

Executive Summary

For six years now, the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) has been helping public school districts across the state rise to an increasingly difficult challenge--keeping their scarce education dollars in the classroom, where they belong.

Executive Summary

A Texas School Performance Review of the Spring Independent School District

The Comptroller's Texas School Performance Review (TSPR), created by the Texas Legislature in 1990, is guided by one mission above all--to help school districts large and small deliver high-quality, low-cost service to their customers. Who are the customers? They are the children whose future is shaped in large part by what they learn in public school classrooms. Parents and families are customers, too, and so are the teachers, principals, and other employees who work with admirable dedication in thousands of schools across Texas. Ultimately, too, the many vital property taxpayers who annually dig into their pockets to support their local schools are customers. Without their aid, Texas schools could not continue to serve more than 3.7 million pupils every year.

At a time when Texas faces the critical challenge of how to pay for the education of its schoolchildren, all these customers deserve to know that their schools are accountable both for the cost and the quality of the education they deliver. Only then will they be willing to invest the time, energy, and resources to support and enhance the most important task society faces today--ensuring the educational well-being of all future Texans.

TSPR in Spring, Texas

In April 1997, TSPR began its review of the Spring Independent School District (SISD). As in previous reviews of 23 Texas school districts, the review team came to Spring in response to a local call for assistance; in this case, the Spring ISD Board of Trustees joined then-Superintendent Gordon M. Anderson in requesting a review. With the help of experts steered by WCL Enterprises, a Houston firm, the TSPR team interviewed district employees, school board members, students, parents, business leaders, and representatives from community organizations. In addition, the review team fielded comments in letters to the Comptroller and through calls to his toll-free hotline.

The Spring public schools posed an unusual challenge for the Comptroller's review team, which recognized from the start that the district ranks as a beacon in Texas and the United States. Compared to peers in other districts, SISD's teachers are deservedly well-paid. Its administrative leadership, essentially intact for 15 years, is stable and admired. And perhaps most significantly, as detailed in the chapter on Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures, SISD students outperform their peers by every conventional measure. Despite shifting demographics of the student population, the review team found, the district's teachers, principals and administrative leaders continue to bring out the best from students. Notably, as an example to Texas and the nation, Spring's brightest students outscore their peers in the rigorous Advanced Placement exams required to earn college credit before attending college.

So TSPR's challenge became to find ways to keep SISD performing at peak levels, while recommending steps that would lift the district to greater heights. Key recommendations hinge on more teamwork among teachers, principals and support staff, including district-driven efforts to identify superior programs in other districts and apply them, as appropriate, to SISD. In a very real sense, SISD stands out as an educationally wealthy environment; its daunting task is to keep that wealth from slipping away, while adding fresh indications of superior achievement.

Public forums at the district's two high schools on April 1 drew some 40 Spring community residents, while more than a dozen focus groups yielded valuable comments from current and former district employees, parents, community leaders and students; in particular, focus groups of student leaders in high school and elementary school brought out direct comments on teaching practices, transportation, food services, and

disciplinary issues. A written survey of 602 students, 249 teachers, and 247 families commissioned by the district under the supervision of a Texas A&M University professor also provided detailed background information. And ultimately, numerous one-on-one interviews helped the review team fine-tune its findings and recommendations. Details from the interviews and focus groups are provided in **Appendix A** through **C**. Besides conducting extensive interviews, the review team consulted databases of comparative educational information gathered by the Texas Education Agency-the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). To draw useful comparisons, the review team also asked SISD to select similar, or peer, Texas school districts. The district chose the Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Duncanville, Fort Bend, Goose Creek, Klein, Richardson, and Spring Branch districts, whose student enrollments are compared to SISD in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
SISD and Selected Peer District Enrollments
1995-96

District	Enrollment	%Change In Five Years*
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	20,343	19.6
Duncanville	10,126	(0.7)
Fort Bend	40,223	28
Goose Creek	17,876	4.0
Klein	29,324	14.6
Richardson	33,984	4.4
Spring	20,246	10.2
Spring Branch	29,543	9.2

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

**Represents five years through 1994-95.*

The TSPR review team visited each SISD school, targeting 12 areas of operation:

- District organization and management
- Educational service delivery and performance measures
- Community involvement
- Personnel management
- Asset and risk management

- Financial management
- Computers and technology
- Purchasing
- Facilities use and management
- Transportation
- Food services
- Safety and security

Acknowledgments

TSPR and WCL Enterprises wish to thank SISD's Board of Trustees, former Superintendent Gordon M. Anderson and new Superintendent John Folks, and school district employees, students and members of the community who provided information and assistance during TSPR's work in the district. Special appreciation is accorded Superintendent Anderson for providing office space, equipment, and meeting room facilities; Jane Reed and Jerry Smith for coordinating most data requests and providing relevant financial information; and Sharon McNeil, who assisted in scheduling and coordinating focus group sessions and other interviews.

SISD History, Enrollment Trends

Some 20 miles north of Houston, Spring ISD stretches north and south along Interstate 45 and east and west along Cypress Creek and FM 1960. The district was created in 1935 from the merger of two smaller school districts, Spring and Harrell, and served a homogenous, largely rural population for nearly 20 years. While SISD did not build its first new school, an elementary, until 1959, the following decades brought an explosion of growth with an influx of newcomers to the Houston suburbs.

As the district's student population grew, its demographic mix also shifted, moving from largely Anglo to a Texas-like mix of Anglo, African American, Hispanic, and Asian students. In 1982-83, Anglo students comprised 85 percent of the student population. In 1995-96, the district was 44 percent minority, with 20 percent of the students African American and 18 percent Hispanic (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2
SISD and State Student Ethnic Composition
1995-96

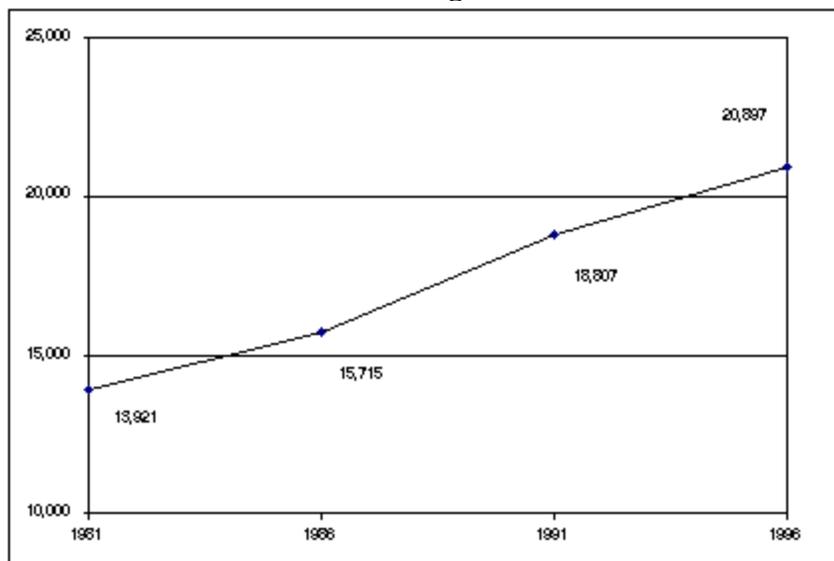
Ethnic Group	SISD	Texas Average
African American	19.8%	14.3%
Anglo	56.1%	46.4%

Hispanic	18.0%	36.7%
Other	6.0%	2.6%

Source: AEIS data, 1995-1996.

During 1996-97, SISD's 2,500 teachers, administrators, and support staff served more than 20,000 students in 21 schools on annual revenues of about \$110 million. The student population continued its steady increase, up 10 percent since 1990-91 (**Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3
SISD Enrollment
1980-81 through 1995-96



Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

For about 20 years, Spring ISD has been distinguished by high student achievement encouraged by teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents committed to continual improvement. Anderson Elementary School and Spring High School have been designated Blue Ribbon schools by the U.S. Department of Education, while student marching bands from Westfield and Spring high schools have won the 5A University Interscholastic League state championships five of the last eight years. Alumni of SISD include actress Crystal Bernard and Gerald Fauss, inventor of the numeral one foam hand often seen at sporting events.

Biggest Challenges

By dint of its tremendous growth, SISD is coming to terms both with enrollment pressures and demands for more school buildings and improved facilities. Board members requested a performance review from TSPR as they sought voter approval of a \$99 million bond issue in 1996; the issue was rejected at the polls. During this review, the TSPR team noted a need to focus efforts on computers and technology and to replace the aging and inefficient school bus fleet. More generally, an outstanding commitment to long-term planning needs to continue as new leaders assume positions long held by experienced individuals who may soon retire. Such planning should include a renewed effort to recruit teachers and other staff of different ethnicities.

Texas School Performance Review: A History of Savings

For more than six years, the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) has been trying to help public school districts across the state rise to an increasingly difficult challenge--spending their scarce education dollars in the classroom, where they belong, rather than on red tape, paperwork, and needless bureaucracy.

Created by state lawmakers as part of the state Comptroller's Office in 1990, TSPR accepts invitations from public school districts of every size and shape--large or small, rich or poor, rural or urban. The team settles in for months of detailed study, at no charge to district taxpayers. With the help of outside management experts, they consult a wide range of administrators, principals, teachers, parents, students, community groups, and business leaders. They solicit suggestions from front-line district employees. They hold public meetings, arrange special focus group forums, and conduct private interviews. And they encourage every concerned citizen to call a toll-free hot line and share what they think.

TSPR's goal is to identify ways to hold the line on costs, reduce administrative overhead, streamline operations, and improve educational services--in short, to help school districts operate more effectively and efficiently with available resources. Most of the Comptroller's recommendations come directly from teachers, parents, students, and others who live or work in the district. TSPR has found that these hard-working folks have often known for years what would help them improve their schools, if only someone would ask. The Comptroller asks.

Since 1991, TSPR has offered nearly 2,400 detailed ways to save taxpayers more than \$276 million in 23 public school districts throughout Texas--Spring is the 24th. And TSPR has done all this without ever recommending the firing or laying off of a classroom teacher.

Districts studied by the TSPR team include San Antonio, Richland Springs, San

Saba, Cherokee, Lubbock, Victoria, West Orange/Cove Consolidated, Lake Travis, Dallas, Austin, Calhoun County, Midland, Paris, San Marcos Consolidated, Brownsville, Longview, San Angelo, Beaumont, Waco, United in Laredo, Tyler, Houston, Texarkana, and now Spring. A review of the Corpus Christi district will soon conclude, while studies of the Socorro, Ysleta, Port Arthur, Wimberly, and El Paso districts are anticipated within the next year.

In addition, TSPR has conducted follow-up reviews of districts that have had at least one year to implement their recommendations. These subsequent reviews show that 87 percent of TSPR's combined proposals have been acted upon, saving local taxpayers nearly \$75 million during the first years of implementation, with additional savings projected.

TSPR's work is not a financial audit in the traditional sense. Its purpose isn't to uncover financial wrongdoing or other potential criminal activities. Instead, each school performance review tries to show the participating district how it might accomplish more with the same amount of money. The team has recommended ways to streamline administrative functions, transportation and food service, improve campus security, reduce maintenance costs, and more efficiently manage facilities. They've proposed revamped investment strategies, better strategic planning, and privatization of certain district services.

Anyone seeking detailed information on a particular district's previous performance review should call the Texas School Performance Review toll-free at 1-800-531-5441 ext 3-4900.

Summary Results

All told, the review team developed 10298 recommendations during a five-month review period ending in September 1997.

The SISD review identified total savings of nearly \$6.6 million that could be realized by SISD from 1997-98 through 2001-02 if these recommendations are implemented. The TSPR recommendations also include investment opportunities of about \$800,000 in fiscal 1998 and total investment opportunities of \$2.498 million through fiscal 2002. Cumulative net savings (savings minus recommended investments) from all recommendations is expected to reach almost \$4.298 million by fiscal 2002. The savings opportunities identified in the report are conservative and should be considered the minimum that can be realized if all recommendations are implemented.

The total savings and costs associated with TSPR's recommendations are listed at the end of this chapter. Significantly, many recommendations would not have a direct financial impact, but nevertheless represent important improvements over current policies and practices, including boosts in customer service by the district.

A Model School District

TSPR's 23 school district performance reviews to date singled out and celebrated exemplary practices or programs seen as models for other districts. SISD yielded its own model programs, but more significantly, the review team found that Spring district administrators, teachers, and support staff have been *directly addressing*

many of the common challenges TSPR finds in other districts. In short, SISD has excelled in areas where the Comptroller often finds weaknesses.

Staffing and Productivity Standards

Given that more than 85 percent of all school district budgets involve personnel costs, the TSPR regularly looks at staffing and productivity standards to evaluate the equity and efficiency of staffing across a district. For instance, the number of students per teacher or the number of students per assistant principal help shed light on how a district assigns staff and spends its valuable dollars. Other ratios indicate the allocation and productivity of support staff such as the number of custodians per square foot of space, and cafeteria meals served per labor hour. SISD, the review team found, maintains such standards for schools and by departments. While flexibility is allowed within the basic personnel allocation formulas, resources are evenly and equitably distributed throughout the district.

