker	2
Utilities Services Foreman	1
HVAC Technicians/Helpers	4
Electrician	1
Plumber	1
Total	21

Source: RISD Maintenance and Operations Department.

FINDING

RISD's level of custodial staffing is not in line with the total square footage maintained according to the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) standards. RISD custodians report directly to the principal at the school where they work. The duties of custodians may

vary slightly from campus to campus based upon the priorities determined by the principal. Custodians assigned to the Food Services Department report directly to the cafeteria manager at each school and work only within the Food Services Department.

According to ASBO 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 period. **Exhibit 5-13** indicates the application of this standard to RISD custodial staffing by campus. Because the Food Services Department employs its own staff of custodians at each school kitchen, the Food Service custodians were not counted and the square footage for each campus was reduced by the size of the cafeteria. Applying the ASBO-recommended standard indicates that RISD is overstaffed with custodians by approximately 7.92 full time equivalents. When reviewing possible positions to cut as part of the reduction in force, the district did not look at support staff, such as custodians.

Exhibit 5-13
Recommended Number of Custodians Per Facility

Campus	Square Footage Maintained	RISD Number of Custodians*	ASBO Recommended Number of Custodians	Variance
Central Administration Office	12,311	1	0.62	0.38
Robstown High School	209,868	12	10.49	1.51
Wynne Seale Junior High	81,629	5	4.08	0.92
Ortiz Intermediate School	94,818	4	4.74	(.74)
Lotspeich Elementary School	38,577	2.5	1.93	0.57
Hattie Martin Elementary	44,613	3.5	2.23	1.27
Salazar Elementary School	46,550	4	2.33	1.67
San Pedro	31,279	3	1.56	1.44

Elementary School				
Alternative Learning Center	21,164	1.5	1.06	0.44
Alternative Education Program	11,008	1	0.55	0.45
Parent Involvement Center	5,652	0.5	0.28	0.22
Special Education	14,275	0.5	0.71	(0.21)
Total	611,744	38.5	30.58	7.92

Source: RISD Property Appraisal, August 25, 2000 and RISD Energy Conservation manager.

**Excluding Food Service custodians.*

Recommendation 28:

Implement a custodial staffing formula.

Limiting daytime use of custodial personnel and implementing work schedules that emphasize late afternoon and evening work hours will eliminate the need for custodians to work around students and teachers and will provide a minimum of disturbance to pupils and school personnel.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent of Human Resources identifies areas overstaffed with custodians and works with school principals and lead custodians to eliminate positions.	September 2001
2.	The principals and lead custodians for each school restructure custodial work schedules to allow for primary cleaning time during after-school hours and submit the plan to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources.	October 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent of Human Resources reviews and approves the elimination of positions and restructuring of the custodial workload.	October 2001
4.	Principals and lead custodians implement the new work schedule as it is approved.	November 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

Estimated cost savings are calculated using salary and benefits for entry-level custodians of \$10,704 (\$5.86 x 8 hours per hour for 180 days with benefits of 5.5208 percent of salary plus \$1,800) times seven positions equates to \$74,930 annually, with implemented reduction effective at the end of October in the 2001-02 school year.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Implement a custodial staffing formula.	\$59,944	\$74,930	\$74,930	\$74,930	\$74,930

FINDING

RISD's priorities for routine maintenance are not clearly defined. The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation stated the principals' offices determine emergencies at the campus level and calls in work order requests. Work determined not to be an emergency is generally assigned the next day. Work orders are entered into an electronic file that serves as the department's record of the work order process. There is no online method for submitting work orders or tracking the progress of maintenance requests and there is no database capable of handling queries or user-defined reporting. **Exhibit 5-14** lists the work orders processed during from September 1, 2000 through March 9, 2001.

Exhibit 5-14 RISD Status of Work Orders September 1, 2000 through March 9, 2001

Number of Work Orders Initiated	Number of Work Orders Completed	Number of Incomplete Work Orders	Percentage of Work Orders Incomplete
2,362	1,755	607	25.7%

Source: RISD Maintenance and Operations Department April 2001.

For the referenced 6-month period, more than 25 percent of work order requests submitted were not completed. In addition, surveys conducted among central administrators, campus administrators, teachers and support staff indicated that there is a broad mixture of opinion regarding the responsiveness and quality of routine and emergency maintenance operations. **Exhibit 5-15** shows excerpts from surveys among parents, teachers, campus and district administrators.

Exhibit 5-15 RISD Evaluation of Facilities Maintenance

**Parent, Teacher, Campus and District Administration Surveys
March/April 2001**

Survey Statement	Agree/Strongly Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.			
Parents	54.0%	16.2%	29.7%
Teachers	43.9%	8.3%	46.5%
Campus Administrators and Support Staff	46.6%	3.3%	50.0%
District Administrators and Support Staff	50.0%	10.0%	40.0%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.			
Parents	45.9%	18.9%	35.1%
Teachers	32.5%	9.6%	56.7%
Campus Administrators and Support Staff	36.7%	10.0%	53.4%
District Administrators and Support Staff	55.0%	10.0%	35.0%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.			
Parents	59.4%	16.2%	24.3%
Teachers	54.1%	15.3%	29.3%
Campus Administrators and Support Staff	76.6%	6.7%	16.6%
District Administrators and Support Staff	65.0%	15.0%	15.0%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

As shown, the majority of people surveyed feel that while most emergency maintenance is handled promptly, general facility repairs are not made timely. In addition, survey responses were equally split regarding satisfaction with the quality of facility maintenance.

Recommendation 29:

Develop a schedule of maintenance priorities and automate the work order process to track progress and completion of maintenance work orders.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation develops a priority listing of maintenance activities to include the expedition of emergency repairs.	September 2001
2.	The director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation submits the priorities listing to campus principals.	September 2001
3.	The campus principals or custodians call in work order requests and submit them to the Maintenance and Operations department.	September 2001
4.	The M&O secretary or clerk initiates the automated work order process with the department's existing system and tracks work order completion.	September 2001 - Ongoing
5.	M&O staff complete work and submit labor, supply and materials information to the M&O administrative staff.	September 2001 - Ongoing
6.	The M&O administrative staff completes the automated work order and generates reports.	September 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

As shown in **Exhibit 5-3**, RISD's facilities are in need of repair and renovation.

The federal Tax Payer Relief Act of 1997 established Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs), which allow schools to borrow at no or nominal interest. The intended use for these available funds is to create resources to help better educate children and better prepare them for college or entrance into the workforce. QZAB is a federally funded program providing federal tax credits to lenders who purchase bonds from an issuing school district and allowing the authorized district to obtain interest-free funding.

The U.S. Department of Education states that eligible schools must be located in an empowerment zone or an enterprise community or expect to have at least 35 percent or more of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Act. With more than 90 percent of RISD's students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, the district is eligible for QZAB funding if it applies before the program's scheduled end in November of 2001. The funds can be used for any of the following types of projects:

- The rehabilitation or repair of public school buildings;
- The provision of equipment for public school use;
- The development of course materials; and
- The training of teachers and other school personnel.

To apply for QZAB, the RISD superintendent must complete the application and provide written assurance from a business 'partner' designating a contribution of 10 percent to the total project at the qualified school. The contribution may include cash, property, equipment, professional or volunteer services and the district may partner with either a single entity or with several entities in order to reach the 10 percent threshold. The application process takes approximately 30 days from the date of submission to the TEA final approval and upon receipt of QZAB designation, the district will have 180 days to issue the bonds.

Recommendation 30:

Pursue funding of facility repairs and rehabilitation by applying for and issuing Qualified Zone Academy Bonds.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Board of Trustees approves and selects repair/rehabilitation projects for individual campuses based on information provided by the facilities planning committee.	September 2001
2.	The Board of Trustees and superintendent forms an alliance and partnership with an entity or entities to provide a 10 percent contribution to the project.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent submits a QZAB application to TEA.	October 2001
4.	TEA approves the application and RISD receives QZAB designation.	November 2001
5.	RISD issues QZAB bonds and initiates repair and rehabilitation projects funded.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MAINTENANCE

C. ENERGY USE

FINDING

RISD installed a complete energy management system in May 2000. The system is an electric/electronic system utilizing a Siebe Direct Digital Control (DDC) system. Temperature and humidity controls are by unit-furnished thermostats and humidistats installed and wired by a mechanical contractor.

The system is in cooling mode whenever the outside air temperature is above 70 degrees. The system is taken out of cooling mode when the outside air temperature is below 65 degrees. The system is in heating mode whenever the outside air temperature is below 55 degrees and will be taken out of heating mode when the outdoor air temperature rises above 60 degrees. Pumps, chillers and boilers are each disabled at outdoor air temperatures above 60 degrees but below 65 degrees.

Exhibit 5-16 shows RISD's monthly utility expenses for the last two years. The district does not track gas consumption rates.

Exhibit 5-16
RISD Utilities Expenses
1999-2000 and 2000-01

Month	Electricity Costs		Electricity Consumption KWH		Gas Costs	
	1999-2000	2000-2001	1999-2000	2000-2001*	1999-2000	2000-2001
September	\$80,153.59	\$90,086.84	1,091,622	1,041,703	\$881.72	\$1,392.90
October	\$74,969.02	\$103,463.97	989,070	1,010,190	\$893.12	\$2,541.50
November	\$56,703.08	\$68,106.68	702,180	683,405	\$1,217.36	\$1,542.63
December	\$43,003.88	\$51,750.52	569,938	519,896	\$1,549.57	\$2,511.43
January	\$38,251.78	\$53,627.99	479,090	590,281	\$1,097.44	\$12,284.13
February	\$49,388.65	\$64,283.30	686,098	589,222	\$1,854.63	\$4,922.72
March	\$44,573.72	\$58,244.54	588,984	533,659	\$976.48	\$2,092.47
April	\$49,490.19	\$63,231.89	644,616	636,521	\$1,140.46	\$1,561.97

May	\$57,697.63	\$76,676.53	717,015	660,061	\$840.25	\$1,056.22
June	\$78,670.60	\$77,248.95	911,999	827,302	\$1,178.60	\$880.15
July	\$62,934.12	N/A	721,674	N/A	\$470.29	N/A
August	\$118,995.76	N/A	993,244	N/A	\$1,360.88	N/A
Total	\$754,832.02	\$706,721.15	9,095,530	7,092,240	\$13,460.80	\$30,786.12
Average	\$62,902.67	\$70,672.12	757,961	709,224	\$1,121.73	\$3,078.61

Source: RISD Energy Conservation Program Manager.

As shown, Robstown ISD's utilities consumption was lower in eight of the ten comparison months (figures in bold), but the costs for both electricity and gas increased for every month in the 2000-01 school year through May. Through June 2001, the district's electricity costs had already reached \$706,721 and the gas costs were \$30,786, which is more than twice the total for gas in 1999-2000. Average monthly electricity consumption for the district has decreased 6.43 percent, but the costs for electricity have increased 12.35 percent. RISD's average monthly gas costs have risen 174 percent in the last year.

COMMENDATION

RISD has implemented the use of an energy management system to help reduce the district's energy costs.

FINDING

Utility expenses for the 2000-01 school year have risen drastically from 1999-2000 despite reduced consumption in most months. RISD's utilities are currently provided by the City of Robstown's privately owned utility company. The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) conducted an energy audit in May 2001 to study the district's energy conservation measures and provide recommendations on ways that RISD could reduce its utilities expenditures.

SECO's review of the Robstown ISD indicated a number of energy-saving opportunities. The audit also yielded several recommendations for maintenance and operations procedures including improved control of interior and exterior lighting, publicizing energy conservation and controlling outside air infiltration. Other recommendations include establishing HVAC unit service schedules and replacing premium efficiency motors.

Projects recommended by SECO include improvements to the district's air conditioning systems and lighting systems. In addition, the district's energy management control systems were found to have limited capabilities and in some cases were not functioning properly, if at all.

Several projects identified by SECO as beneficial to the district have also been identified in RISD's draft 5-year strategic plan and therefore are not presented here with estimated costs and savings. Recommendations include RISD's involvement in no-cost programs through the \$600,000 in replacement costs for various chillers and air conditioning units throughout the district.

Almost all of the lighting in the school district is provided by 34-watt T-12 fluorescent lamps and magnetic ballasts. Replacing this type of lighting with 32-watt T-8 lamps and electronic ballasts would yield additional energy savings.

SECO offers a wide variety of programs specifically for school districts, including the Energy Education Outreach Program, Schools Energy Manager Training, Energy Efficient Partnership Program and Sustainable School Design, as well as low interest loans such as the LoanSTAR Revolving Loan Program and the Schools program. The programs offered through SECO would allow the district to achieve further energy savings, provide energy education opportunities for students and energy managers, and promote more energy efficient design for new and renovated facilities.

The Energy Manager Training Program provides administrative and technical training for school and local government energy managers, school business officials, building operators and others responsible for efficient facility operation. Workshops address state-of-the-art building energy technologies, procedures and techniques for saving energy costs, and current utility issues. In many cases, 25 percent or more of a facility's utility bill can be attributed to inefficient equipment and building operation procedures and is therefore paid unnecessarily. Energy Manager Training workshops are designed for school districts, hospitals and local government entities that would like assistance in identifying ways to eliminate their unnecessary energy waste.

Recommendation 31:

Develop a timeline and implementation plan for SECO'S recommendations to reduce utility expenses.

Projects identified by SECO should be reviewed, prioritized and approved by the director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation, assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, the superintendent and the Board

of Trustees with a timeline determined for implementation. There will be costs associated with the projects approved, but each should yield a large measure of savings over time.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	SECO provides RISD with a final report for the audit conducted in May 2001.	September 2001
2.	The director of M&O/T reviews the SECO report and prepares a proposed implementation plan timeline including participation in SECO's Energy Manager Training Program.	October 2001
3.	The director of M&O/T submits the plan and timeline to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and assistant superintendent of Business and Finance for approval.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance makes any necessary adjustments to the proposed plan timeline and recommends approval by the superintendent.	January 2002
5.	The superintendent approves the implementation plan timeline and recommends approval by the Board of Trustees.	February 2002
6.	The Board of Trustees approves the plan and timeline and implementation begins accordingly.	March 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

SECO has a school-based program called Watt Watchers, which provides free materials, training and site support for student councils and students in grades 1 through 12 participating in the program. Students learn about energy resources and actively teach others about the importance of energy efficiency and conservation. The Watt Watchers program involves the use of an Energy Patrol consisting of students, parents, teachers and volunteers who work together to implement energy saving ideas and practices. The Texas Energy Education Development (TEED) program is available for high school students and is also offered by SECO. Students participating in this program conduct year-long energy projects that promote energy conservation awareness not only within the schools, but in the local community as well. In addition, the Schools and Local Government Energy Program provides a number of integrated services to assist school districts and other units of local government in setting up and maintaining effective energy efficiency programs.

Assistance is delivered through energy efficient school partnerships, energy management training workshops, technical support in designing new facilities for optimal energy efficiency and sustainability, and on-site training in setting up student-involved energy awareness projects.

Recommendation 32:

Involve schools in districtwide energy efficiency and conservation efforts.

RISD should enhance its current energy conservation program by promoting student and staff involvement at individual schools. Utility expenditure information should be forwarded to campuses every month to make principals and staff aware of energy use and the effect that conservation has on the district's finances and efficiency.

Implementing a reward system whereby schools share savings from efficient energy use is a great way to encourage student and staff involvement. Spring ISD developed and implemented such a rebate program. This program rewards schools that reduce energy usage below the budgeted amount with a check for one-half of the savings generated.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The energy conservation program manager acquires materials to develop programs such as SECO's Watt Watchers and TEED to promote student and staff involvement in energy conservation.	September 2001
2.	The energy conservation program manager and the director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation visit and work with individual campuses to identify maintenance projects to help the district conserve energy.	October 2001 - Quarterly
3.	School principals and promote campus involvement in selected energy conservation programs.	October 2001 - Ongoing
4.	The energy conservation program manager forwards monthly reports to individual campuses regarding energy use.	October 2001 - Ongoing
5.	The energy conservation program manager submits quarterly energy reports to the Board of Trustees.	December 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Energy savings from campus observation measures could result in significant savings to RISD. Using a conservative savings estimate of 425

kilowatt-hours (kwh) per day of use (2 percent of the May 2001 kwh use) at an average rate of \$0.116 per kwh (per May 2001 expenditure) totals \$49 per day. With facilities in use 220 days per year, the savings would be \$10,846 per year with programs implemented by the end of October 2001.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Involve schools in districtwide energy efficiency and conservation efforts.	\$8,134	\$10,846	\$10,846	\$10,846	\$10,846

Chapter 6

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Texas school districts are responsible for protecting their publicly financed assets. Cash, employees and fixed assets are among a school district's most valuable assets. The goal of asset and risk management is to protect these assets from physical and financial losses resulting from unforeseen events.

Effective asset and risk management involves:

- Investing idle cash and achieving the best rates of return after meeting board policy, principal preservation and liquidity considerations;
- Providing affordable health and workers' compensation insurance to employees;
- Safeguarding property from loss through damage, theft and unexpected events; and
- Managing debt through timely principal and interest payments while reducing costs.

BACKGROUND

The risk management director, the safety officer and the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance are responsible for the district's asset and risk management. This includes overseeing cash management, investing, maintaining fixed assets records and administering the self-funded workers' compensation insurance fund.

The district's cash management activities and investment policies are designed to ensure the safety of idle funds; the availability of operating, capital and debt service funds; and the best return on investments. Emphasis is placed on the safety of the principal and on liquidity. The board reviews and approves the district's investment policies and procedures.

RISD provides workers' compensation insurance under a self-insurance fund and contracts with EOS Claims Services, Inc., a California corporation, for the administration of the fund. The district contracts with Humana Health Maintenance Organization for health insurance coverage.

Chapter 6

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

A. CASH MANAGEMENT

The district's investment policies and procedures comply with the requirements of Chapter 2256 of the Government Code and the Public Funds Investment Act. Sections 2256.009 through 2256.019 of the Public Funds Investment Act provide a list of authorized investments that may be purchased.

The district's investment board policy CDA (LOCAL) allows four types of investments that are authorized by the Public Funds Investment Act:

- Obligations of the United States or Texas or its agencies and instrumentalities and political subdivisions including collateralized mortgage obligations directly issued by a federal agency or instrumentality of the U.S. as permitted by Government Code 2256.009;
- Certificates of deposit as permitted by Acts of the 1997 Legislative Session, Chapter 32;
- Two types of mutual funds as permitted by Government Code 2256.014: money market mutual funds and no-load mutual funds; and
- Public funds investment pools as permitted by Government Code 2256.016-2256.019.

The district currently invests solely in certificates of deposit.

RISD has seven general operating accounts (**Exhibit 6-1**). The business office maintains the operating accounts. The district maintains signature cards for the operating accounts checks written against the operating accounts require the signatures of the board president and board secretary. Checks are signed electronically. The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the superintendent are authorized to execute check preparation within the financial system. The accounting clerk is responsible for reconciling the operating bank accounts.

Exhibit 6-1
RISD Bank Account Type and Description
August 31, 2000

Type of Account	Account Description
------------------------	----------------------------

Building Fund	Construction funds
Financial Clearing Account	Accounts payable disbursements
Interest and Sinking Fund	Debt payments
Local Maintenance Fund	General operating fund
Payroll Account	Payroll and payroll liabilities
Self-Funding Health Care Fund	Workers' compensation funds
Special Revenue Fund	Grant funds

Source: RISD audited financial statements, August 31, 2000.

FINDING

RISD keeps too much money in its bank accounts overnight, not earning the maximum amount of interest available. RISD's operating bank accounts are interest-bearing with the district paying an analysis fee of \$13,050 on these accounts. For 2000-01, RISD earned an approximate 1.51 percent interest, earning a total of \$46,695. The district's bank offers sweep account services that provide additional interest on deposits. A sweep account is one that sweeps the ending account balances into overnight investments, reducing the account balances to zero. RISD's bank offers several sweep accounts with average interest ranging from 4.48 to 4.71 percent with a monthly fee of \$175 for the first account and \$100 for each additional account. RISD's daily cash balance is estimated at \$3 million, based on the average daily balances in the district's seven bank accounts. Based on this balance, RISD earned \$46,695 in interest and paid \$13,050 in bank fees for a net of \$33,645.

RISD does not use sweep services available from their depository bank. The district was not aware of the sweep account service provided by their depository bank.

Recommendation 33:

Use a sweep account to increase interest earnings on idle bank balances overnight.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance prepares a resolution to use the sweep service on the district's existing bank accounts.	September 2001
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2.	The board approves the resolution to use the depository bank's sweep account service.	September 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance opens the sweep service to be applied to the district's existing bank accounts.	September 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

By using a "Government Reserves" type of sweep account, the district would earn \$133,567 (\$3,092,366 daily cash balance X .0462 average sweep return from January to June 2001=\$142,867 less a \$9,300 sweep account fee). The net effect of using a sweep account is \$99,922 (\$133,567 - \$33,645 in current interest earning). The first year assumes that the additional earnings will not begin until November 2001.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Use a sweep account to increase interest earnings on idle bank balances overnight.	\$83,268	\$99,922	\$99,922	\$99,922	\$99,922

FINDING

The district does not earn as much as it could from its investments. RISD invests more than \$2.7 million daily. The district deposits funds received from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and from tax revenues into short-term certificates of deposit. The maturity dates for the certificates of deposit are determined by estimating future cash needs. The district's investment policy allows investing in other investment venues. **Exhibit 6-2** compares RISD's investment revenue with peer district investment revenues.

Exhibit 6-2
Comparative Analysis of Investment Revenue Earned
1999-2000

District	Fund Balance at August 31, 2000	Total Revenue	Investment Revenue	Percent of Investment Revenue to Fund Balance	Percent of Investment Revenue to Total Revenue
Hidalgo	\$5,677,300	\$21,542,493	\$580,466	10.2%	2.7%
Mercedes	\$17,694,090	\$38,332,593	\$1,405,520	7.9%	3.7%

Raymondville	\$5,750,222	\$21,580,564	\$771,848	13.4%	3.6%
Robstown	\$2,884,498	\$30,122,006	\$186,136	6.5%	.6%
Roma	\$10,706,125	\$41,756,444	\$759,066	7.1%	1.8%

Source: RISD and peer districts' audited financial statements, August 31, 2000.

Exhibit 6-3 denotes RISD and peer districts' investments in certificates of deposit and public funds investment pools as of August 31, 2000. Three peer districts had all of their investments in pools as of August 31, 2000. Hidalgo ISD and Robstown ISD had all of their investments in certificates of deposit.

Exhibit 6-3
RISD and Peer Districts Investment
In Certificates of Deposit and Public Fund Investment Pools
As of August 31, 2000

District	Public Funds Investment Pools	Certificates of Deposit
Hidalgo	No	Yes
Mercedes	Yes	No
Raymondville	Yes	No
Robstown	No	Yes
Roma	Yes	No

Source: RISD and peer districts' audited financial statements, August 31, 2000.

By only investing its excess cash in certificates of deposit, RISD is not receiving the maximum investment revenue possible. The TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* states three general rules to follow for investing school district funds:

- The purchase of investments should be made with the intent and ability to hold the investment to maturity if necessary;
- All investments should be made with the school district's cash needs and cash flow forecast in mind; and

- The school district *must* understand the investing instrument, the investment mechanics and the associated risk of the investment. Knowledge of these factors and the variables that affect the market value of each investment will assist the school district in determining its investment policies and strategies.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts identified 10 key steps to developing and monitoring an effective investment program, which are published in *Banks to Bonds: A Practical Path to Sound School District Investing*. This publication provides considerable advice on sound investing.

Recommendation 34:

Diversify into other board-authorized investment vehicles to maximize investment revenue.

RISD has the potential to earn increased interest by taking advantage of other types of investments. A review of the allowable investment vehicles should be made and an investment plan developed. The plan should include cash flow projection strategies and strategies to use during interest rate fluctuations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance reviews the rate of return for certificates of deposit, government obligations and public funds investment pools.	September 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance recommends the best plan for investing funds to the board.	September 2001
3.	The board approves the investment plan.	September 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance monitors the activity of the investments on an ongoing basis and makes the necessary changes to maximize the rate of return.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

RISD has the potential to earn \$21,693 annually from additional interest from investing in Texpool, one of the investment pools available to school districts, rather than only investing in certificates of deposit.

The calculation of \$21,693 is based on earning 5.88 percent interest, the average of the Texpool interest rates from September 1999 through

August 2000, less the interest earned from the current certificates of deposit held at April 2001 (\$2,746,042 RISD's average invested funds X .0588 Texpool interest rate = \$161,467, less \$139,774 (\$2,746,042 RISD's average invested funds X .0509 Certificate of Deposit interest rate). This fiscal impact assumes the same Texpool interest rate for each year. Savings in the first year are dependent on when the district can safely cash in the Certificates of Deposit without penalty.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Diversify into other board-authorized investment vehicles to maximize investment revenue.	\$0	\$21,693	\$21,693	\$21,693	\$21,693

FINDING

The district's investment officer does not have the required 10 hours of investment training required by state law and incorporated into RISD's board policy CDA (LEGAL). The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance is the designated investment officer for the district. The accounting clerk assists the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance with the investment responsibility of transferring funds into certificates of deposit. The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance told TSPR that he had not received training as he had held the position of assistant superintendent for Business and Finance for only nine months.

Government Code 2256.005 requires investment officers and the chief financial officer to receive not less than 10 hours of instruction relating to investment responsibilities under the Public Funds Investment Act. Ten hours of instruction must be undertaken in the first 12 months after assuming duties. At least one class of not less than 10 hours is required in every subsequent two-year period.

Recommendation 35:

Obtain training for the investment officer to be in compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance obtains information on investment officer training available.	September 2001
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2.	The investment officer attends training related to investment responsibilities under the Public Funds Investment Act.	November 2001 and each subsequent year beginning in 2002
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FISCAL IMPACT

Investment officer training costs \$125 per person for a two-day workshop provided by the Texas Association of School Boards. At least one class of not less than 10 hours is required in every subsequent two-year period.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Obtain training for the investment officer to be in compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act.	(\$125)	\$0	(\$125)	\$0	(\$125)

Chapter 6

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

B. RISK MANAGEMENT

The district created a Risk Management Department in June 2000. This department includes a risk management director and a safety officer. The risk management staff is responsible for safety and training. The Risk Management Department administers the following safety programs:

Asbestos Management Plan, Alcohol/Drug Testing, Hazard Communication Act, Integrated Pest Management, Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, Security Guards, Employee Accident Prevention Programs, Monthly Safety Meeting and Safety Inspections checklist, CPR training, Administrators' training, Sexual Harassment Prevention training, Substitute Teacher Safety training, New Teacher Orientation, Bus Driver training and Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities. Department staff conducts safety training sessions at the campuses for campus personnel.

Risk Management Department staff perform periodic safety inspections and investigate reported safety concerns. A playground inspection and evaluation was completed in October 2000 by an outside consultant.

The department also developed and distributed the following manuals to district employees:

- Employee Accident Prevention Manual;
- Hurricane Preparedness Manual;
- Crisis Management Plan; and
- Asbestos Management Plan

The department uses as resources the Texas School Safety Center's *Planning Manual for Safe Schools* and the Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) *Loss Control Manual*. Department staff also attend workshops provided by TASB.

The district is self-insured for workers' compensation coverage. The mid-year report issued on March 6, 2001 by the administrator, reported that in the last seven years RISD has saved \$2 million compared to a fully insured workers' compensation policy. The district also has the required comprehensive insurance that includes coverage of property, general liability, automobile fleet, educator's legal liability and mechanical, electrical and pressure equipment.

FINDING

The district created a Risk Management Department in June 2000 to address increasing safety concerns. Safety booklets and manuals are distributed to employees. Accidents have decreased and workers' compensation claims for 2000-01 decreased by 40.8 percent from 1999-2000. **Exhibit 6-4** shows the decrease of workers' compensation claims from 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 6-4
Percent of Decreases in Workers' Compensation Claims by Year
1998-99 Through 2000-01

Year	Indemnity Claims	Medical Only Claims	Total Claims	Yearly Percent Decrease
1998-99	25	127	152	-
1999-2000	24	118	142	(6.6%)
2000-01	12*	72*	84*	(40.8%)

Source: RISD Self-Funded Workers' Compensation - Mid-Year Report.
**Annualized*

Safety programs have been implemented and inspections and training workshops are now scheduled and conducted on a regular basis.

COMMENDATION

The district created a Risk Management department that is aggressive in providing safety education and training to employees of the district, resulting in a 40.8 percent decrease in workers' compensation claims.

FINDING

Employee health insurance for RISD's 688 employees is provided through a contract with the Humana Health Maintenance Organization. The employees have three plans to choose from: a 100 percent coverage HMO plan, an 80 percent coverage Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan and a 90 percent coverage PPO plan. For each employee, RISD contributes \$150 per month for the coverage, while employees contribute \$61.05, \$80.65 or \$138.77 respectively for "employee only" coverage. Dependent coverage can be purchased by the employees for \$189.97 to

\$714.80 per month. In 2000-01, 474 employees are participating in the program.

The 2001 Texas Legislature established a statewide school employee health insurance plan for teachers and other employees of school districts. School districts with 500 or fewer employees-over 80 percent of the state's school districts-will be required to participate in the new state insurance plan beginning in fall 2002. Districts with 501 to 1,000 employees may join the plan but must decide if they will participate before September 30, 2001. Districts with more than 1,000 employees may join in 2005, unless the Teacher Retirement System Board (TRS), which will be administering the plan, determines that an earlier opt-in is feasible. Districts not joining the state insurance plan will still receive state support to continue their locally determined insurance programs. All districts, whether participating in the state insurance plan or not will receive a \$75 a month per covered employee contribution from the state and \$1,000 a year "pass through" for each school employee.

There are some special provisions to the plan that deal with risk pools and self-insurance programs. Risk pools is a method of insuring groups of employees in multiple school districts in order to spread out or "pool" the risk.

Risk pools: If a risk pool was in existence on January 1, 2001, the districts with less than 501 employees within the pool may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Self-Insured: Districts with less than 501 employees who were individually self-insured on or before January 1, 2001, and have continued a self-insured program since, may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Furthermore, the law stipulates that districts that are parties to a health insurance contract in effect on September 1, 2002 are not required to participate until the expiration of the contract period.

All full-time employees and those part-time employees who are members of TRS are automatically covered by the basic state plan, which is considered catastrophic coverage. Receiving higher levels of coverage will require additional district and employee contributions. To assist with these costs, the state will send each district \$75 per month per covered employee and will give each employee an additional \$1,000 annually (\$83 a month) to pay for additional employee coverage, dependent coverage, compensation or any combination of the above. Part-time employees who are not TRS members may participate if they or the district pay the full cost.

Districts are required to make a minimum contribution of \$150 per employee per month. If they are not making that effort, over the next six years the state will help them pay that local district share. The state will phase out this aid over the next six years. Districts reaching the Maintenance and Operations tax cap of \$1.50 will also be held harmless for any tax effort over \$1.50 required to reach their minimum district effort of \$150 a month.

Districts contributing more than \$150 a month per employee may use the difference between their current expenditure per employee per month and the required \$150 a month minimum effort to provide additional insurance coverage or other employee compensation.

All of the details of the plan will be subject to contract negotiations with health insurance providers, actuarial estimates, as well as rules and guidelines set by TRS. TRS has additional details to assist districts with 501 to 1,000 employees to make a decision regarding participation before the September 30, 2001 deadline for declaring their intent to participate. Consequently, within the next year, more than 80 percent of the districts in the state will be examining the options and making plans for a transition to the new plan.

Because the Legislature was concerned about the effect that the termination or bidding of insurance contracts during this final year of coverage would have on a district's ability to obtain competitive bids for health insurance, the state has exempted the smaller school districts from the competitive bid requirements for health insurance coverage for the coming year.

Because the district employs 688 staff, which exceeds the 500-employee level, RISD is a district that will not automatically be enrolled in the program, but will be required to declare by September 30, 2001 whether they will participate in the state plan for 2002-03.

Recommendation 36:

Establish a committee to review the state health plan options and devise a plan of action for the district in 2001-02.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints a committee of employees from throughout the district including the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, to be headed by the Risk Management director.	September 2001
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2.	The committee determines which options are available to the district through the state health plan and those that are available through the current healthcare provider, and determines if the district should participate in the state's plan.	September 2001
3.	The board reviews the recommendation of the committee and votes to accept or reject the state plan.	September 2001
4.	The committee continues to meet to discuss the various funding questions associated with the new state plan, and prepares a report on the potential impact of the funding changes on the district and its employees.	October 2001
5.	The committee prepares a report to the board and employees summarizing the various options and recommending a course of action for employees and for the district.	November 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

C. FIXED ASSETS

The guidelines set forth in TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* states that fixed assets are items that are tangible, have a life longer than one year, have significant value when purchased or acquired, and are reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. They may include land, buildings, machinery, furniture and other equipment, which are intended to be held and used over a long period of time. The emphasis for fixed assets in a school district is on control and accountability. Consequently, various data relating to a district's fixed assets must be accumulated to maintain control and accountability for the custody and maintenance of individual items and to help estimate future needs.

The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance is responsible for tracking fixed assets. The business office secretary maintains the fixed assets inventory records.

District campuses and departments create purchase orders for the purchase of budgeted equipment. The purchase orders are then authorized by the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the district superintendent. Campuses and departments perform purchasing and receiving. Invoices and purchase orders are remitted to the business office for payment and for data entry into the fixed asset inventory program. The purchase orders include the location of the fixed assets.

The business office secretary enters the fixed assets purchased into the fixed assets inventory program. The district uses the Fixed Asset Management Program software, which was installed in March 2000 by RCI Technologies, Inc. This software uses bar coding for tracking and reporting fixed assets.

In March 2000, at a cost of \$14,500, RCI Technologies, Inc. performed a physical inventory, affixed bar codes to the furniture and fixtures and provided the district with an updated fixed assets inventory report.

FINDING

Fixed assets purchased since March 2000 have not been tagged. When questioned by the review team regarding why tagging has not been continued, the RISD interim superintendent told TSPR that they had no personnel available to do the tagging. The interim superintendent said that

several staffing changes had occurred, including the hiring of a new assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the reassignment of the staff member responsible for fixed assets. No other staff assumed the fixed asset duties, so no tagging of fixed assets continued. Items purchased prior to March 2000 were tagged with bar codes by RCI Technologies, Inc.

The physical inventory was performed and software installed in March 2000, and the report from RCI listed the items, identification numbers and location. By not tagging new assets, the district has undermined the inventory system because new assets are now excluded, making the system incomplete.

Recommendation 37:

Assign responsibility for tagging all fixed assets to ensure proper accounting of district-owned property.

The district should assign responsibility for tagging all fixed assets purchased since March 2000 with bar codes to an individual within the business office. In addition, the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance should input all the fixed asset data into the Fixed Asset Management Program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources assigns fixed asset responsibility to an individual within the business office.	September 2001
2.	The individual assigned the fixed asset responsibility provides bar codes to principals for items purchased since March 2000.	September 2001
3.	The principals affix bar codes to fixed assets without bar codes.	October 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance inspects all fixed assets to ensure that they are bar coded.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not hold school principals or other managers accountable for fixed assets under their supervision. The business office does not

provide the school principals and other managers with a list of equipment inventory assigned to them and the district does not require them to sign for that inventory. Neither police reports nor insurance claims are filed for missing items. Further, no employees or supervisors are held accountable when items cannot be found. Items not found during a physical inventory are removed from the inventory.

The inventory completed by RCI Technologies, Inc. was filed in the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance's office and not distributed to the schools or other offices for validation and upkeep. While the review team was at RISD, school principals were unaware of the RCI Technologies, Inc. inventory and had a hard time locating assets listed on the inventory system assigned to them.

Recommendation 38:

Hold school principals and other department heads accountable for the fixed assets under their supervision.

The business office should provide the principals and department heads with an inventory list of fixed assets assigned to them. The Fixed Asset Management Program can be used to print reports by location. The principals and department heads should be required to sign for and accept responsibility for those fixed assets. Missing items should be reported immediately to the Business Office, a police report filed and an insurance claim filed if the missing item was insured. The district should be reimbursed for items not located by the principals or department heads.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance provides principals and department heads a list of fixed assets assigned to them.	September 2001
2.	The principals and department heads compare the inventory list with the fixed assets in their area and report any differences to business office.	September 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance reconciles inventory records with actual inventories.	October 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance provides principals and department heads with an updated inventory lists that will be signed by the principals and department heads who accept responsibility and accountability for the items on the list.	October 2001 By the start of external audit
5.	The principals report missing items to the Business Office.	Ongoing

complete police reports and file insurance claims, if applicable.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Annual physical inventories of fixed assets are not performed. The last inventory was conducted in March 2000 by RCI Technologies, Inc. The district does not have a scanner to be able to quickly scan the bar codes that do exist into the inventory system. When questioned by the review team regarding why a physical inventory has not been taken, the RISD interim superintendent and assistant superintendent for Business and Finance told TSPR that they had no personnel available to handle the inventory process because the staff member in charge of fixed assets was reassigned within the district. The fixed asset inventory responsibility is no longer being performed by anyone. TEA guidelines state that certain fixed assets, such as furniture and equipment should be inventoried on a periodic basis. Annual inventories are typically taken usually at the end of the school term before staff members leave are recommended. Discrepancies between the fixed asset inventory list and what is on hand should be settled. Missing items should be listed and written off in accordance with established policy.

The review team selected a sample of 30 items for physical identification from the inventory list compiled by RCI. Of the 30 items, 11 were not located.

Recommendation 39:

Perform an annual physical inventory of fixed assets.

The district can perform inventories of fixed assets by scanning bar codes on the items, once they purchase a scanner. The fixed asset computer program will produce reports by location, making availability lists that can be compared with fixed assets on hand. The computer program will also print reports showing the physical inventory.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance submits request to purchase a bar code scanner.	September 2001
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2.	The board approves the purchase of a bar code scanner.	October 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance purchases a bar code scanner.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and individual assigned fixed asset inventory responsibility prepares inventory lists for schools and departments.	April 2002
5.	The principals and department directors perform an annual inventory of fixed assets and sign for fixed assets under their supervision.	May 2002 and annually thereafter
6.	The individual assigned fixed asset inventory responsibilities inspect inventory results conducted by principals and department directors.	May 2002 and annually thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

The district will need to purchase a \$2,000 bar code scanner.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Perform an annual physical inventory of fixed assets.	(\$2,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The district's capitalization policy is not at the appropriate level and RISD does not have a policy that covers the depreciation of fixed assets. RISD requires fixed assets with a cost of \$300 or more to be capitalized, while TEA guidelines set the capitalization limits at \$5,000.

Some school districts establish accounting policies with a lower capitalization limit for items recorded as fixed assets. School districts often maintain accountability for certain fixed assets even if they do not meet the district's capitalization policy. A listing of such assets and their location should be maintained for control and accountability.

School districts are not now required to depreciate the value of their assets. Statement 34 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB 34) requires that fixed assets be reported in the financial statements at the net value of the item including depreciation, which means that the district will have to maintain information on the age and useful life of its depreciable assets. GASB 34 goes into effect for school districts beginning September 1, 2001 and has been incorporated into TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*. The Fixed Asset

Management Program has a depreciation function, but the district does not use it to compute the depreciation value of fixed assets.

Policies on depreciation give guidance about estimated depreciable asset lives and methods of depreciation. Policies on depreciation are required for the implementation of GASB 34.

Recommendation 40:

Increase the district's fixed assets capitalization policy to \$5,000 and include a depreciation policy.

RISD should increase the capitalization policy from \$300 to \$5,000 and include in the policy guidelines for the depreciation of fixed assets. However, the district should maintain the \$300 level for control and accountability purposes, which include inventorying items at that level.

The district should begin using the depreciation function in the Fixed Asset Management Program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance revises the district's capitalization policy and develops a policy for the depreciation of fixed assets.	September 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance presents the capitalization and depreciation policy to the board for approval.	September 2001
3.	The business office accounting clerk is trained to use the fixed assets depreciation feature of the fixed assets software.	September 2001
4.	The accounting clerk begins using the depreciation feature.	October 2001
5.	The accounting clerk trains the business office secretary to use the depreciation feature for updating the system and for continued maintenance.	November 2001
6.	The business office secretary maintains the depreciation value of fixed assets.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Effective financial management ensures that a school district receives all available revenue from state and federal sources and maintains a track record of sound financial decisions and adequate and equitable budget allocations. A school district that is managed effectively issues timely, accurate and informative reports on the district's financial position maintains; adequate internal controls; employs skilled well-trained staff; and maintains a consistent record of unqualified opinions by its external auditors.

BACKGROUND

The RISD Business Office is responsible for financial reporting, accounting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, investing and fixed assets. The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance supervises seven employees and reports to the district superintendent. The district contracts with an accounting firm based in Corpus Christi for external auditing services.

The district has contracted since 1990 with the Nueces County Tax-Assessor Collector for the collection of ad valorem taxes. Tax receipts are forwarded to the district on a daily basis. The total tax levy for year 2000 was \$2,699,115, and \$251,923, or 9.3 percent of the total tax levy, was delinquent as of August 31, 2000.

The district's budget process begins in May and ends in August of each year. The budget calendar allows input from principals and program directors. The community is invited to provide input on the budget during the public hearing held before the board votes on the proposed budget.

Exhibit 7-1 provides a comparison of RISD's total annual tax rate to that of its peer districts for years 1996 through 2000. The RISD total tax rate, including maintenance and debt-service rates, has been higher than those of the peer districts.

Exhibit 7-1
RISD and Peer District Total Tax Rate
1996 through 2000

District	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Hidalgo	\$1.3900	\$1.4244	\$1.5400	\$1.5700	\$1.5700

Mercedes	\$1.3600	\$1.4100	\$1.4100	\$1.5100	\$1.4100
Raymondville	\$1.2600	\$1.3200	\$1.3200	\$1.4900	\$1.4900
Robstown	\$1.5690	\$1.5730	\$1.5730	\$1.5605	\$1.6140
Roma	\$0.9000	\$1.0927	\$1.1727	\$1.5000	\$1.5000

*Source: RISD's and peer district audited 08/31/00 financial statements.
Note: Mercedes and Raymondville tax rates for years 1996, 1997 and 1998 represent the maintenance rates only. These districts had no debt service those years. Roma tax rates for all years represent the maintenance rates only. The district had no debt service.*

RISD's budgeted revenues have shown a steady increase from 1997-98 through 2000-01 as indicated in **Exhibit 7-2**. The district's total budgeted revenue increased by 13.0 percent, state revenue increased by 15.2 percent and federal program revenue increased by 15.8 percent.

Exhibit 7-2
RISD Budgeted Revenues
1997-98 through 2000-01

Revenue Source	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Local and intermediate sources	\$3,266,168	\$3,440,284	\$3,296,853	\$3,211,034	(1.7%)
State	\$19,177,849	\$19,567,173	\$21,744,626	\$22,096,619	15.2%
Federal	\$1,808,904	\$2,057,704	\$2,089,613	\$2,094,588	15.8%
Total Revenue	\$24,252,921	\$24,765,161	\$27,131,092	\$27,402,241	13.0%

Source: TEA, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and Public Education Information Management system (PEIMS) 2000-01.

RISD experienced the second smallest percentage growth in total budgeted expenditures from 1997-98 through 2000-01 in comparison to the peer districts, as shown in **Exhibit 7-3**.

Exhibit 7-3
RISD and Peer Districts Total Budgeted Expenditures
1997-98 through 2000-01

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Hidalgo	\$14,310,474	\$17,017,453	\$17,724,296	\$19,639,733	37.2%
Mercedes	\$29,678,338	\$30,694,502	\$33,308,832	\$35,858,861	20.8%
Raymondville	\$16,202,720	\$17,027,710	\$19,276,922	\$18,071,473	11.5%
Robstown	\$23,658,209	\$24,231,694	\$26,637,417	\$26,833,343	13.4%
Roma	\$24,566,726	\$24,518,851	\$30,186,038	\$33,331,678	35.7%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

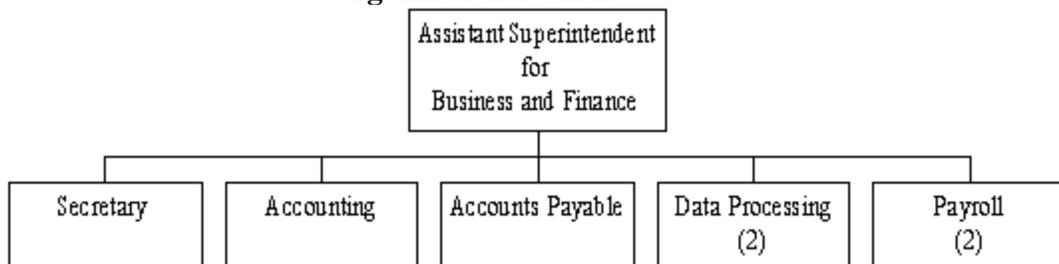
Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

RISD's Business Office staff consists of eight full-time positions: assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, secretary, accounting clerk, accounts payable clerk, two payroll clerks, data processing clerk and data processing systems manager/PEIMS coordinator. **Exhibit 7-4** shows RISD's Business Office organization.

Exhibit 7-4
Business Office
Organizational Chart



Source: RISD Business Office.

The Business Office secretary and clerks have worked in the Business Office from 16 to 22 years. Each has worked in a position or positions in the Business Office other than their present position. The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance position has had several recent turnovers, with the present assistant superintendent for Business and Finance hired in June 2001.

An organization's financial planning and monitoring, as well as its budget development and management establish the foundation for all financial management operations. Effective budget processes typically include formal input from all interested parties, appropriate guidance from administrators, desired goals, objectives and outcomes from strategic planning processes and detailed management and reporting functions throughout the budget cycle.

The district has a budget calendar that begins in May and concludes with the adoption of the budget in August. School and department administrators are responsible for evaluating and prioritizing their needs. Schools and departments submit their budget requests to the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance where they are collected and compiled for submission to the superintendent and board for approval.

The accounting system has an integrated budget module that allows schools and departments to retrieve real-time budget information.

FINDING

The district's budget process does not provide for multi-year budgets to forecast the changes in revenue and long-range effects of board actions. The district only prepares single-year budgets for the upcoming year.

Appraised property values in the district have decreased in the last ten years. Student enrollment has also decreased and further decline is projected by the district. Both of these conditions affect revenues received from TEA. Because of decreasing revenue, the district cannot operate in a fiscally sound way without long-range budgeting.

TEA's Financial Accounting Systems Resource Guide (FASRG) establishes guidelines districts should follow in budgeting. The budgeting process is comprised of three major areas: planning, preparation and evaluation. The process begins with planning, which defines the goals and objectives of schools and develops programs to attain those goals and objectives. When programs and plans have been established, budgetary resource allocations are made to support them. Finally, the budget is evaluated for its effectiveness in attaining goals and objectives. Budgeting is not an annual exercise to allocate funds for the next year, it is a continuous cycle of planning and evaluation to achieve district goals.

The Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) has developed *State Aid* templates and worksheets to assist school districts prepare multi-year budgets.

Region 10's "Components and Competencies for School Business and Support Service" also identified multi-year budgeting as a best practice in financial management.

Recommendation 41:

Initiate a multi-year budget process.

The district should develop a strategy for developing multi-year budgets. The strategy should include a board policy that requires long range fiscal impact statements to be included for all board actions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance prepares strategy and policy requiring fiscal impact statements for all	October 2001
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	board actions.	
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance presents strategy and policy requiring fiscal impact statements for all board actions to the board for approval.	November 2001
3.	Board approves strategy and policy and directs staff to develop procedures to implement.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance develops procedures and instructions for implementing a multi-year budget process.	December 2001 through January 2002
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance presents procedures and instruction to the superintendent for approval.	February 2002
6.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance distributes instructions to school principals and department administrators and conducts a training session.	April 2002
7.	The district begins the budget process for the 2002-03 budget.	May 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources

FINDING

The district does not have a general fund balance management policy and is not maintaining an adequate general fund balance. The district incurred a significant decline in its general fund balance in 1999-2000, a decrease of 23.1 percent.

Government funds such as RISD's general fund report their equity as a "fund balance". A fund balance is the difference between assets and liabilities as reflected on a district's balance sheet. It is a measurement of the district's financial resources available for future use after all current obligations have been met.

The fund balance of a district's general fund is significant since it is the primary fund that supports most of the district's activities and which receives state aid and local maintenance taxes. It is one of the primary measures of solvency for a school district. The fund balance is viewed as the most meaningful reflection of the district's financial condition.

As shown in **Exhibit 7-5** the district's general fund balance has varied from a high of \$2,100,470 to a low of \$1,614,791 over the last four years.

Exhibit 7-5
Changes in General Fund Balance
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Year	Ending Balance	Percent Increase/ (Decrease) From Previous Year
1996-97	\$1,968,577	N/A
1997-98	\$2,060,134	4.6%
1998-99	\$2,100,470	2.0%
1999-2000	\$1,614,791	(23.1%)

Source: RISD's audited financial reports 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

TEA's FASRG provides a computation formats for the optimum fund balance in the general fund. The Computation Worksheet for optimal general fund balance is a required schedule in the annual external audit. TEA recommends that the optimal fund balance be equal to the total reserved fund balance, total designated fund balance, an amount needed to cover Fall cash flow deficits in the general fund and one month of average cash disbursements during the regular (non-summer) school year. Reserved fund balances are those that are legally earmarked for a specific future use, such as a reserve for encumbrances. Designated fund balances are those that are identified by the school district management to reflect tentative plans or commitments.

RISD has operated with a general fund balance below the optimum level for each of the last three years. An analysis of the district's general fund balance as compared to the optimum fund balance is shown in **Exhibit 7-6**.

Exhibit 7-6
Analysis of RISD General Fund Balance
1997-98 through 1999-2000

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Ending Fund Balance	\$2,060,134	\$2,100,470	\$1,614,791
Optimum Fund Balance	\$2,100,000	\$3,782,441	\$1,750,000

Excess/(Deficit)	(\$39,866)	(\$1,618,971)	(\$135,209)
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Source: RISD's audited financial reports 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

As shown, the district is not maintaining an optimum fund balance according to TEA calculations. There are four major indicators that are warning signs of a district in financial difficulty: declining student enrollment, rising number of staff, declining fund balance and a flat tax rate. RISD is experiencing declining student enrollment, and staffing in the district has not been adjusted downward in relation to the number of students served. The fund balance is declining, and the tax rate has increased only 2.9 percent between 1996 and 2000.

Recommendation 42:

Establish a general fund balance management policy.

If the district is to avoid financial difficulties in the coming years, there must be a concerted effort to control spending and increase the general fund balance. The policy should establish the optimum balance and provide clear direction as to how to achieve the goal.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance drafts a general fund balance policy for board approval.	September 2001
2.	The board approves the policy and directs the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance to implement.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent for Business and Finance develops reports to be submitted to the board.	October 2001
4.	The superintendent for Business and Finance prepares and submits reports to the board.	November 2001 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district has not taken advantage of declining interest rates on bonded indebtedness.

The district has financed its capital projects through the issuance of Schoolhouse Bonds. **Exhibit 7-7** provides a list of outstanding bonds as of August 31, 2000. The present interest rate on general obligation AAA Bonds is 5 percent and the cost to issue new bonds is approximately 2 percent of the new bonds issued.

**Exhibit 7-7
Outstanding Bonds
August 31, 2000**

Description	Interest Rate Payable	Original Issue Amounts	Bonds Outstanding
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1986	7.85%	\$799,033	\$799,033
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1992	4.80%	\$3,435,000	\$1,565,000
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1994	3.00%	\$3,890,000	\$1,590,000
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1994	3.00%	\$1,751,932	\$1,751,932
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1994	4.90%	\$1,435,000	\$95,000
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1994	7.45%	\$969,559	\$969,559
Schoolhouse bonds Series 1995	5.00%	\$2,630,000	\$2,320,000
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1995	6.85%	\$513,924	\$513,924
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1997	6.50%	\$7,455,000	\$7,000,000
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1997	6.50%	\$499,935	\$499,935
Schoolhouse bonds-Series 1997	6.50%	\$1,210,000	\$1,210,000
Total			\$18,314,383

Source: RISD's audited financial report 1999-2000.

Exhibit 7-8 compares annual interest being paid on outstanding bonds with interest rates above 5 percent to the annual interest for current AAA Bonds.

**Exhibit 7-8
Comparison of Current Annual Interest
To AAA Bonds**

Description	Present Rate	08/31/00 Outstanding Balance	Current Annual Interest	Annual Interest AAA Bonds 5 percent	Difference Current Annual Interest to AAA Bonds
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Series 1986	7.85%	\$799,033	\$62,724	\$39,952	\$22,772
Series 1994	7.45%	\$969,559	\$72,232	\$48,478	\$23,754
Series 1995	6.80%	\$513,924	\$35,204	\$25,696	\$9,508
Series 1997	6.50%	\$7,000,000	\$455,000	\$350,000	\$105,000
Series 1997	6.50%	\$499,935	\$32,496	\$24,997	\$7,499
Series 1997	6.50%	\$1,210,000	\$78,650	\$60,500	\$18,150
Total		\$10,992,451	\$736,306	\$549,623	\$186,683

Source: RISDs audited financial report 1999-2000.

School districts can achieve significant savings by issuing refunding bonds when interest rates for new bonds fall below the rates that districts are paying on existing bonds. In 1995, the Corpus Christi ISD replaced its high interest bonds with lower interest bonds and produced saving of more than \$2 million which would have been paid had it retained its older high interest bonds.

Recommendation 43:

Refund bonds at a lower interest rate.

Refunding outstanding bonds totaling \$10,992,451 that have interest rates above 5 percent will reduce annual interest costs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance develops a plan for refunding the district's high interest rate bonds.	September 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance presents the plan to the board and obtains approval to enter into a contract with a financial advisor.	October 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance negotiates a contract with a financial advisor.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance works with the financial advisor to issue the refunding bonds.	November 2001 and December 2001
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance presents the bond package to the board for approval.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

By refunding bonds at a lower interest rate, the district can realize annual savings of \$186,683. Interest saving for 2001-02 is based on six months of interest for bonds sold in February 2002. Cost to issue bonds of \$219,849 is calculated at 2 percent of the value of the bonds sold (\$10,992,451 x 2 percent).

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Savings on interest	\$93,341	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683
2 percent refunding fee	(\$219,849)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net savings (costs)	(\$126,508)	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683	\$186,683

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. ACCOUNTING, INTERNAL CONTROL AND PAYROLL

An entity's internal control structure consists of three elements: the control environment, the accounting system and control procedures.

- The control environment reflects the overall attitude, awareness and actions of the board of directors, management and others concerning the importance of control and its emphasis in the entity.
- The accounting system consists of the methods and records established to identify, assemble, analyze, classify, record and report an entity's transactions and to maintain accountability for the related assets and liabilities.
- Control procedures are those policies and procedures in addition to the environment and accounting system that management has established to provide reasonable assurance that specific district objectives will be achieved.

The Business Office prepares the district's accounts payable and payroll checks. Checks are prepared using the district's financial computer system and require two board member signatures. The signatures are affixed electronically, and the district superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance have the authority to initiate the check-preparation program. The board is presented with a detailed list of checks for approval during the regular board meeting.

FINDING

The Business Office's procedures manual is outdated and does not include procedures for all Business Office operations.

The procedures manual was last updated in August 1994. The procedures manual does not include procedures for the electronic signing of checks, cash receipts from the county tax office or electronic cash receipts. Procedures to use in case of employee absences also are not included in the manual; therefore it is not clear who is to perform the duties of absent employees. This can have a serious impact if the employee performs such functions as preparing payroll and depositing payroll taxes. Should the payroll coordinator require time off and not be available to prepare the payroll it is possible that employees will not be paid on time, paychecks may be inaccurate or payroll taxes could be late or incorrect. This situation has the potential to create unnecessary hardships to district employees and

liabilities for the district. Cross-training cannot be effectively carried out until procedures are documented.

The district does not have an internal audit department. Therefore, heavy reliance must be placed on internal controls to help ensure that the financial operations of the district are properly administered.

The FASRG states that as a school district writes an information management plan, inherent in the process should be consideration of internal controls. Each district should have an internal control structure in place to provide reasonable assurance that the school district's assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use or disposition. The attitude of the school district's administration about the importance of internal controls is a key factor in the successful implementation of an internal control system. Development of policies and procedures that include internal control elements is critical.

Changing technology also requires that internal controls be reviewed and updated more often. Technology has also made it simpler to maintain policies and procedures electronically.

Recommendation 44:

Update the Business Office procedures manual to include procedures for all functions.

The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance should update the procedures manual and include the procedures that are being followed but not documented. The procedures should emphasize the segregation of duties and cross-training. The revised procedures manual should be dated and presented to the district superintendent for approval. The procedures manual should also be made available in an electronic format for district staff to use. This will facilitate revisions and will ensure the most current version of the manual is available to district staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance analyses and documents procedures that are being performed by staff.	September 2001 and October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance revises the procedures manual to include all procedures.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent approves revised procedures manual.	December 2001

4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance distributes revised manual to staff and discusses changes to procedures and establishes cross-training schedules.	January 2002
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have a policy regarding the use of manual checks or a set schedule for automated check runs. The Business Office prepares approximately 350 computer-prepared checks each month. Payments using computer-prepared checks are batched together and run through the computer system two or three times each month. The Business Office also prepares 100 to 200 manual checks each month using a typewriter. Manual checks are usually prepared for travel reimbursements, entry fees, purchases from vendors that do not accept purchase orders, purchases from vendors that are not setup in the accounting system's vendor list and for payments to take advantage of discounts.

Accounts Payable is having a difficult time making timely payments to the district's vendors due to the unorganized manner in which payments are processed. Typically, a district will generate computer checks on a set schedule and limit the number of manually issued checks so the payment process can be managed in an efficient manner.

Recommendation 45:

Develop and implement a policy regarding manual checks and a schedule for computer-prepared checks.

Check-preparation runs should be scheduled twice a month. Manual checks should be limited and processed only in emergency situations. District employees should be informed of the changes so that they can assist in improving the district's payment process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance develops a policy for the use of manual checks and establishes a schedule for computer-compared checks.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance presents the policy to the board and obtains approval.	November 2001

3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance revises Business Office procedures and trains staff on new board policy and procedures.	December 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance informs district staff of changes in procedures.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD's controls over its student activity funds are weak.

Student activity funds are maintained and accounted for at the campuses. The campuses remit copies of the bank reconciliations to the Business Office but no other reports on the activity of these funds. The Business Office does not perform any other monitoring of the funds. Cash receipts from events are not compared to deposits and checks are not compared to purchase invoices. The Business Office does not perform any expenditure control functions. The external auditor noted in audit reports for years 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 that the district does not maintain sufficient internal controls over student activity funds.

TEA's FASRG prescribes two common methods of activity-fund accounting: centralized, in which funds are controlled and disbursed through the district's accounting department, and decentralized, in which funds are accounted for and controlled at the various schools.

There are advantages to centralizing activity funds accounting. Some of the advantages are:

- better internal controls as all receipts and disbursements flow through one central accounting system rather than systems that can vary from school to school;
- 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; and
- a reduced need to audit funds if the school principal and/or finance clerk is replaced.

Other schools districts, such as Mount Pleasant ISD, have centralized accounting for student activity funds at the district office. Mount Pleasant 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. School secretaries at Mount Pleasant ISD are responsible for depositing all club funds and sending a receipt to the district office. Expenditure requests are submitted using purchase orders, which are processed through the district's normal accounts payable system. Every month, the district sends each club a report showing receipts and expenditure for the month. This arrangement has enabled Mount Pleasant ISD to monitor and account for student activity funds accurately.

Some districts after consolidating student activity funds in a single bank account have been able to invest the funds not needed for immediate use in interest bearing accounts. The interest earned on these idle funds are then distributed back to the individual accounts on a prorated basis.

Recommendation 46:

Centralize the administration of the student activity funds.

The Business Office should control and account for student activity funds to reduce the possibility of errors or misappropriation of funds. The management and reconciliation of these accounts should follow the same procedure as those used for the district's depository accounts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and district superintendent develop policies and procedures for maintaining centralized student activity funds.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance conducts workshops as necessary to train secretaries and club sponsors in how to deposit funds and request payment for allowable purchases.	November 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance trains accounting clerk on new procedures for the administration of activity funds.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance implements the new procedures districtwide.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Effective purchasing ensures that a district is able to provide quality materials, supplies and equipment in a timely manner, at the best price and in accordance with all applicable purchasing and bid requirements established by the Texas Education Code (TEC) and local district policy.

BACKGROUND

The TEC includes state purchasing laws designed to provide the best value to school districts through a competitive bidding process. The statutes for competitive procurement were revised during the 76th Texas Legislative session to explain the competitive bidding process more completely to vendors and to show that the process is conducted to provide maximum value to the district. Generally, when districts purchase items valued at \$25,000 or more in the aggregate (meaning multiple, like items with a cumulative value of more than \$25,000 per year), one of the following processes must be followed:

- Competitive bids, which requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms and conditions, bid process and bid price;
- Competitive sealed proposal, whereby vendors submit a written proposal that is publicly opened to ensure fairness in the bidding process;
- Request for proposals (RFPs), which is a mechanism for the process of competitive sealed proposals. RFPs contain notice to prospective bidders, standard terms and conditions, scope of work and a contract clause;
- Catalogue purchase, which provides another alternative to procurement methods for the acquisition of equipment, supplies and services;
- Interlocal contracts, which provide for agreements with other local governments and state agencies to perform services;
- Job order contracts, which are used for minor repair, rehabilitation or alteration to facilities;
- Design/build contracts, in which the district contracts with a company or agency to both design and construct a project; and
- Construction management contracts, which are used to construct, rehabilitate, alter or repair facilities using a construction manager.

Districts must advertise bids for more than \$25,000 in goods or services in a newspaper published in the county in which the district is located at least once per week for two weeks. Contracts for \$10,000 to \$25,000 must be

advertised in two successive issues of a newspaper. The advertisements must specify the categories of property to be purchased and solicit bids from vendors that are interested in supplying the goods or services.

The TEC allows a district to purchase items that are available from only one source on a "sole-source" basis. Sole-source items must meet the following criteria:

- an item for which competition is precluded because of the existence of a patent, copyright or proprietary process;
- a film, manuscript or book;
- a utility service to include electricity, gas or water; and
- a replacement part or component for equipment that is specific to a particular piece of equipment and is not available from more than one vendor.

Shown in **Exhibit 8-1** are excerpts from Robstown ISD's Purchasing and Acquisition Policy CH (LEGAL) issued August 25, 1999.

Exhibit 8-1
Excerpts from Robstown ISD Purchasing and Acquisition Policy CH
(LEGAL)
August 25, 1999

PURCHASES VALUED AT OR ABOVE \$25,000	All District contracts, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$25,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period, shall be made by the method that provides the best value for the District: 1) Competitive bidding. [See also CVA] 2) Competitive sealed proposals. [See also CVB] 3) A request for proposals for services other than construction services. 4) A catalog purchase as provided by Government Code Chapter 2157, Subchapter B. 5) An interlocal contract.
NOTICE PUBLICATION	Notice of when and where bids or proposals or the responses to a request for qualifications will be received and opened shall be published in the county where the District's central administrative office is located, once a week for at least two weeks prior to deadline for receiving bids, proposals, or responses to a request for qualifications. If there is no newspaper in that county, the advertising shall be published in a newspaper in the county nearest the county seat of the county in which the District's central administrative office is located. In a two-step procurement process.

	<p>the time and place where the second-step bids, proposals, or responses will be received are not required to be published separately. <i>Education Code 44.031(g)</i></p>
<p>PERSONAL PROPERTY PURCHASES VALUED \$10,000 TO \$25,000</p>	<p>When the District seeks to purchase personal property of a value of at least \$10,000 but less than \$25,000, in the aggregate, for a 12-month period, the District may either purchase those items in accordance with Education Code 44.031(a) and (b) described above or follow the vendor list procedures described below. <i>Education Code 44.033(a)</i></p>
<p>NOTICE</p>	<p>For each 12-month period, the District shall publish a notice in two successive issues of any newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the school is located. If there is no newspaper in the county in which the school is located, the advertising shall be published in a newspaper in the county nearest the county seat of the county in which the school is located, specifying the categories of personal property to be purchased and soliciting the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of vendors that are interested in supplying any of the categories to the District. <i>Education Code 44.033(b)</i></p>
<p>VENDOR LIST</p>	<p>For each category, the District shall create a vendor list consisting of each vendor that responds to the published notice and any additional vendors the District elects to include. Before the District makes a purchase from a category of personal property, it must obtain written or telephone price quotations from at least three vendors from the list for that category. If fewer than three vendors are on the list, the District shall contact each vendor. Whenever possible, telephone quotes should be confirmed in writing by mail or facsimile. The bidding records shall be retained with the District's competitive bid records and are subject to audit. Purchases shall be made from the lowest responsible bidder. <i>Education Code 44.033(b)(c)</i></p>
<p>PRODUCE OR FUEL PURCHASES</p>	<p>When the District purchases produce or fuel valued at \$10,000 or more in the aggregate, for a 12-month period, the District must either purchase those items in accordance with Education Code 44.031(a) and (b) described above or follow the vendor list procedures described immediately above. <i>Education Code</i></p>

	<i>44.033(a)(d)</i>
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	<p>The purchasing requirements of Education Code Section 44.031 do not apply to a contract for professional services rendered, including the services of an architect, attorney, or fiscal agent. The District may contract for professional services rendered by a financial consultant or a technology consultant in the manner provided by Section 2254.003, Government Code, in lieu of the methods provided by Education Code 44.031. <i>Education Code 44.031(f)</i></p> <p>Competitive bids shall not be solicited for professional services of any licensed or registered certified public accountant, architect, landscape architect, land surveyor, physician, optometrist, professional engineer, state-certified or state-licensed real estate appraiser or registered nurse. Contracts for these professional services shall be made on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications to perform the services and for a fair and reasonable price. <i>Gov't. Code 2254.002, 2254.003(a)</i> [See also CV (LEGAL)]</p>
SOLE SOURCE	<p>Compliance with Education Code 44.031 is not required for purchases that are available from only one source, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An item for which competition is precluded because of a patent, copyright, secret process, or monopoly. 2) A film, manuscript, or book. 3) A utility service, including electricity, gas, or water. 4) A captive replacement part or component for equipment.
IMPERMISSIBLE PRACTICES	<p>A Trustee, employee, or agent shall not, with criminal negligence, make or authorize separate, sequential, or component purchases to avoid the purchasing requirements set out in Education Code 44.031. An officer or employee shall not knowingly violate Education Code 44.031 in any other manner.</p>

	<p>"Component purchases" means purchases of the component parts of an item that in normal purchasing practices would be made in one purchase. "Separate purchases" means purchases, made separately, of items that in normal purchasing practices would be made in one purchase. "Sequential purchases" means purchases, over a period, of items that in normal purchasing practices would be made in one purchase.</p>
	<p>Violation of this provision is a Class B misdemeanor and an offense involving moral turpitude, conviction of which shall result in removal from office or dismissal from employment. A Trustee who is convicted of a violation of this provision is considered to have committed official misconduct and for four years after the date of final conviction, the removed person is ineligible to be appointed or elected to public office in Texas, is ineligible to be employed by or act as an agent for the state or a political subdivision, and is ineligible to receive any compensation through a contract with the state or a political subdivision. [See BBC(LEGAL)] <i>Education Code 44.032</i></p>
<p>COMPETITIVE BIDDING</p>	<p>If the District receives two or more bids from responsible bidders that are identical in nature and amount as the lowest and best bids, it shall select only one bidder from the identical bids.</p> <p>If only one of the bidders submitting identical bids is a resident of the District, that bidder shall be selected. If two or more such bidders are residents of the District, one shall be selected by the casting of lots. In all other cases, one of the identical bids shall be selected by the casting of lots.</p> <p>The Board shall prescribe the manner of casting lots and shall be present when the lots are cast. All qualified bidders or their representatives may be present at the casting of lots. <i>Local Gov't. Code 271.901</i></p>
<p>INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS</p>	<p>To increase efficiency and effectiveness, the District may contract or agree with other local governments and with state agencies, including the GSC, to perform some of its purchasing functions. <i>Gov't. Code 791.001, 791.011</i></p>

	<p>The District may agree with another local government, including a nonprofit corporation that is created and operated to provide one or more governmental functions and services, or with the state or a state agency, including the GSC, to purchase goods and services reasonably required for the installation, operation, or maintenance of the goods. Such an agreement may not, however, apply to services provided by firefighters, police officers, or emergency medical personnel.</p>
	<p>If the District purchases goods and services by agreement with another local government or with the state or state agency it satisfies the requirement to seek competitive bids for the purchase of goods and services. <i>Gov't. Code 791.025(b)(c); Atty. Gen. Op. JC-37 (1999)</i></p>
<p>COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM</p>	<p>The District may participate in a cooperative purchasing program with another local government or a local cooperative organization. If the District does so, it may sign an agreement with another participating local government or a local cooperative stating that the District will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designate a person to act on behalf of the District in all matters relating to the program. 2. Make payments to another participating local government or local cooperative organization or directly under a contract, as provided in the agreement. 3. Be responsible for the vendor's compliance.
	<p>If the District participates in a cooperative purchasing program, it satisfies any law requiring it to seek competitive bids. <i>Local Gov't. Code 271.102; Atty. Gen. Op. JC-37 (1999)</i></p>
<p>BUS PURCHASE OR LEASE</p>	<p>Each contract proposed for the purchase or lease of one or more school buses, including a lease with an option to purchase, shall be submitted to competitive bidding when the contract is valued at \$20,000 or more. <i>Education Code 44.031(l)</i> [See CNB]</p>

CRIMINAL HISTORY	<p>Before entering into a contract with the District, a person or business must give notice to the District if the person or an owner or operator of the business has been convicted of a felony. The District may terminate a contract with a person or business if the District determines that the person or business failed to give such notice or misrepresented the conduct resulting in the conviction. The District must compensate the person for services performed before the contract terminated. <i>Education Code 44.034</i></p>
	<p>The District may obtain criminal history record information that relates to an employee of, or applicant for employment by, a person that contracts with the District to provide services if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The employee or applicant has or will have continuing duties related to the contracted services; and 2. The duties are or will be performed on school property or at another location where students are regularly present. <i>Education Code 22.083(b)</i>

Source: RISD Online Board Policy Manual.