The Role of Administrators

TSPR often recommends that school districts revise the job descriptions of central office administrators to emphasize the service of school principals, teachers and students. In addition, TSPR recommends that administrators be required to spend at least 50 percent of their time in the schools; districts implementing this suggestion report this to be most beneficial. In SISD, the review team found, Superintendent Anderson was known for the amount of time he spent outside his office in the individual schools. As a group, SISD's central administrators and their support staff proved that they are committed to serving schools, principals, teachers, and students-first.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning enables a district to define its goals and objectives, establish priorities, and determine specific implementation strategies. The process begins as a school district assesses its strengths and weaknesses, both in instructional and support areas. From broad goals, specific strategies for achieving the goals are developed. One of the most critical strategies involves the allocation of resources to make the goals reality. Priorities must be set, which means that some goals will be achieved within weeks or months, while others will be deferred until additional money or resources become available.

While most Texas districts engage in some sort of planning, few districts have gone to the lengths of SISD. The SISD Five-Year Educational Plan, instituted in 1982, involves parents, teachers, students, and community members in planning for and regularly monitoring the district's progress. The survey instrument used to begin the process is the most comprehensive information-gathering tool observed by TSPR.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" in SISD. Through commendations in each chapter, this report highlights model programs, operations and services provided by SISD administrators, teachers and staff. Other school districts throughout the state are encouraged to examine these programs and services to see if they may be adapted to meet their needs. Notable examples include:

- The SISD board has defined its role as policy-maker and avoids interference in day-to-day administration. Board committees allow members to focus on key policy issues, while maintaining a positive staff working relationship. Confidence and trust among the board members and the administration are evident.
- Link Elementary School established its School/Community Leadership Project in 1991 geared toward improving the quality of life of community residents, ridding the community of criminal influences, and being free of drugs and alcohol. The project has led to a community awareness parade and festival, a breakfast for parents of students in grades 4 and 5, and an international culture festival. On another front, Link Elementary maintains The Parent Link, emphasizing more parental involvement in education and practical parent education bringing trained parents in contact with other parents to discuss and resolve child-rearing issues.
- Wells Middle School's Success Club addresses student's behavioral and learning needs. Initially funded through a grant from the SISD Education Foundation, the club's members are students selected based on low or failing grades, zeros on daily assignments, poor performance on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), and evidence of poor study habits. Participants attend individualized two-hour sessions after school. Gains in grades and TAAS scores suggest the program works; it is being expanded to more schools in 1997-98.
- SISD uses innovative compensation strategies, including a performance-based pay plan and exceptional benefits, to attract and retain highly qualified personnel and reinforce the achievement of district priorities. In addition, SISD's performance appraisal system directly ties performance to professional development and compensation.
- As part of its energy management program, SISD developed a rebate program that rewards schools for efficient energy use. A school that reduces its usage below the budgeted amount shares the cost savings with the district. The school gets half the dollar savings, and the district uses the other half to fund energy-related building and equipment improvements.

- SISD's budget planning process ties budget expenditures to specific priorities established in the district's Five-Year Education Plan. The SISD budget is amended only three times a year, and amendments are reviewed and approved by the board during a normal budget review cycle.
- Workers' Compensation claims have been reduced 46 percent since 1995-96, after the addition of a director of Safety and Compliance and the initiation of policies and procedures that identify areas for safety improvement.
- Purchasing cooperatives have saved SISD money in buying milk, tires, and other supplies. The tire cooperative was created by SISD because district officials realized they were not getting the best possible prices. Other area districts joined in, and SISD handles the bidding process for 26 districts. As a result, tires cost 13 percent less than what SISD previously paid.
- SISD has implemented a cash management system in school cafeterias that ensures the confidentiality of students participating in the federal free- and reduced-price meal program. All students enter a payment identification number at the point of sale, so participating students' economic status remain confidential. As a result, student participation in the meal programs has increased, a fact recognized in 1996-97 by the Texas Food Service Association.
- In 1994, SISD's director of Transportation led the development and implementation of a state cooperative training course offered by the Texas Association for Pupil Transportation and Texas A&M University, called "Train the Trainer." The five-day course follows a detailed manual and provides behind-the-wheel instruction, leading to a range of driving skills not duplicated by most districts.
- SISD obtained a drug detection dog at a fraction of the cost of contracting for such an outside service. The annual \$1,500 cost of maintaining the dog favorably contrasts to an annual contract price of \$19,000.

- Chapter by Chapter: Key Findings, Recommendations

District Organization and Management

-To maintain excellence attributed in great part to the district's stable, solid leadership since 1982, the review team recommends development of an internal management training program. More than 25 SISD central office administrators had more than 20 years experience during 1996-97, indicating at least the possibility of multiple retirements within the next five years. On another front, TSPR urges reorganization of the Board and Community Services Department to address a community desire for more information on district operations.

Educational Service Delivery

-Emphasizing a finding that SISD has made great academic strides, but can still do better, the review team urges more careful tracking of students after graduation, closer attention to closing the achievement gap between minority and Anglo students on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, and extra efforts toward earning more "recognized" and "exemplary" ratings in the state's accountability ratings. In each case, the district appears ready to meet the highest possible expectations.

Community Involvement

-The review team recommends new steps to establish strong, permanent relationships between the district and the greater Spring community. A Minority Involvement Task Force should be formed to develop ideas for bridging the gap between minority community residents and the district. An annual Community Outreach Summit would allow SISD teachers and principals to showcase and improve effective community outreach programs. On a related front, the district should create a School-Business Advisory Committee to aggressively encourage and maintain partnerships between schools and community businesses.

Personnel Management

-While principals and other staff praised the district's recruiting efforts, Spring community residents said they saw room for improvement, particularly in increasing the ethnic diversity of teaching staff. TSPR urges the director of Staff Placement to step up minority recruitment. As SISD improves its ethnic mix, a cultural diversity training program also should be developed and implemented.

Facilities Use and Management

-By adjusting attendance zone boundaries, SISD could reduce its dependence on portable school buildings and relieve some overcrowding. In the northeast part of the district, for instance, Winship Elementary is at 59 percent capacity while nearby Smith Elementary is at 119 percent

capacity with six portable school buildings, or 12 classrooms, in place. A shift in attendance zone lines could help both schools.

Financial Management

-Although the property tax collection rate achieved by SISD's tax office has been excellent, similar results could be achieved through the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector. Transferring tax office functions to Harris County would save the district more than \$435,000 through 2001-02.

Computers and Technology

-SISD emerged as a leader in computers and technology in the 1980's, but the district was unable to stay abreast as its student population surged. The district's five-year technology plan needs the direction of a single assistant to the superintendent. Teachers need updated workstations to record student grades. And the district needs to identify business needs before purchasing system software. SISD should solicit support from area businesses, national grant programs, and others to bolster hardware and hasten improvements to its technology infrastructure.

Food Services

-By boosting student participation in federal free- and reduced-price meal programs, SISD could increase its revenues by \$309,535 a year, assuming a 5 percent increase in student participation. TSPR also urges implementation of a school breakfast program districtwide.

Transportation

-With full public input, the district should consider leasing advertising space on school buses, a strategy that could generate \$100,000 a year. The review team found SISD could save \$50,000 a year by simplifying its multiple bell schedule. Perhaps most significantly, the SISD board and superintendent should come to terms with implementing a long-term bus replacement plan; the projected costs of purchasing diesel buses, less fuel and maintenance savings, amount to \$292,000 in 1997-98 and lesser amounts in subsequent years. The benefits are a renewed fleet of much greater safety and reliability.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many recommendations would result in savings and revenue increases that could be used by SISD to more effectively meet student needs. The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered the minimum taxpayers have a right to expect. Investment requirements usually are related to creating an efficiency or savings to the district, enhancing productivity and effectiveness.

As shown below, and in detail in **Exhibit 5**, full implementation of the recommendations in this report could produce gross savings of almost \$3 million in the next two years. SISD could achieve total net savings of almost \$4.2 million by 2001-2002 if all recommendations are implemented.

Exhibit 5 Summary of Net Savings

Year Savings Begin	Total (In Millions)
1997-98 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$88,857
1998-99 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$958,102
1999-00 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,001,705
2000-01 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,175,607
2001-02 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,274,292
One Time (Costs) Savings	(\$ 299,500)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 1998-2002	\$4,199,063

Detailed implementation strategies, timelines, and fiscal impacts follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights a series of actions. Some should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

TSPR recommends that the SISD board ask district administrators to review these recommendations, develop a plan to proceed with implementation, and monitor subsequent progress. TSPR is available to help in any way.

Chapter 1

District Organization and Management

This chapter examines the organization and management of the Spring Independent School District (SISD) in three parts:

- A. Board and Governance
- B. District Management
- C. Planning and Budgeting

BACKGROUND

A school district's organization begins with an elected or appointed board of trustees. In the eastern and midwestern parts of the United States, school districts often are considered departments of the local city government, and trustees are appointed by the mayor and city council. In Texas, by contrast, most school boards are elected by district residents within "independent" school districts. An independent school district board sets policies, selects key management, establishes property tax rates, and approves staffing levels, pay rates, and the annual budget. It also determines facility needs and calls bond elections as necessary to support those needs.

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

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD is located in Harris County, about 20 miles north of Houston, stretching north and south along Interstate 45 and east and west along Cypress Creek and FM 1960. The district is served by the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Regional Education Service Center IV (RESC IV) in Houston.

SISD's educational philosophy and mission statement are outlined in the board policy manual. These are detailed in the district's beliefs, which were first adopted in 1982 and revised in 1992, as follows. SISD:

- Believes in providing a basic educational program of instruction which permits each student to attain his or her academic potential.

- Believes that the education of our students is a responsibility shared equally by students, their families and staff members, with the expectation that all will actively support and participate in the development of our children.
- Encourages all students to participate in school programs and activities for the purpose of discovering personal strengths and abilities and developing well rounded interests.
- Believes that patriotism, responsible citizenship, self-discipline, respect for authority, and respect for others, including an understanding of our heritage, should be emphasized in all aspects of the district's operation.
- Expects that parents will participate, support and cooperate in the education and discipline of their children.
- Believes in selecting staff members of the highest quality and rewarding them on the basis of achievement and performance.
- Expects that each staff member will be a model of commitment to professionalism and a model and example of good citizenship to the students, to the community, and to one another.
- Believes that it is the responsibility of the board to establish policy and direction for the district and to delegate the management and operation of the district to the superintendent and the staff.
- Recognizes and respects the financial trust placed in the board by the taxpayers of the district, and expects that the district will be operated in a fiscally responsible manner.

The board translates these beliefs into specific goals and objectives through a Five-Year Education Plan, updated annually to reflect accomplishment of objectives and establishment of new priorities or objectives. SISD began the planning process in 1982, and developed the fourth Five-Year Education Plan during this review.

For this review, SISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes based upon certain similarities:

- Suburban districts in the Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston areas with enrollments between 10,000 and roughly 40,000 students;
- Districts where between 20 and 40 percent of the student population is eligible for free- and reduced-price lunches; and
- Districts with Anglo student populations at 45 to 65 percent of the total student population.

The resulting peer districts were:

- Carrollton-Farmers Branch, in suburban Dallas
- Duncanville, south of Dallas

- Fort Bend, in suburban Houston
- Goose Creek, in Baytown, Texas, about 40 miles east of Houston
- Klein, adjacent to Spring
- Richardson, north of Dallas
- Spring Branch, west of Houston along Interstate 10

SISD had revenues of \$110.1 million in 1995-96. Total operating expenditures for the same year were \$99.5 million, with 52 percent applied to instruction. **Exhibit 1-1** compares SISD's receipt and use of funds to its selected peer districts.

Exhibit 1-1
SISD Revenues and Expenditures Compared to Peer Districts
1995-96

District	Total Revenue (millions)	Revenue/Pupil	Total Operating Expenditure (millions)	Total Operating Expenditure/Pupil	Total Instructional Expenditure (millions)	Instructional Expenditure/Pupil
Fort Bend	\$223.9	\$5,566	\$194.6	\$4,839	\$110.3	\$2,743
Richardson	\$197.1	\$5,801	\$170.0	\$4,998	\$98.0	\$2,884
Spring Branch	\$172.1	\$5,825	\$155.6	\$5,226	\$89.3	\$3,021
Klein	\$156.9	\$5,351	\$138.7	\$4,732	\$82.0	\$2,797
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$114.9	\$5,649	\$97.3	\$4,783	\$56.1	\$2,760
Spring	\$110.1	\$5,436	\$99.5	\$4,913	\$58.4	\$2,884
Goose Creek	\$100.0	\$5,593	\$87.2	\$4,877	\$46.6	\$2,607
Duncanville	\$51.5	\$5,088	\$46.5	\$4,590	\$26.0	\$2,567

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots, 1995-1996.

As with many suburban school districts in Texas, SISD faces increasing pressure on its tax base. As noted in **Exhibit 1-2**, SISD has the second-highest tax rate among its selected peer districts. The rate is almost 25 cents higher than the average for districts within RESC IV and almost 31 cents higher than the state average.

SISD also has the second-lowest taxable property value per pupil compared to its selected peer districts, meaning that it generates fewer dollars from its taxable property and thus must have a higher overall property tax rate to generate revenues similar to its peer districts. SISD's property value per pupil is lower than the regional and state averages.

Exhibit 1-2
SISD Tax Rate and Taxable Property Value
Compared to Peer Districts
1995-96

District	Taxable Property Value/Pupil	Equalized Tax Rate
Klein	\$144,061	\$1.774
Spring	\$163,287	\$1.721
Duncanville	\$198,779	\$1.600
Fort Bend	\$178,104	\$1.577
Spring Branch	\$292,182	\$1.557
Goose Creek	\$270,215	\$1.545
Richardson	\$328,531	\$1.479
RESC IV	\$202,872	\$1.472
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$397,779	\$1.431
Texas	\$176,591	\$1.412

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

The district receives revenue from state, federal, and local sources. **Exhibit 1-3** shows the distribution of the funds as a percentage of overall revenue for SISD and its peer districts.

Exhibit 1-3
Revenue Sources as a Percentage of Total
Revenues for SISD and Peer Districts
1995-96

District	Local/Other Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue
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Carrollton-Farmers Branch	88%	8%	3%
Richardson	88%	9%	3%
Spring Branch	85%	8%	7%
Goose Creek	82%	12%	7%
Duncanville	68%	29%	3%
RESC IV	59%	34%	7%
<i>Spring</i>	57%	39%	3%
Fort Bend	53%	44%	3%
Klein	51%	45%	3%
Texas	49%	43%	8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

SISD relies on significant contributions from the state's formula funding to support programs. The district is not required to participate in the state's redistribution of wealth program (i.e., the so-called "Robin Hood Plan"), and retains all local revenue.

SISD spends 52 percent of its revenue on instruction, more than most of its peer districts and on par with both regional and state averages (**Exhibit 1-4**).

Exhibit 1-4
SISD and Peer District Expenditures by Type and Percentage
1995-96

District	Instruction	Central Administration	Campus Administration	Plant Services	Other Operating	Non-Operating
<i>Spring</i>	52%	7%	5%	11%	14%	11%
Klein	52%	5%	6%	11%	14%	13%
Richardson	52%	6%	7%	12%	13%	11%
RESC IV	52%	6%	5%	11%	15%	11%
Texas	52%	7%	5%	10%	15%	11%
Spring	51%	7%	5%	11%	14%	11%

Branch						
Duncanville	50%	8%	6%	10%	15%	11%
Fort Bend	49%	6%	5%	12%	15%	13%
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	46%	7%	5%	10%	12%	20%
Goose Creek	46%	7%	5%	12%	17%	14%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

Compared to its peer districts, SISD pays relatively high salaries to teachers with 10 years or more experience and in central administration (**Exhibits 1-5 through 1-7**). The stated purpose for this pattern is to attract and retain good teachers and administrators. Individual school administrators and newer teachers are paid comparably in SISD's peer districts. These salary levels are discussed in greater detail in the section of this report concerning Personnel Management.

SISD has the highest-paid central administrators among its peer districts. This may be attributed to several factors:

- Significant experience of top administrators.
- Lean staffing, with accordingly greater responsibility.
- Inclusion of car allowances and other benefits in salary.
- Use of a performance-based compensation system.

**Exhibit 1-5
Central Administrative Salaries
SISD and Peer District
1996-97**

District	Average Salary for Central Administrators
<i>Spring</i>	\$77,687
Spring Branch	\$74,798
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$72,600
Duncanville	\$68,227
Klein	\$67,923

Richardson	\$64,418
RESC IV	\$64,292
Goose Creek	\$61,722
Texas	\$58,606
Fort Bend	\$55,319

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

The number of school administrator positions is determined through staffing guidelines reviewed annually. Those guidelines are provided in detail for elementary, middle, and high schools in the section of this report concerning Personnel Management.

Exhibit 1-6
School Administrative Salaries
SISD and Peer District
1996-97

District	Average Salary for School Administrators
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$58,291
Richardson	\$58,057
Spring Branch	\$56,262
<i>Spring</i>	\$53,292
RESC IV	\$51,859
Klein	\$51,856
Duncanville	\$51,704
Texas	\$49,265
Goose Creek	\$48,526
Fort Bend	\$45,630

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

For 1995-96, SISD teachers had the highest average salary among the peer districts (**Exhibit 1-7**).

Exhibit 1-7
Average Teacher Salary
SISD and Peer District
1995-96

District	Average Salary
<i>Spring</i>	\$34,438
Richardson	\$34,141
Spring Branch	\$33,804
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$33,712
Region IV	\$32,629
Duncanville	\$31,982
Klein	\$31,651
Texas	\$31,400
Goose Creek	\$31,352
Fort Bend	\$29,364

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

Exhibit 1-8 provides average SISD teacher salary by years of experience for the past three years.

Exhibit 1-8
SISD Average Teacher Salary by Years of Experience
1994-95 through 1996-97

Years of Experience	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Beginning teachers	\$23,290	\$24,308	\$26,254
1-5	\$25,224	\$25,793	\$27,133
6-10	\$30,959	\$32,414	\$32,266
11-20	\$34,662	\$38,225	\$39,120
Over 20	\$38,861	\$43,233	\$44,612

Source: TEA, 1994-96 Snapshots, SISD 1996-97.

SISD conducted a salary survey in 1996 in five Houston-area districts with which it competes for teachers: Alief, Cypress-Fairbanks, Katy, Klein, and Spring Branch. SISD's average salaries were the lowest among the comparison districts for teachers with five or fewer years of experience. At more experienced levels, SISD teacher salaries were either highest or second-highest (**Exhibit 1-9**).

Exhibit 1-9
SISD and Selected Districts Teacher Salaries
1996-97

Years of Experience	Alief	Cypress-Fairbanks	Katy	Klein	Spring	Spring Branch
Beginning teachers	\$27,100	\$26,800	\$26,867	\$26,610	\$26,254	\$26,600
1-5	\$28,906	\$28,317	\$28,967	\$27,434	\$27,133	\$30,100
6-10	\$32,226	\$30,602	\$32,633	\$29,990	\$32,266	\$35,100
11-20	\$36,536	\$35,141	\$36,606	\$34,805	\$39,120	\$41,708
Over 20	\$42,435	\$40,455	\$44,475	\$43,427	\$44,612	N/A

Source: SISD salary survey, 1996-97.

Among its peer districts, SISD ranks fifth in the percentage of teachers with fewer than five years experience as a percentage of total teachers (**Exhibit 1-10**). This percentage is lower than the average in both the region and state.

Exhibit 1-10
SISD and Peer Districts Teachers
with less than Five Years Experience
1995-96

District	Percentage of Teachers with Fewer Than Five Years Experience
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	37.5%
Spring Branch	35.4%
RESC IV	33.6%
Texas	33.3%

Fort Bend	31.9%
Duncanville	31.3%
Spring	27.5%
Goose Creek	26.8%
Richardson	25.7%
Klein	22.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

Teachers in SISD have an average of 11.9 years of experience (**Exhibit 1-11**).

Exhibit 1-11
SISD and Peer District Teacher Experience
1995-96

District	Average Years of Experience
Richardson	13.3
Goose Creek	13.2
Klein	12.9
Duncanville	12.2
Spring	11.9
Texas	11.7
Region IV	11.6
Spring Branch	11.5
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	10.6
Fort Bend	10.5

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

Seventeen percent of SISD's staff are minority members (**Exhibit 1-12**). Slightly more than 6 percent of SISD's teachers are minorities.

Exhibit 1-12
Staff and Teacher Demographics as a Percentage of Total Staff

**for SISD and Peer Districts
1995-96**

District	Minority Staff	Teachers - African American	Teachers - Hispanic	Teachers - Anglo	Teachers - Other
Fort Bend	38%	18%	5%	76%	1%
Region IV	36%	17%	8%	74%	1%
Texas	35%	8%	15%	76%	1%
Goose Creek	29%	8%	9%	83%	0%
Spring Branch	27%	4%	9%	87%	1%
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	18%	3%	5%	90%	1%
Spring	17%	2%	3%	94%	1%
Duncanville	17%	6%	2%	92%	0%
Richardson	16%	3%	2%	94%	1%
Klein	15%	3%	2%	95%	0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

Chapter 1

District Organization and Management

A. Board and Governance

BACKGROUND

Each Texas independent school district is governed by an elected board of trustees, which derives its legal status from the Texas Constitution and Texas Legislature. The board must function in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, court decisions, and applicable regulations pursuant to state and federal law.

Each board has specific statutory powers and duties. The board has the legal power and duty to:

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

- Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district; and
- Hold all powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to the agency or the State Board of Education.

CURRENT SITUATION

The SISD board consists of seven members elected at large for three-year terms (**Exhibit 1-13**). Terms are staggered so that only three seats are filled each election.

Elections have been held each year on the third Saturday of January. Changes in election dates made by the Texas Legislature will move SISD board elections to May beginning in 1998. In the election held on January 18, 1997, one incumbent was reelected and one open position was filled by a new member.

Exhibit 1-13
SISD Board of Trustees
1996-97

Name	Title	Term Expires	Years of Experience	Occupation
Andy Dekaney	President	1999	10	Management consultant
Sherry Mudder	Vice President	2000	6	Business owner
Timothy C. Perdue	Secretary	1998	2	Environmental scientist
Bonnie Claire Dadidakis	Assistant Secretary	1998	2	Homemaker
Rickey C. Bailey	Member	1998	14	General manager
Chet Burchett	Member	1999	4	Engineering management
Malcolm Thompson	Member	2000	0	Actuary

Source: SISD.

FINDING

Board members maintain a clear distinction between their policy role and the implementation role performed by the superintendent and staff. Board members, both individually and collectively, police themselves to avoid any imposition on day-to-day operations. This self-policing usually involves one-on-one talks between the board president and board members or discussions during executive sessions of the board.

The board president also makes presentations to other school district boards regarding board management, use of board committees, and long-range planning. In the past three years, presentations occurred in the Alvin, Crosby, and Goose Creek districts, at two conventions of the National Association of School Boards, and at the Texas Association of School Boards/Texas Association of School Administrators convention.

Board members told the review team that the reason the board functions so well is the trust and confidence members have in one another. Board members told the review team:

- "The board does not micro-manage."
- "We self-police and discipline each other to avoid getting involved in day-to-day matters."
- "If the staff presents good recommendations, based upon the priorities of the district, our role is to support them and then get out of the way."

Focus groups and interviews with various community organizations reinforced these comments. Comments included:

- "The board has always worked with, instead of against, the administration and the community."
- "There is no dictating of what goes on by either the superintendent nor the board."
- "The board and superintendent anticipate needs and meet them. This (approach) avoids last minute crises and hasty decisions. They think things through and carry them out ahead of time."
- "Board is nationally recognized. (I) think that is appropriate. Very good."
- "There is good communication between the board and superintendent. There are differences of opinion but people work professionally."

SISD uses a comprehensive planning and management system that begins with the Five-Year Education Plan. The district will embark on the first year of its fourth five-year plan with the 1997-98 year.

Using the district's Five-Year Education Plan as its guide, the board focuses on key areas of concern within the district. For example, strengthening student achievement is one of the plan's foremost goals. The board has focused on allocating revenues to support a variety of programs aimed at addressing different cultural and learning needs, producing increases in TAAS scores in each of the past three years. Board discussions with staff members center on policy issues defined in the plan and the staff's recommendations on achieving the desired objectives.

The board's roles are clearly defined in the district's policy manual. Management guidelines prepared to guide day-to-day decisions provide clear guidance on staff responsibilities.

COMMENDATION

The board has clearly defined its role as policy-maker and avoids interference in day-to-day administration.

FINDING

The board meets regularly on the second Tuesday of each month. Board meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room on the second floor of the Administration Building. Since this room can only seat 60 people, occasions for larger audiences, such as award or recognition ceremonies, are held at one of the district's schools.

The board conducts most business through six standing committees:

- Audit
- Benefits
- Construction and Renovation
- Insurance and Legal
- Planning and Evaluation
- Policy

Dividing the workload into committees allows board members to study and discuss issues in greater depth. Each SISD board member, with the exception of the board president, chairs one committee and serves on two others. Appointments are rotated so that all trustees serve at one time or another on each committee. The president is an *ex officio* member of all committees.

Two peer districts also use committees, but, only one does so on a regular basis (**Exhibit 1-14**).

Exhibit 1-14
SISD and Peer District Board Committees
1996-97

District	Use of Standing Committees	Number of Committees and Functional Area
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	Yes	2 - Naming of Facilities; Audit
Duncanville	No	N/A
Fort Bend	No	N/A
Goose Creek	No	N/A
Klein	No	N/A
Richardson	No	N/A
Spring	Yes	6 (see above)
Spring Branch	Yes	3 - Facilities; Audit; Legislative

Source: Telephone survey of districts.

All committee meetings are posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and are open to the public. The committees function similarly to the boards of directors of private corporations. Committees meet as needed, not on a fixed schedule. **Exhibit 1-15** lists the most recent meetings of each committee and attendance by non-SISD persons at each meeting.