Exhibit 8-2 shows the Robstown ISD's Purchasing and Acquisition Policy CH (LOCAL), issued August 25, 1999.

Exhibit 8-2
Robstown ISD Purchasing and Acquisition Policy CH (LOCAL)
August 25, 1999

PURCHASING AUTHORITY	<p>The Board delegates to the Superintendent or designee the authority to determine the method of purchasing, in accordance with CH (LEGAL), and to make budgeted purchases. However, any purchase that costs or aggregates to a cost of \$10,000 or more shall require Board approval before a transaction may take place.</p>
COMPETITIVE BIDDING	<p>If competitive bidding is chosen as the purchasing method, the Superintendent or designee shall prepare bid specifications. All bids shall be submitted in sealed envelopes, plainly marked with the name of the bidder and the time of opening. All bidders shall be invited to</p>

	attend the bid opening. Any bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening. Bids received after the specified time shall not be considered. The District may reject any and all bids.
COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS	If competitive sealed proposals are chosen as the purchasing method, the Superintendent or designee shall prepare the request for proposals and/or specifications for items to be purchased. All proposals shall be submitted in sealed envelopes, plainly marked with the name of the proposer and the time of the deadline for submission, to the extent permitted by law. Proposals received after the specified time shall not be considered. Proposals shall be opened at the time specified, and all proposers shall be invited to attend the proposal opening. Proposals may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening. Changes in the content of a proposal, and in prices, may be negotiated after proposals are opened.
UNSEALED COMPETITIVE PROPOSALS	A request for proposals may also be used as a procurement option to generate an unsealed competitive proposal. In this instance, a District may open the proposal upon receipt and begin the negotiation process for the goods or services. The District may reject any and all proposals.
RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEBTS	The Board shall assume responsibility for debts incurred in the name of the District so long as those debts are for purchases made in accordance with adopted Board policy and current administrative procedures. The Board shall not be responsible for debts incurred by persons or organizations not directly under Board control; persons making unauthorized purchases shall assume full responsibility for all such debts.
PURCHASE COMMITMENTS	All purchase commitments shall be made by the Superintendent or designee on a properly drawn and issued purchase order, in accordance with administrative procedures. All regular creditors of the District shall be notified that purchase commitments made without a properly drawn purchase order and not signed by the Superintendent or designee shall not be honored by the District.
PERSONAL PURCHASES	District employees shall not be permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the District's Business Office.

Source: RISD Online Board Policy Manual.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

A. PURCHASING

An effective purchasing system requires several key components. One of the most important is a good organization that includes well-trained people. School administrators must clearly define roles and related responsibilities and adapt them to meet the unique operating environment of the district. Although purchasing organization structures may vary, most perform similar functions. An administrator in purchasing typically:

- approves purchase orders and service contracts, including competitive procurement specifications and tabulations;
- assists in the development and modification of purchasing policies and procedures and is responsible for their implementation;
- resolves problems encountered regarding purchasing;
- establishes and monitors good working relations with vendors;
- communicates with vendors and approves vendor communications with schools and departments;
- stays current on purchasing statutes, regulations and practices by attending various purchasing-related courses, seminars or workshops and by reading current purchasing periodicals and books; and
- ensures district staff is aware of relevant purchasing statutes, regulations and board policies through either formal or informal training programs.

Also, the purchasing administrator or an assistant typically prepares competitive procurement specifications, evaluates competitive procurement bids, maintains a vendor list, supervises the processing of purchase orders and evaluates the performance of vendors. Buyers and clerical staff typically write, review and modify specifications for competitive procurements; help evaluate competitive procurements; identify sources to obtain competitive prices and terms; assist in maintaining an updated vendor list from which purchases can be made; and obtain and verify vendor price quotes.

RISD maintains a centralized purchasing system in which purchasing requests originate with various administrators, directors and school principals and are submitted and processed by staff in the district's business office. RISD has no departmental budget for purchasing, and there is no allocation of salaries or operating costs outside of the business office for persons involved in the purchasing process. The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance serves as the district's purchasing

agent and is responsible for developing RFPs and for reviewing all proposals submitted. Other district positions that handle purchasing-related functions report to the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance.

Exhibit 8-3 displays the reporting relationship of RISD personnel involved in the purchasing process.

**Exhibit 8-3
RISD Administrative Personnel with Purchasing Process Duties
April 2001**

Job Title	Duties	Supervisor
Assistant superintendent for Business and Finance,	Develops RFPs, evaluates proposals submitted and reviews contracts.	Superintendent
	Approves purchase orders and supervises accounts payable, fixed-asset accounting, receiving and purchase order functions.	
Business Office clerk	Receives purchase orders and assigns vendor number, encumbers purchase orders, annotates purchase order log and forwards purchase orders to accounts payable clerk	Assistant superintendent for Business and Finance
Superintendent's secretary	Forwards purchase orders to superintendent for signature, returns signed purchase orders to business office.	Superintendent
Accounts Payable clerk	Sends purchase order copies to requestors and files copies, receives and files signed purchase orders, reviews and completes purchase orders, enters payment information, runs reports and performs quality control, notifies Data Entry to proceed with check printing, receives and annotates checks, mails checks, all files purchase orders after checks are processed.	Assistant superintendent for Business and Finance
Data Entry System manager	Prints checks, returns checks to accounts payable.	Assistant superintendent for Business and Finance
Mail clerk	Accepts delivery of goods, organizes inventory, delivers goods from central	Assistant superintendent

	administration to schools, as assigned.	for Business and Finance
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Source: Interviews with RISD Business Office personnel.

Many of the district's purchases are made through cooperative agreements with the state and the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2). Items and equipment not available in cooperative catalogs are processed from the district's approved vendor list. Purchases of goods or services from vendors that are not on the district's approved list are not processed for payment without prior approval. Each school has access to the district budget module and can generate budget status reports upon demand.

FINDING

RISD has implemented "just-in-time" delivery of supplies and materials. The district has a warehouse dedicated to Food Services, which makes it possible to order bulk quantities of food at lower costs. The district also has a warehouse used to store textbooks for the short period of time while they are sorted and delivered to the schools. It does not operate a central warehouse facility for the storage of other supplies or materials. Items are ordered when the need arises and are delivered directly to the originator of the request, or to the central administration office where they are subsequently delivered to campuses by the mail clerk. This practice avoids the personnel, maintenance and utilities costs associated with the operation of a warehouse facility.

COMMENDATION

RISD has implemented just-in-time delivery with supplies and materials being delivered directly to the originator of the purchase request.

FINDING

In February, March and April 2000, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducted an investigation of RISD's purchasing and contracting practices in response to numerous allegations of abuse of authority and misuse of district property and funds by district officials. Allegations were sustained and formally reported to RISD management.

One of the items in the TEA auditor's report discussed an RFP issued by the district during June 1996 for roofing repairs on an "as needed" basis. One proposal was received and resulted in a contract. However, the contractor failed to adequately complete information requested in the RFP. Additionally, the RFP did not include specifications for a multi-year

contract, but the board awarded a two-year contract to the contractor. RISD's failure to properly define and secure terms and standards of quality performance within its RFP and resulting contract resulted in overspending and poor surveillance of the contractor's performance. To protect the purchaser, RFPs should clearly define the particular activity to be performed, specify the length of time the activity should take, establish standards against which the contractor's performance can be measured and address sanctions for when performance standards or timelines are not met.

According to district officials, evidence existed that a school official had tampered with the contract in an attempt to delete the purchaser's signature line. An undated change order extended the contract through December 1998 and was signed by the district's assistant superintendent for Business and Finance. The district paid the contractor more than \$448,000 for additional work that appeared to have been performed beyond the original two-year contract.

The TEA audit further indicated that there was no documentation provided to indicate that work performed by the contractor under the change order was competitively bid and a review of board minutes did not indicate any board action on the change order or the extension of the contract.

In the district's response to TEA's Preliminary Investigative Report, dated November 16, 2000, the RISD superintendent stated that "the (roofing) contract was administered by the former assistant superintendent for Business and Finance. The irregularities noted in the Investigative Report relate to (the former assistant superintendent for Business and Finance's) activities in the Business Office. (The former assistant superintendent for Business and Finance) has been terminated by the school district and no longer is responsible for the district's procurement activities. That termination has been upheld in an appeal to the Commissioner of Education."

In response to his termination, the former assistant superintendent for Business and Finance filed a lawsuit against the district, the former superintendent, a former board member and a current board member. That lawsuit remained unsettled on July 12, 2001.

At the June 12, 2001 school board meeting, the RISD board voted 4 to 3 to re-hire the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, who was previously terminated and who has a lawsuit pending against the district. He assumed his position on July 5, 2001 without an employment contract.

Robstown ISD must improve its current spending practices and regain public confidence in its purchasing and contracting operations. Public

disclosure and internal controls for approval of purchases prior to disbursement of funds are needed.

Exhibit 8-4 indicates the annual volume of purchase orders handled by the RISD Business Office for 1998 through April 19, 2001.

Exhibit 8-4
Annual Purchase Order Volume
1998-99 through 2001

Year	Volume
1998-99	7,393
1999-2000	7,064
2000-01*	8,286
Average	7,581

Source: RISD Business Office.

**Figure annualized from actual count of 5,179 on April 19, 2001.*

Current signature authority guidelines require the superintendent or assistant superintendent for Business and Finance to authorize and sign for all purchases regardless of dollar amount. With an average monthly number of purchase orders in excess of 630, the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and superintendent spend a great deal of time reviewing and approving purchase orders.

Recommendation 47:

Establish thresholds for approval of fund disbursements and require board approval in an open board session for disbursements over \$500.

In addition, RISD should raise purchasing thresholds to shift the responsibility for making lower-value purchases to the departments or campuses initiating the purchase request. This will allow departments initiating the purchase request added flexibility in purchasing goods and services. Raising thresholds would also give the Business Office personnel, assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, and superintendent added flexibility to focus on other tasks.

Exhibit 8-5 shows suggested purchasing thresholds for RISD.

**Exhibit 8-5
Suggested Purchasing Thresholds**

Approval Requirements	Purchase Levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Trustees • Superintendent 	\$500 or more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance • Department Director/Campus Principal 	\$100 - \$499
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Director/Campus Principal • Buyer 	\$0 - \$99

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance proposes to the superintendent alternative purchasing thresholds to provide more flexibility for the business office and the department or campus initiating the purchase request.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent reviews and approves proposed purchasing thresholds and submits to the board for approval.	October 2001
3.	The board approves the new purchasing thresholds and establishes new board policy and procedures.	November 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance disseminates information regarding the new purchasing thresholds and implements the plan.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Campuses and departments sometimes make purchases before they initiate purchase orders, which is inconsistent with board policy. The district requires purchase orders for purchases of \$10 or more. Purchase orders require the signature of the originating party and are approved by both the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the superintendent before staff members make a purchase.

There is a lack of accountability when purchases are made without appropriately approved purchase orders. Goods or services purchased must be used for their intended purpose and to the benefit of the students or programs they support. Items purchased must be acquired at the best price and best quality, or both. Goods must also be accounted for and maintained in the district's inventory of assets. When purchases are made without approved purchase orders, there is an extreme risk that none of these principles will be met.

In addition, board policy clearly states that persons making unauthorized purchases shall assume full responsibility for all such debts. Unauthorized purchases made may also violate bidding and contracting laws as established by Texas Government Code and be punishable by law. This may occur when a conflict of interest exists or when established bidding and contracting laws are not appropriately followed.

The external auditor also noted in its audit reports of August 31, 1998, August 31, 1999 and August 31, 2000 that purchase orders were obtained after invoices were received.

Recommendation 48:

Enforce district policy requiring purchase orders for all purchases of \$10 or more.

The superintendent, the assistant superintendents, the business office, principals and department heads should aggressively enforce the district's purchase order policy. The district should notify vendors that purchase orders are required for purchases of \$10 or more and make persons executing purchases without purchase orders responsible for the payment of those purchases.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent prepares and signs a memorandum stating the purchase order policy to include reimbursement by the purchaser and/or other sanctions for unauthorized purchases.	September 2001
2.	The memorandum is circulated and posted on bulletin boards.	September 2001
3.	The purchase order policy is enforced by all parties.	September 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

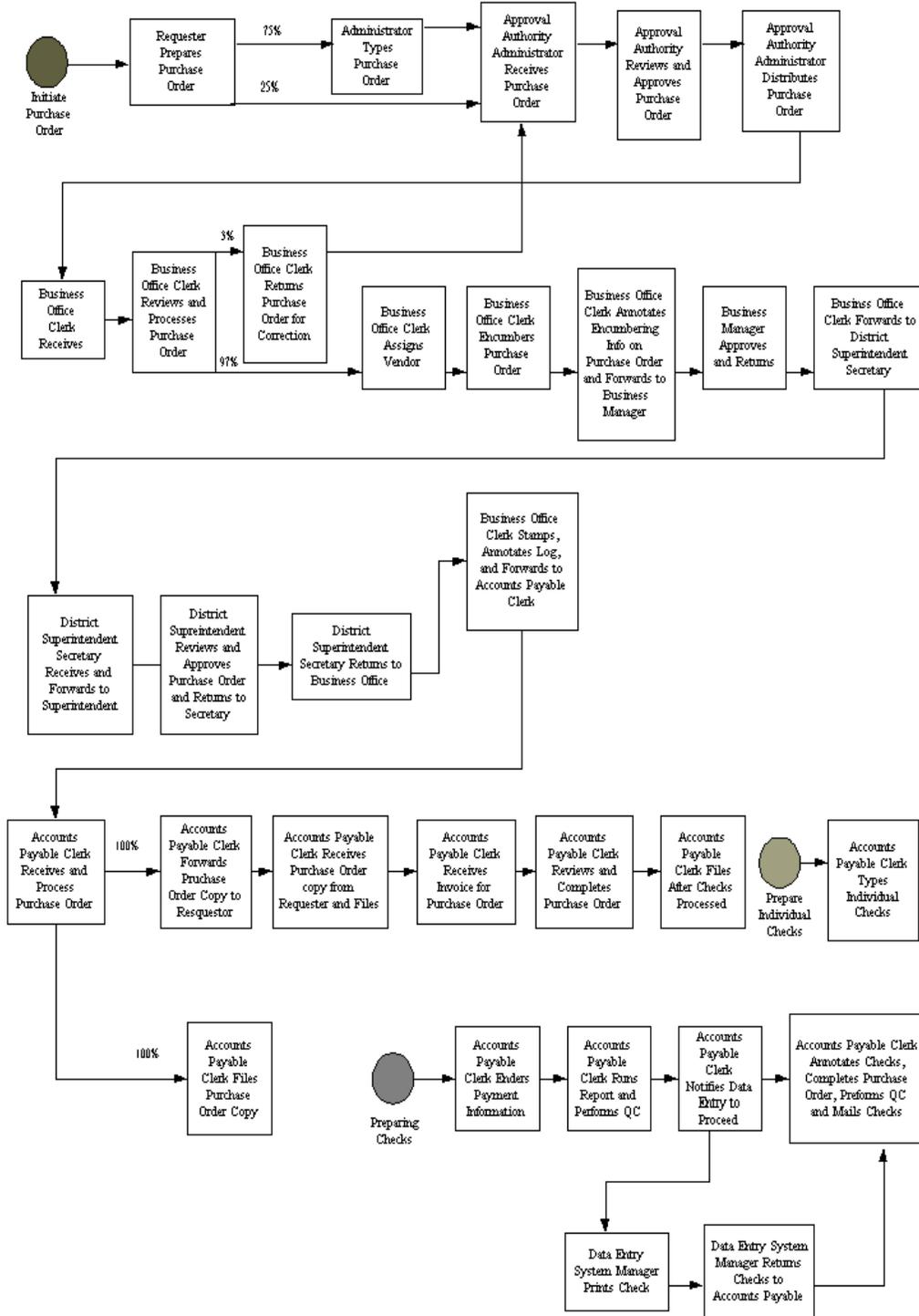
FINDING

RISD's purchase order process takes approximately one month from the time a purchase request is received by the business office through the time the purchase order is approved, items are ordered and received and a check typed. Purchase order processing is a labor-intensive activity. The district's financial accounting system software includes a purchase order module, but it has not been installed.

Delays in processing purchase orders result in needed supplies not getting to the ultimate users in a timely manner. The current process takes too long, and those requiring the purchased items grow impatient. The process results in invoices that are sometimes received before purchase orders are prepared or approved. Once the computer systems are upgraded and the purchasing order module is in place, the purchase order process will be automated. Benefits of adding the purchase order module include significantly reduced purchase order process times and automated accountability reports.

RISD business office staff has explored automated purchase order alternatives. The software vendor advised that the district's existing accounting system software includes a purchase order module which can be installed. For a one-time cost of \$1,100, the software vendor will provide a representative to install the purchase order module and conduct on-site training for system users including accounting staff, the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, the Technology director, campus administrators and the superintendent. Users would be able to access the module once the system upgrades are completed. **Exhibit 8-6** shows the district's current purchase order process.

Exhibit 8-6 RISD's Purchase Order Process



Source: RISD Business Office.

RISD business office staff has explored automated purchase order alternatives. The software vendor advised that the district's existing

accounting system software includes a purchase order module which can be installed. For a one-time cost of \$1,100, the software vendor will provide a representative to install the purchase order module and conduct on-site training for system users including the Career and Technology Education (CATE) director, the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance, and the accounting staff, campus administrators and district administrators. Users would be able to access the module once the system upgrades are completed.

Recommendation 49:

Install the district software purchase order module and train users.

Automating purchase orders eliminates the need for secretaries to type forms for requesters and reduces distribution cycle times. Long distribution cycle times are created by transferring the forms from requesters to school administrators to district offices through the school distribution system or by hand.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance coordinates the requirements of the purchase orders module with the CATE director.	September 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance develops a budget proposal for installation of the purchase order module and training, for users.	September 2001
3.	The Data Processing System manager presents the budget requirements for the installation of the purchase order module and training as well as a plan for the module's implementation to the superintendent for approval.	October 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance contacts the vendor to implement the purchase order module and schedules training for the school administrators, accounting and data processing staff and central administrators.	November 2001
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the CATE director communicate the decision to the appropriate personnel.	November 2001
6.	The vendor installs the purchase order module and provides training.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

The software vendor for the purchase order module estimates software installation and training would cost the district \$1,100.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Install the district software purchase order module and train users.	(\$1,100)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

RISD is not consistently following all state purchasing and bid laws. There is no mechanism in place to review proposed expenditures so that acquisition plans can be made in accordance with appropriate purchasing laws and policies. Because budgets for the next fiscal year are completed months before that year commences, each of the district's departments have a good idea of what will be purchased in the coming year and be able to identify those purchases that will need to be competitively bid.

Examples of past mismanagement and abuse are discussed in other sections of this chapter. These practices remain a serious concern of individuals in the community who told the review team that bids are not awarded fairly and that preferences appear to be given to certain contractors with a close relationship to the board or administration.

If RISD is to establish trust with the community, abuses of the past must not be repeated and a strong system of internal controls can provide assurance that they will not.

Recommendation 50:

Establish a strong system of procedures to ensure compliance with purchasing laws and policies.

The business office and other district departments must work collaboratively during the budget process to identify potential purchases that will need to be competitively bid. All expenditures that are expected to equal or exceed \$10,000 for like items or categories of items should come to the attention of the business office so that the district can decide which acquisition process to use such as competitive bidding or RFP. Additionally, all contracts must be awarded with the highest level of integrity by the board and administration.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance discusses budget issues with department directors to determine if bids will be required for the purchase of any goods or services.	September 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance prepares and submits a consolidated list of proposed bid items to the superintendent for review and approval.	September 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance works with department directors to develop statements of work and prepare bid requests for identified goods and services.	October 2001
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance submits bid recommendations to the superintendent and board for approval.	November 2001
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance continues the appropriate bid process.	December 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

B. TEXTBOOKS

The district's safety officer manages the textbook function as one of his primary duties. The safety officer reports to the assistant superintendent for Educational Operations for this duty.

The district places textbook orders each April for the coming school year using the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Educational Materials (EMAT) online textbook requisition system. The district is entitled to order up to 110 percent of its maximum pupil enrollment for the grade or subject for which it is ordering pupil editions.

RISD's textbook order is based on the highest level of enrollment for the preceding school year. When textbook shortages occur, orders are placed as requested by principals. Textbooks are delivered to a small warehouse/storage area located at the Special Education complex where books are unpacked and inventoried. Textbooks, including extra copies, are subsequently delivered to campuses based on school requirements. Maintenance and Operations department employees deliver textbooks to campuses as requested.

In accordance with TEC Section 31.102, textbooks ordered through TEA become the property of the state, and the school board is the legal custodian of those textbooks. Lost or damaged books must be reported to each campus principal. Books damaged or lost by students must be replaced at the parents' expense. The district requests and receives payment from parents and students who are responsible for lost or damaged books, although the district is not allowed to withhold grade reports or transcripts to encourage parents or students to pay balances due. When the district receives payment for a lost or damaged book, the funds must be used to order replacement books from the textbook depository. When the district is unable to recover replacement costs, the district becomes responsible for purchasing the replacements.

The review team administered surveys to students, parents, teachers, campus administration and district administrators regarding the issuance and quality of textbooks. **Exhibit 8-7** shows the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that textbooks are delivered in a timely manner and in good condition.

Exhibit 8-7 **RISD Survey Results**

Quality of Textbook Materials
March/April 2001
Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing with the Statement

Survey Statement	District Administrators	Campus Administrators	Parents	Teachers	Students
Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	55.0%	80.0%	70.3%	72.6%	62.0%
Textbooks are in good shape.	50.0%	80.0%	64.9%	68.8%	42.4%

Source: TSPR Survey Results.

FINDING

RISD's use of a book tracking system reduced its lost or damaged book charges by \$3,794 (37 percent) between 1999 and 2000. RISD uses "Hayes Software Systems" to maintain and track textbook inventories. The automated inventory system provides the district with an automated inventory control product that is constantly updated with current TEA textbook information. The software contains the textbook name, edition and current costs. As part of the annual fee, software updates are received any time TEA adds or deletes textbooks from its list or textbook prices change. The district annotates in the software how many of each textbook it has and what school has how many of each assigned.

The district also conducts random checks to verify that students have the textbooks they are supposed to have and to be certain textbooks are not lost or damaged.

Exhibit 8-8 shows the cumulative book charges by school for 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

Exhibit 8-8
RISD Annual Book Charges
1998-99 and 1999-2000

School	Book Charges 1998-99	Book Charges 1999-2000	Increase/Decrease
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Robstown High School	\$7,615.99	\$3,465.35	(\$4,150.64)
Seale Jr. High School	\$450.26	\$628.80	\$178.54
Ortiz Intermediate School	\$662.94	\$496.81	(\$166.13)
Lotspeich Elementary School	\$167.34	\$167.97	\$0.63
Hattie Martin Elementary School	\$461.64	\$614.44	\$152.80
Salazar Elementary School	\$195.12	\$361.98	\$166.86
San Pedro Elementary School	\$86.41	\$99.27	\$12.86
Alternative Learning Center	\$278.79	\$543.81	\$265.02
Alternative Education Program	\$141.34	\$11.25	(\$130.09)
Vocational Department	\$224.91	\$101.25	(\$123.66)
Total	\$10,284.00	\$6,491.00	(\$3,794.00)

Source: RISD.

COMMENDATION

RISD has implemented an automated inventory system to receive, issue and account for books, including books that are lost, damaged, or stolen.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

C. CONTRACTING

FINDING

The district does not provide training for project managers, department heads and school principals on how to effectively manage contracts. There is no central location where district contracts are administered and maintained. According to staff interviews, RISD central administrators and staff do not have a clear awareness of all contracts currently in place within the district. Contracts that were found and provided to the review team do not include provisions for monitoring vendor performance and quality of services provided. Many district contracts are vendor-friendly, are not performance based and do not provide adequate means for RISD to exit the contract or to impose sanctions against unsatisfactory contractor performance.

Some contracts do not have required signatures by district personnel. The contract with Narcotic Detection Dogs, Inc., dated July 1, 2000, has no signature by a district official. The contract with Accident Reconstruction Specialists was unsigned when the review team initially visited the district, although a signed copy was produced later in the review process.

Recommendation 51:

Provide training on contract management and contractor evaluation.

Contract management training should be provided for all central and campus administrators, department heads and other school personnel who are or may be responsible for managing projects and evaluating contractor performance.

Training should cover all contract management functions that a project manager or department head would encounter. It should include in-depth discussion and an examination of all the components of contract management including the supervision, inspection and review of technical work, deliverables, reports, payment requests, project schedules and other matters.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance	September 2001
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	develops a training program for contract management.	
2.	The superintendent reviews and approves the training program.	November 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance plans and conducts contract management training on a quarterly basis.	December 2001 and quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In some instances, software or software development service purchases have not been coordinated with the Career and Technology Education (CATE) director. Although the dollar amounts have been small, coordination may have yielded even lower or no-cost options that were already available to the district. This includes multiple purchases of application software products that could have been purchased one time and licensed to the district for use at all locations.

The CATE director uses Region 2 resources and researches state-approved hardware and software vendors to obtain the lowest price on technological purchases. A systematic method to control technology costs is essential when technology prices change rapidly and vary dramatically between vendors.

Recommendation 52:

Adopt and implement a written policy for technology contracting.

The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the CATE director should develop the policy, as well as written procedures to be implemented after the policy is approved. This policy ensure that the CATE director reviews and approves all requests for the purchase or lease of any technology hardware, software or training.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The CATE director and the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance develop a policy for coordinating technology software, hardware and services purchases.	September 2001
2.	The CATE director and the assistant superintendent for	October 2001

	Business and Finance present the policy to the superintendent for approval.	
3.	The superintendent presents the policy to the board for review and approval.	October 2001
4.	The CATE director and the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance communicate the policy to the appropriate personnel.	November 2001
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business and Finance and the CATE director implement the policy for coordinating technology purchases.	December 2001
6.	The CATE director and the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance evaluate the effectiveness of the policy for coordinating technology purchases.	December 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

School food service operations are responsible for providing students and staff an appealing and nutritionally sound breakfast and lunch at a reasonable cost in an environment that is clean, safe and easily accessible. Several factors are used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a school's food services operation, including staffing, productivity, food cost and nutritional value, amount of waste, participation rates in breakfast and lunch programs, variety of meals served, wait time per student served, financial self-sufficiency and Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH). Meals Per Labor Hour is the ratio of meals served to the labor hours taken to create them. Each of these responsibilities must be accomplished in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations as well as district board policy.

A well-managed and proactive food services department is critical to the health and academic success of all students. Inefficient management of food services operations can negatively impact student performance by inhibiting concentration and achievement due to inadequate nutrition.

BACKGROUND

The federal government sponsors the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to fund meals for more than 26 million children each year in nearly 95,000 schools across the United States. The Texas Education Agency's Child Nutrition Programs Division oversees these programs in Texas public schools.

The School Breakfast Program began as a pilot project in 1966 and is administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The project was originally designed to provide categorical grants to assist those schools serving breakfasts to children identified as nutritionally needy. Recognizing the importance of a nutritious breakfast, the USDA has actively promoted the School Breakfast Program and has made a commitment to improve the nutritional quality of all school meals.

Studies support teacher reports that students are more alert and perform better in class if they eat breakfast. A State of Minnesota Breakfast Study found that students who ate breakfast before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits and improved student behaviors. Researchers at Harvard Medical/Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston found that hungry students are more likely to have behavioral and academic problems

than children who get enough to eat. Hungry children had more problems with irritability, anxiety and aggression, as well as more absences and tardiness. These reports affirm the 1998 Tufts University study on *The Link Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children* which states that, "children who participated in the School Breakfast Program were shown to have significantly higher standardized achievement test scores than eligible non-participants."

The National School Lunch Program was established under the National School Lunch Act signed in 1946 by President Harry Truman. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to nearly 27 million children every school day. School districts that take part in the lunch program receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each meal they serve. In return, schools must serve lunches that meet federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced-price lunches to children of eligible families.

According to *Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Leadership for Excellence* by Martin and Conklin, child nutrition programs present many challenges and management opportunities. Child nutrition directors need to plan and manage efficient programs; organize and staff for expanded school days, after school snack programs, summer feeding programs and universal breakfast programs; incorporate the school food and nutrition program into a comprehensive health program and make the nutrition programs integral parts of the educational delivery system.

School food and nutrition programs are important to learning readiness, health promotion and disease prevention. Childhood obesity has become the third most prevalent disease of children and adolescents in the United States. Many districts view school meals as an integral part of the education process and strive to ensure quality and maintain affordability. Policy decisions are made with the goal of providing all students with the skills and environment needed in order to encourage good eating habits.

The School Meals Initiative mandates that school districts meet the nutrient standards for fat content and calories established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The same initiative encourages departments to participate directly in nutrition education and team nutrition programs. In addition, the American Dietetic Association, the Society for Nutrition Education and the American Food Service Association developed a position statement outlining the need for comprehensive school-based nutrition programs and services for all the nation's elementary and secondary students.

The Texas School Food Service Association (TSFSA) has identified 10 Standards of Excellence for evaluating school food service programs. TSFSA states that effective programs:

- Identify and meet current and future needs through organization, planning, direction and control;
- Maintain financial accountability through established procedures;
- Meet the nutritional needs of students and promote the development of sound nutritional practices;
- Ensure that procurement practices meet established standards;
- Provide appetizing, nutritious meals through effective, efficient systems management;
- Maintain a safe and sanitary environment;
- Encourage student participation in food service programs;
- Provide an environment that enhances employee productivity, growth, development and morale;
- Promote a positive image to the public; and
- Measure success in fulfilling regulatory requirements.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducts reviews under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Agreement, which is a legal contract between TEA and RISD. The last coordinated review of RISD in October 2000 indicated that there were no program irregularities and that the district appeared to be in compliance. At the end of the school year, each district must complete a renewal agreement on the Child Nutrition Programs Information Management System. The Texas Department of Health also conducts sanitation inspections at each cafeteria several times during the year.

Exhibit 9-1 shows the Food Services expenditures for RISD and its peer districts. Food Services accounted for 7.8 percent of RISD's total budgeted expenditures for 1999-2000, which was the second highest percentage among its peer districts.

Exhibit 9-1
Percentage of Food Services Expenditures
RISD and Selected Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Food Services Expenditures	Percentage of Total Budgeted Expenditures
Roma	\$2,448,655	8.1%
Robstown	\$2,071,192	7.8%

Mercedes	\$2,116,826	6.4%
Hidalgo	\$1,079,000	6.1%
Raymondville	\$1,144,000	5.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Shown in **Exhibit 9-2** displays the revenue and fund balance data for Robstown ISD over the last three years.

Exhibit 9-2
RISD Food Services Revenue, Net Profit and Fund Balance
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Revenue Source	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change from 1997-98 to 1999-2000
Local	\$271,759	\$277,257	\$269,546	(0.8)%
State Matching & Federal	\$1,756,085	\$1,782,200	\$1,815,751	3.4%
Total Revenue	\$2,027,844	\$2,059,457	\$2,085,297	2.8%
Net Profit	\$83,945	\$52,925	\$105,467	25.6%
Fund Balance (Beginning)	\$284,661	\$368,606	\$346,524	21.7%
Increase/Decrease*	\$0	(\$75,007)	\$0	0.0%
Fund Balance (Ending)	\$368,606	\$346,524	\$451,991	22.6%

Source: RISD Audited Annual Financial Reports, 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

*Decrease in 1998-99 due to a prior period adjustment.