Exhibit 1-15
SISD Committee Meetings and Non-SISD Attendance

Committee	Most Recent Meeting Dates	Attendance
Audit	December 3, 1996 December 5, 1995 December 6, 1994	1 external auditor 2 external auditors 3 external auditors
Benefits	February 25, 1997 April 16, 1996 April 25, 1995	5 representatives of third-party administrator 3 representatives of third-party administrator 4 representatives of third-party

		administrator
Construction and Renovation	March 3, 1997 August 27, 1996 May 7, 1996 March 19, 1996	0 1 architect 0 0
Insurance and Legal	March 26, 1997 January 17, 1995 October 4, 1993	1 insurance agent 1 insurance agent 1 insurance agent
Planning and Evaluation	March 18, 1997 January 17, 1995 October 4, 1993	0 9 members of the Five-Year Education Plan Steering Committee 0
Policy	March 6, 1997 July 29, 1996 April 30, 1996 March 25, 1996	0 0 0 0

Source: Executive Director, Board and Community Services, and minutes of committee meetings.

Each committee is supported by one or more members of the district's senior staff, or cabinet, depending upon the nature of the issue under examination. Staff members respond to questions from committee members, conduct research at the request of the committee, and provide technical assistance as required. Lead staff assigned to support each committee are:

Audit	Assistant superintendent of Business/Financial Services
Benefits	Assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services
Construction and Renovation	Executive director of Facilities Management/Security
Insurance/Legal	Assistant superintendent of Business/Financial Services
Planning and Evaluation	Assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Services
Policy	Executive director for Board/Community Services

Depending upon the complexity of the issue, other staff members may attend as well

Interviews with board members elicited the following comments on the committee structure:

- "One of the district's greatest strengths."
- "Works because of mutual trust among board members for each other and for the work of the staff."
- "The committee meeting is the time to ask probing questions and work out the issues."
- "The perception of unanimity by the board is not accurate. We discuss our differences in depth in committee meetings and reach the most achievable end result. Then, we make that recommendation to the full board."

Responses from focus-group participants and community leaders mirrored the comments of the board:

- "The board uses committees effectively."
- "Issues are worked in committee, so people think there is not enough discussion and conflict."
- "Everything is well thought out, planned, and organized; no knee jerk [reactions], no free for all, no circus atmosphere."
- "By the time a vote is taken, committee members have hashed things out. There is ample opportunity to get involved with committees. The district is very open with information."

COMMENDATION

SISD's committee system allows board members to concentrate on key issues, creates a positive working relationship with district staff, and fosters trust and confidence among board members.

FINDING

In the course of the evaluation, the review team noted that while the number of committees is appropriate, several key operational areas are not included in the purview of the existing committees. For this reason, these areas may not receive adequate attention. For example, none of the existing committees focuses on technology.

Another area of concern is support services. SISD's transportation and food service areas face significant difficulties with deferred purchases of equipment and facilities that may be impairing their productivity. Yet, no board committee or subcommittee is devoted to support services.

Recommendation 1:

Annually evaluate the committee structure to ensure it addresses critical areas of district operations.

Given the district's priorities on technology for the coming years, an alternative configuration might be as follows:

- Policy and planning
- Technology
- Financial and legal services (including audit and budget)
- Insurance and benefits
- Support services (including transportation, food services, etc.)
- Facilities management

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The board adopts the annual update of the Five-Year Education Plan containing new priorities and adopts a committee structure for the current year to reflect these priorities.	June 1998
--	--------------

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact would be associated with implementing this recommendation.

FINDING

The district maintains accurate minutes of each board and board committee meeting. Microfiche copies of the minutes are kept in the Board/Community Services office. Paper copies are maintained in a warehouse behind the Administration Building.

Information from prior board meetings must be accessed physically at the office of Board/Community Services. The information cannot be accessed electronically. The Superintendent's office is often contacted first for district information, requiring staff to leave their office to retrieve documents from Board/Community Services.

The Purchasing Department uses a document imaging machine, or scanner, to copy and store a variety of bulky documents electronically, such as bid information from vendors. Access to this information is available to all Purchasing personnel.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission has adopted standards for maintaining the electronic storage of records. These standards apply to

all medium-term, long-term, and permanent electronic records of state agencies and local governments. They establish minimum requirements for the maintenance, use, retention, and storage of all qualifying documents and address the creation and use of data files and text documents, security of electronic records, and the maintenance and destruction of electronic media. These standards and methods are already used by many Texas cities such as Dallas and school districts such as Katy ISD.

Recommendation 2:

Adopt Texas State Library and Archives Commission standards for electronic records and begin scanning historical documents and minutes of all meetings for storage.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Board and Community Services works with the director of Purchasing to establish an internal procedure and schedule to implement sharing of the equipment.	September 1997
2. The executive director reviews the procedure with the assistant superintendent of Personnel and Support Services.	September 1997
3. The assistant to the Superintendent meets with the director of Purchasing to discuss how information in the Superintendent's office should be scanned.	September 1997
4. The director of Purchasing decides which information should be scanned and recommends a schedule to complete this work.	October 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Purchase of the necessary materials such as computer disks can be accomplished within the board's existing budget.

Chapter 1

District Organization and Management

B. District Management

CURRENT SITUATION

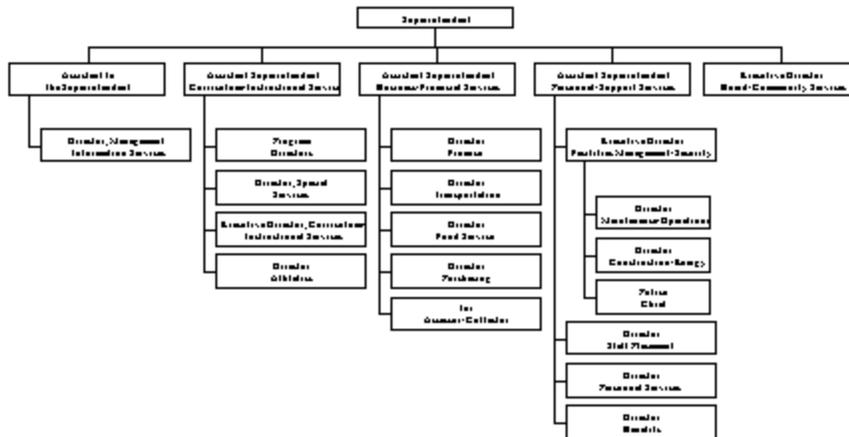
SISD is managed by a superintendent and senior staff members or "cabinet" members who report to the superintendent. Last summer, Dr. Gordon Anderson, SISD's superintendent for the past 15 years, announced his intention to retire on June 30, 1997. The board retained a search firm to assist in locating a replacement. Dr. John Folks was named in July 1997, and began work on July 2, 1997.

As noted in SISD's board policy manual, the superintendent is the district administrative manager. The superintendent's primary duties are as follows:

- Administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the educational programs, services, and facilities of the district and for annual performance appraisals of district staff.
- Administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all district personnel.
- Termination or suspension of staff members or the nonrenewal of staff members' term contracts.
- Day-to-day management of district operations.
- Preparation of proposed district budgets.
- Preparation of policy recommendations for the board and administration of the implementation of adopted policies.
- Development of appropriate administrative regulations to implement board policies.
- Leadership in attainment of student performance.
- Organization of the district's central administration.

In fulfilling this last responsibility, the former superintendent grouped the district's functions as follows (**Exhibit 1-16**):

Exhibit 1-16
SISD Organization
1996-97



Source: SISD

Under this organizational structure, SISD administrators perform the following duties:

Assistant to the superintendent for Administration	Acts as the superintendent's primary representative in dealing with all parental questions/concerns and student discipline matters and, in the superintendent's absence, meets with parents, teachers, principals, and community members to resolve concerns; supervises the Management Information Systems (MIS) department.
Assistant superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Services	Administers curriculum/instruction services, special services, program directors, and athletics;
Assistant superintendent, Business and Financial Services	Administers finance, internal audit, purchasing, tax collection, food service, and transportation.
Assistant superintendent, Personnel and Support Services	Administers staff placement, personnel services (including certification and employee records), benefits, facilities management, maintenance/operations, construction/energy, and police.
Executive director, Board and Community Services	Administers board support (including agenda preparation, travel logistics, expense report monitoring, and meeting minutes preparation), and community services (including certain publications for community information and press relations).

At the beginning of 1996-97, SISD employed 2,661 full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees (**Exhibit 1-17**), an increase of 7.2 percent over the prior year.

Exhibit 1-17
SISD Employees by Category
1995-96 - 1996-97

Employee Category	FTE as of September 1, 1995	FTE as of September 1, 1996	Percentage Increase
Professional	1,539	1,670	8.5%
Paraprofessional	419	454	8.4%
Classified	524	537	2.5%
Total	2,482	2,661	7.2%

Source: SISD School Board Agenda Item, September 10, 1996 meeting.

Exhibit 1-18 provides a percentage breakdown of the positions by categories of employees.

Exhibit 1-18
Percentage of SISD Employees by Category
1995-96

Category	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Teachers	52.5%	51.6%	50.9%	49.6%	50.0%
Professional support	6.1%	7.2%	6.8%	5.4%	5.9%
Campus administration	2.8%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%
Central administration	1.3%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%
Educational aides	7.6%	7.6%	4.9%	6.0%	6.5%
Auxiliary staff	29.7%	29.9%	34.1%	35.8%	34.4%

Source: AEIS Report, 1992-96.

Professional staff members include school and central administrators, teachers, and professional support positions. Auxiliary staff includes all remaining personnel other than educational aides and those in the professional category.

Exhibit 1-19 describes the total number of employees by age and gender.

Exhibit 1-19

SISD Employees by Age and Gender

Age Group	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total by Age Group	Percentage of Total Employees
70-79years old	2	3	5	0.2%
60-69	36	65	101	3.8%
50-59	106	465	571	21.2%
40-49	140	775	915	33.9%
30-39	136	572	708	26.3%
20-29	56	338	394	14.6%
Under 20	0	2	2	0.1%
Total	476	2,220	2,696	100%

Source: SISD Personnel Department, April 24, 1997.

SISD's total staffing compared to peer districts is shown in **Exhibit 1-20**. SISD falls below the state average for professional staffing as a percentage of total staff and below average for educational aides, but above the average for auxiliary staff.

Exhibit 1-20

**SISD Staffing Compared to Peer Districts
1995-96**

District	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administrators	Central Administrators	Educational Aides	Auxiliary Staff
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	58.9%	7.6%	2.5%	0.8%	4.2%	25.8%
Richardson	57.0%	6.0%	3.0%	1.0%	4.0%	29.0%
Fort Bend	53.3%	6.6%	2.5%	0.7%	1.4%	35.6%
Goose Creek	53.1%	6.2%	2.9%	0.7%	6.7%	30.4%
Duncanville	53.0%	7.0%	3.0%	1.0%	0	36.0%

Texas	52.0%	6.5%	2.5%	0.9%	9.3%	28.7%
Klein	50.2%	7.0%	2.6%	0.7%	7.8%	31.7%
Spring	50.0%	5.9%	2.6%	0.6%	6.5%	34.4%
Spring Branch	49.9%	7.8%	2.0%	0.5%	7.7%	32.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

FINDING

SISD employs 20 regular-education principals and one alternative-school principal, all of whom report directly to the superintendent.

In 1996-97, the superintendent spent more than half of his time in the schools. At least once every two weeks, the superintendent visited a school to observe, respond to questions, and work with the principal, teachers, and other personnel in resolving issues or concerns.

As a result of this frequency of contact, SISD staff indicated that they share information readily with the superintendent. The superintendent often learns of issues or concerns before other staff members in the central office.

To be able to devote this sort of time to school visits, the former superintendent surrounded himself with senior administrators to whom he delegated many day-to-day administrative responsibilities. The former superintendent told the review team that he grouped departments based upon his management philosophy of organizing and assigning responsibilities in concert with the strengths of individuals; moving people into roles where they can use their strengths to be successful; addressing personnel issues, instead of working around them; and building personnel management capabilities for the long-term.

The superintendent also encouraged his senior staff to "look to the strengths" of subordinates and build opportunities for them to succeed. He encouraged teamwork, not individual accomplishments.

Comments in focus groups and interviews indicated that respondents were very pleased with the work of the superintendent and his staff. Among comments received were the following:

- "Kudos to a superintendent [who] gets out of the office and visits schools, sometimes four and five a day."

- "The superintendent and other high level managers are accessible to teachers and are visible. No `ivory towers' here."
- "SISD makes you feel special. The administration knows who you are and is supportive of what you do."
- "Spring administration listens to community and teachers alike. Hats off."
- "The ability to talk to principal, teachers, and superintendents is readily available; there is an open door policy."
- "The superintendent visits every facility and every department within the facility."
- "SISD has maintained a familial approach to education in a large metropolitan area. It is still possible to know the principal, administrators, and teachers, although the district is large."
- "SISD is easy to work with. They are very flexible; when they confront barriers, they do everything within their power to remove them. They are very good people to work with."
- "The people work hard. There is good leadership at the administrative level."

COMMENDATION

SISD's management structure builds on the strengths of individual employees and a philosophy of remaining close to the classroom.

FINDING

Each summer, SISD provides administrative training to all administrators above the level of assistant principal. This program lasts from three to five days and involves 125 to 140 people.

Each year, the superintendent designates a theme for this training. Recent themes have included:

- Site-based decision-making.
- Teaching, learning and respect.
- Creating the conditions for classroom success.
- Team building and leadership development.

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

At the conclusion of each program, each participant is asked to evaluate the training. The district develops an evaluation tool that covers each section of the program. Participants are asked to rate the quality of the

individual presentations, the applicability of the subject matter to their responsibilities, and whether additional information or sessions on the subject would be beneficial.

District managers said they look forward to these sessions and find them both informative and stimulating. Participants said they find the sessions useful in setting the tone and priorities for the year and in emphasizing key areas of the district's Five-Year Education Plan.

COMMENDATION

The district's annual administrative training fosters professional development and communication across all levels of administration.

FINDING

The district has been criticized for being administratively top-heavy. Comments in public forums at the beginning of this review and in several focus groups included:

- "Management is too top heavy, too many administrative employees."
- "Administration is top heavy, in terms of numbers of personnel. There are lots of well paid administrators."
- "Flatten the bureaucratic pyramid."
- "All those people in the administration building - who knows what they do?"

The review team also heard comments reflecting the opposite opinion, including:

- "This district uses their people resources the best of any district I know of."
- "The administration of Spring is the best."
- "Organization and management are very good; it almost looks too easy from the outside."
- "Not top heavy; not a lot of duplication - jobs are well defined."
- "The administration of this district, from the central administration to building administration, works as a part of a team. This is a `we' district, not an `us' against `them' district."

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) develops an annual administrative cost ratio comparing annual general operating fund expenditures for instructional administration and general administration to those for instruction, instructional resources, curriculum and staff development, and guidance and counseling services. Each year, TEA establishes a maximum

administrative cost ratio for school districts based on the size of the district. SISD falls in the category of districts with more than 10,000 students and the maximum for this group is 11.05 percent of total expenditures.

According to the most recent three years for which data are available, SISD has consistently remained well below the state's maximum and has had one of the lowest administrative cost ratios among area districts (**Exhibit 1-21**).

Exhibit 1-21
SISD Administrative Cost Ratio (*) Compared to Other Area
Districts
1992-93 - 1995-96

District	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	Average 1992-93 through 1995-96
Klein	6.58%	6.12%	7.21%	6.64%	6.64%
Cypress-Fairbanks	7.84%	6.35%	6.43%	6.07%	6.67%
Spring	7.60%	6.52%	6.39%	6.63%	6.79%
Humble	8.73%	6.97%	7.34%	7.04%	7.52%
Conroe	8.45%	8.04%	7.07%	7.02%	7.65%
State maximum (*)	11.05%	11.05%	11.05%	11.05%	11.05%

(*) Percentage of administrative expenditures to total expenditures for this size district.

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Exhibit 1-22
SISD Use of Consultants and Fees Paid
1994-95 - 1996-97

Consultant	Purpose	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97(*)
Bracewell & Patterson	Legal services	\$126,565	\$179,253	\$25,952
Deloitte & Touche	Audit and related financial services	\$51,950	\$63,575	\$36,697
Corrigan Consulting	Environmental	0	\$4,688	\$8,681

	compliance			
NSE Inc.	Five- year technology plan/network security issues	\$21,807	\$27,710	0
Institute for Environmental Assessment	Air quality issues in school buildings	\$6,850	\$5,513	\$4,411
Hazard, Young Attea & Associates	Superintendent search	0	0	\$17,500(**)
Health Administration Services	Third-party administrator for benefits plan (***)	\$189,995	\$190,664	\$147,881 (****)
Michael Hardin & Associates	Roof consulting & inspection services	\$1,200	\$23,400	0
Schmitz/Lamb Engineers	Structural engineering services	\$6,595	\$11,500	0
R.H. George & Assoc.	Engineering design services - HVAC	0	0	\$10,000
Pat Powell	Computer technology - attendance accounting and reporting	\$9,000	\$1,000	0
Total		\$413,962	\$507,303	\$251,122
Percentage of operating budget expenditures	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	

(*)Through April 1997.

(**) Amount of contractual agreement.

(***) Reflects percentage of total cost that SISD pays.

(****) Estimated.

Source: SISD.

Based upon the information presented in **Exhibit 1-22**, SISD does not appear to rely too heavily on consultants to complement administrative personnel. Less than 1 percent of the district's operating budget expenditures have been used for consultants.

Since 1982-1983, only 10 central-office administrators have been added beyond an original total of 35. This equates to an increase of 29 percent in

central office administrators over the 15 years. During the same period, the student population increased from 13,385 in 1982-83 to 20,847 in 1996-97, an increase of 55 percent. The ratio of central office administrators to student population dropped from one for every 382 students to one to 462 during this period.

Exhibit 1-23 identifies positions that have been added to the central office staff.

Exhibit 1-23
Comparison of SISD Central Office Positions
1982-1997

Position	Number of Positions in 1982-1983	Number of Positions in 1996-1997	Net Change	Percentage Change
Superintendent	1	1	-	0
Assistant superintendent	2	3	+1	50%
Executive director	1	3	+2	200%
Assistant to the superintendent	2	1	-1	-50%
Director	14	14	-	0
Program director	8	9	+1	13%
Assistant director	1	1	-	0
Coordinator	0	2	+2	N/A
Supervisor	3	5	+2	67%
Tax assessor/collector	1	1	-	0
Auditor	1	1	-	0
Student accounting	1	1	-	0
Programmer/analyst	0	3	+3	N/A
Total	35	45	+10	29%
Student population	13,385	20,847	+7,462	55%

Source: SISD personnel tables.

COMMENDATION:

SISD has maintained a low administrative cost ratio despite rapid growth in the student population.

FINDING

Senior staff in the district's central office have extensive experience in public education, both in SISD and other districts. That experience, combined with the continuity of district staff over the past 15 years, has resulted in the development of innovative programs, continuing high levels of student achievement, and recognition in both state and national forums.

Administrators were eligible for retirement in 1997-98 or will be eligible within the next five years (**Exhibit 1-24**).

Exhibit 1-24
SISD Central Office Administrators
with More than 20 Years Experience
As of 1996-97

Position	Years of Experience in 1996-97
Program director, Music	41
Director, Staff Benefits	41
Superintendent	39
Assistant superintendent, Personnel and Support Services	39
Executive director, Facilities Management and Security	33
Program director, Math	33
Executive director, Curriculum and Instructional Services	31
Assistant superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Services	31
Director, Athletics	30
Director, Special Services	29
Program director, Social Studies	29
Program director, Occupational and Technical Education	29
Assistant to the superintendent	27
Supervisor, Special Services	27
Program director, Student Services	26

Executive director, Board and Community Services	26
Supervisor, Special Services	26
Program director, Planning and Evaluation	25
Program director, Language Arts	24
Director, Operations	24
Director, Purchasing	24
Supervisor, Special Services	24
Director, Personnel Services	24
Tax Collector	23
Program director, Science	21
Coordinator, Title I	21
Director, Transportation	20
Supervisor, Special Services	20
Supervisor, Supply Services	20

Source: SISD Personnel Services.

The district has no plan of succession to train potential candidates to assume the responsibilities of top administrative positions or to identify positions that should be filled by candidates from outside the district. Loss of these persons' experience and expertise without such a plan could set back progress in many areas. In contrast, many districts and private organizations groom replacements in secondary-level positions to step in after serving an "apprenticeship" of three to four years. However, since SISD has kept its central administrative staff small, as described earlier in this chapter, it does not have a second layer of staff to draw upon for many key positions.

The district previously had an internship program, but it was discontinued. Potential candidates for senior management positions were identified and placed as apprentices to incumbents in those positions. However, the salary expense became prohibitive and the program was discontinued. Other than the summer administrative training program, SISD has no ongoing management development training for director-level positions and above.

While the district leadership is aware of its staff's seniority, it has made no effort to create a plan of succession in anticipation of expected retirements. With 27 administrators-or 60 percent of the central administrative staff of 45-having 20 or more years of experience, such planning appears to be a necessity.

Recommendation 3:

Develop an internal management training program.

This program should begin by identifying incumbents in the central office management who are eligible for retirement or will be during the next three to five years. A management training program should be then developed that can identify potential successors, assign them to varied roles within central office management under the tutelage of the incumbents, and screen qualified successors. Finally, the district should consider developing a staged plan for replacing incumbents in concert with their retirement plans.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent assigns a committee of key administrators the responsibility of developing information to support a plan, training program, and/or recruitment from the outside.	October 1997
2. Using this information, the committee designs and recommends a plan for review by the superintendent and cabinet.	February 1998
3 The superintendent and cabinet make modifications which are incorporated by the committee in their recommended plan. The plan is finalized.	March 1998
4. The superintendent presents the plan to the board for review and discussion.	April 1998
5. Responsibilities are assigned and the plan is implemented.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.

FINDING

Most constituents of SISD view its organizational and department groupings as effective. The success of the district's students on statewide performance assessments and SISD's reputation as an educational leader contribute to the view that its organization works. According to interviews with board members and staff and comments received by the review team

in public forums, the system has been effective because of the management philosophy and style of the former superintendent, the capabilities of the senior staff, and the trust and confidence that they have had in one another.

While the organization has served the district well, it may not be the most appropriate structure for moving the district into the future. SISD has grown by nearly 7,000 students over the last 15 years. Most larger school districts are organized by functional categories. For example, support services such as food service, transportation, maintenance, custodial operations, and facility management often are grouped together, as are finance and Management Information Services. Personnel often is a separate department.

By creating more focused departments a district breaks the complex maze of duties and responsibilities into smaller bites. In a small district, administrators are expected to do everything. As a district grows, however, various district operations require more expertise and time. If progress is to be made and order maintained, functions must be aligned under specialized, skilled administrators. SISD has made steady moves in this direction through the years but has not achieved full functional alignment.

At SISD, food service and transportation are grouped with finance, purchasing, and tax collection under the direction of the assistant superintendent of Business/Financial Services. The MIS Department stands alone under the direction of the assistant to the superintendent rather than under an assistant superintendent like most other SISD departments. The Maintenance Department is directed by the assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services.

As district priorities and personnel change, adjustments to department groupings may be needed. For example, the district is behind in its application of educational technology and has not effectively coordinated the management of financial data received from various support functions such as food service. To address these issues, the district may need to integrate the MIS department into the overall organization structure. Additionally, as senior staff members retire, the superintendent may want to hire staff who have experience and skill in specific functional areas.

Recommendation 4:

Align the district's organization to address emerging priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent evaluates the current structure and grouping of functions.	October 1997
2. The superintendent presents any changes to the board for discussion and approval.	November 1997
3 The superintendent reassigns necessary people to fill the positions.	November 1997
4. Personnel Services rewrites and/or develops the job descriptions needed to support any changes	January 1998
5. The job descriptions are reviewed by the superintendent and approved.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

SISD's need to provide information on its activities to area residents has grown dramatically due to several factors including the growth of the district over the past 15 years, increasing diversity of the district's population, growth in the percentage of minority students, continuing movement of a growing number of families from one apartment complex to another resulting in frequent changes of schools for children, and an increase in the percentage of area residents who do not have children in the public schools and who live on fixed incomes.

Since SISD is not located in an incorporated area with a dedicated newspaper, radio station, or television station, the district's ability to communicate with its increasingly diverse population has been limited. While several weekly or monthly newspapers provide local information, none provides the timeliness or consistency of coverage needed to reach the district's population.

The Board and Community Services Department is responsible for directing SISD's communications effort as well as providing support to the board. This department reports directly to the superintendent and has three employees including an executive director, a paraprofessional in charge of desktop publishing, and a paraprofessional position that supports the other positions and performs certain board support tasks, such as expense report preparation and submittal.

SISD's communication effort has been hindered by several factors. The Board and Community Services Department has relied almost completely on written communications through local newspapers. Also, related

functions of community outreach have been physically located in other areas. Community and Business Partnerships was part of Board and Community Services until 1990-91, but was moved to Curriculum and Instructional Services to support a foundation that was created by the district and to align Curriculum and Instructional Services with school-community partnerships. Moreover, parental interaction and student discipline issues are responsibilities of an assistant to the superintendent.

Board and Community Services provides board support such as agenda development and printing, preparation of meeting minutes, travel arrangements, and general information, thus limiting the amount of time available to devote to community outreach. The review team contacted each of the other selected peer districts and found that all of them use a paraprofessional to support the board.

This distraction in focus reduces the effectiveness of the communication function and limits SISD's ability to reach all residents.

Interviews and focus groups uncovered concerns about the district's ability to communicate effectively. While this is discussed more completely in the Community Involvement chapter of this report, the following comments serve as examples of broad community concerns:

- "Community involvement is very active, but communication is limited. We need more information."
- "Community and churches need to be more involved."
- "A lot of people do not feel comfortable going to the Administration Building."
- "A breakdown in communications happens."
- "SISD needs to do a better job with minorities."
- "We need to instill a sense of involvement and opportunity in persons with lower economic status."
- "The community is aging; [some] people have no kids, but vote. This group needs to be better informed."
- "Get the people in the administration out to the community for events other than school events."
- "A lot of people would be willing to get involved who don't have kids in the district. They need someone to show them how."
- "I am concerned about the demographic change. So far, it has gone well, but SISD needs to be more focused on dealing with that, especially communications."

Other area organizations have been particularly good at crafting effective communication strategies. The Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA) of Harris County is about the same size of SISD, with an annual operating budget of \$90 million and approximately 2,000

employees. MHMRA serves a diverse population, many of whom are low income, high risk patients who cannot pay for services.