The RISD Food Services Department fund balance has steadily increased since 1997 to \$451,991 for fiscal 2000. Any positive balance remaining in the Food Services Department's account at the end of the year must be carried over to the next school year as a beginning balance. Based on expenditure information for the 1999-2000 school year, RISD's average monthly food service expenditure is approximately \$165,000. The fund

balance of \$451,991 is in compliance with the legal limits placed by TEA as it does not exceed three months of average expenditures.

All revenues received by the Food Services Department must be used only for the operation and improvement of the Food Services program. Revenues include receipts from the operation of breakfast and lunch programs, snack bar and a la carte programs, earnings on investments, federal and state reimbursements and other local revenues.

The Food Services Department does not currently reimburse the district's general operating fund for overhead expenses such as utilities, but the district is in the process of developing a method to charge utility expenses for each cafeteria to the Food Services Department in 2001-02. The Food Services director is also in the process of implementing a comprehensive automation program to incorporate all tangible and non-tangible expenses into its budget and plans to fully implement this program within the coming school year.

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

A. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

RISD's Food Services Department is headed by the Food Services director who reports to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs. The Food Services director supervises three department employees located in the central administration office, as well as a warehouse truck driver, an appliance repairman and 66 cafeteria and custodial staff located at seven school kitchens. Each school's cafeteria manager reports to the Food Services director. The Alternative Learning Center (ALC) receives meals from the cafeteria at Hattie Martin Elementary School, and the Alternative Education Program (AEP) campus is sent pre-made meals and sack lunches from the cafeteria at Wynne Seale Junior High School.

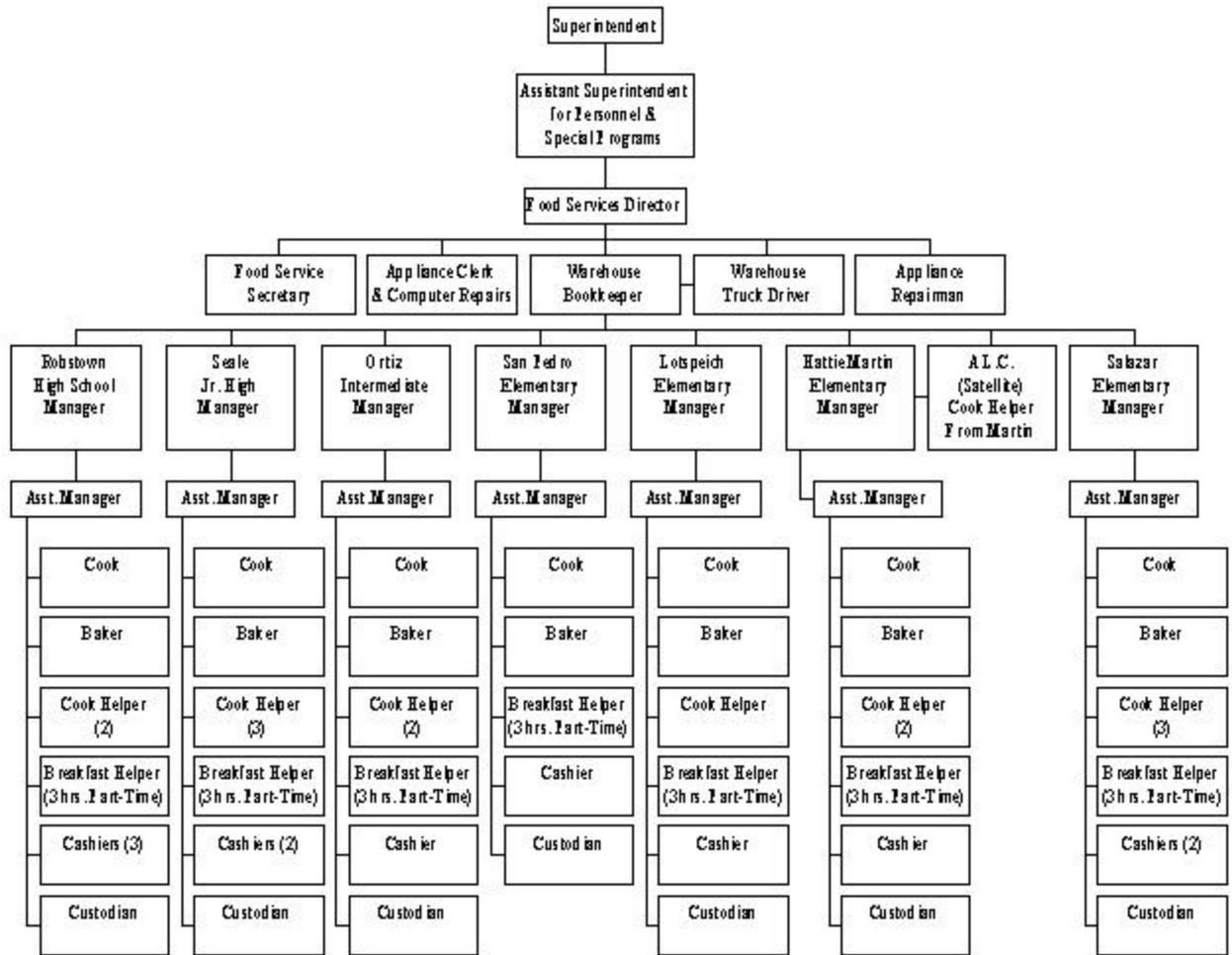
Food Services funds can be used to pay salaries of custodial workers as long as the custodian's duties are performed for the Food Services Department. In addition to cleaning kitchen and cafeteria dining facilities at each school, Food Services custodians help with the breakdown of boxed and crated food items and occasional dishwashing.

The district does not staff nor does it contract for the services of a licensed registered dietician. The Food Services director holds a Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics and works with the Regional Educational Service Center II (Region 2) dietician to provide the district's meal and nutrition analysis. **Exhibit 9-3** illustrates the Food Services Department's current organizational structure.

Exhibit 9-3

RISD Food Services Organizational Structure

2000-01



Source: RISD Food Services Department.

The seven full-time cafeteria managers supervise 59 Food Services workers, custodial workers and assistant managers at seven schools as illustrated in **Exhibit 9-3**.

The number of meals served by Wynne Seale Junior High School includes those delivered to AEP, and the number of meals served by Hattie Martin Elementary school includes those delivered to ALC. Employees considered full-time are those that work 5 hours or more per day. **Exhibit 9-4** gives the number and type of Food Services employee by campus.

Exhibit 9-4
RISD Food Service Kitchens by School
2000-01

School	Name of	Number of	Full-Time	Part-Time	Daily
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Number	School	Students Served*	Employees	Employees	Hours Worked per Kitchen
001	Robstown High School	964	9	1	68.5
041	Wynne Seale Junior High School	632	9	1	68.5
042	Ortiz Intermediate School	577	7	1	56.5
101	San Pedro Elementary School	341	5	1	44.5
103	Lotspeich Elementary School	412	6	1	50.5
104	Hattie Martin Elementary School	510	7	1	56.5
105	Salazar Elementary School	680	9	1	68.5
Total		4,116	52	7	413.5

Source: RISD Food Services Department and PEIMS, 2000-01.

FINDING

Food Services positions are often filled from within the district's pool of established substitute workers for the Food Services Department. Substitutes receive extensive training in each of the cafeteria positions and are rotated among several of the district's campuses to gain a thorough understanding of the operation of each kitchen. Substitutes that are able to meet the demands of the Food Services Department and perform satisfactorily are offered the opportunity to fill full-time positions within the district as they become available, minimizing the time required to find a replacement for a previous full-time employee and filling that position with someone that is familiar to the Department or its operating procedures.

COMMENDATION

RISD fills its Food Services position vacancies from its pool of available trained substitute workers.

FINDING

The Food Services Department does not have a mechanism for tracking current satisfaction with the quality, appearance and taste of food among students, teachers, parents and administrators. Instead, the Food Services Department conducts an initial survey upfront with students and parents before introducing new menu items. This survey allows the Food Services Department to determine the interest in new menu items but does little to assess the current level of satisfaction within the school cafeterias.

Other districts have increased student satisfaction with food services operations by placing comment boxes in cafeterias. Students, teachers and administrators are given short questionnaires to take home or complete in the classroom over current operations within the Food Services Department.

While the preliminary input is a good operational practice, the Food Services Department has no way of knowing the immediate level of customer satisfaction with items presently on the menu or the overall satisfaction with Food Services operations.

Recommendation 53:

Conduct annual surveys of students, parents, teachers and administrators to assess satisfaction with services and the quality, appearance and taste of food provided in school cafeterias.

Surveys can be sent home with students and distributed to teachers and administrators at each school. Recommendation and comment boxes can also be placed in each cafeteria to allow individuals to anonymously provide feedback regarding the quality of food and services provided.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers develop a list of survey questions to be administered to students, parents, teachers and administrators to assess the satisfaction with the taste and appearance of food.	October 2001
2.	Cafeteria managers place suggestion drop boxes in each cafeteria and assess monthly recommendations.	October 2001

3.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers distribute surveys to students, teachers and administrators to assess satisfaction with food provided in school cafeterias.	November 2001 - Ongoing
4.	The cafeteria managers receive survey responses and work with the Food Services director to analyze results.	November 2001
5.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers develop and implement a plan to alter meal planning and food preparation techniques to best satisfy needs according to survey analysis.	December 2001
6.	The cafeteria managers conduct follow-up satisfaction surveys with questionnaires randomly administered among students, teachers and administrators.	January 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD's Food Services Department serves fewer meals per labor hour (MPLH) in each of its seven kitchens than recommended by food service standards. MPLH is a standard measure of performance used to gauge the efficiency of food services in school districts, hospitals, restaurants and other food service-oriented industries. MPLH is the number of meal equivalents served in a given period divided by the total labor hours worked during that period. RISD uses the following conversion rates to calculate the amount that represents one meal equivalent as shown in **Exhibit 9-5**.

Exhibit 9-5
Conversion Rates for RISD Meal Equivalents

Lunch Meal	1	1 meal equivalent
A la carte dollars	\$3.00	1 meal equivalent
Breakfast Meal	2 breakfasts	1 meal equivalent
Breakfast a la carte dollars	\$2.00	1 meal equivalent

Source: RISD Food Services Department.

The review team used the guidelines provided in **Exhibit 9-6** to evaluate RISD's level of food services staffing.

Exhibit 9-6
Sample Staffing Guidelines for On-Site Meal Production (MPLH)

Number of Meal Equivalents	Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)	
	Conventional System MPLH	Convenience System MPLH
Up to 100	8	9
101-150	9	10
151-200	10-11	12
201-250	12	14
251-300	13	15
301-400	14	16
401-500	14	18
501-600	15	18
601-700	16	19
701-800	17	20
801-900	18	21
901+	19+	22+

Source: Adapted from Pannell, School Food Service Management (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990).

The conventional system of preparing meals consists of preparing food on-site from scratch with raw vegetables and other ingredients and includes the washing of dishes. The convenience system of meal preparation used by RISD consists of using processed foods when possible and incorporates more frequent use of disposable trays and utensils. The recommended MPLH for the convenience method of food preparation is used in evaluating RISD's kitchen productivity as shown in **Exhibit 9-7**.

If the MPLH rate is lower than the recommended standard, either the number of meals served is low or the number of hours worked is high. The number of hours worked is the product of the number of staff employed multiplied by the hours worked per employee.

RISD's Food Services Department serves fewer meals per labor hour (MPLH) than recommended in all seven of its kitchens as shown in

Exhibit 9-7. MPLH is calculated by dividing the total number of meal equivalents by the total number of labor hours associated with providing those meals. Information provided reflects the MPLH calculated for a typical school day at RISD during January 2001. Since cafeteria custodians are not involved in food preparation or serving, their hours worked are not included when calculating RISD's MPLH.

**Exhibit 9-7
RISD Meals Per Labor Hour**

	High School	Seale Jr. High	Ortiz Inter	San Pedro Elem.	Lotspeich Elem.	Martin Elem.	Salazar Elem.	District Totals
Actual Meal Equivalents	1,160	897	1,013	465	593	674	916	5,718
Actual Labor Hours	60.5	60.5	48.5	36.5	42.5	48.5	60.5	357.5
Recommended Labor Hours	52.7	42.7	46.0	25.8	32.9	35.5	43.6	259.9
Variance in Hours	7.8	17.8	2.5	10.7	9.6	11.00	16.9	97.6
Actual MPLH	19.17	14.83	20.89	12.74	13.95	13.90	15.14	15.99
Recommended MPLH	22+	21	22+	18	18	19	21	22+
Variance in MPLH	2.83	6.17	1.11	5.26	4.05	5.10	5.86	6.01

Source: RISD Food Services Department.

Districts have cut their MPLH by reducing hours worked for some or all current cafeteria workers, eliminating duplication of management positions, reducing staffing levels through attrition or even terminating employees to bring the MPLH to an acceptable level. Reductions in the hours worked while maintaining or increasing productivity have led to major savings in school districts and other food service operations.

In 1995, TSPR conducted a review of the San Angelo Independent School District and recommended the district reduce staffing levels through hiring freezes and attrition. By reducing 11 part-time positions by approximately four hours each SAISD has saved more than \$41,000 annually in salary costs alone.

Recommendation 54:

Reduce cafeteria staffing to achieve the recommended Meals Per Labor Hour.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers develop specific MPLH standards for each school and do not fill vacant positions.	September 2001
2.	Cafeteria managers reduce staff based on MPLH standards for each school and implement plans to increase productivity.	October 2001
3.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers evaluate the progress of each cafeteria on a monthly basis according to established MPLH productivity standards.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Using the month of January 2001 as a basis for productivity and assuming a reduction in force of 13 full-time cafeteria workers, the district labor costs could be reduced by \$131,924 annually. This is a conservative estimate based on an entry-level, pay grade I employee with a starting salary of \$5.86 per hour. (7.5 hours per day times 180 days per year and full benefits of 5.5208 percent plus \$1,800 resulting in \$10,148 for each of 13 full-time employees equals \$131,924 per year.) Due to the start of the school year for 2001-02 only half the savings are shown in the first year.

RISD could either reduce hours worked for some or all current cafeteria workers, eliminate duplication of management positions at each cafeteria or centralize cafeteria management, reduce staffing levels through attrition or terminate employees to bring the productivity to an acceptable level.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Reduce cafeteria staffing to achieve the recommended Meals Per Labor Hour.	\$65,965	\$131,924	\$131,924	\$131,924	\$131,924

FINDING

RISD has no tracking system to identify employees and schools with excessive tardiness and absences. There is no mechanism in place to evaluate absenteeism in the RISD Food Services Department. The Food Services director and cafeteria managers stated that absences occur

frequently. When absences occur, the affected cafeteria may operate short-handed. The district maintains a substitute pool but typically does not contact a substitute until at least two cafeteria workers are absent. There is no policy in place to remedy excessive absenteeism and tardiness or to reward employees for good attendance practices.

Food Services Department personnel receive an incentive for achieving certification through the Texas School Food Service Association's certification program. Personnel achieving certification as managers receive \$360 in additional annual pay, and individuals achieving certification at levels other than management receive \$180 in additional annual pay. However, there are no performance-based employee recognition programs in place to encourage outstanding performance or attendance.

Recommendation 55:

Develop and implement an incentive program to encourage attendance and superior performance.

The incentive program could include performance-based rewards that encourage perfect attendance and exemplary employee performance as well as a corrective action to address employee absence and tardiness.

Employees abusing leave privileges could be counseled and, if necessary, disciplined. Disciplinary actions should be developed and implemented to deter excessive employee absences and tardiness.

Suggested criteria for selecting employees eligible for performance-based awards may include perfect attendance over three months, six months and one year, a positive attitude and successful completion of training courses. To encourage attendance, the district should develop incentive programs for good attendance such as personal and team recognition and monetary rewards.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director identifies performance criteria to use in determining award eligibility for individuals and cafeteria teams and forwards it to cafeteria managers for review.	September 2001
2.	The Food Services director works with the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs to develop formal guidelines for specific corrective actions to be taken for RISD-defined excessive absences and tardiness.	September 2001
3.	Cafeteria managers provide feedback on performance criteria	October

	identified by the Food Services director.	2001
4.	The Food Services director reviews, approves and implements selected performance-measure criteria to determine employee award eligibility.	November 2001
5.	The Food Services director develops an appropriate addendum to the Food Services employee handbook and each employee signs absenteeism/tardiness/performance agreement.	November 2001
6.	The cafeteria managers track and report employee tardiness and absenteeism to Food Services director daily.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

A monetary award of \$100 for each individual working with perfect attendance for each quarter would cost the district a maximum of \$21,200 annually (53 remaining cafeteria employees times \$100 each quarter). The first period of eligibility would be for the 3-month period from December through February of the 2001-02 school year.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Develop and implement an incentive program to encourage attendance and superior performance.	(\$10,600)	(\$21,200)	(\$21,200)	(\$21,200)	(\$21,200)

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

B. COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

In an effort to reduce paperwork at the local level, Congress has incorporated in Section 11 (a)(1) of the National School Lunch Act, three alternative provisions to the normal requirements for annual determinations of eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. In schools where at least 80 percent of the children enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, a district may qualify for one of the three provisions.

Provision 1 reduces application burdens by certifying free meal eligibility status for a 2-year period rather than on an annual basis. Provision 2 reduces application burdens and simplifies meal counting and claiming procedures, by allowing schools to establish claiming percentages and serve all meals at no charge for a 4 year period. Provision 3 reduces application burdens and meal counting and claiming procedures, by allowing schools to receive the same level of federal cash and commodity assistance each year, with some adjustments, for a 4-year period.

Since over 80 percent of RISD students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, the district began its base year of Provision 2 in September 2000. All students in the district may eat both breakfast and lunch free of charge. The district then receives full reimbursement for each free meal given.

During the base year, the district determines eligibility and takes meal counts by type (free, reduced-price and full-price). During the next 3 years, the district will make no new eligibility determinations and will count only the total number of reimbursable meals served each day. Reimbursement during these years will be determined by applying the percentages of free, reduced-price and paid meals served during the corresponding month of the base year to the total meal count for the claiming month. The base year is included as part of the 4 years. At the end of the 4-year period, TEA may approve 4-year extensions if the income level of the district's population remains stable.

Districts that select the Provision 2 alternative must pay the difference between federal reimbursement and the cost of providing all meals at no charge. The money to pay for this difference must be from sources other than federal funds.

RISD is reimbursed for student breakfast and lunch costs as shown in **Exhibit 9-8**.

Exhibit 9-8
National School Breakfast and Lunch Program Reimbursement Rates
2000-01

Category	Lunch	Breakfast
Full-Price	\$0.19	\$0.21
Reduced-Price	\$1.62	\$0.82
Free	\$2.02	\$1.12
Severe Need	\$0.02	\$0.21

Source: RISD Food Service Department and TEA Memo.

FINDING

The district began its base year of Provision 2 in September 2000 whereby all students may eat both breakfast and lunch free of charge. The RISD Food Services Department developed the following procedures for securing applications for the Universal Free Breakfast and Lunch programs:

- In accordance with TEA policy, the RISD Food Services Department distributed letters and applications to parent/guardians of all children enrolled on the first day of each school year.
- Media releases mailed to the local newspaper with an income scale provided for publication, as required by TEA.
- The Food Services Department mailed letters and application forms to parents/guardians of all students in the fifth through 12th grades.
- The Food Services Department mailed letters and application forms to parents/guardians of students who were enrolled in the previous school year, but had not submitted a new application. (The deadline for this particular mail-out is 30 calendar days before the start of the school year.)
- Food Services representatives also made phone calls and conducted home visits to families to encourage participation.
- To further encourage families to submit application forms, the Food Services Department provided pizza parties and ice cream treats to classrooms with 100% participation.

COMMENDATION

The district has aggressively worked to obtain a high level of student meal participation in its base year of Provision 2 Universal Free Breakfast and Lunch Programs whereby all students eat for free.

FINDING

RISD operates snack bars at each of its schools during the lunch periods. The snack bars serve USDA-approved food items including pizza, hamburgers, fruits, juices and other snack items. In addition, the snack bars provide additional income for the Food Services Department, are a convenience for students, teachers and administrators and offer alternatives for those students who choose not to participate in the main cafeteria's free meals.

As reported by the RISD Food Services director, a few of the school principals have routinely denied or attempted to deny students access to snack lines as a means of punishment. Students were barred from making purchases at the snack lines at the Junior High School for a full week on two separate occasions, which cost the Food Services Department income.

According to Section 4.1 of the TEA *Administrator's Reference Manual*, "USDA policy prohibits the denial of meals as a disciplinary action against any student who is enrolled in a school from participating in the child-nutrition programs. Disciplinary actions indirectly resulting in the loss of meals is allowable, such as when a student is suspended from school. When the withholding of meals is the disciplinary action or if the disciplinary action directly results in the loss of meals, it is inconsistent with the law and is not allowable."

Recommendation 56:

Comply with disciplinary action guidelines required by the Child Nutrition Program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director and school principals review the Child Nutrition Program policies regarding denial of meals as a method of disciplinary action.	September 2001
2.	The school principals create new guidelines to ensure they follow policies from the Child Nutrition Program regarding denial of meals as a disciplinary action.	September 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

Daily snack bar revenues at Seale Junior High School averaged \$189.28 from July 2000 through March 2001, \$75.63 per day at Ortiz Intermediate School and \$63.76 per day at Hattie Martin Elementary School. Assuming snack bar privileges for all students were denied for one full week at each

school, the fiscal impact would be a total loss to the Food Services Department of just over \$1,643 annually. Eliminating the closure of snack bars as a means of disciplinary action would negate this loss of funding.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Comply with disciplinary action guidelines required by the Child Nutrition Program.	\$1,643	\$1,643	\$1,643	\$1,643	\$1,643

FINDING

RISD does offer nutrition education to students as a regular part of the curriculum, but the Food Services director and several cafeteria managers commented that many students, primarily girls, either do not eat at all or they purchase lunches consisting of non-nutritious foods.

The National School Lunch Act mandates that schools "*safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children.*" Participating schools must serve lunches consistent with recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans which includes:

- Eating a variety of foods;
- Choosing a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits;
- Choosing a diet moderate in sugars and salts; and
- Choosing a diet with 30 percent or less of its calories from fat and less than 10 percent of its calories from saturated fat.

Additionally, school lunches must provide, over the course of each school week, an average of at least one-third of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for protein, iron, calcium and vitamins A and C. Schools must also offer five food items from four food components to include meat/meat alternate, vegetables and/or fruits, grains/breads and milk with minimum portion sizes established by age and grade groups.

The USDA offers nutrition education through its Team Nutrition Program, which helps schools focus attention on the important role that nutritious school meals and a health-promoting school environment play in helping students learn healthy eating and physical activity habits. Program materials and the Web site offer a wealth of information explaining the benefits of being physically active and eating a variety of healthy foods.

Associations such as the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association offer films and lectures as well as printed materials to

assist teachers and encourage students to improve their diets and become more aware of the positive effects of good nutrition and exercise.

Recommendation 57:

Encourage and reward healthy eating choices.

TEA promotes several activities in its 5-a-Day campaign that Food Service operations can implement to encourage students in making healthy eating choices. The Healthy Choice Reward is an innovative way to reward students for making healthy choices. Food Services personnel place a sticker or color dot on the bottom of the containers of selected fruits and vegetables. When they announce that there are 'winners' in the cafeteria, students check their containers or food items for the special stickers, and 'winners' are rewarded with a coupon for a free healthy fruit or vegetable snack, juice or milk.

Pamphlets and brochures could be used as health-promotion materials and could be distributed to student's in cafeterias or by classroom teachers.

The Food Services department should continue to develop affiliations with local health and nutrition agencies to provide programs and educational materials.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers brainstorm for innovative program ideas to raise student awareness regarding the value of healthy eating choices.	October 2001
2.	Cafeteria implement new programs to encourage healthy eating and habits in students.	November 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

FOOD SERVICES

C. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

FINDING

RISD cafeteria managers place their food orders through an automated system, which is transferred electronically to the warehouse bookkeeper at the Food Services central office on a weekly basis. Orders received by the warehouse bookkeeper are compared to what is shown on each respective school's inventory of goods. If a school is placing an order for something shown to be in its available inventory, reconciliation is conducted as to where the products were transferred, the amount and the purpose. Emergency orders may be filled immediately by knowing at all times what each individual campus has in stock. Items ordered that are in warehouse stock are provided in a listing generated by the automated inventory system, while items not in available warehouse stock are assigned to appropriate vendors. The warehouse bookkeeper then faxes orders to vendors and places orders in pending status. Pantry inventories are maintained daily by cafeteria personnel to depict the daily usage of such items as canned goods, sugar and flour. This process aids in assuring goods are ordered when needed and items do not go to waste.

COMMENDATION

RISD has implemented an automated inventory system for its Food Services Department that allows for electronic ordering of food items and provides up-to-the-minute inventory information at the campus level.

FINDING

The RISD Food Services Department participates in a multi-regional purchasing cooperative with 34 other school districts to obtain the benefits and efficiencies of large-scale purchasing. The district also participates in an effort to comply with state bidding requirements and identification of qualified vendors for commodities, goods and services. Bids are solicited by Region 2 on behalf of the 35 districts in the cooperative for appropriate cafeteria food products.

In addition to purchasing items through an approved-vendors list and the Region 2, the Food Services director also submits specifications to the RISD Business Office for the solicitation of the district's milk, bread, ice

cream, tortilla and produce needs under appropriate competitive bidding rules.

COMMENDATION

RISD participates in a multi-regional purchasing cooperative for beneficial purchasing of food products.

FINDING

RISD's Food Services Department uses a point-of-sale (POS) system to record sales transactions and track and report student and financial data. A POS system is used in food services departments to prevent human error, increase accuracy of tracking and reporting cash received and to protect students from being identified or embarrassed by qualifying for free and reduced-price meals. A point-of-sale system usually refers to a standard computer, or group of networked computers, running POS application software and serving in a "cash register" role.

Elementary students at RISD have electronic swipe cards that are kept by their homeroom teachers. Teachers distribute the cards to students before the lunch period, the students swipe their cards through the card reader and student-meal participation is updated automatically. Students at the middle and high schools do not carry cards but use a keypad to input a pass code for their daily lunch meals. Daily cash reports are generated at each cafeteria that detail the number and type of sales made along with the amount of money collected. Money from cafeteria sales is deposited daily.

COMMENDATION

The RISD Food Services Department has increased the accuracy of its tracking and reporting of cash sales and safeguarded student privacy by implementing the use of an electronic point-of-sale system in each school cafeteria.

FINDING

Some of the RISD cafeteria equipment currently in use is very old and exceeds its useful life. Dishwashers do not always heat water to a temperature appropriate for cleaning and sanitizing food trays, and older food warmers are not reliable. The district employs an appliance repairman within the Food Services Department who maintains records on preventive maintenance as well as major repairs for individual pieces of equipment. Review of the fixed asset inventory listing provided by the business office shows that several warmers used to hold heated foods until served have exceeded their useful life.

In addition, the Food Services director and several of the cafeteria managers claim that the available frozen food storage space is inadequate and forces them to order goods more frequently, disabling them from obtaining discounts for bulk orders. The frozen food storage locker at the San Pedro Elementary School is a space of approximately 6 feet by 8 feet stocked to the ceiling with freezer items to accommodate an enrollment of more than 350 students.

Recommendation 58:

Reinvest a portion of the Food Services fund balance to replace aging equipment.

The district's reinvestment of a portion of the Food Services fund balance to replace aging equipment will allow RISD to improve the quality of food production and its respective MPLH. In addition, new equipment could contribute to overall employee satisfaction, reduce equipment downtime, reduce electricity consumption and enable the district to take advantage of discount pricing for bulk orders.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Each cafeteria manager conducts a needs assessment for kitchen equipment repair and replacement and submits report to the Food Services director.	September 2001
2.	The Food Services director analyzes the needs assessments for each kitchen and develops a prioritized listing of equipment repairs and replacement needs.	October 2001
3.	The Food Services director arranges funding for high priority or urgent equipment replacements and repairs.	January 2002
4.	Cafeteria managers conduct annual assessments of equipment needs.	March 2002 - Ongoing
5.	The Food Services director includes funding for equipment repair and replacement in the annual budget process.	March 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

If the RISD Food Services Department reinvests 8 percent of its fund balance in the repair or replacement of aging, inefficient or obsolete equipment, the annual cost (based on fund balance as of August 31, 2000) would be \$36,159.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
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Reinvest a portion of the Food Services fund balance to replace aging equipment.	(\$36,159)	(\$36,159)	(\$36,159)	(\$36,159)	(\$36,159)
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Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

The purpose of a school district's transportation department is to deliver timely, efficient and safe transportation services to all students.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Education Code authorizes school districts to provide student transportation services between school and home, from school to career and technology training destinations and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires districts to treat students with disabilities the same way the district treats general population students. IDEA also requires districts to provide transportation services to students who must travel to receive special education services.

The Texas Education Code allows school districts to receive state funding for the transportation of regular and special education students between home and school, and of career and technology students to and from vocational training locations. A district may apply for and receive up to an additional 10 percent of its regular transportation allotment for transportation of children living within two miles of the school who would otherwise be subject to hazardous conditions if they walked to school. As stated in Texas Education Code 42.155 (d), a hazardous condition exists where no walkway is provided and children must walk along or cross a freeway or expressway, underpass, overpass or a bridge, uncontrolled major traffic artery, an industrial or commercial area or another comparable condition.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reimburses districts for qualifying expenses according to a formula based on linear density as specified by the Education Code. Linear density is the average number of eligible regular education students transported daily divided by the approved daily route miles traveled. TEA uses this calculation to assign each school district to one of seven groups eligible to receive a different maximum per-mile reimbursement. TEA evaluates these group assignments every two years by recalculating linear density with data from the first of the previous two school years.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

A. TRANSPORTATION, OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

Pursuant to Section 42.155 of the Texas Education Code, the legislative appropriation for regular program transportation for the 1999-2000 and 2000-01 school years is calculated as shown in **Exhibit 10-1**.

Exhibit 10-1
Linear Density Allotment
1999-2000 through 2000-01

Linear Density Grouping	Allotment Per Mile of Approved Route
2.40 and up	\$1.43
1.65 to 2.40	\$1.25
1.15 to 1.65	\$1.11
.90 to 1.15	\$0.97
.65 to .90	\$0.88
.40 to .65	\$0.79
Up to .40	\$0.68

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Exhibit 10-2 represents the linear density for RISD and peer districts for the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 10-2
Linear Density Data
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

School District	Annual Ridership	Annual Mileage	Linear Density
Hidalgo	154,800	82,620	1.874
Roma	461,880	413,906	1.116
Mercedes	205,920	203,904	1.010

Raymondville	53,280	54,288	0.981
Robstown	58,500	70,560	0.829

Source: TEA, School Transportation Route Services Status Reports, 1999-2000.

For 1999-2000, RISD received a reimbursement of \$1.11 per mile for regular transportation services based on the 1998-99 linear density of 1.215. During 1998-99, RISD reported an annual ridership of 59,760 and annual mileage of 49,176.

All special education student transportation, except field trips, is also eligible for a maximum state reimbursement of \$1.08 per mile, as provided by Section 42.155 of the Texas Education Code. For 1999-2000, RISD reported transportation expenses to TEA of \$1.685 per mile for regular education student transportation and \$1.295 for special education transportation. RISD had 60,660 miles of reimbursable special education transportation mileage for 1999-2000. In 1999-2000, TEA provided RISD with \$158,260 in regular and special transportation funding based upon state regulations and \$11,350 for career and technology program related transportation services, for a total allotment of \$169,610. Other than routes identified as hazardous, RISD does not have any routes that are within the two-mile no funding limit.

Exhibit 10-3 compares the expenses per mile for regular and special education transportation for RISD, its peer districts and the state. RISD's expenses per mile for regular education transportation is less than all its peer districts and the state average, yet expenses per mile for special education transportation is 41 percent lower than the state average of \$2.196. RISD's per mile expenses have decreased substantially over the last three years though per mile expenses for its peer districts and the state average have increased steadily. Cost per mile is calculated by dividing the district's total annual operating costs by the total number of miles driven.

Exhibit 10-3
Transportation Operation Costs Per Mile
RISD, Peer Districts and State
1997-98 through 1999-2000

District	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000	
	Regular	Special	Regular	Special	Regular	Special

Robstown	\$2.637	\$3.676	\$2.195	\$2.327	\$1.685	\$1.295
Hidalgo	\$1.947	\$1.271	\$2.048	\$1.29	\$2.127	\$2.133
Mercedes	\$2.711	\$2.713	\$2.588	\$2.578	\$2.911	\$2.811
Raymondville	\$1.389	\$1.233	\$1.421	\$1.100	\$2.046	\$1.161
Roma	\$1.391	\$0.806	\$1.378	\$0.886	\$2.096	\$0.716
State	\$1.816	\$1.803	\$1.912	\$1.977	\$2.070	\$2.196

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1997-98 to 1999-2000.

Transportation expenditures for RISD have decreased since 1995-96. **Exhibit 10-4** shows the annual transportation expenditures for RISD and its peer districts. ISD is the only district to experience a drop in annual transportation expenditures when compared to its peers. Each of RISD's peer districts have had substantial increases in transportation expenses.

Exhibit 10-4
Transportation Expenditures
RISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 through 1999-2000

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change from 1995-96 to 1999-2000
Robstown	\$428,746	\$410,146	\$434,455	\$430,401	\$354,979	(17.21%)
Roma	\$846,034	\$768,692	\$816,525	\$810,563	\$1,132,259	33.83%
Hidalgo	\$368,118	\$418,386	\$408,806	\$400,439	\$516,572	40.33%
Raymondville	\$272,361	\$292,960	\$336,065	\$328,746	\$395,692	45.28%
Mercedes	\$895,223	\$966,860	\$1,000,064	\$1,137,420	\$1,301,227	45.35%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

The Transportation staff at RISD completes a majority of the fleet maintenance and repair work

in-house and efficiently schedules and performs preventive maintenance on its vehicle inventory. This practice aids the district in maintaining low operating costs for the Transportation Department.