MHMRA's consumers are ethnically diverse and so the agency has focused on developing a wide range of service providers that can work effectively with its consumers. The agency publishes a bimonthly newspaper that is mailed out to community organizations and leaders, similar to SISD's *Springboard*, and has complemented that with numerous events tied both to local communities as well as to key events for minority communities throughout the year, such as Cinco de Mayo, Vietnamese celebrations, African-American month and others.

These events are coordinated centrally. The entire MHMRA staff participates, from the executive director down. MHMRA effectively communicates its programs and services through this type of community outreach.

In a focus group with SISD principals, several participants said there is a real need to address the issue of transient families. At least two elementary principals in the group indicated that it was not uncommon for a student to be in one school one month and another the next.

District officials said this transience is due to the development of several of new apartment complexes south of Westfield High School. These complexes attempt to fill their apartments by advertising one month of free rent. According to school principals, some families take advantage of the free month and then move to another complex. Over the course of the year, a child could be in three or four schools as the family moves to take advantage of free rent.

Older residents who are no longer parents of students also merit attention. Largely on fixed incomes, such persons may not have been involved in the schools for many years and may not be aware of the growth in the student population or of the aging of district facilities. The focus group with the principals reinforced the need to address this segment of the community.

Recommendation 5:

Reorganize the department of Board/Community Services.

The reorganization should separate the function of supporting the board and its committees from community services and reassign board support to one of the paraprofessionals in the superintendent's office. Rename the remaining function "Community Services Department" and continue to have the department report directly to the superintendent. The functions of community and business partnerships should be combined with the

position in Curriculum and Instructional Services, and an additional professional position should be added to the department, dedicated to creating new channels of communication to the increasing minority population.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent, as part of the overall evaluation of reorganization of the central administration, realigns the functions within Board/Community Services as noted above.	October 1997
2 The superintendent presents proposed realignment to the board for discussion.	November 1997
3 The superintendent reassigns necessary people to fill the positions.	November 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

The addition of one professional position in this area would cost approximately \$50,400 per year, including benefits. (\$45,000 plus 12 percent benefits).

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Reorganize Board/Community Services	(\$50,400)	(\$50,400)	(\$50,400)	(\$50,400)	(\$50,400)

FINDING

The Superintendent's Office, including both the superintendent and the assistant to the superintendent, had two paraprofessional personnel to support it during 1996-97. This was the same number of paraprofessional positions that existed when the former superintendent assumed his position 15 years ago, when the district had half the number of students it has today.

With the increasing size of the district, the workload of the office increased dramatically. For example, there are an increasing numbers of telephone calls for a wider variety of information, not only from parents but from outside sources involving issues such as guardianship. There is greater reporting and communications requirements due to changes in the laws affecting public education. Also, there are increased requirements to maintain documentation required to support decisions or to be used in case

of legal requirements such as expulsion and alternative education decisions.

The Superintendent's Office also has limited space. The reception area is 200 square feet and houses two paraprofessionals and a small kitchenette. The offices of the superintendent and assistant to the superintendent are both less than 100 square feet. Adjoining the reception area is a small file room measuring about 50 square feet.

The staff lacks sufficient room to store all their files, and only a limited amount of information is stored electronically, especially information pertaining to board meetings. Since this office is the primary recipient of requests for information about past board meetings, the paraprofessional staff must leave the office frequently and go to the Board and Community Services Department to retrieve files needed to respond to these requests. Combined with the increasing demands placed on the paraprofessionals, this disrupts their productivity.

Recommendation 6:

Physically place the paraprofessional staff of the Superintendent's Office and Board/Community Services in one area to support both departments.

This relocation will provide three staff members to support these functions and result in a more effective use of space.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent realigns the functions within SISD as noted above.	October 1997
2. The superintendent presents the proposed realignment to the board for discussion.	November 1997
3. The executive director of Facilities Management/Security assesses the requirements needed to physically redo the areas to be affected within the Administration Building and recommends a schedule for completion.	November 1997
4. The Facilities Management/Security department initiates work on the physical changes required.	January 1998
5. Work is completed on the facilities and personnel moved	May 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of this relocation will involve no additional expenditure beyond the current budget.

Chapter 1

District Organization and Management

C. Planning and Budgeting

BACKGROUND

Planning and budgeting are critical to effective management. Planning enables a district to define goals and objectives, establish priorities, select appropriate implementation strategies, and determine critical measures of performance in achieving the goals and objectives.

The budget process should follow the plan development and implementation by allocating resources necessary for reaching the performance targets established in the plan. When coordinated properly, the combination of planning and budgeting reduces confusion and conflict regarding the distribution of scarce resources.

FINDING

SISD uses a comprehensive planning and management system to establish a clear direction for the district; build support for and concentrate resources on district priorities; assist the district in accomplishing objectives; and provide valid information for decision-making.

The system begins with the Five-Year Education Plan that SISD has used since 1982. In 1997-98, the district will begin the first year of its fourth Five-Year Education Plan. SISD emphasizes the use of the plan in making decisions from the board down to every administrative level. The budget is formed in concert with each plan priority and expenditures are tracked and reported according to each priority. Administrator compensation is tied to the achievement of each plan priority.

The development of a each five-year plan begins with a collaborative effort involving teachers, administrators, parents, and students. In the fall prior to the development of a new plan, a survey of parents, students, and teachers is conducted using an outside expert in surveys. In the survey conducted in fall 1996, parents administered the student survey over the phone and/or interviewed groups of students. Parents also interviewed other parents. Teacher volunteers coordinated the scheduling of student interviews.

The surveys give residents an opportunity to rate the district, addressing such issues as instructional services, parent involvement, safety, transportation services, extracurricular activities, and special programs. Parents are given an opportunity to rate principals, assistant principals, office staff members and SISD as a whole. The teacher survey gives teachers an opportunity to rate administrators, transportation services, parental participation, and safety, among other things. Some of the items students rate include educational services, extracurricular activities, food service, teachers, principals, assistant principals, and library services.

The results of the surveys are published in brochures and distributed throughout the community.

Once the survey results have been compiled by the outside expert, SISD breaks down the results by each functional area and by each area within the instructional program. Based upon the results, a series of task groups are recommended to the superintendent and board to further evaluate the issues and recommend performance measures. The task groups are composed of community members, parents, teachers, and administrators. Each task group is chaired by an administrator whose area also provides necessary clerical support.

Task groups met in spring 1997 and developed a new set of priorities for presentation to the board. They also recommended a series of action steps and performance measures for the coming year to guide staff members and to give the board a means of measuring success at the conclusion of the year.

The plan is updated and adjusted each year to reflect the results of the prior year's efforts. The board reviews the updates annually, adopts objectives for the upcoming year, and allocates the budget based on the current year's priorities.

Seven related activities further support and enhance the Five-Year Education Plan. These activities are set forth in SISD's job description notebook and include adopting annual priorities; writing and updating campus improvement plans; following a program development cycle; developing a program evaluation system; completing and monitoring administrative work plans; maintaining an updated personnel evaluation system; and using a management information system to track and record the district's progress.

Annual priorities are adopted by the board each year and indicate what the district will do in a given year to achieve the five-year goals and objectives. An additional, though unstated, component of the process is the relationship of the plan to the budget. When the budget is approved,

funds are allocated by priority (see the Financial Management Chapter of this report, for further discussion of the budget process).

Campus improvement plans are adopted by a campus improvement plan committee on each campus and outline what each school will do in a given year to help achieve district and school objectives.

The District's Program development cycle which involves a comprehensive review of curriculum in all subjects indicates what will happen in each program taught in the district, in each year of the plan. The district has also developed its own mechanism of assessing educational program efforts, the *program evaluation system*. The system includes a methodology whereby on a cyclical basis, programs are evaluated and the conclusions are used in making, changing, or extending decisions about program objectives and activities. SISD's process for program evaluation is described in more detail in the Educational Service Delivery Chapter of this report.

Administrative work plans, completed by each administrator in SISD, state what each administrator will do in a given year to help achieve district and school objectives. These plans not only relate to the accomplishment of five-year plan priorities but also address needed professional growth activities.

The *personnel evaluation system* then measures how well administrators performed in accomplishing their objectives.

Finally, the *management information system* collects information to determine how well objectives are being achieved and what needs to be changed, as well as other information pertinent to decision-making, such as enrollment and financial projections.

The review team has found that most districts lack a long-term plan that is as detailed as SISD's plan or is updated as frequently. SISD also is unusual in that it not only has a plan, but uses it as a dynamic guide rather than a static document.

COMMENDATION

The district has a well-defined and documented system to link priorities developed in the planning process with the allocation of district resources.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

This chapter reviews key areas of SISD's educational service delivery systems and performance measures. These areas are:

- A. Planning and Management
- B. Student Performance
- C. Organization
- D. Staffing and Scheduling
- E. Staff Development and Teacher Evaluation
- F. Special Education
- G. Career & Technology
- H. Gifted and Talented

SISD's Curriculum and Instructional Services Department manages the delivery of educational services within the framework of a comprehensive planning and management system. The centerpiece of this system is the Five-Year Education Plan developed over a two-year period by parents, teachers, and staff. Compared to national and state averages, SISD students generally outperform their peers. While this performance is commendable, SISD still faces challenges such as a growing student population, a shift in the socioeconomic makeup of the student population, and the increasing urbanization of the surrounding community. This chapter summarizes how SISD can meet these challenges and increase its school accreditation ratings, reduce student failure rates, improve its technological resources, update career and technology programs, increase success rates among minority students, and raise learning expectations for all students.

CURRENT SITUATION

During 1996-97, SISD served 20,824 students in 14 elementary schools, covering pre-kindergarten through grade five; four middle schools, encompassing grades 6-8; two high schools, including grades 9-12; and the Carl G. Wunsche School, which provides special education for students with severe disabilities and other special programs as well as programs for students in alternative education.

The review team drew upon information provided by SISD as well as the state's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), an annual compilation of school information collected from Texas school districts by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Academic

Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), school-by-school performance data maintained by TEA that contribute toward each district's annual accountability ratings. In particular, the review team analyzed student results on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), which students must pass to qualify for a high school diploma. The review team also visited every school in the district and interviewed a wide range of school administrators, principals, teachers, and students and collected additional comments through local focus groups and one-on-one interviews. A survey of 602 students, 249 teachers, and 247 families commissioned by SISD helped deepen the review team's understanding of SISD's educational system.

SISD Enrollment

As of April 1997 (**Exhibit 2-1**), SISD served 10,419 students in its elementary school grades, 4,805 students in the middle school grades, 5,517 students in high school, and 83 students in hospitals or in their homes depending on the nature of their illnesses.

**Exhibit 2-1
SISD Student Enrollment by School and Grade
April 1997**

SCHOOL ELEMENTARY	EE	PK-AM	PK-PM	Kind.	Pre1	Gr.1	Gr.2	Gr.3	Gr.4	Gr.5	TOTAL
Anderson	8	20	22	128	18	159	127	149	126	130	887
Bammel	3	31	21	95	8	83	97	88	86	91	603
Beneke	5	33	23	126	0	134	142	120	117	132	832
Clark	8	23	39	134	9	128	121	127	117	103	809
Hirsch	7	13	15	108	14	98	108	94	103	108	668
Jenkins	10	43	20	151	0	164	159	151	162	171	1031
Link	6	33	57	100	10	116	125	132	112	111	802
Meyer	5	19	37	145	0	141	122	136	122	116	843
Oak Creek	10	0	0	101	0	123	131	119	107	131	722
Ponderosa	7	20	15	71	11	88	75	95	77	100	559
Salyers	0	21	21	88	0	71	79	82	76	63	501
Smith	9	18	20	118	0	138	133	121	125	132	814
Thompson	10	36	31	124	0	116	106	132	124	127	806

Winship	6	0	0	60	13	75	76	81	79	93	483
Wunsche	18	0	0	2	0	6	11	4	5	13	59
PK subtotal - AM/PM		310	321								
MIDDLE	112		631	1551	83	1640	1612	1631	1538	1621	10419
		Gr.6	Gr.7	Gr.8							Total
Bammel		442	463	453							1358
Dueitt		361	326	341							1028
Twin Creeks		344	349	380							1073
Wells		429	433	396							1258
Wunsche		23	25	40							88
HIGH SCHOOL		1599	1596	1610							4805
					Gr.9	Gr.10	Gr.11	Gr.12			
Spring					768	684	567	473			2492
Westfield					1002	786	648	505			2941
Wunsche					45	23	15	1			84
					1815	1493	1230	979			5517
Hospital/HB		HSP	34			HB	49				83
DISTRICT											20824

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

Peer Districts

SISD selected six Texas school districts as peer districts for comparative purposes (**Exhibit 2-2**). Based on PEIMS information, the districts generally share the following characteristics:

- student enrollment between roughly 10,000 and 40,000 students
- growth in enrollment over the past five years
- similar student ethnicity
- percentage of economically disadvantaged students
- percentage of limited English proficient students

Because nearby Klein ISD is similar to SISD and is often compared to SISD, the review team added Klein as a peer district.

Exhibit 2-2
Demographic Characteristics of Spring ISD, Peer School Districts
1995-96

District	Student Enrollment	Percent Ethnicity	% Reduced & Free Lunch Students	% Students of Limited English Proficiency	% Growth Over Five Years*			
		Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian & Other			
Fort Bend	40,223	45	27	15	14	22**	5	28
Richardson	33,984	59	19	13	9	26	11	4.4
Spring Branch	29,543	41	7	43	8	49	30	9.2
Klein	29,324	69	11	13	7	14	6	14.6
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	20,343	57	8	24	12	28	13	19.6
Spring	20,246	56	20	18	6	28	6	10.2
Goose Creek	17,876	48	17	34	1	45	12	4.0
Duncanville	10,126	53	32	13	3	27	3	(0.7)

Source: AEIS, 1995-96 *Through 1994-95.

**Represents 1994-95.

While student performance on the state-mandated TAAS varies among the peer districts and SISD, in every case the district student averages exceed state average scores (**Exhibit 2-3**).

(ACT) Results									
% at/above criterion	30	26	31	14	37	41	25	41	18
% tested	70	83	77	41	86	88	71	82	65
Average SAT score	974	909	937	900	952	978	931	987	891
Average ACT score	21	20.7	21.1	19.9	21.8	22.1	20.9	21.6	20

Source: AEIS, 1995-96 NA = Not available

Exhibit 2-4
SISD Program Participation and Expenditures and Peer Comparisons
1995-96

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND EXPENDITURES	Carrollton-Farmers Branch	Duncanville	Fort Bend	Goose Creek	Klein	Richardson	Spring	Spring Branch	Texas
Total Per Pupil Expenditures (\$)	5,951	NA	5,591	5,695	5,408	NA	5,511	5,941	5,358
Operating Expenditures (\$)	4,783	4,590	4,839	4,877	4,732	4,998	4,913	5,266	4,756
Instruc. Expenditures (\$)	2,894	2,567	2,824	2,725	2,877	2,884	2,962	3,128	2,877
Instruction as % of Operating	46.4	50	49.1	45.8	51.7	52	52.3	50.9	52
Enrollment by Program									
Special Education	10.8	10	8.1	9.8	11.5	11	10.0	10.6	11.5
Career and Tech.	16.0	28	13.0	16.8	15.3	17	21.0	12.4	16.9
Bilingual/ESL	12.7	3	5.0	10.9	5.1	11	6.4	27.1	11.3
Gifted and Talented	8.8	10	5.1	5.0	10.0	5	17.3	6.0	7.8

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

PROGRAM	Carrollton-	Duncanville	Fort	Goose	Klein	Richardsn	Spring	Sprino	Texas
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PARTICIPATION AND EXPENDITURES	Farmers Branch		Bend	Creek				Branch	
Expenditures by Program (%)									
Regular Education	69.8	80	83.2	94.3	75.2	74	70.9	68	67.4
Special Education	11	9	9.7	6.8	15.9	11	15.2	10.1	11.4
Compensatory Education	6	4	1.8	4.5	2.2	3	4.1	7.7	12.2
Career and Tech. Educ.	3.6	5	2.7	0.2	3.8	2	4.1	3.7	3.9
Bilingual/ESL Education	6.4	1	0.3	0	2.3	5	2.5	9.9	3.4
Gifted and Talented Education	3.2	NA	2.2	0	0.5	0.8	3.2	0.6	1.6

Source: AEIS, 1995-96 NA = Not available

Per-student expenditures among the peer districts are relatively similar, but SISD, Spring Branch, and Carrollton-Farmers Branch are the only districts with instructional expenditures that exceed the state average (**Exhibit 2-4**). A larger share of SISD's budget is devoted to career and technical education as well as gifted and talented education.

SISD spends less of its budget on therapists, psychologists, counselors, diagnosticians, nurses, librarians, supervisors, department heads, registrars, and related support staff than the peer districts (**Exhibit 2-5**). SISD spends an average amount on school principals, assistant principals, athletic directors, instructional officers, and other administrative support staff.

SISD's percentage of total minority staff is lower than that of all but two peer districts, and its percentage of African-American teachers is the lowest among the peer districts.

**Exhibit 2-5
Percentage of SISD and Peer District Staff by Category
1995-96**

Staff Information	Carrollton-Farmers	Duncanville	Fort Bend	Goose Creek	Klein	Richardson	Spring	Spring Branch	Texas
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	Branch								
Professional Staff	69.9%	NA	63%	62.9%	60.6%	NA	59.1%	60.2%	62%
Teachers	58.9%	53%	53.3%	53.1%	50.2%	57%	50%	49.9%	52%
Professional Support	7.6%	7%	6.6%	6.2%	7%	6%	5.9%	7.8%	6.5%
Campus Administration	2.5%	3%	2.5%	2.9%	2.6%	3%	2.6%	2%	2.5%
Central Administration	0.8%	1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	1%	0.6%	0.5%	0.9%
Educational Aides	4.2%	0%	1.4%	6.7%	7.8%	4%	6.5%	7.7%	9.3%
Auxiliary Staff	25.8%	36%	35.6%	30.4%	31.7%	29%	34.4%	32.1%	28.7%
Total Minority Staff	17.6%	17%	38.2%	28.5%	15.3%	16%	16.9%	26.9%	34.9%
Teachers by Ethnicity									
African American	3.3%	6%	18%	7.9%	2.7%	3%	2%	3.5%	8.1%
Hispanic	5.4%	2%	4.9%	9.3%	2.1%	2%	3.4%	9.2%	15%
Anglo	89.9%	92%	76.2%	82.5%	94.9%	94%	93.9%	86.6%	76.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.9%	0%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	1%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%
Native American	0.5%	0%	0%	0.2%	0.2%	0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
Advanced Degrees	34.5%	32.1%	25%	42.8%	32%	38.8%	28.2%	30.2%	27.3%
Avg. Years of Experience	10.6	12.2	10.5	13.2	12.9	13.3	11.9	11.5	11.7
Avg. Yrs. Experience in district	6.2	NA	5.9	9.8	7.7	10.0	7.3	8.4	8
Number of students	15.9	16.1	17.3	16.4	16.3	16.2	16.1	15.7	15.6

per teacher									
Avg. Annual Teacher Salary (\$)	\$33,712	\$31,982	\$29,364	31,352	\$31,651	\$34,141	\$34,438	\$33,804	\$31,400

Source: AEIS, 1995-96 NA = Not available

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery

and Performance Measures

A. Planning and Management

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's Five-Year Education Plan establishes a direction for the district by setting long-range priorities. Progress toward implementation is measured and reported annually to the school board, and activity plans are adjusted or updated to ensure that results are accomplished. SISD's comprehensive strategic planning process began with the first plan in 1982. Subsequent plans followed in 1987, 1992, and most recently in 1997.

SISD's mission statement drives the five-year planning process; priorities established during the planning process support the principal goal: "to develop students to excel academically, reason and solve problems rationally and act responsibly, displaying good character and citizenship."

The Board of Trustees' Planning and Evaluation Committee is responsible for overseeing the five-year planning process. The superintendent establishes a steering committee of parents, community members, students, teachers, and administrators. Chaired by a community member, the steering committee gathers data from many sources, including financial reports, surveys, enrollment projections, and the like. From this information, priorities are formulated and presented to the Planning and Evaluation Committee and eventually to the full board for consideration.

Once the board adopts priorities, the steering committee coordinates the work of task groups to recommend activity plans, consisting of time-specific, measurable goals and objectives, to implement those priorities. These activities are presented to the board in a final document, and, once approved, become the district's Five-Year Education Plan. All work on the five-year planning process, reporting, and updating, is done internally, with the exception of surveys conducted by an external entity to ensure the integrity of results.

The resulting Five-Year Education Plan establishes a target for SISD's progress over five years and sets action steps to get there. Within the framework of this plan, SISD measures its progress annually, evaluates and adjusts its action plans and objectives as needed, and budgets funds to accomplish the stated priorities.

For example, priority six from the 1992-93 through 1996-97 plan states: "Provide for the safety of students and staff in the schools." One of the goals associated with this priority was to provide conflict resolution training and training in nonviolent crisis intervention (NVC I). Results from 1992 to 1995 show that 15 district staff earned certification as trainers in NVC I. Objectives for 1995-96 called for the continued expansion of NVC I training. Results for 1995-96 show that SISD conducted NVC I training on all campuses, with the proportion of staff trained ranging from 2 to 100 percent by campus. Additional training took place in 1996.

During 1996-97, in addition to finalizing the Five-Year Education Plan for the period of 1992-93 through 1996-97, the district began a new five-year planning effort to take SISD into 2002. The steering committee studied SISD performance measures and the results of the previous five-year planning process, including student achievement, course enrollments, grade by grade follow-up results, attendance and grades. Program evaluations, demographic trends and projections, and financial indicators also were considered as the committee specified topics for a survey of parents, students, and teachers. While the committee studied these data, a survey was developed and its results reported under the supervision of a Texas A&M University professor. The survey was conducted in November 1996 with results published in March 1997. A random sample of 247 parents, 249 teachers, and 602 students responded. The results of this survey can be reviewed in detail in **Appendix C** of this report.

The November 1996 survey asked parents, students and teachers to identify the three most important things the district should work on in the next five years. A majority of parents and teachers recommended issues in the categories of curriculum and administration, while students primarily identified issues in the categories of curriculum, discipline, and school buildings/facilities.

The committee used these results and other data to recommend new priorities to the board. In May 1997, the board adopted the recommended priorities, with slight modifications. After adoption of priorities for the 1997-98 through 2001-02 five-year planning cycle, 19 task groups consisting of about 250 high school students, business representatives, parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and other school-based professionals, developed activity plans to implement the priorities.

As shown, the first three priorities, involving very complex issues, had two or more task groups assigned, while the remaining nine each had a single group assigned. The new priorities include:

1. Enhance the quality of teachers and support staff.

*Task Groups: Recruitment, Employment and Compensation
Professional Development Teacher Evaluation*

2. Increase student achievement and strengthen educational programs.

*Task Groups: Program Development Cycle Special Interventions
Diversity Counseling Extracurricular and Cocurricular*

3. Increase parent and community involvement.

*Task Groups: Parent Education and Involvement Community
Involvement and District Image*

4. Improve instructional and administrative technology applications.
5. Provide strong financial management.
6. Maintain current facilities and provide space to support programs and reduce crowding.
7. Improve student discipline.
8. Ensure safe and secure schools.
9. Eliminate substance abuse.
10. Expand school-business partnerships.
11. Explore block and other alternative schedules and implement if warranted.
12. Explore standardized dress and implement, if warranted.

In May 1997, the task groups delivered their recommendations to the steering committee, which took them to the board for approval in June 1997.

Site-Based Decision-Making

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

SISD adopted policies in August 1990 and April 1991 to create district and school-based collaborative decision-making committees in compliance with state law. These policies provide authorization, scope of responsibility, committee composition, electoral processes for member selection, and approval processes. The district committee consists of one classroom teacher from each elementary school, two teachers from each middle or special school, three teachers from each high school, and three other school-based professionals other than classroom teachers. The major issues addressed by this committee include planning for staff development activities, developing waiver requests, creating procedures to help with

student placement, providing input into the Five-Year Education Plan, and designing the SBDM process.

Each school advisory committee is governed by SISD Policy BQA (Local) and is charged with assisting the principal in establishing and evaluating a school improvement plan. The members of each committee include the school principal, five teachers elected by colleagues, two parents selected by the principal, and one community member who lives in the school's attendance zone and has no children attending a district school.

FINDING

SISD policy states that the purpose of SBDM is to ensure that decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level; reflect the outcome of a collaborative process at the school and district levels, and are made within a framework of central values established by the board through the Five-Year Education Plan. The district lacks, however, specific guidelines delegating responsibilities for decision-making among schools, administrators, or the board. Constituent perceptions of the SBDM concept vary. One community member praised SISD for "...having site-based management before the concept gained popularity." Another resident said that "only in the past two or three years has site-based decision-making been accepted." As summarized by one employee, "Site-based management is inconsistent." Some districts have addressed this problem by creating a model (**Exhibit 2-6**) that assigns responsibility at each level for providing input, offering recommendations, making decisions, and giving approval.

**Exhibit 2-6
Partial Site-Based Decision-Making Model
Spring Branch Independent School District**

Function	School Principal	Central Office	Superintendent	School Board	Campus Advisory Teams
Goal setting: Develop campus improvement plan.	D	R	R	A	I
Personnel: Make final recommendation for the selection of new personnel and assignment of new and current campus	D	R			

staff					
Budget: Determine use of campus allocations for special populations programs.	D	I	A		I

Source: Spring Branch Independent School District Model for Increasing School Effectiveness Through More Campus-based Decision-making

I = Input: share/provide information/advise

D= Decide: make a choice/judgment

R= Recommend: to present as worthy of acceptance

A= Approve: give formal/official sanction
Recommendation 7:

Create a site-based decision-making model assigning specific responsibilities for decision-making to school employees, administrators, and the board. Representative participants in the decision-making process can deliberate and design a system providing guidelines as to role expectations for school advisory teams, principals, central office staff, superintendent, and the board regarding input, decisions, recommendations, and/or approvals. The model would add clarity and consistency to the decision-making process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The superintendent meets with senior advisers to review SISD philosophy, policies, procedures, and directives regarding SBDM; consider the current status of the SBDM process in the district; identify occasions when break downs have occurred in the process; and develop an action plan for board consideration.	September 1997
2. The board considers the action plan and selects representative students, parents, teachers, principals, community leaders, and board members to develop a model assigning specific responsibilities for decision-making among schools, administrators, and the board.	October 1997
3. The committee membership forms; the board president provides project guidelines and expectations; the senior staff makes a status report; the committee collects plans from other districts, reviews TEA rules, and deliberates.	November 1997
4. The committee presents a model to the board for action.	February 1998
5. The assistant superintendent distributes the model to schools and	March

the community and initiates the process	1998
6. The committee evaluates the model and confirms or modifies it annually thereafter.	Fall 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact.