Exhibit 10-5 shows RISD's categories of operation costs for transportation compared to its peer districts for 1999-2000. RISD did not purchase any new or used buses during 1999-2000 and had the lowest overall expenditures among all its peers districts.

Exhibit 10-5
Comparison of Operations Costs
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Salaries & Benefits	Purchased & Contracted Services	Supplies & Materials	Other Operating Expenses	Debt Service	Capital Outlay	Total Operating Costs
Robstown	\$165,676	\$15,180	\$90,344	\$14,058	\$0	\$69,721	\$354,979
Raymondville	\$230,783	\$24,400	\$76,700	\$4,100	\$0	\$59,709	\$395,692
Hidalgo	\$334,679	\$28,194	\$105,752	\$11,615	\$0	\$36,332	\$516,572
Roma	\$499,564	\$29,032	\$387,409	\$49,869	\$21,792	\$144,593	\$1,132,259
Mercedes	\$937,315	\$19,407	\$267,461	\$19,935	\$0	\$57,109	\$1,301,227

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 10-6 shows each cost category as a percentage of the total operation costs for each district for 1999-2000. With payment expenditures for two new buses lease-purchased in 1998, RISD had the highest percentage for capital outlays and exceeded the state average by 7.75 percent. RISD salaries and benefits ranked second lowest and were substantially below the peer and state averages, while costs for supplies and materials were ranked second highest among peer districts.

Exhibit 10-6
Percentage Analysis of Operating Cost Categories
RISD, State and Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Salaries & Benefits	Purchased & Contracted	Supplies & Materials	Other Operating Expenses	Debt Service	Capital Outlay
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		Services				
Robstown	46.67%	4.28%	25.45%	3.96%	0%	19.64%
Hidalgo	64.79%	5.46%	20.47%	2.25%	0%	7.03%
Mercedes	72.03%	1.49%	20.55%	1.53%	0%	4.40%
Raymondville	58.32%	6.17%	19.38%	1.04%	0%	15.09%
Roma	44.12%	2.56%	34.23%	4.40%	1.92%	12.77%
Peer Average	59.82%	3.92%	23.66%	2.30%	0.48%	9.82%
State Average	62.38%	10.17%	11.27%	2.90%	1.39%	11.89%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 1999-2000.

RISD's 1999-2000 route mileage totaled 225,437 of which 166,079 was for regular and special route transportation, 49,938 was for field trips and 9,420 miles was reported as other trips including mileage for driver training. This total includes deadhead mile, which are the miles school buses are driven when not transporting students. Field trips that are not covered by state funding are coordinated through the RISD business office and are charged to the school or program requesting the service.

In comparison to peer districts, RISD has the lowest cost per rider and was nearly 33 percent below the statewide average shown in **Exhibit 10-7**. Cost per rider is calculated by dividing the district's total annual operating costs by its average daily ridership.

**Exhibit 10-7
Costs Per Rider
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000**

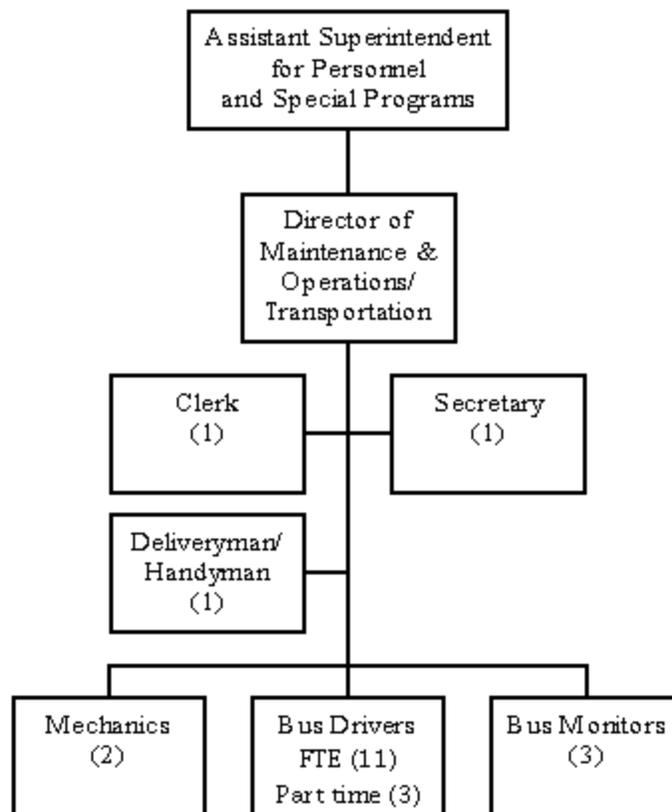
District	Total Annual Operating Costs	Average Daily Ridership	Cost Per Rider	Percentage Above/ (Below) State Average
Robstown	\$354,979	928	\$382.52	(32.97%)
Roma	\$1,132,259	2,802	\$404.09	(29.19%)
Hidalgo	\$516,572	1,150	\$449.19	(21.29%)
Mercedes	\$1,301,227	1,843	\$706.04	23.72%
Raymondville	\$395,692	536	\$738.23	29.36%

State	\$780,314,464	1,367,333	\$570.68	N/A
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Source: TEA, School Transportation Route Services Status Reports 1999-2000 and School Transportation Operation Reports 1999-2000.

The director of the Transportation Department also directs the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Department. The director of M&O/Transportation reports directly to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs. The Transportation Department's staffing structure is presented in **Exhibit 10-8**.

Exhibit 10-8
RISD Transportation Department Organization
2000-01



Source: RISD Transportation Department.

The Transportation Department is staffed with two mechanics, 11 full time drivers, three part time drivers, one delivery/handyman, three bus monitors, and a clerk and secretary who also support the Maintenance & Operations division. Several drivers drive morning and afternoon routes, as well as providing services for field trips and extracurricular activities.

Bus monitors are responsible for aiding special education students on and off of the bus and maintaining order. The full time bus drivers have cross-functional responsibilities with the Maintenance and Operations division, including a driver who performs small engine repairs, a driver who provides ground-keeping services, and drivers who perform preventive maintenance for the district's facilities.

FINDING

The district's Safety and Risk officer recently implemented defensive driving training sessions for all drivers of buses and other district vehicles, and plans to implement CPR training sessions for drivers of special education bus routes during the coming school year.

In addition, the director of M&O/Transportation attends and actively participates in meetings of the local chapter of the Texas Association for Pupil Transportation (TAPT). TAPT promotes safe and efficient pupil transportation for Texas public school districts. The organization encourages the exchange of ideas and cooperation between transportation departments across the state. Members work to improve pupil transportation policies, standards and equipment on local, state and national levels.

COMMENDATION

RISD promotes safe and efficient student transportation by providing defensive driving and CPR training opportunities for its bus drivers and professional development for the director of Maintenance and Operations/Transportation.

FINDING

RISD's Transportation Department includes a fleet of 22 buses for regular, special and extracurricular transportation and a district motor pool of 32 other vehicles and trailers for use by other departments including facility maintenance, grounds-keeping and food services. RISD route service records indicate a daily ridership of 928 out of 4,116 students enrolled during 2000-01. The district has implemented staggered opening and closing times at campuses to optimize the use of buses and drivers while providing timely delivery of students.

Exhibit 10-9 shows each school with the morning and afternoon start and release times. This schedule allows drivers to make multiple trips on some routes and allows service to more than one school.

Exhibit 10-9
School Start and Release Times
2000-01

School	School Start Time	School Release Time
Elementary Schools (Pre-K morning session)	7:50 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Elementary Schools (Pre-K afternoon session)	11:30 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
Elementary Schools (K-4)	7:50 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
Ortiz Intermediate School	7:50 a.m.	3:05 p.m.
Wynne Seale Junior High School	7:50 a.m.	3:16 p.m.
Robstown High School	8:20 a.m.	3:46 p.m.
Alternative Learning Center (morning session)	7:30 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Alternative Learning Center (afternoon session)	2:45 p.m.	4:45 p.m.
Alternative Education Program	8:20 a.m.	3:45 p.m.

Source: RISD Transportation Department 2001.

According to the director of M&O/Transportation, bus routes begin at least 30 minutes prior to school start times and return children home no later than 15 minutes before school release times.

Though the district has not documented financial savings from the staggered bell schedule, the director of M&O/Transportation stated that the schedule provides for better and more efficient scheduling of bus drivers who run multiple routes and allows timely delivery of children to and from school.

COMMENDATION

The district has implemented a staggered bell schedule at campuses to optimize the use of buses and drivers and provide timely delivery of students.

FINDING

RISD has a memorandum of understanding with Alice ISD for the daily transport of two RISD special education students to the Regional School for the Deaf, located in Corpus Christi. The special education student transportation service agreement was effective for the 2000-01 school year and provided transportation each school day set by the Corpus Christi

school calendar. According to the director of M&O/Transportation, this agreement developed because there was a shortage of RISD drivers to provide this service, and the districts determined the arrangement to be mutually beneficial. At RISD's special education program cost per mile of \$1.295, the annual expense of providing this level of service using RISD resources would be approximately \$24,216. The cost for Alice ISD to provide this service is \$19,000, which is an annual savings to RISD of \$5,216.

COMMENDATION

RISD has a Transportation Service Agreement with neighboring Alice ISD to provide transportation of RISD special education students to the Regional School for the Deaf located in Corpus Christi.

FINDING

RISD's linear density from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 dropped more than 31 percent, or 1.215 to 0.829. Though ridership declined 2 percent, annual mileage rose over 43 percent from 49,176 to 70,560 miles and includes 20,700 miles for hazardous routes. RISD's reported transportation expenses to TEA of \$1.685 per mile for regular education transportation are more than double the state reimbursement rate for the coming school year.

Linear density can be adversely affected when buses are driven greater distances to pick up a small number of students. Linear density is also adversely affected when buses are operated below capacity. Conversely, routes with a large number of riders per mile increase revenue from the state.

RISD designs bus routes by using manual bus logs with specific stops, turns and distances. This type of planning may limit the efficiency of routes and result in overcrowding or underutilization of buses. A long-term RISD bus driver rides each route approximately twice each year to determine if buses are running the most efficient route possible.

A district can maximize the number of students picked up and dropped off at each location, reduce the number of stops made, estimate walking distances for students and prevent stops in hazardous or undesirable locations by effectively selecting stop locations. Route coupling is the combination of a group of bus runs into schedules that minimize the number of buses required, and reduce student wait-time and overall bus travel distance. Use of automated route tracking and scheduling systems can assist a district in maximizing vehicle capacity and minimizing distance traveled.

Exhibit 10-10 shows all of the regular bus routes for RISD and the number of students transported each day compared to the capacity for each bus. As indicated by the percent of capacity used, the district's bus capacity is underutilized.

Exhibit 10-10
RISD Ridership by Bus, Run and Capacity
2000-01

School Bus Number	Run Number	Route Type	Bus Capacity	Number of Students	Percent of Capacity Used Per Run
2	Morning 38	Regular	72	38	52.78%
2	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	23	31.94%
2	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	16	22.22%
3	Morning 1	Regular	72	29	40.28%
3	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	18	25.00%
3	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	8	11.11%
4	Morning 1	Regular	72	16	22.22%
4	Morning 2	Regular	72	54	75.00%
4	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	36	50.00%
4	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	37	51.39%
5	Morning 1	Regular	72	40	55.55%
5	Morning 2	Regular	72	18	25.00%
5	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	40	55.55%
5	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	13	18.06%
6	ROTC	Extracurricular	77	18	25.00%

7	Morning 1	Regular	72	55	76.39%
7	Morning 2	Regular	72	26	36.11%
7	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	38	52.78%
7	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	25	34.73%
9	Morning 1	Regular	72	29	40.28%
9	Morning 2	Regular	72	41	56.94%
9	Morning 3	Regular	72	36	50.00%
9	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	58	80.56%
9	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	35	48.61%
9	Afternoon 3	Regular	72	10	13.89%
10	Morning 1	Regular	72	52	72.22%
10	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	40	55.55%
10	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	33	45.83%
11	Morning 1	Regular	48	8	16.67%
11	Morning 2	Regular	48	9	18.75%
11	Morning 3	Regular	48	2	4.17%
11	Morning 4	Regular	48	8	16.67%
11	Afternoon 1	Regular	48	6	12.50%
11	Afternoon 2	Regular	48	3	6.25%
11	Afternoon 3	Regular	48	8	16.67%
16	Morning 1	Regular	72	79	109.72%
16	Morning 2	Regular	72	20	27.78%
16	Afternoon 1	Regular	72	64	88.89%

16	Afternoon 2	Regular	72	45	62.50%
17	Morning 1	Regular	82	51	62.20%
17	Morning 2	Regular	82	44	53.66%
17	Morning 3	Regular	82	38	46.34%
17	Clinical	Extracurricular	82	64	78.05%
17	Afternoon 1	Regular	82	54	65.85%
17	Afternoon 2	Regular	82	42	51.22%
17	Afternoon 3	Regular	82	26	31.71%
1	Morning 1	Special	12	16	133.33%
1	Afternoon 1	Special	12	20	166.67%
2	Morning 1	Special	19	25	131.58%
2	Morning 2	Special	19	10	52.63%
2	Afternoon 1	Special	19	28	147.37%
3	Morning 1	Special	30	13	43.33%
3	Afternoon 1	Special	30	15	50.00%
Total RISD Ridership			3,360	1,580	47.02%

Source: RISD Transportation Department, May 2001.

Additionally shown above, the special education buses may be overcrowded on some routes. The use of a larger vehicle could eliminate that problem. Overall however, the district operates routes at less than 45 percent of capacity, with some routes running at less than 25 percent capacity.

Recommendation 59:

Optimize bus routes to improve linear density and make better use of bus capacity.

Closer analysis of bus routes will improve the district's linear density and eligible mileage reimbursement rates. The district should consider consolidating sparse routes and plan for the purchase or lease of smaller buses where consolidation cannot be accomplished.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of M&O/Transportation and lead bus drivers for regular and special education routes complete comprehensive analysis of ridership of all bus routes to optimize transportation capabilities and increase linear density and utilization.	October 2001
2.	The director of M&O/Transportation establishes restructured routes and submits to superintendent for approval.	December 2001
3.	The superintendent notifies parents of the restructured routes.	December 2001
4.	The Transportation Department implements new routes and increases linear density and bus utilization.	January 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The comprehensive analysis of bus routes can be implemented with existing resources. The conservative savings estimate assumes RISD can increase its linear density to between .90 and 1.15 and be reimbursed the rate of \$0.97 per mile beginning 2002-03. Using the annual regular mileage for 1999-2000 of 70,560 and an increase in the reimbursement rate from \$0.88 (2001-02 school year) to \$0.97 per mile for 2002-03 and subsequent years, the estimated savings would be \$6,350 ($\$0.09 \times 70,560$ miles = \$6,350). Additionally the district should realize savings when optimized routes decrease the district's total fuel use.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Optimize bus routes to improve linear density and make better use of bus capacity.	\$0	\$6,350	\$6,350	\$6,350	\$6,350

FINDING

RISD has a shortage of qualified bus drivers. The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) notes that there is a shortage of school bus drivers in many parts of the nation, which is typical when there are many competing job opportunities. The district implemented a pay raise for bus drivers at the beginning of 2000-01. The

RISD director of M&O/Transportation said that many potential bus drivers come to Robstown looking for full-time employment because the pay is better than nearby districts. They are not however, interested in the cross-functional nature of job opportunities offered by the district's Maintenance and Operations/Transportation Department.

The district has employed a majority of the current bus drivers for several years. The three part-time drivers have route hours that typically begin early in the morning, run for a couple hours and then run again in the afternoon. Because there is only one individual in the substitute pool, any bus driver's absence adversely affects the district's ability to provide timely and high quality transportation. Advertisements for drivers are placed in local area newspapers, including Corpus Christi, and notices are posted throughout the district, but response is poor because the full-time positions include duties beyond a normal bus driving job.

Exhibit 10-11 shows that RISD's bus driver hourly wages are comparable with wages of local districts.

Exhibit 10-11
Bus Driver Hourly Pay Rates
RISD and Local Districts
2000-01

School District	Minimum	Mid-Point	Maximum
Alice	\$7.09	\$7.09	\$7.09
Calallen	\$7.69	\$9.42	\$11.15
Kingsville	\$7.25	\$8.75	\$10.25
Robstown	\$7.61	\$9.51	\$11.41
Local District Average	\$7.35	\$8.86	\$10.94

Source: RISD Salary Schedule and Telephone interviews with the Transportation Department in each peer school district, 2001.

Recommendation 60:

Target bus driver recruitment to individuals who are interested in flexible schedules and part-time work hours.

The district should focus its recruitment of drivers to people who are interested in short work hours, such as retirees, students from Del Mar College or Texas A&M University-Kingsville or parents who only want to

work limited hours. Offering flexible scheduling and reduced hours would enable the district to recruit part-time employees and avoid paying full-time benefits and still accommodate the demands of the district's transportation needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of M&O/Transportation and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs draft an advertisement for part-time bus drivers and post it in local newspapers, RISD school bulletin boards and newsletters, local college campuses, churches and community halls.	October 2001
2.	The director of M&O/Transportation maintains and continues to recruit part-time bus drivers for the Transportation substitute pool.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

B. FLEET MAINTENANCE

RISD operates and maintains a fleet of 22 buses. Eight buses, or 36 percent, of RISD's fleet are over fifteen years old with three being over twenty years old. There is no documented bus replacement plan, but the director of M&O/Transportation and the lead mechanic annually assess the need for fleet repair and replacement. **Exhibit 10-12** shows the bus inventory in RISD by age.

Exhibit 10-12
RISD Bus Fleet By Age
1999-2000

Vehicle Age	Number of Buses	
	Regular	Special
Less than 5 years	2	2
5 to 10 years	7	1
Older than 10 years	8	2
Total	17	5

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Report 1999-2000.

Exhibit 10-13 shows how the age of RISD buses compares to those of peer districts. RISD has the third highest percentage (45.45 percent) of buses that are older than 10 years.

Exhibit 10-13
Comparison of Age of Buses
RISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Age			Total Number of Buses	Percent of Buses Older than 10 Years
	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10 Years or Greater		
Roma	6	16	25	47	53.19%
Mercedes	11	9	20	40	50.00%

Robstown	4	8	10	22	45.45%
Hidalgo	8	6	8	22	36.36%
Raymondville	5	6	6	17	35.29%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports 1999-2000.

FINDING

RISD is staffed with a lead mechanic and a mechanic's helper for the maintenance and repair of its bus and vehicle fleet of 54. The industry standard for mechanics is one for every 20 to 30 vehicles. RISD's staffing level for mechanics is in the acceptable range at 1:27. The lead mechanic is also an Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified bus technician and has completed training in courses including electrical systems, diesel engine operations, automobile heating and air conditioning, refrigerant recovery and recycling, brakes and the installation, service and repair of wheelchair lifts and accessories.

Industry experts state that the use of ASE certified mechanics enables a company, agency or school district to better manage transportation expenditures by providing a more accurate diagnosis of mechanical problems, which reduces vehicle downtime and rework of repairs. ASE certified mechanics are also a good resource for the recruitment and selection of other prospective mechanics.

COMMENDATION

RISD is in-line with industry staffing levels for vehicle mechanics and employs a professional ASE certified bus technician.

FINDING

The RISD Transportation Department does not have written preventive maintenance procedures. Maintenance activities are well planned and tracked by the lead mechanic. Bus drivers check oil levels, brakes, tires and perform routine maintenance according to manufacturer recommendations. Each bus driver submits daily status reports to the lead mechanic which are placed in individual files for each vehicle. A master listing is kept on a chalkboard in the mechanic's office, which lists the date and mileage of each vehicle's latest oil change as well as the next interval for oil changes.

The Transportation Department has vehicle and parts information including, manufacturer's warranty and recommended maintenance and schedules vehicles for preventive maintenance. The required daily pre-

route inspection routine by each driver and the specific assignment of drivers to individual buses, helps the district identify potential maintenance problems and creates a useful operational history for each bus. Drivers are assigned to specific routes and specific buses so they become familiar with the vehicle's operation and are more likely to notice changes in operation or performance drivers report problems to the mechanic who prioritizes and schedules maintenance and repair work.

Though this manual process of tracking preventive maintenance currently works very well for RISD, written procedures would ensure that future operations continue to operate smoothly and to the same standards.

Recommendation 61:

Document the existing vehicle preventive maintenance process.

The manual tracking process currently used by RISD is effective. However, a written procedures manual should be developed by the lead mechanic and the director of M&O/Transportation. In the event the department experiences changes in personnel, this manual would ensure adherence to preventive maintenance standards and procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The lead mechanic documents existing preventive maintenance procedures for all buses and the district vehicle fleet and submits the draft to the director of M&O/Transportation for review and approval.	October 2001
2.	The director of M&O/Transportation approves the preventive maintenance procedures and prepares a procedures manual for the Transportation Department.	November 2001
3.	The Transportation Department performs preventive maintenance according to established and documented procedures.	December 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD does not have a formal bus replacement plan. The district's bus procurement pattern is indicated in **Exhibit 10-14**. As shown, the district has purchased four regular education buses and two special education

buses in the last five years. The two regular education buses were purchased in 1998 and were low mileage reconditioned vehicles.

Exhibit 10-14
RISD Bus Inventory by Model Year
April 2001

School Bus Model Year	Date of Purchase	Number of Buses	
		Regular	Special
1977 International 60 Passenger	4/19/77	1	
1980 Chevrolet 10 Passenger	4/10/80		1
1980 Chevrolet 72 Passenger	2/26/81	1	
1982 Chevrolet 16 Passenger	8/23/82		1
1982 GMC 72 Passenger	12/21/82	1	
1983 Ford 72 Passenger	10/13/98	1	
1984 GMC 72 Passenger	10/13/98	1	
1985 International 72 Passenger	1/23/86	1	
1986 International 72 Passenger	9/02/86	1	
1988 Chevrolet 77 Passenger	7/13/88	1	
1990 Bluebird 48 Passenger	7/11/90	4	
1992 Bluebird 30 Passenger	10/28/92		1
1993 Bluebird 48 Passenger	7/1/94	1	
1993 Bluebird 72 Passenger	7/21/93	2	
1995 Bluebird 12 Passenger	7/10/96		1
1995 Bluebird 19 Passenger	7/10/96		1
1999 Bluebird 82 Passenger	5/12/98	1	
1999 Bluebird 82 Passenger	5/15/98	1	
Total		17	5
Average Age		12.65	12.2

Source: RISD Transportation Department.

The average age of RISD's bus fleet is 12.65 years for regular education buses and 12.2 years for special education buses. Districts gain maximum

uses of vehicles by establishing replacement plans based on an analysis of the fleet's age and condition and the district's capacity needs. Replacement plans also allow districts to efficiently budget funds for the orderly replacement of buses.

TSPR recommends a 15-year bus replacement cycle. Districts with good maintenance programs can extend bus life beyond the recommended 15-year life cycle.

Comal ISD, for example, has adopted a vehicle replacement plan designed to maintain the necessary fleet size and concurrently reduce bus hazards by replacing buses once they reach the end of their useful life. This plan of replacement allows for staggered replacement costs.

A district can opt to purchase buses through the General Services Commission (GSC) if the specifications of available buses meet their required criteria. If a school district elects to purchase a bus or buses through other sources than the GSC, the district must solicit for bids.

Recommendation 62:

Develop and implement a formal school bus replacement plan.

The bus replacement plan should be based on an analysis of the age, condition and capacity of each bus in the fleet. This will help the district ensure that buses wear evenly and that bus mileage can be accumulated evenly. Rotation of buses may also help identify which route combinations most evenly accrue mileage. Implementing a 15-year bus replacement plan with a fleet of 22 buses will require RISD to budget for the purchase of one bus each year and two buses every fifth year. The bus replacement plan should also remain flexible and anticipate changes in student enrollment. As shown, RISD purchased two new and two used buses in 1998, as well as two special education buses in 1996.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of M&O/Transportation determines a maximum age and mileage target for all district buses.	September 2001
2.	The director of M&O/Transportation adopts a bus rotation plan, which considers level of preventive maintenance, mileage targets and age of buses.	October 2001
3.	The director of M&O/Transportation and the lead mechanic monitor overall condition of bus fleet including annual mileage, wear and tear on rough routes, repair expenditures and age of individual buses.	November 2001 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

RISD has purchased six buses in the last five years for a total expense of \$238,162. Implementing a five-year bus replacement plan by purchasing one bus per year for four years and two buses in the fifth year, at a purchase price of \$55,000, will cost the district \$330,000. The district will need to budget the additional expense of \$91,838 ($\$330,000 - \$238,162 = \$91,838$) divided out over five years equates to \$18,368 each year. This fiscal impact does not consider any income generated from the sale or disposal of older buses.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Develop and implement a formal school bus replacement plan.	(\$18,368)	(\$18,368)	(\$18,368)	(\$18,368)	(\$18,368)

FINDING

The RISD Transportation Department does not produce summary reports or track expenses on district vehicles. Basic data including serial numbers, odometer readings, mileage, vendor purchases, revenue and expenses and departmentalized billings are performed with labor intensive manual methods. Fuel use and inventory for parts and supplies are not tracked at all.

A vehicle maintenance software program will enable the district to track parts inventories by category, location and expenses including automatic reorder levels and order tracking. Useful inventory reports including parts usage and cost analysis will allow RISD to make "just-in-time" purchasing decisions with up-to-date information. Service records for each piece of equipment can also be created that show the dates work was performed as well as the cost of all parts and labor. This information would also be important in determining the value of equipment at the time of disposal or resale.

Scheduling for preventive maintenance on vehicles can be done manually or automatically by entering mileage counts on work orders and fuel tracking records. Equipment service can also be scheduled in advance to avoid shortages of parts or personnel and allow for smoother operations.

Vehicle maintenance software can also track actual work performed and store information for vehicle service analysis. Work order information should automatically reduce inventory amounts, update odometer readings and record various costs for reporting purposes. Many user definable reports including fuel usage analysis, vehicle specific service records and

costs and equipment listings can help the district better track resources and make well-informed decisions.

Recommendation 63:

Purchase and implement an automated vehicle maintenance software program.

The Transportation Department's existing computers are capable of supporting the proposed software. An automated vehicle maintenance system will maintain information for equipment, parts inventory, service record history and maintenance scheduling and provide the district with up to date records and information for reporting purposes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of M&O/Transportation determines the requirements of an automated vehicle maintenance software program and develops an estimate of the cost of the system, including installation and training.	October 2001
2.	The director of M&O/Transportation submits a budget amendment request to the RISD superintendent for board approval.	October 2001
3.	The director of M&O/Transportation requisitions for the fleet maintenance software program, including installation and training.	November 2001
4.	The fleet maintenance software vendor conducts training for the director of M&O/Transportation, lead mechanic and administrative staff.	January 2002
5.	The RISD Transportation Department implements use of the fleet maintenance software.	February 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There are numerous options in the selection of fleet maintenance software. The cost for the fleet maintenance software is \$2,200 and includes security features and licensing for two users. The software package also includes a tutorial for system operation with technical assistance and support available online or by phone.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
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Purchase and implement an automated vehicle maintenance software program.	(\$2,200)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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FINDING

RISD does not have fuel storage tanks for its Transportation Department and does not participate in a purchasing cooperative with other regional transportation providers for bidding and buying such things as bulk fuel, tires and vehicle parts and supplies.

Fuel is purchased through an arrangement with a local station. The district issues purchase orders approximately every other week to authorize fueling. All district employees must sign for the fuel and provide their driver's license number, district vehicle number and odometer reading. When drivers refuel out of town they use district credit cards. While this is a well thought out process, there has not been a request for competitive bids for fuel vendors. Bus and vehicle parts including tires and lubricants are purchased from the district's approved vendor list. In addition to a possible purchasing arrangement with Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) or GSC, there are several vendors within Nueces County and neighboring communities that could provide discounted prices and delivery of bulk purchases for numerous goods such as fuel, lubricants, tires and expendable supplies.

Recommendation 64:

Use cooperative purchasing arrangements to purchase fuel, tires, lubricants and supplies at discounted prices.

Savings can be generated as the Transportation Department is able to compare pricing structures for various products from a wide variety of vendors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of M&O/Transportation arranges participation in a cooperative purchasing agreement with local school districts.	October 2001
2.	The director of M&O/Transportation Department compares prices available from vendors in the purchasing agreement to prices available from vendors outside the agreement and selects the most advantageous.	November 2001
3.	The director of M&O/Transportation continues to evaluate	November 2001 -

	opportunities to obtain products at a savings to the district.	Ongoing
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 11

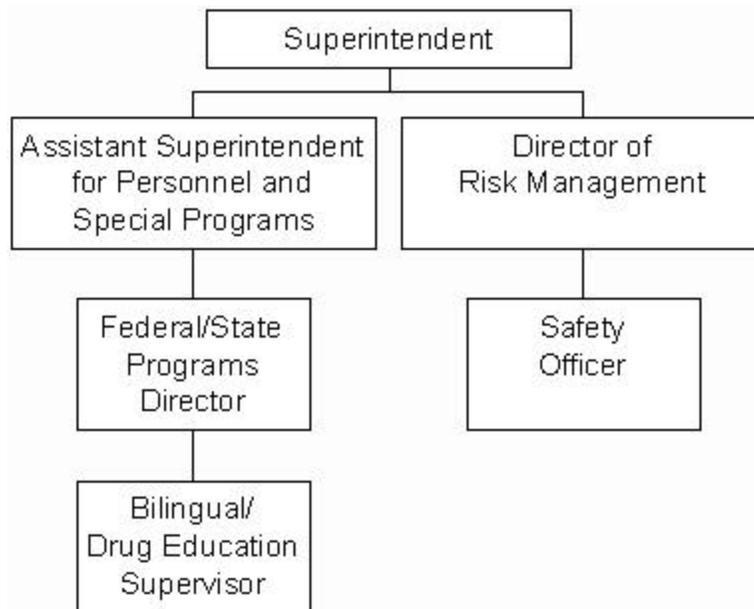
SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security of students, teachers and school district staff are primary concerns, and a basic requirement for an environment conducive to teaching and learning. School districts must have effective policies, procedures, and programs to adequately address the security of the students and the district staff.

BACKGROUND

RISD's Risk Management office has two staff members assigned responsibility for safety and security, the director of Risk Management and the Safety officer. The director of Risk Management reports to the superintendent while the Safety officer reports to the director of Risk Management. In addition, the supervisor of the Bilingual Program/Drug Education, who reports to the director of Federal and State Programs, is responsible for drug or violence incident reporting to TEA, drug education programs and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community program. **Exhibit 11-1** shows the organizational chart for RISD's safety and security functions.

Exhibit 11-1
Organization for RISD's Safety and Security Functions
2000-01



Source: RISD Superintendent's Office 2000-01.

In 2000-01, the department's budget of \$147,042 covered two salaries, travel, furniture, equipment, general office supplies and contracted safety courses such as CPR and Defensive Driving. In addition to these budgeted items, the district also contracts with outside vendors for seven security guards, alarm surveillance and a drug detection dog. The security guards are placed in the secondary schools: the high school and junior high school. The elementary schools, Alternative Learning Center (ALC), an alternative education program designed to help students graduate who are at-risk of dropping out of school and the Alternative Education Program (AEP) do not have security guards assigned.

In 2001-02 the number of guards will drop from seven to four, with two at the high school and two at the junior high. Security services for all extra curricular activities are obtained through the same contract for security guards. The district also contracts with the local police department for traffic control during special events.

Additionally, the AEP has a county sheriff's deputy visit and talk to the students on days when the deputy conducts Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) classes at the intermediate school. Visits by the sheriff's department personnel at the AEP are a courtesy and free of charge, as no formal agreement or contract has been developed for this service.

The district also has other preventive programs such as DAVE (Drug and Violence Education) and numerous other activities throughout the year aimed at drug abuse education and anti-violence. Some of the activities include Red Ribbon Week, National Smoke Out Day, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Say No to Drugs Week and Dare to Dream.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A. SECURITY AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

RISD safety and security responsibilities are divided between the district and individual schools. The director of Risk Management has responsibility for districtwide security, while the individual campus principals are responsible for the day-to-day safety and security issues such as student discipline and the general safety of all personnel.

The district has approved policies and procedures on student conduct and discipline for all students, including students with disabilities. These policies contain the legal authority and local guidelines, and are the basis for the district's code of conduct and student handbook.

In addition, the district has installed some surveillance equipment to assist in monitoring areas of the district for safety. The Alternative Education school has two video cameras viewing the front entrance of the school, while Hattie Martin Elementary school has one video camera.

Maintenance and operations personnel maintain these cameras. All RISD facilities have security alarms installed for surveillance of facilities during non-operating hours. The alarms are monitored and maintained through a contract with Alarm Security & Contracting of Corpus Christi.

While none of the schools have identification badges for staff, visitors or students, all schools in the district do require that visitors report to the main office before entering school facilities. This requirement is displayed on signs at all entrances of every campus in the district. The district and all campuses, encourage parents to visit the schools and classrooms, but they must sign in at the main office before entering any classroom.

FINDING

Each campus in the district has its own crisis management plan detailing procedures to follow in case of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado or fire and conducts mock exercises once per year. RISD also has a districtwide crisis management plan that covers the following types of crisis: children left at school unsupervised; child kidnapping; chemical leaks; violence, bomb and telephone threats; details to follow in case of serious injury or death to students or staff; and instructions on what to do during natural disasters.

The district plan was developed by a committee of district staff, the Emergency Coordinator for the City of Robstown, parents and community

members. In addition, the Coastal Bend-Texas Chapter of the American Red Cross developed a disaster feeding agreement as part of the crisis management plan. The plan allows school facilities and food the campuses have on hand at each school cafeteria to be used during natural disasters.

COMMENDATION

The district is creating a "Team Approach" with district, school, city and emergency organizations in developing and implementing their crisis management plans.

FINDING

The district's security policy, lacks a districtwide plan for security measures, oversight and program evaluation. Although the district complies with state mandates on drug and violence incident reporting requirements and has been trained on incident reporting by TEA and Region 2, the current method of collecting and reporting data does not provide a means to analyze the information on security activities or measure and evaluate the effectiveness of current security practices.

While each Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) includes safety and security goals and objectives, strategies and program evaluation, the district still does not have a districtwide plan specifically designed to implement an effective security program. School security is the responsibility of each individual campus with little district oversight or coordination. Each school implements its own security program with little interaction or coordination from the other schools or the district.

Without a district plan and a continued evaluation of security practices, the district cannot identify and adapt to changing requirements. Most districts have a clearly defined district security plan on how to implement an effective security program. According to the Texas Attorney General's School Violence Prevention Task Force Final Report, May 2000, programs should have evaluation components to measure the program's effectiveness and ensure scarce resources are not spent on unsuccessful programs.

Recommendation 65:

Establish a districtwide security plan that includes a mechanism for measuring and evaluating security activities.

The director of Risk Management forms a security committee representative of personnel from the district, each campus, community, and local police department leadership to meet quarterly. The security

committee will be responsible for developing a districtwide security plan tied to the district budget and based on current district security policy. The districtwide plan will identify reporting requirements, procedures to analyze data and a means to evaluate the security program. The individual schools will then develop a security plan personalized to address specific requirements of each campus but tied to the district's overall security plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Risk Management forms a security committee composed of district staff, community members and police department leadership to assist in writing the district security plan.	October 2001
2.	The director of Risk Management drafts and provides committee members a copy of their committee roles and responsibilities.	October 2001
3.	The committee conducts its initial meeting, reviews committee roles and responsibilities and determines the approach how to develop the districts' security plan.	November 2001
4.	The committee completes the district security plan and submits it to the superintendent for review.	December 2001
5.	The superintendent presents the plan to the school board for approval.	December 2001
6.	Each school establishes a security committee and begins developing a school security plan tied to the districtwide security plan.	January 2002
7.	Each school security plan is submitted to the director of Risk Management for review and submitted to the superintendent for approval.	February 2002
8.	The director of Risk Management approves the plans.	March 2002
9.	Each school implements their safety and security plan.	April 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD procured guard services under an ambiguous contract initiated in December 1999 with Accident Reconstruction Specialist. On an annual basis, the contract is automatically renewed and extended for an additional year unless either party gives written intent to terminate.

The review team was given a copy of the contract to examine while onsite and they found that the contract does not specify the number of guards or man-hours required, locations of guard service, business hours required, means to obtain additional security during extracurricular activities, quality assurance measures, or evaluation procedures. For example, paragraph three in the contract is designated to identify the man-hours per week required under the contract, however this portion of the contract has not yet been completed. In addition, the contract also does not specify experience, training or certification requirements of the security personnel assigned to the district.

This type of contract poses several risks to the school district with little or no risk to the vendor. One potential risk involves the number of security guards, placement and number of hours required. Under this contract arrangement, the vendor can determine and change the number of guards, the locations of service and the number of man-hours supplied without notifying the school district. This can potentially be costly for the district. Another risk to the district is that without a means to measure and evaluate the performance of the guards, the district cannot ensure they are receiving the quality of service they expect. Finally, by not requiring training, experience, or certification of personnel, the vendor may use unqualified staff for these services.

The federal Government uses "Performance Based Contracts." These types of contracts specify what, when and where the service is required, the training, experience and certifications required by the contractor, the standards to which the vendors is held and a quality control plan to measure and evaluate the contract performance.

By telling the vendor when, where and what type of service they want, the district gives the vendor flexibility to provide the service at the lowest cost. Having measures and evaluations in place ensures the district gets the services they expect.

Recommendation 66:

Issue an RFP for security services and notify Accident Reconstruction Specialist of intent to terminate the current contract.

The new contract for school security services should be performance based stating what services are required of the vendor. The director of Risk Management should develop and implement a quality assurance plan detailing the method of surveillance to ensure the vendor is meeting the requirements of the contract. The new contract should state the schools covered under the contract, the times and days the service is required and a schedule of extracurricular activities the vendor will provide security

services for. The contract should also state a price per man-hour for unscheduled extracurricular activities, such as play-off games and the procedures for obtaining these services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent requests the board approve the issuance of an RFP for school security services.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent asks the director of Risk Management to draft a quality assurance plan and requirements to be met in the security contract.	October 2001
3.	The director of Risk Management drafts a quality assurance plan based on the required services and performance measures.	November-December 2001
4.	The superintendent reviews the draft.	December 2001
5.	The superintendent issues an RFP for security services.	January 2002
6.	The board reviews all proposals received and selects the best proposal.	March 2002
7.	The superintendent notifies Accident Reconstruction Specialist of intent to terminate the existing contract ten days prior to the end of the contract date of June 1, 2002.	May 2002
8.	The vendor begins providing security services.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

B. Student Discipline Management

The Texas Comptroller of Public Account's publication *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School* is based on the results of its numerous school performance reviews. TSPR has found that the most effective districts have a safety plan that includes prevention, intervention and enforcement strategies. An effective program includes the steps shown in **Exhibit 11-2**.

Exhibit 11-2
Keeping Texas Children Safe in School
January 2000

Strategy	Steps to be Taken
Prevention	Know your goals and objectives: where your district is going and what you want to accomplish.
	Establish clear expectations for students, parents, teachers and administrators.
	Address warning signs before they turn into trouble.
Intervention	Look for trouble before it finds you.
	Recognize trouble when you see it.
	Have individuals in the right place and at the right time to intervene.
	Have a plan of action appropriate for the occasion and practice it.
Enforcement	Leave no room for double standards.
	Ensure that discipline management extends inside and outside the classroom.
	Alternative programs are not just a matter of compliance with the law; they are many student's last chance at success.

Source: Comptroller of Public Accounts, Keeping Texas Children Safe in Schools, January 2000.

Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code is the legal guideline for student discipline. The code requires each district to develop a Code of Conduct detailing acceptable and non-acceptable behavior, consequences and fair

and equal treatment. Districts report school discipline actions using the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). **Exhibit 11-3** shows that the total number of incidents in Texas schools increased between 1994-95 and 1998-99. New reporting requirements prohibit numbers for 1999-2000 to be compared in this exhibit because the incident indicators increased from 16 to 34 and does not lend itself to an equal comparison. Violence, drug, alcohol or tobacco incidents have risen in Texas by 19 percent from 1994 through 1999.

Exhibit 11-3
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Act
State of Texas Annual Evaluation Report
Program Specific Indicators

Incidents	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Students referred for disciplinary action related to the possession, sale, or use of TAOD*	34,124	38,187	39,195	37,731	36,688
Student arrests for offenses related to the possession, sale, or use of TAOD*	6,270	9,191	8,736	11,342	11,614
Incidents of school-related gang violence	5,736	5,945	8,959	6,879	4,867
Students placed in Alternative Education due to possession, sale, or use of TAOD*	11,894	13,726	15,551	16,153	15,107
Other students placed in Alternative Education (excluding line 4 above)	128,883	109,168	121,189	98,624	88,545
Out-of-school suspensions related to possession, sale, or use of TAOD*	10,264	13,615	14,781	15,113	14,209
Other out-of-school suspensions (excluding line 6 above)	180,775	200,630	227,929	258,190	303,034
Expulsions related to possession, sale, or use of TAOD* (do not include students placed in an alternative to expulsion program)	3,821	1,235	1,499	1,688	1,815
Other expulsions (do not include students placed in an alternative	13,441	5,045	5,455	4,206	4,129

to expulsion program) (excluding line 8 above)					
Assaults against students	50,904	47,967	45,556	58,650	50,734
Assaults against teacher/staff	6,238	4,125	3,927	4,369	3,721
Acts of vandalism/criminal mischief against school property	6,545	14,708	19,810	16,439	15,578
Acts of vandalism/criminal mischief against student property	2,597	9,425	8,549	6,657	6,419
Acts of vandalism/criminal mischief against teacher/staff property	1,033	2,320	2,302	2,676	2,214
Number of firearms confiscated	851	542	523	576	490
Number of other weapons confiscated	8,554	5,061	7,993	7,437	6,432
Total Number Of Incidents	471,930	480,890	531,954	546,730	565,596

*Source: TEA Student Support Program.
TAOD-Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Robstown ISD's discipline procedures are printed in a well-developed student code of conduct that specifically details all aspects of what is expected in student behavior, prohibited conduct, possible consequences for unacceptable behavior and the appeal process. The code of conduct allows flexibility in the disciplinary consequences based on the circumstances surrounding the incident and the student's past history. The code also specifies when and where the district authority applies and includes conduct for extra curricular activities as well as conduct on school buses.

All RISD schools use the district Code of Conduct and student handbook to ensure that all students receive fair and equal treatment throughout the district. The code of conduct and student handbook are distributed to each student at the beginning of the year with a form the students and parents sign indicating they have read, understand and agree with the contents. Students who commit minor infractions of the student Code of Conduct, or break campus or classroom rules, are assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS). Students assigned to ISS are supervised by a certified teacher, and are required to complete normal assignments given by their regular teacher.

When students repeatedly break the Code of Conduct or commit major infractions, they are placed in the Alternative Education Program (AEP) or suspended from school, and parents are sent home a notice telling them about the incident and the consequences the student will be given.

Students have the right to explain their version of the event at a conference with the parents, teacher, principal and administrator; and in the case of suspension, the student has the right to be represented by legal counsel at a hearing before the superintendent.

The student and parents receive written notification of the outcome of the conference or hearing and are provided with instructions on the appeal process. The RISD Board of Trustees is the final appeal authority and its decisions are final.

RISD operates a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP) for students who commit serious offenses or persistent misbehavior. Parents are notified of any action resulting in a student being placed in the AEP, or suspended from school. The AEP School is staffed with ten highly-motivated and dedicated personnel. Parents are encouraged to attend all conferences/meetings regarding placement and removal of the student in the AEP. The AEP staff ensures elementary and secondary students are separated and focus their curriculum on English, Math, Science, History, and Self-Discipline.

Students placed in the AEP also complete TAAS testing. The AEP staff and administration develop a curriculum plan for high school students placed in the program to ensure the students meet graduation requirements.

In addition to the ISS and AEP program, districts can send students who have committed a felony offence to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP). Specific information concerning the arrest or criminal conduct of students must be shared between law enforcement and local school districts. The Education Code requires school districts, the juvenile board, and juvenile justice systems in counties with a population of 125,000 or more to establish a JJAEP. The JJAEP operates under the jurisdiction of the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. Its primary objective is to provide for the education of incarcerated youths and youths on probation.

The Nueces County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (NCJJAEP) is a partnership based on an inter-local agreement and a memoranda of understanding between the Nueces County Juvenile Board and the 12 independent school districts in Nueces County. RISD students placed in the NCJJAEP are reflected in the district's Average Daily

Attendance (ADA). Costs to the district for placement in the NCJJAEP, equal the district's ADA amount.

Exhibit 11-4 shows that RISD's Alternative Education Program's attendance for 1998-99 through 1999-2000 has dropped by 8.4 percent.

Exhibit 11-4
Alternative Education Program's Attendance
1998-99 through 1999-2000

Campus	Number of student days served in AEP		Number of students assigned to AEP		Number of repeats assigned to AEP		Number of students transferred to JJAEP	
	1998-99	1999-2000	1998-99	1999-2000	1998-99	1999-2000	1998-99	1999-2000
High School	2736	2080	75	72	6	10	6	5
ALC	179	87	15	4	0	0	0	0
Jr. High School	933	1129	37	44	6	6	6	0
Ortiz Intermediate	168	128	6	6	0	0	0	1
San Pedro Elementary	0	18	0	4	0	0	0	0
Lotspeich Elementary	148	0	4	0	1	0	1	0
Martin Elementary	0	64	0	2	0	0	0	0
Salazar Elementary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4164	3506	137	132	13	16	13	6

Source: RISD data processing.

FINDING

Lotspeich Elementary School has implemented a Peer Mediation program for students in grades 3 and 4. This program was initially designed for high school and junior high school students. Initiating such a program at the elementary grades is a new approach to managing student discipline.

The program trains students in areas of conflict resolution and lets students mediate potential problems with peer students.

Volunteer students are selected throughout the school year to participate in the program and once selected, the student receives training and is placed on a peer mediation committee. The peer mediation committees, under direct supervision of trained staff personnel, mediate potential problems of peer students. The training and actual mediation process helps students learn how to handle potential problems without conflict. Training for students and school staff is provided by Region 2 in Corpus Christi. The program began in January 2001 with 14 students attending training initially. Sixteen more students have since been trained. The school is currently in the process of developing a program for trained students to teach other students.

COMMENDATION

Lotspeich Elementary School's Peer Mediation program teaches young children how to handle problems, work together, understand individual differences and resolve potential problems without conflict.

FINDING

While RISD has implemented districtwide drug and violence prevention programs, the district's records indicate that there is a problem with controlled substances. The district contracts with a vendor to use a drug detection dog to randomly search parking lots, school lockers and classrooms. During 2000-01, the high school and junior high school each received 11 searches. The contractor also conducted five searches of the AEP and two searches at the Alternative Learning Center.

The contractor determines the times and days the searches are conducted, ensuring no one has prior knowledge. This not only maintains the no-notice inspection aspect of the program, but also removes any perception of the district singling out personnel or specific groups for the search.

Records from the contractor were not available for the first semester of the school year. However, records for the second semester revealed the dogs detected seven cases of drugs. The contractor also stated that the number of drug cases detected were about the same for the first semester.

In 1999-2000 district records also indicate that RISD identified 55 students using controlled substances. **Exhibit 11-5** shows the type and number of times disciplinary incidents occurred within the district.

or volunteer.											
Possessed, purchased, used or accepted a cigarette or tobacco product.	5	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
School- related gang violence.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

*Source RISD data processing.
Latest data available.

In addition, overall community perception about drugs is that the district has a problem. Responses to surveys administered during the review, indicate that 59.4 percent of parents strongly disagreed with a statement that drugs were not a problem in RISD, and 46.7 percent of campus administrators and support staff also disagreed or strongly disagreed with the same statement.

The district is trying to resolve the drug problem by using various methods. RISD's District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) indicate there are activities in place to address these problems, including implementation of the Drug and Violence Education (DAVE) curriculum, two-way communication systems in all classes at the high school, peer mediation conflict resolution committees and the use of crisis plans.

RISD personnel are also offered staff development in the areas of violence prevention and drugs. The district uses programs like; DAVE, Signs and Symptoms of Drug Abuse and South Texas Substance Abuse Recovery Services (STARS). On a weekly basis, district teachers also implement Education for Self-Responsibility II (ESR II) curricula with instructional materials in all core subject areas and grade levels.

However, despite all of these efforts, there is little discussion between the district and the community about drugs and the preventive measures the district is taking. According to RISD's records reporting 55 students using controlled substances, the community's perception about drugs may not be so far removed.

Many districts open dialogue with parents, students, district staff and community leaders in order to keep all parties informed and aware of the measures the district is taking. In addition, open communication with all stakeholders in the district may result in additional positive preventive measures, added volunteers to help combat the problem and possible new funding resources.

Recommendation 67:

Create a committee to develop a course of action for reducing drug abuse.

The district must take a more aggressive stance in controlling drug use and incidents in its schools. A committee made up of school staff, students, parents and community leaders should develop a course of action directed at reducing drug abuse. The committee should hold regularly scheduled town hall meetings for parents and community members to provide open dialogue, addressing school program successes and failures and making recommendations for improvement. State and local law enforcement officials could be used to provide lectures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent forms a committee of principals, counselors, parents and community leaders, to develop a course of action regarding drugs in RISD.	October 2001
2.	The committee analyzes current programs for effectiveness and adjusts programs as needed.	October 2001
3.	The committee develops a plan of action to combat drug use.	November 2001
4.	The committee begins quarterly town hall meetings.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Teachers and staff at the AEP school receive minimal specialized training for working with troubled youth. The AEP is an Alternative Education Program for students who have broken the Code of Conduct. Staff at the AEP is continuously working with students who have serious discipline and behavioral problems and require various types of motivational

instruction. The AEP has one part-time counselor trained to work with troubled youth. Teachers and other staff members working at the AEP, receive the state required training identified in chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.

The AEP's 1999-2000 Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) identified a need for staff development and training to work with these students. The following are areas identified for additional training by the CIP: behavior management; drug intervention/alcohol abuse; dealing with highly at-risk students; new teaching strategies; discipline management; active teacher-parent communication and succeeding with highly at-risk students.

The RISD superintendent ensures a portion of staff development funding is used for AEP staff. While the district has taken measures to improve staff development in this area, some of the topics covered in the most recent training do not address all areas. On May 4, 2001, Southwest Texas State University conducted a staff development session for the DAEP that included sessions on student self-responsibility, an introduction to the Boys Town Model, gang awareness, anger control, drug awareness and team building.

The Regional Education Service Center 2, located in Corpus Christi, offers classes and workshops such as Managing Classrooms for Success (Cooperative Discipline), Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (C.P.I) and Tough Kids Techniques. Many districts offer AEP personnel additional training to assist them in their daily tasks in order to better attend this special population's needs.

Recommendation 68:

Provide specialized training to all personnel assigned duties at the Alternative Education Program school.

The district needs to identify specific training requirements for all levels of personnel working at the Alternative Education Program school. Training should focus on how to handle students with discipline and behavior problems. Services can be obtained through the Region 2, by soliciting vendors, or through a local college or university.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The AEP school principal and assistant Superintendent for Education Operations identify training requirements for the personnel assigned to the AEP school.	October 2001
2.	The AEP school principal develops a schedule for one person to	November

	attend training per quarter.	2001
3.	The AEP school principal, with assistance from the Business Manager, obtains the services from a vendor or local education institution.	November 2001
4.	AEP personnel start attending training quarterly.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

RISD currently has a budget for staff training. This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Robstown ISD's overall student attendance rate is below the state average and below the peer district average (**Exhibit 11-6**). Student attendance directly affects revenue provided by the state to the district.

**Exhibit 11-6
Peer Attendance Comparison
1995-96 through 1999-2000**

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Hidalgo	95.2%	95.5%	96.1%	96.4%	96.3%
Roma	94.5%	95.3%	95.6%	96.1%	96.3%
Mercedes	96.6%	96.2%	96.4%	96.5%	96.1%
Raymondville	95.1%	95.1%	94.7%	95%	95.2%
Robstown	94.7%	93.9%	94.5%	94.7%	95.0%
Peer Average	95.4%	95.5%	95.7%	96.0%	96.0%
State average	95.1%	95.1%	95.2%	95.3%	95.4%

Source TEA, AEIS 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

While RISD has developed a truancy program to curb its absenteeism, the program lacks consistency and procedures to evaluate its results. Eight attendance officers notify two truancy officers of truant students. One truancy officer is responsible for all students attending Seale Junior High, Ortiz Intermediate, Hatti Martin and Lotspeich Elementary schools. The other is responsible for Robstown High, Salazar and San Pedro Elementary schools. Both truancy officers are responsible for

students from their assigned campuses who are placed in either the Alternative Learning Center or the AEP. Truancy practices have shown a reduction of truanancies by 24% from 1997-98 to 1999-2000.

Exhibit 11-7 shows the decline in truanancies by campus from 1997-98 to 1999-2000.

Exhibit 11-7
RISD Truanancies by Campus
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Campus	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent change
Robstown High School	489	465	421	14%
Seale Junior High	178	242	201	13%
Ortiz Intermediate	61	72	105	72%
Hattie Martin Elementary	68	16	8	(88%)
Lotspeich Elementary	190	91	169	(11%)
ALC	56	14	46	(18%)
AEP	295	61	94	(68%)
Salazar Elementary	33	2	0	(100%)
San Pedro Elementary	5	2	0	(100%)
Total	1,375	965	1,044	(24%)

Source: RISD Truancy officer.

In addition to the truancy officers local law enforcement agencies and judges assist the district with truant matters. The municipal court judge visits students at school and home and arranges for parent and student counseling through the Coastal Bend Council of La Raza.

The processes used by the two truancy officers for checking on absences, truancy prevention measures and record keeping vary significantly from one another. One officer starts checking on students after three unexcused absences while the other officer begins after the tenth absence. Additionally, one officer routinely checks on potential truant students at the student's home before school begins while the other truant officer does so occasionally.

Both truant officers maintain files of truancy charges with the municipal judge however only one tracks the number of truanancies, the number of

charges filed, number of appearances in court and the number of truancy cases pending.

Consistency in duties along with performance measures make truancy programs in school districts successful and result in a drop of absences by students. A Norfolk, Virginia school district collects data on students who are tardy, absent, leave school grounds without permission or are truant and brought to school by local police or other officials and analyze the data for trends. They use the information to develop programs and procedures to combat truancy and in 1994-95, the overall district attendance increased by 1 percent.

Comal ISD in Texas instituted procedures to lower student truancy and increase attendance as a result of a Texas School Performance Review in 1999. A progress review conducted in 2000 concluded Comal ISD had instituted procedures to increase attendance which increased revenue \$62,400 a year.

Recommendation 69:

Develop a district truancy plan that includes procedures and performance measures to increase attendance rates.

The director of Risk Management, school principals, counselors, and truancy officers in conjunction with local law enforcement and judicial personnel form a committee to develop procedures to actively pursue possible truant students.

The truancy officers should track and analyze past truanies and identify students who are at risk of becoming truant cases. Based on this analysis, the truancy officers should visit student's homes prior to school starting to ensure school attendance and assist the student in getting to school if needed.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Risk Management with school principals, counselors, truancy officers and local law enforcement and judicial personnel form a committee to develop procedures to reduce student truancy.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent approves the procedures.	November 2001
3.	The director of Risk Management distributes the procedures to all district personnel, students and parents.	December 2001

4. The truancy officers implement the procedures.	December 2001
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation will increase Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the district by four tenths of one percent to bring RISD in line with the state average of 95.4 percent based on current data shown in **Exhibit 11-6**. This would result in an additional 17 students, based on 2000-01 enrollment, and would generate an additional \$83,742 in state funding each year (17 students at \$4,926 each). First year revenues are calculated at half the annual savings to account for the time necessary to develop and implement the plan and procedures.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Develop a district truancy plan that includes procedures and performance measures to increase attendance rates.	\$41,871	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$83,742	\$83,742

Chapter 12

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

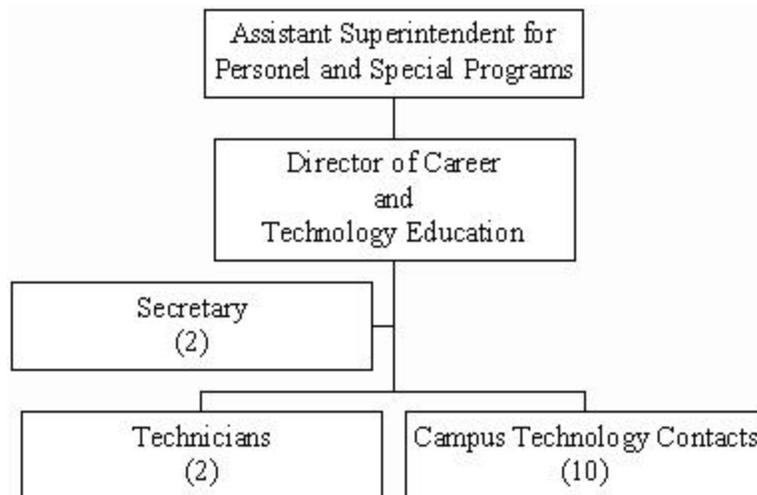
The responsibilities of technology services operations in Texas public school districts vary. Some offices support administrative workers only, while others are responsible for supporting both administration and instruction either through a single or separate department.

Regardless of structure, a school district must be organized to attain the entire organization's instructional and administrative requirements for the planning, implementation, integration and support of existing and new technology.

BACKGROUND

Technology support services are divided into two areas: Instructional Technology (**Exhibit 12-1**) and Administrative Technology (**Exhibit 12-2**).

Exhibit 12-1
RISD Instructional Technology Organization
2000-01

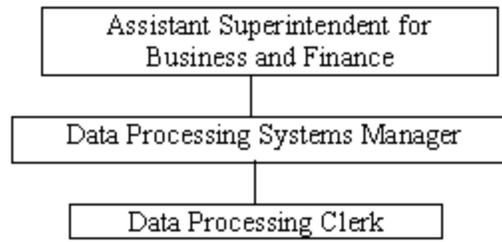


Source: RISD director of Vocational Education.

The Administrative Technology staff reports to the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance. The instructional technology staff reports to the director of Career and Technology Education.

Exhibit 12-2
RISD Administrative Technology Organization

2000-01



Source: RISD Data Processing Systems manager.

Chapter 12

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

FINDING

The district receives several types of state and federal grants related to technology including the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant and a federal E-Rate discount. The TIF grant helps schools develop ways to integrate the Internet into school curriculum and instruction. In order to receive this grant, schools are required to submit an approved technology plan, create a technology task force, provide 10 percent in matching funds, purchase items from the TIF suggested configuration list, participate in the TIF Tech training program and build a homepage on the Internet.

The TIF grant provides for state-of-the-art links to local area networks and wide area networks so that improved instructional and technological resources will be available to teachers and students. The federal E-Rate discount provides 20 percent to 90 percent of the cost of purchasing telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections. The level of discount is based upon the percent of students eligible for participation in the federal free and reduced price school lunch program. With more than 80 percent of the students eligible, Robstown ISD receives a 90 percent discount.

Exhibit 12-3 lists the grant amounts obtained for the 1997-98 through 2000-01 school years.

Exhibit 12-3
Technology Grants Received by RISD for 1997-98 through 2000-01

Type of Grant	Grant Amounts by School Year			
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant	\$98,887	\$0	\$159,577	\$0
E-Rate	\$0	\$268,204	\$296,468	\$909,628
Total	\$98,887	\$268,204	\$456,045	\$909,628

Source: RISD Director of Vocational Education.

The grants are being used to upgrade connectivity and reliability of the current technology infrastructure with high-speed access through fiber optic cable. A technology infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, phone lines, hubs, switches, routers and other devices that connect the various parts of the school system (schools and administrative offices) through local area networks (LANs) and a wide area network (WAN). A high-speed infrastructure allows users to access people and information throughout the district and beyond, helping them to do their jobs and aiding in student instruction.

A WAN generally provides users with such tools as electronic mail (e-mail) systems as well as links to the Internet. WANs usually are designed to prevent persons outside the WAN from accessing information in the WAN without a password and/or personal identification number.

A key function of a WAN is to connect LANs throughout the district. A LAN typically connects all users within a single building to one local network. This is accomplished typically by installing wires in ceilings throughout a school. The wires connect individual computers to each other through central computers called file servers; the rooms containing the file servers and termination points for all of the wires are called telecommunications closets. By connecting the LAN to a WAN, all LAN users gain access to others LANs in the district as well as to the Internet. A district that has every user connected to the network should have the infrastructure necessary to take full advantage of the present telecommunications capabilities and those that will be available in the near future.

The funding RISD has obtained is being used to: increase classroom Internet connections from one to four; greatly increase the speed of information transfer through the installation of fiber-optic cable ; install phone lines in each classroom; install high-speed switches for the telecommunications closets in each school and district office and upgrade wireless Ethernet equipment from two megabits per second to 11 megabits per second. These enhancements will be completed at the end of the 2000-01 school year.

COMMENDATION

RISD has used TIF and E-Rate money for technology improvements.

FINDING

There are two secretarial positions for the director of Career and Technology Education (CATE). One of the secretaries was on leave from March 20, 2001 through May 2, 2001 and no administrative backlog of

work occurred. One of the secretarial positions is budgeted for \$18,054 per year in salary with benefits of \$2,796 (5.5208 percent of salary plus \$1,800). The other secretarial position is budgeted for \$19,708 per year in salary with benefits of \$2,888 (5.5208 percent of salary plus \$1,800).

Recommendation 70:

Eliminate one secretarial position in the Career and Technology Education Department.

One secretary should be able to handle all secretarial work for the director of Career and Technology Education (CATE).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs instructs the director of CATE to develop a proposal to eliminate one secretarial position.	October 2001
2.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and the director of CATE discuss the best options for the department, and prepare the proposed adjustment to the department's budget submission.	October 2001
3.	The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Special Programs and the director of CATE present the proposal to the superintendent and board for approval.	November 2001
4.	The director of CATE communicates the budget decision to the appropriate personnel.	December 2001
5.	The district personnel department effects reduction-in-force actions with an effective date of January 1, 2002.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating a secretarial position will save the district \$20,850 a year based on the least costly secretarial position in the department of CATE.

No savings are estimated here since this is one of the targeted job categories suggested for reduction as part of an overall staffing reduction.

FINDING

There is no current districtwide technology assessment plan or technology training plan. Each school's campus improvement plan addresses specific technology needs for that school and develops its own school training

plans. Also, there are no policies or procedures currently in place concerning the prioritization of computer hardware or software installation or repair. Fragmentation of technology efforts has resulted in an inadequate numbers of computers available to students and in the future may result in unnecessary expenditures and inadequate training.

Exhibit 12-4 displays the ratio of computers to students.

Exhibit 12-4
RISD Computer Inventory-Student to Computer Ratio

School	Total Students	Computers	Student-to-Computer Ratio
High School	1,064	221	4.8:1
Seale Junior High	605	93	6.5:1
Ortiz Intermediate	581	105	5.5:1
San Pedro Elementary	344	56	6.1:1
Lotspeich Elementary	414	29	5.2:1
Salazar Elementary	680	80	8.5:1
Martin Elementary	406	71	5.7:1
Alternative Learning Center	92	48	1.9:1
Academy for Excellence and Accelerated Education	28	6	4.6:1
Totals	4,214	709	5.9:1

Source: RISD Director of Vocational Education.

Many Texas districts have a technology committee, composed of community members and school and administrative representatives to review and refine technology and technology training, needs, determine funding and procedure priorities to recommend to district leadership and formulate detailed technology plans.

The Texas Education Agency has made short-term (1997-98), mid-term (1999-2002) and long-term (2003-10) recommendations to local education agencies. The short-term goal for technology equipment is a student-to-computer ratio of 4 to 1. The mid-term goal for technology equipment is a student-to-computer ratio of 3 to 1. The long-term goal for technology equipment is a student-to-computer ratio of 1 to 1. Use of the Texas

Education Agency recommended goals by RISD would aid in determining technology needs for each school in the district.

Recommendation 71:

Establish a technology committee led by the director of CATE to develop a technology plan.

Establishing a technology committee made up of district staff and community members and led by the director of CATE to develop a technology assessment plan and technology training plan will aid RISD in defining and refining technology requirements and evaluating options.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes a Technology Committee, composed of community members, school representatives from teachers and staff, and department representatives from Finance, Payroll, Purchasing, Student Accounting, Data Systems Management, Administration and Technology and appoints a team leader.	October 2001
2.	The Technology Committee develops the district Technology Plan.	November 2001
3.	The CATE director presents the plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	December 2001
4.	The CATE director communicates the plan to the appropriate personnel.	January 2002
5.	The Technology Committee monitors progress of the plan, updating the plan as necessary.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 12

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

B. MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT

FINDING

RISD has no written comprehensive disaster recovery plan. The district does insure technology assets. Teachers manually record grades in their grade books. The server maintaining accounting and student administration data is backed up daily through an arrangement with the Region 2. Also, financial, PEIMS, attendance and grades data are backed up daily.

Since RISD has no disaster recovery plan, essential elements of a disaster recovery plan that need addressing are as follows:

- Disaster recovery team;
- Contact list of persons to contact after a disaster;
- List of critical school functions;
- Required staffing levels needed immediately after a disaster;
- List of essential office equipment needs.

Each administrator must be prepared to answer the following questions related to disaster recovery as follows:

- Do we know our areas of exposure?
- Does our staff understand how to recover from a disaster?
- Do we have a contingency plan?
- Do we have a business resumption plan?
- Do we have strategies for a quick recovery?
- Do we have on-going maintenance to ensure an accurate, up-to-date recovery program?

Exhibit 12-5 lists some key elements of an effective disaster recovery plan.

Exhibit 12-5
Key Elements of a Disaster Recovery Plan

Step	Details
Establish a disaster recovery team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent identifies a disaster recovery team including key decision makers, building management, users, key contractors and technical

	staff.
Determine key information needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a complete list of critical activities performed within the district. • Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Develop a realistic schedule for beginning initial operations after a disaster. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Determine and maintain vital information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inventory of all technology assets, including: data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. • Establish a reciprocal agreement with other schools to share equipment or lease equipment to allow the district to operate critical activities after a disaster. • Make plans to obtain hardware, software and other equipment to ensure critical operations are resumed quickly. • Establish procedures to obtain off-site back-up records. • Locate support resources that might be needed such as power supply, equipment repair, moving and cleaning organizations. • Make arrangements with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders. • Identify data recovery specialists and establish agreements for emergency support.
Specify details within the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so everyone knows exactly what needs to be done. • Define actions to take before a disaster. • Define actions to take at the onset of a disaster to limit damage and loss. • Identify actions to take to restore critical functions. • Define actions to take to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the plan on a regular basis and document results.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze results to improve the plan.
Deal with damage appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should a disaster occur, document costs and videotape damage. Be prepared to overcome losses until insurance settlement issues are resolved.
Consider other significant issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify the plan. Have one individual responsible for the plan, but structure and communicate the plan so others are authorized and prepared to implement the plan as needed. Regularly update the plan to include changes made to your system.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology." (Modified by TSPR)

Recommendation 72:

Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan and test it.

A comprehensive disaster recovery plan will help the district recover technology operations more quickly should a disaster occur. Obtaining and reviewing disaster recovery plans available from the Regional Educational Service Center and other school districts should speed the planning process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes a Disaster Recovery Team, composed of department representatives from Finance, Payroll, Purchasing, Student Accounting, Data Systems Management and Technology and appoints a team leader.	October 2001
2.	The Disaster Recovery Team develops the Disaster Recovery Plan.	November 2001
3.	The Disaster Recovery Team leader presents the plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	December 2001
4.	The Disaster Recovery Team leader communicates the plan to the appropriate personnel.	January 2002

5.	The Disaster Recovery Team runs a scheduled test of the plan.	February 2002
6.	The Disaster Recovery Team leader reports the results to the superintendent and school board.	March 2002
7.	The Disaster Recovery Team monitors ongoing plan review and testing, updating the plan as necessary.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Work orders for the repair of computers are being faxed to the CATE Department. Each school centralizes the collection of work orders and the technology contact at that campus submits them. While this serves to prevent duplication of requests for work, the practice is costly to the district in the amount of time that it takes to both send, receive and process the work orders manually. Some Texas school districts use email work order forms.

The RISD director of CATE has contacted Taft ISD for information on Taft ISD's online Web-based program for submitting work orders and providing work order status reports.

RISD should continue working with Taft ISD to develop a Web-based reporting system. When the computer system upgrade is complete at the end of the 2000-01 school year, the Internet will be available to implement a Web-based problem reporting system. The director of CATE has received initial indications from the Taft ISD director of Technology that implementation of Web-based system may be available from Taft ISD at no cost to Robstown ISD.

Recommendation 73:

Develop a Web-based work order submission and status reporting system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The district director of CATE evaluates information on Web-based work order and status reporting solutions gained from the Taft ISD and other school districts for application to Robstown ISD.	October 2001
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2.	The director of CATE develops the potential solutions and plan for implementing a solution.	October 2001
3.	The director of CATE presents the plan to the superintendent and school board for approval.	November 2001
4.	The director of CATE communicates the plan to the appropriate personnel.	December 2001
5.	The director of CATE implements a Web-based work order and status reporting system.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD does not have a complete inventory of software, nor is there a library of software and reference materials for users or technology staff. The director of CATE completed an complete inventory of current computer hardware in the district. This was the first inventory taken of these valuable assets. It is important to audit or inventory software periodically to ensure all copyrights and licenses are honored and to enforce acceptable use guidelines.

Recommendation 74:

Create and maintain comprehensive software and technology inventories at each school and a master software and technology inventory.

The creation and regular maintenance of software libraries and technology inventories for these valuable district assets will improve control of site licenses, aid in assessing district technology needs, provide valuable information for disaster recovery planning and help loss control efforts. There may be an opportunity to reduce software expenditures if staff and teachers require software that is already available.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The district director of CATE develops plan for collecting, recording and storing software and software inventory information.	October 2001
2.	The director of CATE presents the plan to the superintendent for approval.	November 2001

3.	The director of CATE communicates the plan to the appropriate personnel.	December 2001
4.	The director of CATE implements the software inventory and storage plan, completing the software inventory and storing the software.	January 2002
5.	The director of CATE conducts periodic inventories and reports the results to the superintendent.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Appendix A

PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Some members of the school board are too involved with trying to do the job of administration rather than oversight. The current movement to remove our superintendent, who has presided over improvements in our district, is ill-advised and could be fiscally disastrous.
- This district's school board has been continuously reprimanded for attempting to micro-manage the schools. They hire a superintendent to be the fall-guy for (their) mistakes.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- Perhaps math needs improving.
- Teachers are doing their jobs.
- All subjects need improvements.
- We are working to improve this area and have made great strides.
- There probably aren't five schools in the state that do more with less than Robstown High School.

PERSONNEL

- This area is doing very well.
- Teachers need higher pay for what they put up with here.
- There is a disparity in pay for extra- or cocurricular sponsorships. Some people get paid more than a \$1,000 for doing less than others are asked to do for free.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- [The] Robstown High School Career & Technology Department's "Paint Brush" House Painting was a good project.
- Robstown has one of the best community involvement programs.
- Robstown High School students need more parental involvement. Parent attendance at Open House is abysmal.
- The high school goes out of its way to encourage parental involvement but consistently sees only the parents of our best students. Parental involvement = Student performance.

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- Parking lots need repairs.

- Students don't have enough parking spaces.
- Too often maintenance becomes crisis reaction, when preventive maintenance would save time and money. Our infrastructure needs help.
- There is poor management of facilities...there are times when classrooms are used by fewer than six students and the whole wing or school is kept open for two night classes.

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Savings have been gained due to a good safety program.
- Health insurance plans often are put off to the 11th hour, leading to problems for staff members.
- The Insurance Selection Committee also must have some knowledge of insurance coverage and the financial standing of the companies we contract with.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- There needs to be more oversight of the purchases made. This needs to be accomplished by a group other than the school board because of abuses in the past.

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

- All too often, the price for goods purchased through cooperative bidding is higher than open-market purchases.
- We don't have enough textbooks for all our students.

FOOD SERVICE

- Food service has always been good-excellent choices on a variety of food selections.
- Food service is good, but instead of drinking milk [at] lunch, I would prefer to have a soft drink without paying for it. I would also like to be served more food because the food they give me isn't enough.
- I personally need more food - they serve too little!!!
- I think they should have more variety.
- Cafeteria should provide local food like KFC and Taco Bell.
- The cafeteria should not sell "junk food" as an alternative to the regular meal. Coke machines and other vendors should not be allowed to sell during "free" breakfast.

TRANSPORTATION

- Need new buses.
- Buses need to get students to school faster.
- Need security on bus(es).
- Faster transportation (needed).
- How about small buses for small groups? How cost-effective is it to run a 46-passenger bus for three people?

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Safety Program is working well.
- District has or will implement a program of having police officers on campus.
- Security personnel on Robstown High School campus are too "palsy" with students in some cases.
- We need communication between areas of the high school campus. Something could be happening in the 800 wing with nobody being aware of it due to a lack of communication equipment.
- We need a police officer at the high school who has the authority to arrest the criminal element.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- We have made great improvements, and the CATE department has been most helpful to older teachers who are still a bit "technophobic."
- The major problem is with the people installing the cables. When will the state ever learn not to always accept the lowest bidder? Cheapest often is just that! And that results in more expense when you have to redo what was shoddily done the first time.

Appendix B

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

*District Administrative and Support Staff Survey Results
(n=20)*

**Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding*

Demographic Data

		No Response	Male	Female			
1.	Gender (Optional)	5.0%	35.0%	60.0%			
		No Response	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other
2.	Ethnicity(Optional)	5.0%	15.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		No Response	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	20+ Years
3.	How long have you been employed by Robstown ISD?	5.0%	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%	15.0%	20.0%
		No Response	Administrator	Clerical Staffer	Support Staffer		
4.	Are you a(n):	5.0%	45.0%	40.0%	10.0%		
		No Response	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	20+ Years
5.	How long have you been employed in this capacity by Robstown ISD?	5.0%	25.0%	15.0%	30.0%	10.0%	15.0%

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	30%	40%	15%	15%	0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	5%	25%	25%	40%	5%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	15%	35%	10%	40%	0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	10%	40%	10%	40%	0%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	20%	55%	10%	10%	5%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	30%	50%	5%	10%	0%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	15%	30%	25%	20%	5%
8.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	45%	30%	0%	20%	5%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	15%	60%	25%	0%	0%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	20%	55%	10%	15%	0%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	20%	60%	10%	5%	0%

12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	35%	40%	15%	5%	0%
	b) Writing	35%	45%	15%	5%	0%
	c) Mathematics	35%	35%	20%	10%	0%
	d) Science	35%	35%	20%	10%	0%
	e) English or Language Arts	35%	40%	15%	10%	0%
	f) Computer Instruction	25%	45%	20%	10%	0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	35%	40%	20%	5%	0%
	h) Fine Arts	30%	30%	20%	20%	0%
	i) Physical Education	30%	30%	25%	10%	0%
	j) Business Education	30%	40%	20%	10%	0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	35%	40%	15%	10%	0%
	l) Foreign Language	25%	40%	20%	10%	0%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	35%	45%	5%	10%	0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
	c) Special Education	40%	40%	10%	5%	5%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	30%	35%	25%	10%	0%
	e) Dyslexia program	40%	50%	5%	5%	0%
	f) Student mentoring program	20%	50%	10%	15%	0%
	g) Advanced placement program	30%	55%	10%	5%	0%
	h) Literacy program	25%	45%	20%	5%	0%

	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	30%	35%	15%	15%	5%
	j) Summer school programs	30%	40%	10%	15%	5%
	k) Alternative education programs	35%	50%	10%	5%	0%
	l) Bilingual/English as a Second Language program	35%	45%	15%	0%	5%
	m) Career counseling program	25%	55%	5%	5%	5%
	n) College counseling program	10%	65%	20%	0%	5%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	25%	45%	10%	15%	5%
	p) Drop out prevention program	20%	40%	10%	30%	0%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	10%	50%	25%	5%	10%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	10%	40%	30%	15%	5%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	10%	40%	25%	5%	20%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	10%	55%	15%	10%	10%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	15%	35%	25%	5%	20%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less-than-satisfactory performance.	10%	50%	30%	5%	5%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	15%	60%	5%	15%	5%

21.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	15%	60%	5%	15%	5%
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	25%	60%	5%	5%	0%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	10%	50%	15%	15%	10%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	10%	30%	20%	15%	15%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	15%	65%	15%	0%	5%
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	15%	50%	15%	15%	5%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	20%	35%	25%	10%	10%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	10%	40%	15%	20%	15%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	15%	60%	10%	5%	10%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	25%	60%	10%	5%	0%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for	5%	35%	15%	35%	10%

	promotion.					
32.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled.	5%	45%	20%	20%	5%
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	5%	45%	30%	15%	5%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	10%	25%	15%	25%	25%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	10%	70%	5%	15%	0%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	10%	20%	20%	40%	10%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	15%	50%	15%	15%	5%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	15%	65%	15%	0%	5%

E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	5%	35%	20%	35%	5%

40.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	5%	30%	20%	30%	15%
41.	Schools are clean.	10%	40%	20%	15%	10%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	15%	35%	10%	30%	10%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	15%	40%	10%	25%	10%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	20%	45%	15%	15%	0%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	15%	45%	20%	15%	10%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	5%	35%	35%	15%	5%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	5%	50%	30%	5%	5%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	10%	45%	30%	5%	5%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	Purchasing gets me	15%	25%	20%	25%	10%

	what I need when I need it.					
50.	Purchasing acquires high-quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	10%	45%	20%	5%	15%
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requester.	0%	50%	20%	15%	10%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	5%	45%	15%	20%	10%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	15%	40%	25%	15%	5%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	15%	45%	25%	5%	5%
55.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources for students.	20%	55%	10%	0%	5%

H. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	20%	35%	20%	15%	5%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	10%	15%	20%	25%	25%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	5%	15%	30%	30%	15%
59.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	10%	50%	15%	15%	10%
60.	Security personnel are	10%	40%	20%	10%	10%

	respected and liked by the students they serve.					
61.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	5%	65%	15%	5%	0%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	10%	40%	10%	5%	20%

I. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	25%	50%	10%	0%	5%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	25%	45%	10%	5%	5%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	20%	35%	20%	5%	10%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	15%	60%	10%	0%	5%
67.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	20%	55%	5%	5%	5%
68.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	20%	35%	20%	10%	5%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	15%	40%	15%	15%	5%

Additional Comments: District Administrative and Support Staff

- I know that R.I.S.D. is up to par ON ALL educational programs, computer skills, and other skills needed for students to be on top.
- This place is in trouble. You have a total problem with a real issue of leadership. There have been several years of wanton waste and outright theft of district funds. Efforts have been made to correct these problems and those efforts have been stopped.
- The year-round program is working for our school district. Some of the schools have been Recognized. The students' performance is more effective because of the time that they have off. There is no teacher burn out.
- The district's school curriculum does not flow into the different grade levels. There are many teachers at the elementary level that are not...equipped [for] teaching the higher math levels or the higher sciences and social studies curriculum.
- Students in the elementary level should also have Spanish as a foreign language. Although much of the population in Robstown is Hispanic, few children know how to communicate in Spanish. This is a bilingual district. Yet, there are teachers that teach all children with the same curriculum with little emphasis in the Spanish language.
- There is a large amount of focus on remediation throughout the school district. The purpose of year-round education was to minimize the remedial programs early on and address them during intersessions. However, there are remedial classes in the afternoons, in the evenings, during intersessions and in the summer. The district's commitment to the implementation of the year-round calendar falls short. With all the remediation taking place, why continue with the calendar? It is very expensive to implement and the savings could be passed on to more creative and advanced programs. Teachers are burnt out because they teach many additional assignments. They prefer the extra money instead of a break. The substitute money spent on those teachers that are out, due to working so many programs, is outrageous.
- The Alternative Learning Center (ALC) has a ratio of 5 to 1. Yet teachers get an additional stipend at their daily rate to extend classes an additional hour. This is ridiculous. The students attend a minimum of 20 hours per week. Many times, teachers only have students in the mornings. The classes in the afternoon are much emptier than during the day classes. Students are not even mature enough to handle four hours of instruction. If a student catches up on credits at the end of the first semester, he still needs to stay the rest of the year at the ALC. This is mostly because the high school's curriculum (is not integrated with that of) the ALC. The school does not have a scope and sequence of skills that correlates with the high school curriculum. Students work at a self-paced program. A student can spend most of the year sliding off and then

towards the end of the year can get his five credits. The students also have the Nova Net software. This allows them the opportunity to earn credits. Why would the district spend so much money on the Nova Net and still pay the ALC staff additional stipends? The staff at the ALC averages a salary of about \$40K to \$45K. For the number of students they serve, it is best to contract (for) these services with an outside firm as mentors rather than full-time staff serving so few students.

- There are some programs that should also be combined into one (such as the) parental involvement, drug safety and adult education (programs). With a facilitator to assist and a director, the district could save a large amount of money. This concept should be implemented in the 2002-03 school year.
- The district should also consider either keeping the facilitators or the assistant principals. The district is not in any condition to have both. Principals should be instructional leaders. The district already pays a top administrator a high salary to carry on the role of instructional program administrator. The secondary schools should be the only campuses to have both positions available. There are many ways to reduce these high expenditures. The district needs to (consider) that many items can be omitted. New ideas and more focus on employee salaries and insurance benefits are major items that need immediate attention. The year-round calendar is not as effective due to poor management and outrageous spending.

Appendix C

CAMPUS ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

*Campus Administrative and Support Staff Survey Results
(n=30)*

**Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding*

Demographic Data

		No Response	Male	Female				
1.	Gender (Optional)	10.0%	13.3%	76.7%				
		No Response	Anglo	African-American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	
2.	Ethnicity(Optional)	10.0%	13.3%	0.0%	73.3%	0.0%	3.3%	
		No Response	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	20+ Years	
3.	How long have you been employed by Robstown ISD?	6.7%	16.7%	23.3%	10.0%	13.3%	30.0%	
		PK	K	1	2	3	4	5
4.	What grades are taught in your school?	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	23.3%	30.0%	30.0%	13.3%
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		16.7%	13.3%	10.0%	26.7%	26.7%	26.7%	26.7%

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	16.7%	43.3%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%

2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	3.3%	50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	6.7%
3.	School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	0.0%	30.0%	20.0%	33.3%	16.7%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	6.7%	23.3%	20.0%	26.7%	23.3%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	6.7%	26.7%	23.3%	23.3%	20.0%
6.	Central administration is efficient.	3.3%	63.3%	10.0%	16.7%	6.7%
7.	Central administration supports the educational process.	13.3%	76.7%	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
8.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	10.0%	26.7%	26.7%	26.7%	10.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	26.7%	56.7%	6.7%	10.0%	0.0%
10.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	20%	53.3%	10.0%	16.7%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	13.3%	53.3%	13.3%	20.0%	0.0%
12.	The needs of the work-	10.0%	66.7%	16.7%	3.3%	3.3%

	bound student are being met.					
13.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	20.0%	56.7	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%
14.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	13.3%	66.7%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%
15.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	10.0%	66.7%	16.7%	6.7%	0.0%
16.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	16.7%	70.0%	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%
	b) Writing	16.7%	76.7%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	13.3%	73.3%	10.0%	3.3%	0.0%
	d) Science	10.0%	70.0%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	13.3%	80.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	3.3%	60.0%	16.7%	20.0%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	6.7%	66.7%	16.7%	10.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	6.7%	53.3%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	6.7%	73.3%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%
	j) Business Education	3.3%	46.7%	36.7%	3.3%	3.3%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	16.7%	46.7%	30.0%	3.3%	3.3%
	l) Foreign Language	6.7%	46.7%	40.0%	3.3%	3.3%
17.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	10.0%	60.0%	13.3%	13.3%	3.3%

	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	16.7%	80%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	16.7%	56.7%	3.3%	20.0%	3.3%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	6.7%	26.7%	63.3%	3.3%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	10.0%	66.7%	13.3%	10.0%	0.0%
	f) Student mentoring program	6.7%	46.7%	23.3%	26.7%	0.0%
	g) Advanced placement program	16.7%	66.7%	13.3%	3.3%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	10.0%	46.7%	40.0%	3.3%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	6.7%	63.3%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%
	j) Summer school programs	6.7%	66.7%	23.3%	3.3%	0.0%
	k) Alternative education programs	10.0%	76.7%	10.0%	3.3%	0.0%
	l) Bilingual/English as a Second Language program	3.3%	83.3%	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%
	m) Career counseling program	10.0%	66.7%	20.0%	3.3%	0.0%
	n) Counseling the parents of students	3.3%	73.3%	6.7%	6.7%	0.0%
	o) Drop out prevention program	3.3%	56.7%	20%	16.7%	3.3%
18.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	3.3%	56.7%	13.3%	20%	6.7%
19.	Teacher turnover is low.	3.3%	56.7%	23.3%	13.3%	3.3%
20.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0.0%	66.7%	13.3%	13.3%	6.7%
21.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	30.0%	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%

22.	Teachers are counseled about less-than-satisfactory performance.	0.0%	73.3%	16.7%	10%	0.0%
23.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	3.3%	63.3%	0.0%	26.7%	6.7%
24.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	26.7%	70.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
25.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	16.7%	73.3%	0.0%	6.7%	3.3%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	50.0%	6.7%	36.7%	3.3%
27.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	10.0%	66.7%	16.7%	3.3%	0.0%

(Questions 28-36 were unreadable due to a misprint.)

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	13.3%	73.3%	6.7%	6.7%	0.0%
38.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help with student and school programs.	0.0%	36.7%	20.0%	40.0%	3.3%

39.	District facilities are open for community use.	3.3%	76.7%	16.7%	3.3%	0.0%
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E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	0.0%	56.7%	16.7%	23.3%	3.3%
41.	Schools are clean.	10.0%	70.0%	0.0%	16.7%	3.3%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	3.3%	43.3%	3.3%	33.3%	16.7%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	36.7%	10.0%	36.7%	16.7%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	3.3%	73.3%	6.7%	13.3%	3.3%
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	16.7%	70.0%	10.0%	3.3%	0.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	63.3%	20.0%	13.3%	3.3%
47.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	0.0%	76.7%	6.7%	10.0%	6.7%

F. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
48.	Purchasing gets me	3.3%	50%	23.3%	23.3%	0.0%

	what I need when I need it.					
49.	Purchasing acquires high-quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	3.3%	40.0%	33.3%	20.0%	3.3%
50.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requester.	0.0%	46.7%	23.3%	20.0%	10.0%
51.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	3.3%	43.3%	16.7%	30.0%	6.7%
52.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	3.3%	76.7%	13.3%	3.3%	0.0%
53.	Textbooks are in good shape.	6.7%	73.3%	6.7%	10.0%	0.0%
54.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	3.3%	76.7%	3.3%	3.3%	13.3%

G. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	6.7%	66.7%	6.7%	16.7%	3.3%
56.	Food is served warm.	10.0%	83.3%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%
57.	Students have enough time to eat.	10.0%	70.0%	3.3%	13.3%	3.3%
58.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	10.0%	70.0%	6.7%	10.0%	3.3%
59.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	10.0%	70.0%	10.0%	6.7%	3.3%

60.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	6.7%	76.7%	10.0%	6.7%	0.0%
61.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	20.0%	60.0%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%
62.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	16.7%	76.7%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%

H. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	3.3%	83.3%	6.7%	3.3%	3.3%
64.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	0.0%	90.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	0.0%	73.3%	6.7%	10.0%	10.0%
66.	Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	0.0%	53.3%	26.7%	10.0%	10.0%

I. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	96.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
68.	School disturbances are infrequent.	10.0%	83.3%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%
69.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	10.0%	66.7%	10%	6.7%	6.7%
70.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	3.3%	23.3%	26.7%	36.7%	10.0%
71.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	0.0%	53.3%	16.7%	30%	0.0%

72.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0.0%	43.3%	40.0%	16.7%	0.0%
73.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0.0%	33.3%	60.0%	6.7%	0.0%
74.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	6.7%	73.3%	16.7%	3.3%	0.0%
75.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	3.3%	86.7%	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
76.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	0.0%	53.3%	13.3%	23.3%	10.0%

J. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77.	Students regularly use computers.	30.0%	63.3%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%
78.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	23.3%	56.7%	3.3%	16.7%	0.0%
79.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	13.3%	56.7%	3.3%	16.7%	3.3%
80.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	13.3%	66.7%	3.3%	10.0%	6.7%
81.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	10.0%	40.0%	16.7%	26.7%	10.0%

82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	6.7%	60.0%	13.3%	13.3%	6.7%
83.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	3.3%	36.7%	20.0%	23.3%	16.7%

Additional Comments: Campus Administrative and Support Staff

- The curriculum director oversees instruction and keeps the district going. Teachers are trained and do an excellent job of implementing curriculum.
- Too many employees on Workman's' Comp - check M & O department.
- Old books - our students need an up-to-date library.
- Elementary students need computers.
- The school board needs to stop micro-managing and breaking all if not most of TEA's rules/regulations.
- Robstown is a good district that works hard to do the best it can with limited resources, as most districts do!
- Staff top-heavy, too many relatives hired - need new blood and ideas. The district create(s) new positions instead of terminating low performers.
- We have many dedicated teachers and administrators, but they feel underpaid for their many years of service.
- The board and politics interfere with what should be done for RISD students. In this school district, it's not what you know but who you know. Check into the company from which temps are (hired.) I love working for RISD because it is my town and I am loyal to it, but things such as those mentioned above make it hard to stay year after year. Good Luck! Glad you are here!
- Robstown ISD has increased its level of performance over the past years. Strong leadership and a strong bridge between teachers and administrators have been force(s) for accomplishments. We develop minds for tomorrow's future, let us not hinder that growth due to cuts.
- I think Robstown ISD is doing okay at this point. However, input from personnel and support staff needs to be considered more. I also believe that the money generated from SWARS (Medicaid) through special education should be kept/used for special education students and their needs to support their success!

Appendix D

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Teacher Survey Results

(n=157)

**Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding*

Demographic Data

		No Response	Male	Female				
1.	Gender (Optional)	6.4%	19.7%	73.9%				
		No Response	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	
2.	Ethnicity(Optional)	10.2%	22.9%	1.3%	60.5%	0.6%	4.5%	
		No Response	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	20+ Years	
3.	How long have you been employed by Robstown ISD?	1.3%	36.9%	21.7%	14.6%	8.3%	17.2%	
		PK	K	1	2	3	4	5
4.	What grade(s) do you teach this year?	6.4%	11.5%	12.7%	9.5%	11.5%	14.0%	14.6%
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		15.3%	19.1%	15.9%	18.5%	19.7%	21.0%	21.6%

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	8.3%	20.4%	33.8%	14.1%	9.6%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	6.4%	12.1%	31.9%	26.1%	10.2%

3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	2.5%	11.5%	40.8%	25.5%	17.2%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	3.2%	14.7%	31.1%	37.6%	13.4%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	4.5%	21.7%	16.6%	35.7%	19.1%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	5.1%	21.7%	21.1%	31.2%	16.6%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	10.2%	43.3%	14.6%	23.6%	3.8%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	14.1%	55.4%	13.4%	12.7%	3.2%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	8.3%	34.4%	35.7%	8.3%	1.9%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	28.1%	50.3%	2.5%	12.7%	5.1%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	11.5%	52.2%	7.6%	19.7%	7.6%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	7.0%	46.5%	31.8%	13.4%	1.3%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	7.0%	42.7%	36.3%	12.1%	1.9%

14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	17.2%	50.9%	13.4%	13.4%	5.1%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	12.1%	50.9%	14.6%	14.6%	5.7%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	11.5%	49.7%	10.8%	19.1%	5.1%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	16.6%	61.1%	9.6%	7.0%	4.5%
	b) Writing	10.2%	64.3%	8.3%	15.9%	1.3%
	c) Mathematics	14.0%	64.3%	8.3%	13.4%	0.0%
	d) Science	8.9%	56.7%	14.0%	19.1%	1.3%
	e) English or Language Arts	15.9%	64.9%	6.4%	10.8%	1.9%
	f) Computer Instruction	12.7%	56.7%	12.7%	11.5%	6.4%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	9.5%	59.9%	14.6%	13.4%	2.5%
	h) Fine Arts	7.0%	49.0%	14.6%	18.5%	9.5%
	i) Physical Education	11.5%	62.4%	10.2%	13.4%	2.5%
	j) Business Education	5.7%	35.7%	45.2%	8.3%	1.9%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	12.7%	32.5%	40.1%	8.3%	2.5%
	l) Foreign Language	7.0%	33.8%	45.2%	7.6%	2.5%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	17.2%	47.8%	12.1%	15.3%	7.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	19.1%	58.6%	14.0%	5.1%	1.9%

	c) Special Education	15.9%	54.8%	8.3%	17.2%	3.8%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	9.6%	38.9%	45.9%	3.8%	1.3%
	e) Dyslexia program	10.8%	50.3%	26.8%	8.3%	3.8%
	f) Student mentoring program	6.4%	28.7%	35.7%	22.9%	5.1%
	g) Advanced placement program	8.9%	48.4%	33.1%	7.0%	0.6%
	h) Literacy program	8.3%	33.8%	39.5%	12.7%	3.8%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	10.2%	41.4%	24.8%	15.3%	5.1%
	j) Summer school programs	12.1%	42.7%	28.0%	11.5%	2.5%
	k) Alternative education programs	16.6%	54.1%	21.0%	7.0%	0.6%
	l) "English as a second language" program	8.3%	52.9%	25.5%	10.2%	1.3%
	m) Career counseling program	8.3%	37.6%	41.4%	5.1%	3.8%
	n) College counseling program	8.3%	41.4%	35.7%	9.6%	3.8%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	7.0%	38.9%	27.4%	17.2%	6.4%
	p) Drop out prevention program	5.1%	31.2%	44.6%	16.6%	2.5%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	14.0%	33.1%	14.6%	25.5%	10.2%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	7.6%	30.6%	15.9%	28.0%	15.9%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	10.8%	42.7%	13.4%	23.6%	8.9%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	4.5%	34.4%	19.7%	30.6%	10.8%
23.	Teachers are rewarded	3.2%	8.9%	17.2%	42.7%	25.5%

	for superior performance.					
24.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	7.0%	47.8%	25.5%	12.1%	5.1%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	19.7%	61.8%	7.6%	7.6%	1.3%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	8.3%	28.7%	7.0%	34.4%	21.0%
27.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	8.3%	52.2%	5.7%	20.4%	11.5%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	22.3%	63.7%	5.1%	3.2%	2.5%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	6.4%	33.8%	5.1%	33.8%	21.0%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	5.7%	53.5%	15.3%	18.5%	5.1%
31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	2.5%	21.7%	35.0%	29.9%	9.6%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	3.8%	28.0%	28.7%	27.4%	10.2%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	4.5%	14.6%	39.5%	29.9%	10.2%

34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	7.0%	50.3%	12.7%	22.3%	5.7%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	17.2%	75.8%	3.2%	0.6%	1.9%
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	4.5%	14.6%	22.3%	37.6%	19.1%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and in a timely manner.	5.1%	36.3%	29.3%	14.6%	8.9%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	5.1%	28.7%	36.3%	15.3%	7.0%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	2.5%	12.1%	7.6%	22.9%	54.1%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	9.6%	51.6%	14.6%	15.3%	7.0%
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	1.3%	15.9%	21.7%	37.6%	21.0%
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	3.2%	28.0%	12.1%	42.7%	14.0%

43.	District facilities are open for community use.	7.0%	50.3%	28.0%	8.3%	3.8%
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E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans for facilities far enough into the future to support enrollment growth.	2.5%	29.9%	31.8%	22.9%	10.8%
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	4.5%	23.6%	29.9%	29.9%	10.2%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	2.5%	7.6%	61.8%	12.7%	14.0%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	4.5%	13.4%	30.6%	26.1%	22.3%
48.	Schools are clean.	12.1%	50.3%	7.0%	22.9%	7.6%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	5.7%	38.2%	8.3%	35.0%	11.5%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	3.8%	28.7%	9.6%	41.4%	15.3%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	5.7%	48.4%	15.3%	22.3%	7.0%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is	10.2%	30.6%	28.7%	16.6%	11.5%

	used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.					
53.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	11.5%	36.9%	29.9%	17.2%	4.5%
54.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	8.9%	24.8%	23.6%	24.8%	15.9%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	8.9%	17.8%	14.0%	39.5%	19.7%
56.	Purchasing acquires high-quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	5.7%	26.8%	26.1%	26.1%	12.7%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	4.5%	20.4%	31.8%	29.9%	10.8%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	3.8%	22.3%	47.8%	14.0%	10.8%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	5.7%	23.6%	24.8%	31.8%	13.4%
60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	16.6%	56.0%	11.5%	8.9%	7.0%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape	13.4%	55.4%	11.5%	11.5%	5.1%
62.	The school library meets student needs for	13.4%	43.9%	10.8%	20.4%	8.3%

	books and other resources.					
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H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	7.0%	38.2%	12.1%	31.2%	11.5%
64.	Food is served warm.	9.5%	58.6%	9.5%	17.8%	4.5%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	10.2%	67.5%	5.7%	8.9%	7.0%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	10.8%	57.9%	11.5%	12.7%	6.4%
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	10.8%	56.7%	11.5%	10.2%	10.8%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	21.7%	55.4%	7.0%	7.6%	8.3%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	23.6%	66.2%	5.1%	1.9%	3.2%

I. Safety And Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	11.5%	57.9%	5.1%	18.5%	7.0%
71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	10.8%	38.9%	18.5%	26.1%	4.5%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	7.0%	15.9%	26.1%	29.3%	20.4%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.6%	22.3%	23.6%	31.8%	12.1%
74.	Security personnel have a good working	5.7%	29.3%	46.5%	8.9%	9.6%

	relationship with principals and teachers.					
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	4.5%	21.0%	51.6%	17.2%	5.7%
76.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	8.3%	50.3%	33.8%	4.5%	1.9%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	5.7%	45.8%	12.7%	21.6%	14.0%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	5.7%	30.6%	16.6%	38.2%	7.6%

J. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	22.9%	51.6%	3.8%	15.3%	3.2%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	15.9%	45.2%	1.9%	30.6%	5.7%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	14.0%	57.9%	7.0%	18.5%	1.3%
82.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	14.0%	56.7%	2.5%	17.2%	8.9%
83.	The district meets student needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	12.7%	50.9%	10.8%	16.6%	7.6%
84.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer	10.8%	29.9%	25.5%	22.3%	9.5%

	skills.					
85.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	10.2%	28.0%	9.6%	31.2%	20.4%

Appendix D

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Additional Comments: Teachers

- Hands-on education takes extra money. I can do most of my hands-on for about \$5 a day. No funding is available for things I need from Wal Mart or HEB.
- It's a mess here. The last thing the state needs to do is take money away. There are many caring teachers who are overburdened and threatened in this district. There is a lot of moral corruption in the homes and children in this community. Likewise, we have professional corruption from within. It is very difficult to care. This issue is much larger than your assessment & survey! Overburdening teachers is only moving them further away from the students. It is not producing miracles in the children like our state government is expecting. Teachers need time, resources (that are easily available) and smaller class sizes to be effective & caring. We do not need pay raises. Money needs to show up where the kids are!
- The overall "Education Performance" of RISD is a solid B performance.
- In a nutshell - everything is fine in Robstown ISD except the school board. If they would let the superintendent and school staff do their job, things would be much better.
- Special Education Programs do not receive appropriate materials, textbooks, computers and other items needed to address the needs of students. Also, staffing for Special Education has a high turnover, possibly related to lack of support on individual campuses. Special Education says that the campus should provide the items and the campus says that Special Education should provide the items. In the meantime, students suffer.
- Need to provide incentives to retain hard-working teachers. State needs to provide state paid insurance for teachers in order to release district funds for other priority needs.
- Teacher morale is very poor. They are not treated as professionals. In one or more elementary schools teachers are required to make home visits in a very unsafe neighborhood.
- Robstown ISD is a very enjoyable place to work. The students are proud of their school. The environment is conducive to learning.
- Robstown has high expectations for all students. But we need more teacher assistants per grade level to help low performing students. We now have only one for 230 students. We also need more computers in the classroom; we now have one in each classroom, but in order for student to be able to work with technology we need

more.... We would like our small community to be able to learn and compete with other districts. All students should have equal access that should make learning fun, not a chore.

- Some programs are allocated...more [money] than others.
- Some programs do not meet TEA regs on student-teacher ratios as stipulated in IEPs.
- Special Ed is a dumping ground and monies are at a minimum!!!
- [Often], the priorities of this district are not in the right place, and it depends on 'who you are'.... if your needs are met. Overall, this is an excellent district...all of my children graduated from RHS and have excelled in college and have excellent jobs.
- Too much favoritism exist at different schools, which leads to low teacher morale. Parents need to get involved in their child[ren]'s education to make learning more effective.
- It is our goal as teachers to provide our students with high-quality education, but it's sad to say that we are restricted in doing so with all the political turmoil and tyranny in RISD. As small and poor as this district is, it has created so many unnecessary positions. How many assistant superintendents do we need? Does money come with the title? Maintenance and the Special Ed Dept. have supervisors and directors. Every campus now has a facilitator to help the principal (no one helps us). Life skills and the BMC units have assistants. These students are being mainstreamed into our classroom without the assistant. Clumping students into a classroom to cut down on teachers is not the answer. Yes, please help. As a classroom teacher I spend a lot of my money to educate 'our' students.
- More money is spent on sports programs than...the regular teacher in the classroom. Teachers in the classroom end up buying their own school supplies throughout the year. The district did not provide curriculum. Teachers ended up doing their own curriculum. They used teachers that had no idea what curriculum was (new teachers).
- Robstown ISD has improved in their educational performance each year. The district has good, dedicated teachers. However, it is difficult to teach in this district because there's no money for buying supplemental hands-on materials for students. Textbooks are important but students need more materials. Teachers spend a lot of their own money to buy materials.
- P.E. classes are too large. Unnecessary positions in administration [have been] created with increases in salary. We're top-heavy with administration. Too many titles... Money can be saved by eliminating positions that have been created to accommodate 'chosen ones' within the district. Resource classes are also too large especially if the student needs one to one attention.

- I feel that we need more computers in our school to keep up with technology.
- Our school district used to be low! Then we became a center for information and others would come see us for help. Too much is political - who is hired, fired, kept. We have people being shuffled and jobs created just to give a reason to pay someone. I don't understand the district's mentality but then again I am just a teacher.
- The performance of the district is improving, but I feel that because of the school boards' way of 'overpowering' the whole district, our performance will go down in the next few years.
- Racism in this district against Anglos is practically nonexistent. Having come from a district where being Anglo caused me to be threatened (with no action taken by the Hispanic principal), and receiving racial slurs (also with no intervention by the principal), I am thrilled to be teaching where I am respected and allowed to enjoy doing my job well. This is my first year with this district.
- Need more technology access in grades PK-4.
- People are promoted based on who [they] know instead of merit, experience and qualifications.
- Teachers need more Internet workshops. Student accountability is a problem in scholastics as well as textbook/material genre. Health insurance has become today's greatest problem. Mainstreaming holds back the gifted and average. Older building repairs or renovations are put on a low priority compared to new structures. Attendance control is understaffed or under managed.
- We are often in a position where our superintendent's opinion and decisions are compromised. More than half of our school board members do not keep the kids in mind when making decisions. Why are our school board members in charge of the decision-making process that is going to effect an educator or students if they have nothing to lose? Some of these school board members have little or no education. Some have no vested interest, such as a child in school. Please help the education system. It is suffering immensely. I think we have great teachers employed in our district. We do need other programs to help our students get caught up in Science and Math; perhaps summer programs. We need to motivate our students to study - to go beyond the classroom.
- We don't get any money to buy classroom materials. The teachers buy all of [their] own supplies except construction paper! We also need a music program, and better health insurance - better pay!
- RISD is a good district, but I feel it wants to implement every good program it hears about and does not concentrate on just one or two. We have to do so many things in our classrooms such as follow Open Court to a 'T'...- implement district writing - tutor during Act Period - Do ARI intervention during activity period - Do tutoring

for Bilingual kids during activity period, etc, Leap Tag, etc. There are only so many hours and minutes in a day and we are expected to implement all these things into our curriculum!

- Robstown has a lot of good kids, but I worry about the heavy use of drugs and drinking that they talk about. Also the teen pregnancy rate is very high. If the students use as much as they say they do, there is a real problem in this entire town.
- The students are taught to meet the skills of the TAAS test. Only the GT (gifted and talented) are exposed to more global aspects. The students (the entire school) need to be developed with more vocabulary and concepts. As a rule, the students are taught how to take a test. They lack the concepts in math and expressing explanations in reading.
- The school board does not value the input of teachers. They place their highest priority on community opinion. Teachers feel they have no support from school board.
- The school places all emphasis on TAAS. The teachers teach to the test - this is not education, it's test prep! Students do not have adequate time to learn important concepts.
- Teachers are not treated like professionals by administration. Teacher expertise is not valued or sought as an integral part of the instructional program. For example, when a teacher has low TAAS checkpoint scores, the administration does NOT involve the teacher in a series of discussions about how the teacher can remediate those students. It should be about working with that teacher to pinpoint strategies, etc. Instead the teacher is told that she had the lowest scores and is immediately told she must have another teacher 'show' her how to teach. This teacher actually teaches the classes for her. This is humiliating and does not take into account the multi-faceted makeup of each classroom and each student and disregards that teacher's level of knowledge. When this occurs it is a form of punishment that teachers endure when their students are having difficulties academically!
- Many good things happen in Robstown, but it is never recognized or acknowledged. In the eyes of the surrounding communities Robstown is full of drug addicts and gangs, but this is not true. Our town has a bad reputation. There are some teachers who are trying to turn this image around. Teachers do not feel 'loved' and appreciated by the...administration. We have good, caring students and teachers here.
- More security needs to be in place so that discipline problems can be monitored quickly. Phone access should be immediate for teachers to contact administration or parents at home.
- Most of the time, [the] administration will not back the teacher if there is conflict between the teacher and the student/parent. I thought administration was to help teachers in these situations.

Although staff has good rapport on this campus, faculty-administrative relationships are often strained.

- Robstown ISD needs to hire principals that are ready to work. The principal I work for does not do anything. The assistant does everything. The district needs to allow teachers to evaluate the principals. Teachers manage the discipline and curriculum in my campus. It is a shame that I had to transfer my daughter to another school district. Robstown ISD has low standards for our students. We need to raise the standards [for students] to do well in college. My oldest son is struggling in college because he was not prepared.
- I think more in-services should be for Special Education teachers (more for their needs). I would like to know if my Special Education class (Life Skills) has a budget for the year. I think the students (lowest level) should have their own equipment which stays at the school. And when that student leaves, the equipment stays at that school.
- The district could probably do a better job in the education of our students if their priorities were set right. The student's needs should always come first, not the board member's needs.
- We never see administrators from central office. We have little or no input regarding campus matters. Site-based decision-making is a joke. We are top-heavy with facilitators. The assistant principals and head teachers could easily do their job[s] and save the district their huge salaries. The teachers do the most work and get paid the least. It is frustrating. Excellence in teaching is never acknowledged or rewarded. The campus administrators are off campus too often attending meetings. No one ever hears about anything that goes on at those meetings. During the school day, they should stay on campus and do their jobs. Meetings should be scheduled after the school day.
- P.E. classes too large and not sufficient playground equipment; need a covered area.
- Unnecessary positions are being created--top-heavy [administration].
- Too many secretaries at central office.
- Have only one special ed. teacher for whole campus and she is frequently taken out of class to conduct ARD.
- Teachers are taken out of their classes during regular school days to work on curriculum.
- Children are not on grade level in reading. There are too many students who cannot read at the high school. I blame the reading program Open Court. It does not benefit ALL students. At the high school level the students do not have incentive programs that involve reading. They do not encourage reading at all!!! Something needs to be done to correct this problem. This district needs a "real reading program". Also the district needs to implement a better

computer program. The students need to know how to work word processing, PowerPoint & Internet. That will improve instruction. Problem-solving skills are lacking.

- Teachers have no Internet or e-mail. This district is far behind!
- Computers did not work in my classroom.
- Special Ed. Resource is not as effective as it could be because there is not a small group ratio. P.E. (elementary) classes are too big - not enough certified personnel with huge group. TOO MANY "asst. superintendents"/invented job titles at Central Office - very TOP HEAVY- where a lot of money goes! School board members have NO educational backgrounds. Parents come on campus and harass teachers at any time (no monitoring of who's on campus).
- Health insurance selected w/outrageous prices - no choices. Discipline with all students depends on fear of parents.
- There are not enough guidelines for the election of board members and most often the elected are uneducated, unmotivated, unethical and lacking in vision.
- Administrative positions are very often created and given to friends of board members or other administrative staff.
- New teachers are seldom mentored appropriately or given necessary training.
- Teacher assistants are never trained and often left to do the work of teachers.
- Discipline is poor and students aren't dealt with as teachers think they should be. Discipline problems are returned to the class (regular ed, special ed, and DMC students) - this keeps performance low in the classroom.
- I have three computers in my room. Two do not have enough memory-they are old. I have an Internet line that's been there over a year but they can't connect it because the old computers can't handle it.
- I'm glad that we as a district are looking for improvement to better ourselves. We appreciate your commitment! Thanks!
- I love the school I am working in. However, I feel we have an incompetent superintendent. He does not seem to be knowledgeable for the position he holds. I'm lucky to teach at a school that has [few] discipline problems since I work at a primary school. However, I feel the district needs to do something about discipline at the high school level. Teachers at that level also need to prepare our children better for their college education. Perhaps if we had better leadership both of these problems could be solved. Keep up the good work Carole!!
- There is no curriculum for Special Ed. at [the] Elementary Level.
- I feel more discipline is needed on my campus. The students curse, hit each other, and are allowed to misbehave. The ISS is not strict enough. There is no [Detention] Hall, so students know there are

no consequences for their behavior. This hampers the[ir] educational performance.

- As in so many campuses, those who teach, teach. Those who have contacts (administrators), show up. As an educator, it is discouraging to hear how we need to challenge our students, yet I see teachers who are rewarded for having high passing rates. Are they challenging [the students] or doing repetition? How can weekly movies replace classroom discussions or debates? You worry about the teachers leaving the field of education. I worry about the ones who stay.
- This, in my opinion, is an excellent school district that tries to keep updated on the latest technology and teaching strategies.
- Observation: school board is [made up of] uneducated people who have no idea what they are doing.
- Fifth grade does not provide computer instruction, just lessons in math. We have not had reading lessons this year (only four times since July).
- Have not seen security personnel.
- There have been several administrative positions that have been created and filled in the past few years that the district would be able to do without. Facilitators are basically assistants to the principals and the majority of the time they are the ones doing the principal's job. Attendance clerks are now assistants to the school secretaries. Their job consists of what school secretaries did alone years back.
- Principals need to support their teachers 100%. They have a tendency to get too comfortable at their assigned campus and become very critical, demanding, and unsupportive of their teachers. They lack trust and positive feedback toward their teachers, thus creating low teacher morale. They should be designated a different campus every two years. Administrators and school board members need to maintain a positive environment and consider the best interest of the students, which in turn is provided by caring and dedicated teachers.
- There are too many administrators. Elementary PE classes are too large with not enough certified people. There's no security in elementary schools-parents walk on to campus and yell/harass teachers with no consequences. New jobs are created in administration because they're afraid of firing administrators not doing their jobs correctly. Cafeteria sells food to SI on free lunch (extras) and charges too much for teacher trays.
- Every year [the district] has reduction[s] in staff[ing] and this interferes with the educational performance of teachers.... Some of the "new" teachers seem to be just "warm bodies" for the classroom; they do not make effective teachers. In addition, ideas are planned to reduce teacher force although maintenance workers

take hours to weeks to do a simple job. Money can be saved there instead of with a teacher/resource reduction.

- RISD offers educational opportunities to all students. My one concern is the lack of our community and parental involvement. Teachers and administrators do their best to meet all student needs.
- Several administrators have managed to assume administrative roles that the district could do without. The assistant superintendent of curriculum manages 99% of the district's needs. [The] superintendent is not well respected. A handful of administrators demonstrate having the power over teachers who are actually doing all the work. Some principals are very strong while others should retire or allow site based decision making to work.
- The buildings in the junior high are very old and require much repair. Teachers complain of migraines, stomach aches, and severe allergies. The air quality in the seventh-grade building should be evaluated.
- If there is to be a reduction in staff, the reduction should start at the top. There are too many positions and some should be eliminated.
- Teacher morale is very low.
- It seems that the answer to many of our questions is "There is no money!"
- Teachers do not feel free to voice concerns.
- The custodians on our campus do a good job considering the lack of materials, low budget and insufficient help. No matter how much cleaning is done, the buildings still look and smell awful.
- The school board is apathetic, often dozing during meetings or fighting among themselves over irrelevant things.
- There are too many new titles given to administrators, which results in a big increase in salaries. The bulk of our monies should go to the students, not the administration.
- A few district employees are sent to workshops and then expected to convey all information to entire campuses (give mini-workshops).
- Teachers/counselors/school staff are required to hold many fundraisers to purchase equipment and materials that should be part of the district budget (i.e., paper, school supplies, etc.)
- Robstown ISD's TAAS scores are good. I feel sometimes administrators think that Pre-K and early childhood education are not important.
- The problem with our district is of course the salaries - they need to improve. We also need a better insurance package. I also believe that our district is top-heavy. Too much or too many administrative positions. That money should be used for something else.
- Unqualified teachers are hired and their backgrounds are either not checked or ignored altogether.

- Special Education teachers are often brought in through the ESC-Reg.2 simply to fill the present need.
- The specific training needed is often ignored.
- Staff development meetings are not geared to specific needs.
- School board nepotism is extremely rampant.
- Administrative positions are given to employees who clearly lack the required qualifications (no degrees!) or the background to fill the particular positions.
- There's a dire need for special personnel to be hired to guide parents to be more responsible about their children's behavior and school attendance. A lot of parents say that can't control their Kindergarten or first-grade students. Counseling should be provided so parents can assume responsibility.
- RISD tries hard to be the best...but according to several students now attending college, they feel so unprepared. Several have mentioned weak math & science teachers. Not enough assistance was given to prepare them for professors who expect them to know. Too much paperwork and testing -- not enough learning!
- The district tries, but due to lack of funds students don't have science equipment needed to have a successful lab. Students are in great need of reading but the teachers are overloaded with students in class. Counselors do not have enough help to spend time counseling students. Paper work takes up too much of the teachers' and counselors' time.
- Teachers are constantly having to buy certain materials that are needed in the classroom.

Appendix E

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Student Survey Results

(n=92)

**Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding*

Demographic Data

		No Response	Male	Female			
1.	Gender (Optional)	4.3%	43.5%	52.2%			
		No Response	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other
2.	Ethnicity(Optional)	4.3%	0.0%	2.2%	93.5%	0.0%	0.0%
		No Response	Junior	Senior			
3.	What is your classification?	4.3%	47.8%	47.8%			

A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	14.1%	53.3%	14.1%	7.6%	1.1%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	7.6%	50.0%	30.4%	3.3%	1.1%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	26.1%	56.5%	10.9%	0.0%	1.1%
	b) Writing	25.0%	51.1%	10.9%	3.3%	1.1%
	c) Mathematics	27.2%	43.5%	16.3%	2.2%	3.3%

	d) Science	32.6%	45.6%	7.6%	4.3%	1.1%
	e) English or Language Arts	34.8%	51.1%	5.4%	0.0%	1.1%
	f) Computer Instruction	29.3%	45.6%	10.9%	4.3%	3.3%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	31.5%	45.6%	8.7%	4.3%	1.1%
	h) Fine Arts	26.1%	50.0%	9.8%	5.4%	1.1%
	i) Physical Education	30.4%	43.5%	14.1%	4.3%	1.1%
	j) Business Education	31.5%	45.6%	10.9%	4.3%	2.2%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	44.6%	42.4%	4.3%	1.1%	1.1%
	l) Foreign Language	23.9%	43.5%	22.8%	2.2%	1.1%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	11.9%	42.4%	27.2%	9.8%	2.2%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	25.0%	42.4%	19.6%	2.2%	2.2%
	c) Special Education	18.5%	44.6%	27.2%	0.0%	2.2%
	d) Student mentoring program	8.7%	41.3%	29.3%	7.6%	5.4%
	e) Advanced placement program	41.3%	32.6%	14.1%	2.2%	2.2%
	f) Career counseling program	32.6%	42.4%	15.2%	4.3%	2.2%
	g) College counseling program	32.6%	36.9%	17.4%	4.3%	2.2%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	20.6%	38.0%	10.9%	22.9%	5.4%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	18.5%	38.0%	20.6%	11.9%	4.3%
7.	The district provides a	20.6%	53.3%	10.9%	3.3%	4.3%

	high-quality education.					
8.	The district has high-quality teachers.	14.1%	48.9%	19.6%	6.5%	4.3%

B. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	15.2%	43.5%	22.8%	9.8%	3.3%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	13.0%	40.2%	27.2%	6.5%	6.5%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	13.0%	29.3%	30.4%	13.0%	7.6%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled in a timely manner.	14.1%	43.5%	29.3%	5.4%	3.3%
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	17.4%	35.9%	15.2%	21.7%	5.4%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	17.4%	44.6%	19.6%	11.9%	2.2%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape	6.5%	35.9%	23.9%	20.6%	8.7%
16.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	21.7%	41.3%	13.0%	11.9%	5.4%

C. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	48.9%	35.9%	5.4%	1.1%	2.2%

18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	11.9%	30.4%	29.3%	14.1%	10.9%
19.	Food is served warm.	15.2%	43.5%	20.6%	8.7%	7.6%
20.	Students have enough time to eat.	8.7%	32.6%	13.0%	20.6%	18.5%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	15.2%	50.0%	11.9%	10.9%	7.6%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	10.9%	31.5%	19.6%	18.5%	14.1%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	10.9%	46.7%	21.7%	10.9%	3.3%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	23.9%	51.1%	10.9%	2.2%	5.4%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	19.6%	46.7%	20.6%	3.3%	4.3%

D. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	5.4%	9.8%	36.9%	9.8%	31.5%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus	3.3%	15.2%	64.1%	3.3%	7.6%
28.	The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	3.3%	15.2%	63.0%	3.3%	7.6%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	4.3%	19.6%	59.8%	1.1%	6.5%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	5.4%	15.2%	64.1%	1.1%	6.5%
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	7.6%	13.0%	63.0%	2.2%	6.5%
32.	Buses arrive and leave	4.3%	14.1%	60.9%	4.3%	8.7%

	on time.					
33.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	6.5%	16.3%	60.9%	2.2%	6.5%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	5.4%	16.3%	57.6%	3.3%	9.8%
35.	Buses are clean.	3.3%	17.4%	58.7%	5.4%	8.7%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	5.4%	14.1%	59.8%	3.3%	7.6%

E. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	15.2%	52.2%	17.4%	3.3%	4.3%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	13.0%	45.7%	19.6%	9.8%	4.3%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	30.4%	38.0%	18.5%	3.3%	2.2%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	13.0%	23.9%	25.0%	19.6%	13.0%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.6%	27.2%	27.2%	22.8%	9.8%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	13.0%	40.2%	42.4%	3.3%	5.4%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	13.0%	38.0%	23.9%	13.0%	5.4%
44.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	14.1%	35.9%	39.1%	1.1%	4.3%

45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	13.0%	34.8%	28.3%	9.8%	7.6%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	9.8%	33.7%	34.8%	9.8%	6.5%

F. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	20.6%	31.5%	14.1%	9.8%	7.6%
48. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	11.9%	35.9%	21.7%	6.5%	5.4%
49. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	20.6%	50.0%	14.1%	3.3%	5.4%
50. The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	13.0%	44.6%	17.4%	13.0%	6.5%
51. The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	15.2%	39.1%	25.0%	9.8%	6.5%
52. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	20.6%	41.3%	9.8%	10.9%	11.9%

Additional Comments: Students

- Robstown has strong classes that focus on student's...needs.
- RHS is a great school to attend. I don't regret transferring here. The teachers are great, pupils are excellent, and counselors are great.
- The school needs to be more involved with what the students are learning than wearing.

- Robstown is a good school, but I feel a lot could be done to make it better. The learning skills are great, but students choose not to learn.
- The education provided to me at Robstown ISD has been exceptionally outstanding. I feel I am well prepared for college and Robstown ISD is one of the main reasons.
- I think RISD has come a long way. Our education is important and our goals are being met.
- For a school [with] a bad reputation, we are not at all what people think. This is a fair school.
- The teachers in advance[d] programs are excellent and help us succeed for the future.
- We have great performance here in Robstown. Our programs are excellent and they are making big differences in our students and in our campus.
- The bus driver is rude and smells like smoke all the time. It doesn't make sense to wear an orange vest to get out of the classroom. They should make longer lunch periods. More access to computers. Give more money to the health care program.
- There needs to be better teachers. Teachers need to teach better and act like we count and make it interesting. We need to have more activities for students to get involved in. If there is a problem it should be taken care of immediately. The counselors are good. But we need more activities. There should be no favoritism. Everybody should be treated equally.
- The teachers that I have are caring people. There are teachers who are also "coaches" that have the tendency to under educate students.
- It's a good system, but I think teachers should get paid more, [be]'cause of all the stuff they put up with.
- It is a good program. We need a little inspiration.
- Robstown, though it may have many bad names and rumors, is not a bad place. I love Robstown High School and I wouldn't leave unless I had to.
- Robstown ISD is overall a good system. I'm happy to be here.
- I love Robstown High. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.
- Everything has been good.
- It needs improvement and help, but it's great.
- I feel that Robstown has come a long way but there is always room for improvement.
- Robstown ISD provides a wonderful education to all students and makes available the opportunities needed to further a student's education. My relationship with teachers, counselors, and the administration is great and all my needs are met.
- I think we could improve our performance with the opportunity to work with computers more. Last week, I had a ten-page report due

and I had little knowledge of typing up a report. I think if we had more access to a computer on campus my English teacher could have helped me and my classmates with the proper procedure for typing a research paper, since we will be typing a lot in college.

- The education could use a little bit of a brush-up; maybe teachers with better and more modern education to prepare us for college. I don't agree with the uniforms and dress code. The lunch hour should be longer, and there should be less construction. If the district can barely afford a certain amount of teachers, then why build a bigger school?
- I think Robstown High School has a lot of teachers that are excellent. There are a few teachers who I personally feel have no right to be educators. Also, the security people at our school do not do their job properly. They are more interested in befriending the students than protecting them.
- The educational program in our school is great. But I feel that we should work on more computers since we are in the new millennium. Everything has to do with the new technology. We have to learn how to use the Internet and have better access in the library. Sometimes they don't let us use the library because they are busy and can't supervise.
- This is an exceptional school district that is usually put down. Others criticize this town's problems, but everyone has problems. I feel that there could be some improvements in teaching more of each subject.
- I feel that our educational programs have come a long way and are advancing quickly. But I do think that more hands on with computers would better educate us.
- Lunch should be longer. Dress codes for next year should be banned. I thought education was the basis for a school, not what you wear.
- Overall the high school is good, but it can always get better.
- I feel it is mainly good, except the fact that as a picky eater I wish there was better lunch and maybe a little longer. I also feel we are not in need of a dress code since we are a good school: no fights (rarely), no bomb threats (unlike others) and are improving.
- I feel it is very well-managed, and hope it stays this way for my kids. I do feel that the dress code is the dumbest thing...because that will not stop the problems we have.
- The high school needs a lot of help!

Appendix F

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

*Management Review of the Robstown Independent School District
Parent Survey Results
(n=37)*

**Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding*

Demographic Data

		No Response	Male	Female					
1.	Gender (Optional)	8.1%	8.1%	83.8%					
		No Response	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other		
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	94.6%	0.0%	0.0%		
			No Response	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	11 Years or More			
3.	How long have you lived in Robstown ISD		0.0%	16.2%	5.4%	78.4%			
			PK	K	1	2	3	4	5
4.	What grade level(s) does your child(ren) attend?	16.2%	8.1%	8.1%	10.8%	13.5%	13.5%	18.9%	
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		8.1%	16.2%	5.4%	18.9%	18.9%	16.2%	18.9%	

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	0.0%	35.1%	35.1%	24.3%	5.4%
2.	School board members	0.0%	24.3%	35.1%	27.1%	13.5%

	listen to the opinions and desires of others.					
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	2.7%	37.8%	13.5%	29.7%	16.2%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	2.7%	35.1%	27.1%	18.9%	16.2%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	10.8%	48.6%	13.5%	21.6%	2.7%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	5.4%	54.1%	27%	10.8%	2.7%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	5.4%	48.6%	21.6%	16.2%	8.1%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	5.4%	51.4%	24.3%	16.2%	0.0%
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	18.9%	59.5%	2.7%	13.5%	2.7%
	b) Writing	13.5%	62.2%	5.4%	16.2%	2.7%
	c) Mathematics	10.8%	59.5%	5.4%	18.9%	0.0%
	d) Science	8.1%	62.2%	5.4%	16.2%	5.4%
	e) English or Language Arts	18.9%	59.5%	8.1%	8.1%	5.4%
	f) Computer Instruction	16.2%	54.1%	8.1%	18.9%	2.7%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	10.8%	67.6%	2.7%	13.5%	2.7%

	h) Fine Arts	10.8%	43.2%	16.2%	16.2%	2.7%
	i) Physical Education	13.5%	59.5%	8.1%	18.9%	0.0%
	j) Business Education	10.8%	35.1%	37.8%	16.2%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	16.2%	43.2%	32.4%	8.1%	0.0%
	l) Foreign Language	10.8%	35.1%	32.4%	16.2%	5.4%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	13.5%	43.2%	18.9%	16.2%	8.1%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	18.9%	45.9%	16.2%	16.2%	2.7%
	c) Special Education	21.6%	43.2%	16.2%	18.9%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	5.4%	37.8%	45.9%	8.1%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	2.7%	29.7%	43.2%	10.8%	2.7%
	f) Student mentoring program	10.8%	24.3%	32.4%	27.1%	2.7%
	g) Advanced placement program	10.8%	43.2%	27.1%	16.2%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	2.7%	43.2%	32.4%	18.9%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	5.4%	37.8%	27.1%	16.2%	10.8%
	j) Summer school programs	8.1%	40.5%	27.1%	21.6%	2.7%
	k) Alternative education programs	8.1%	43.2%	32.4%	5.4%	8.1%
	l) "English as a Second Language" program	8.1%	43.2%	37.8%	8.1%	0.0%
	m) Career counseling program	13.5%	43.2%	24.3%	16.2%	0.0%
	n) College counseling program	16.2%	40.5%	21.6%	16.2%	2.7%

	o) Counseling the parents of students	13.5%	29.7%	27.1%	21.6%	8.1%
	p) Drop out prevention program	13.5%	21.6%	40.5%	10.8%	10.8%
11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	8.1%	40.5%	8.15	27.1%	13.5%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	10.8%	18.9%	43.2%	13.5%	10.8%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	10.8%	18.9%	29.7%	16.2%	16.2%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	2.7%	29.7%	35.1%	13.5%	16.2%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	21.6%	45.9%	16.2%	0.0%	10.8%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	13.5%	43.2%	10.8%	21.6%	10.8%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	24.3%	64.9%	0.0%	8.1%	2.7%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	21.6%	45.9%	18.9%	13.5%	0.0%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	16.2%	48.7%	10.8%	10.8%	13.5%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	18.9%	48.7%	10.8%	10.8%	8.1%
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	13.5%	45.9%	13.5%	18.9%	8.1%
22.	District facilities are open for community use.	5.4%	40.5%	35.1%	13.5%	5.4%
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help	2.7%	24.3%	27.1%	32.4%	13.5%

	student and school programs.					
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C. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	2.7%	32.4%	24.3%	27.1%	13.5%
25.	Schools are clean.	8.1%	67.6%	10.8%	5.4%	8.1%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	8.1%	45.9%	16.2%	16.2%	13.5%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	5.4%	40.5%	18.9%	16.2%	18.9%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	5.4%	51.4%	18.9%	18.9%	2.7%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	13.5%	45.9%	16.2%	16.2%	8.1%

D. Asset and Risk Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	2.7%	32.4%	37.8%	8.1%	18.9%
31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	2.7%	21.6%	27.1%	24.3%	18.9%

E. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	5.4%	45.9%	29.7%	10.8%	8.1%
33.	Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	45.9%	35.1%	8.1%	10.8%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	0.0%	32.4%	35.1%	21.6%	10.8%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	0.0%	27.1%	40.5%	24.3%	8.1%

F. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	10.8%	59.5%	5.4%	13.5%	10.8%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape.	5.4%	59.5%	10.8%	13.5%	10.8%
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	5.4%	62.2%	10.8%	13.5%	5.4%

G. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the	16.2%	37.8%	8.1%	29.7%	8.1%

	cafeteria.					
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	35.1%	59.4%	2.7%	2.7%	0.0%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	10.8%	29.7%	27.1%	21.6%	10.8%
42.	Food is served warm.	10.8%	48.6%	16.2%	16.2%	8.1%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	8.1%	45.9%	10.8%	16.2%	16.2%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	10.8%	48.6%	18.9%	13.5%	8.1%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	8.1%	43.2%	21.6%	10.8%	10.8%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	8.1%	54.1%	8.1%	16.2%	13.5%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	16.2%	35.1%	32.4%	5.4%	10.8%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	24.3%	51.4%	16.2%	2.7%	5.4%

H. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	8.1%	18.9%	18.9%	29.7%	21.6%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	0.0%	10.8%	62.2%	13.5%	10.8%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	0.0%	24.3%	62.2%	8.1%	2.7%
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	2.7%	54.1%	37.8%	2.7%	0.0%
53.	The bus stop near mv	5.4%	40.5%	48.6%	2.7%	0.0%

	house is safe.					
54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	8.1%	32.4%	51.4%	5.4%	0.0%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	8.1%	27.1%	48.6%	8.1%	5.4%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	5.4%	40.5%	40.5%	8.1%	0.0%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	2.7%	13.5%	62.2%	8.1%	5.4%
58.	Buses are clean.	0.0%	32.4%	54.1%	8.1%	2.7%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	0.0%	24.3%	48.6%	16.2%	8.1%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	2.7%	29.7%	48.6%	10.8%	5.4%

I. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	8.1%	45.9%	16.2%	18.9%	10.8%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	5.4%	54.1%	16.2%	16.2%	8.1%
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	5.4%	35.1%	16.2%	27.1%	16.2%
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	5.4%	18.9%	13.5%	37.8%	21.6%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	5.4%	32.4%	13.5%	27.1%	21.6%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with	2.7%	29.7%	51.4%	10.8%	5.4%

	principals and teachers.					
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	2.7%	35.1%	37.8%	16.2%	8.1%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	5.4%	51.4%	32.4%	0.0%	10.8%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	5.4%	51.4%	18.9%	13.5%	10.8%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	2.7%	27.1%	35.1%	18.9%	16.2%

J. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	13.5%	40.5%	21.6%	21.6%	2.7%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	10.8%	59.5%	8.1%	13.5%	8.1%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	8.1%	56.8%	13.5%	16.2%	5.4%
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	8.1%	35.1%	29.7%	16.2%	10.8%
75.	Students have easy access to the Internet.	8.1%	29.7%	32.4%	13.5%	13.5%

Additional Comments: Parents

- Too much emphasis on Migrant Programs. There is a lot of fraud in the Migrant Program. Counselors advise people to say they are migrant so as to get their children into the three-year-old program. Please check on this. Too much emphasis on TAAS tests. Schools are not paying attention to the children's actual knowledge. Children are being passed from grade to grade and most of them do not know how to read or write over the fourth- or fifth-grade (level).
- Education is very important and we have quality teachers (most) in Robstown schools. We need more caring and sensitive teachers. As much as many people may deny, we do have a very big drug problem among the teens in our schools. We as parents hear it from our young ones and would like to see more being done about it. It seems like enough is not being done and this affects everyone in the schools.
- More communication from the schools to the parents is needed. Hiring practices are more about who you know and not what you know. [The] board and superintendent hire people from outside the district for administrative positions, when they have people within the district, who teach and know these kids, that are passed over for such positions and who are very qualified and care for our students. There are also not enough computer classes offered or enough computers. Campuses are too accessible to strangers, and many students don't feel safe. This district is also far behind on technology. We need to catch up so our students can excel and succeed.
- We are new to this school district, and I think that Robstown ISD is very far behind compared to the surrounding school districts. Also, I feel that the children are allowed to get away with a lot which in turn does not seem very good. I have seen fourth- and fifth- graders with their tongues pierced.
- There needs to be more discipline at the junior high and especially at the high school; maybe new principals that are stricter need to be seen around such large campus. They cannot rely on security guards. My children tell me wild stories that go on at the high school-[it] being a closed campus is not very true. Teachers let students buy breakfast at other places! What will happen when they have an accident?
- I know they try hard to fulfill their goals in the school year but they fall short at times.
- Our two oldest girls have graduated from RISD and are attending college. Our children need to be taught positive attitudes, wisdom, maturity, etc. Eventually, it won't be what they learn but what they do with their knowledge that determines fulfillment, success and happiness. We do our best at home but the fact is our children spend more time with teachers and peers.

- I feel that the staff and teachers could do a better job. Instead of discussing their family problems at school, they should be applying themselves to teaching.
- This is my four-year-old daughter's first year in school and I feel very happy that she gets to enjoy her school years here in the same school district that I did. I feel that it has improved dearly. A great deal has been done, and I hope that it does not stop here. I feel safe dropping her off at school knowing that she's in good caring hands with the teachers and a great staff.
- Certain situations are addressed very unfairly. When students are disciplined it is not the same across the board. If the teacher/principal/parent-substitute know any of the students in question they are let off a lot easier.... The buses are cold in the winter and extremely hot in the summer. It gets very hot in the summertime. My son has a health condition, which the weather plays a factor in. The same goes for the buildings on campus(es). It's a well known fact. It has been aired on the local news channels. One of my children was even misplaced on one occasion. I found him because he had fallen asleep at another office. He woke up, got worried and went to the other office. That is where I spotted him. The assistant principal (very rude & non-apologetic), some teachers and I were all searching for him. I was driven to tears. For a brief moment I could imagine what it felt like to experience a child abduction. All I could do was go home, appreciate and nurse my child back to health. And when my child repeatedly scores higher on tests than a child who is in the gifted and talented program, something is wrong.
- Teachers are very motivated and ready to teach and get students ready for the next grade level. RISD teachers, administrators, counselors are caring and want students to succeed.
- They just use your money, and don't tell you what it's used for.
- It seems that the school district 'usually' hires personnel for administrative positions from outside of the district. They are not community members and are surely not taxpayers. They stay for a year or two and leave. In the meantime, we the taxpayers pay for their training, while at the same time we have qualified people here to fill those positions. It seems that the board wants our taxes but not our expertise or our commitment to stay in our community.
- Students receive an excellent education. Schools feel safe for the most part. District lacks availability of technology for lower grades, PK-4.
- Maybe we should consolidate all of the elementary schools.
- I think the district needs to focus on all students' needs. I don't like that my senior is using an outdated physics book which was obviously from another district in another state. Too much emphasis on sports and money. High school late lunches usually

run out of choices. I would like to see a better computer program, especially at the elementary level....

- They need to separate aggressive kids from non-aggressive kids because they will learn bad words early.
- The kids have little time to eat because the food is too hot. By the time it cools off it's time to go back to class.
- In the cafeteria teachers talk and don't pay attention to the kids, especially the little ones. They need to be more responsible and talk less. That's not a place to talk about work.
- The food is usually the same thing. They need something new.