Program Development Cycle

SISD's program development cycle is another tool used by Curriculum and Instructional Services to manage the delivery of educational services. The cycle specifies planning, development, staff development, implementation, and evaluation activities for each of the five years for each of the subjects taught. It is an important part of the SISD planning and management system and of the Five-Year Education Plan. The Curriculum and Instruction Department is organized to carry out this program and to assist principals and other school-based staff in its implementation. SISD assigns its program directors to cover grades K-12 to make certain that subject-matter skills are sequentially addressed throughout the grades.

FINDING

As a result of the study and monitoring activities involved in the program development cycle, a number of new programs were created or adopted to meet specific needs, including:

- Implementation of full-day kindergarten during 1996-97 to strengthen early learning readiness.
- Adoption and expansion of Reading Recovery as an intervention program in Title 1 schools for students in first grade experiencing difficulty with reading.
- Emphasis on acceleration for students in language arts and math to provide academic challenges.
- Tech-Prep and other dual-enrollment courses offered in association with North Harris Community College to prepare students for work or future academic study in a career field and to provide college credit.
- Hospitality Services and MacManagement classes offered using the Wyndham Hotel and McDonald's offices and stores as classrooms to link students with jobs after graduation.
- The Teachers as Counselors (TAC) program to expand access to counseling services.

- Adventure-based counseling through Reality Oriented Physical Exercise (ROPES), developing trust and communication among participants as they negotiate obstacles requiring teamwork.

COMMENDATION

SISD's program development cycle has led to the adoption of new programs designed to meet specific needs.

Curriculum Documents

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

In 1985, Texas mandated statewide course content standards. These essential elements were revised in 1990. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), another revision of these standards, were approved by the State Board of Education during the summer of 1997. TEKS spells out specific skills, learning, and abilities that students must demonstrate at certain points during their schooling to be incorporated into each district's curriculum.

FINDING

A review team evaluation of 12 randomly selected SISD curriculum documents suggested well-developed curriculum guides in all subjects. Each sample contained, at minimum, a statement of philosophy, a scope and sequence, objectives, suggested teaching/learning activities, identified resources, and measures of evaluation. The guides were accompanied by program configuration checklists specifying what an observer would see if the program were to be implemented as designed. For instance, the elementary language arts (Pre-K-5) guide tells the reader to expect to see both small and large groups of students using cooperative learning procedures, learning expectations clearly communicated, and using appropriate discussion and questioning techniques. These checklists serve to communicate expectations implicit in program design, reveal expected student behaviors, and assist with evaluation of implementation. Teachers are involved in all aspects of the process, and most curriculum guide writing occurs in summer workshops. Thirty-six curriculum guides have been developed or revised during the past two years.

The November 1996 survey of students, teachers, and parents conducted as part of SISD's Five-Year Education Plan reflected support for SISD's curriculum. Almost three of five students surveyed said the needs of slower-learning students were adequately or fully met; more than eight of 10 students said the needs of average students were either adequately or fully met; and 82 percent said academically advanced students' needs were adequately or fully met. Most teachers and parents agreed with student perceptions. **COMMENDATION Using a systemic approach, SISD teachers have developed, evaluated, and updated curriculum documents to the general satisfaction of students, teachers and parents.**

FINDING

The *Spring Independent School District Standard Process for Program Evaluation*, published in 1990, describes standards to be applied to the evaluation of all district educational programs. Its intent is "to establish program evaluation as an expected, systematic, and continuing process integrated with an organized program development cycle." The plan gathers information useful to improving, revising, and determining the worth of programs. Two types of evaluation are included for these purposes: an evaluation designed to improve the implementation of programs in progress, and another designed to measure the merit of programs.

Nine programs completed the process within the latest Five-Year Education Plan, while four did not. The planning phases for Library, Physical Education, Math, and Pre-K were completed in 1996-97, but the entire process is not scheduled for completion until 1997-98.

The SISD five-year curriculum evaluation program was created based on the *Standards for Evaluation of Educational Programs, Projects and Materials* produced by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, a national panel of educators committed to professional staff development. Variables for program evaluation include:

- Degree of Program Implementation
- Student Performance
- Quality of Teacher Preparation and Development
- Teacher Satisfaction and Concern
- Use, the Quantity, and the Quality of materials and Resources
- Unintended Effects
- Student, Parent, and Community Satisfaction
- Adequacy of Staffing, Facilities, and Equipment

These measures identify both strengths and concerns. Instructional and administrative staff and the board use evaluation results as the basis for program planning and revision. In addition to these evaluations, SISD evaluates programs periodically through surveys of parents, teachers, and students. SISD also annually surveys its graduates.

COMMENDATION

Using recognized industry standards, SISD has implemented a continuing, systematic approach to program evaluation.

FINDING

In November 1996, as a major part of the development of SISD's Five-Year Education Plan, teams of school coordinators and parents distributed and collected questionnaires, held personal interviews, and conducted telephone interviews for the purpose of collecting information from representative students, teachers, and families regarding the state of the schools. The project (**Exhibit 2-7**) permitted participants to "grade" SISD on 29 to 68 topics and offer views on up to 34 issues.

Exhibit 2-7
SISD Community Grading of Curriculum Areas, Services, and Staff*
November 1996

<i>Subjects</i>	Parents	Teachers	Students
Mathematics	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A
English/Language Arts	A	A	B
Social Studies	A	B	A
Fine Arts	A	A	A
Physical Education	A	A	A
Business Education	A	B	B
Vocational Education	A	B	B
Foreign Language	A	B	B
Computer Instruction	A	B	A
<i>Services</i>			
Guidance and Counseling	A	A	A
Tutoring	A	B	B

Honors/Above Grade Classes	A	A	A
Library	A	A	A
Extracurricular	A	A	A
Food Services	A	B	B
Nursing Services	A	A	A
Transportation	A	A	B
<i>Staff</i>			
Teachers	A	A	B
Principals	A	A	A
Assistant Principals	A	A	A
Office Staff	A	A	A
<i>District</i>			
Spring Independent School District	A	A	A

*Represents most frequent response of respondents giving a grade in the parent, teacher and student surveys.

Source: SISD Five-Year Plan Survey (1997)

SISD parents, teachers, and students gave a grade of A to most subjects, services, and staff and an overall grade of A. These results indicate that the major constituent groups are pleased with the instructional programs and services, value the work of various staff members, and are satisfied with SISD's overall performance.

Collecting the opinions of students, parents, and teachers by an objective, third-party researcher adds confidence to findings and recommendations. While survey responses were positive, they did lead to several changes in the new Five-Year Education Plan. For instance, 61 percent of high school students and 57 percent of high school teachers approved of changing to block schedules. A priority to use block scheduling was added to the Five-Year Education Plan. Other input contributed to the addition of new objectives and activities (**Exhibit 2-8**).

Exhibit 2-8
Sample SISD Survey Results Leading to New Planning Objectives

Parent Survey Result Trend Statements	Five Year Plan Objective	Activities
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<p>Parent Views on Ability Grouping</p> <p>A majority of parents (76.%) in the sample want their children grouped by ability. The preference for grouping by ability exists for elementary school students (80.7%), middle school students (70%), and high school students (76.1%).</p>	<p>Priority 2: Increase student achievement and strengthen educational programs</p> <p>Objective 4: Establish a framework for assessing the effectiveness of interventions for special populations and make recommendations for interventions that ensure that all student populations are successful.</p>	<p>Activity 5: Ability Grouping</p> <p>a. Establish a study team to investigate the correlation of ability grouping and expectations on student success.</p> <p>b. Investigate ways to meet the special needs of the slower learners whether with/without ability grouping.</p>
<p>Parental Views on Additional or Expanded Services</p> <p>When asked to choose two of three additional or expanded services parents would like to see provided in SISD, those sampled were most likely to choose elementary school field trips (80.2%) and elementary school foreign language (72%).</p>	<p>Priority 2: Increase student achievement and strengthen educational programs.</p> <p>Objective 3: Investigate the need for an elementary foreign language program. If such a program is needed, plan the course(s), develop curriculum, train teachers and implement/evaluate the program.</p> <p>Objective 7: Expand extracurricular and cocurricular activities.</p>	<p>Activity 4: Expand elementary field trips</p> <p>Activities 1-4</p>
<p>Parental Views on Standardized Dress</p> <p>A majority (70%) of parents surveyed favor some form of standardized dress in their child's school.</p>	<p>Priority 12: Explore standardized dress and implement if warranted.</p>	<p>Activities 1-14</p>

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

COMMENDATION

Under the direction of Texas A&M University researchers, SISD conducted a comprehensive survey of 602 students, 247 families, and 249 teachers to determine educational issues and concerns and subsequently used those findings in its five-year planning process.

FINDING

Each December, SISD mails surveys to students who graduated the previous May, to determine their educational and employment status and ask their opinion of selected school issues. The survey is sent to the last address shown on school records, and a metered return envelope is enclosed to encourage responses.

According to the surveys (**Exhibit 2-9**), most graduates attend college and earn a 3.0 grade point average, or about a B. About half of the responding graduates feel well or very well prepared for college. Most graduates gave grades of "A" or "B" to their high school courses in English, math, science, and social studies.

Exhibit 2-9
SISD Graduate Follow-Up Survey Response
Classes of 1991 - 1995

Graduating Class	Number of Survey Respondents	Number of Graduates	Response Rate
1991	392	876	45%
1992	418	853	49%
1993	316	854	37%
1994	302	888	34%
1995	250	885	28%
1996	289	855	34%

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

Exhibit 2-10
SISD Selected Graduate Follow-Up Survey Results
Classes of 1987 through 1996

	`87	`88	`89	`90	`91	`92	`93	`94	`95	`96
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Survey Response Rate	44%	28%	47%	28%	45%	49%	37%	34%	28%	34%
College Attendance Rate	86%	89%	81%	89%	80%	81%	86%	88%	86%	84%
Attending Two Year College	29%	25%	35%	29%	35%	35%	28%	28%	29%	32%
Attending University of Texas or Texas A&M University	24%	23%	19%	21%	18%	13%	26%	25%	21%	14%
College GPA	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0
Well or Very Well Prepared for College	NA	48%	54%	47%	49%	37%	43%	48%	48%	45%
Employed Full- or Part-time after high school	42%	42%	53%	50%	48%	59%	58%	58%	53%	55%
High School Course Ratings (% A's or B's)										
English	81%	77%	73%	73%	75%	81%	85%	84%	89%	88%
Mathematics	69%	68%	68%	68%	75%	81%	76%	76%	80%	69%
Science	75%	73%	73%	78%	77%	81%	87%	88%	86%	87%
Social Studies	75%	75%	75%	76%	72%	85%	79%	83%	81%	84%
Studied less than 30 minutes a night	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	41%	30%	30%	28%
Would take more challenging courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	38%	37%	35%	30%	44%

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department NA = Not asked

While this information is helpful to school planners, a more comprehensive approach over a longer period of time is required to determine the degree of academic success of SISD graduates beyond the first year of college and the work success of students beyond the apprentice period.

The State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) at the Texas Workforce Commission provides free, automated student

follow-up services to school districts who volunteer as pilot sites in their follow-up study. The SOICC follow-up system matches the Social Security numbers of graduates with databases such as state unemployment insurance wage records, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Master Enrollment File and accessible databases kept by the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Postal Service, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and Texas Department of Human Services, and other appropriate sources. SOICC has found that 85 percent of all students can be matched to one or more of these databases, leading to up-to-date information on employment, wages, and training activities, along with any associations with prison, welfare, or the military.

SOICC is negotiating an agreement with TEA to fund the automated student follow-up system for all Texas public schools. When interviewed by the review team, SOICC officials expressed optimism that an agreement would soon be reached. In the event that TEA decides not to underwrite the student follow-up system statewide, districts still may purchase this service from SOICC on a cost-reimbursement basis of approximately \$1.70 per student record.

Recommendation 8:

Expand efforts to track SISD graduates by establishing a data-sharing agreement with the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) to participate in the automated student follow-up system.

SISD should take advantage of SOICC's free graduate follow-up service by volunteering as a pilot site for the 1997-98 school year. SISD's current response rate of 34 percent should be improved significantly since SOICC estimates that 85 percent of students can be tracked following their methodology. If the Texas Education Agency does not fund a statewide follow-up system for Texas school districts, SISD should consider continuing the SOICC graduate follow-up since the fee is nominal.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The program director for Research and Evaluation contacts SOICC to discuss the requirements of a data sharing agreement.	September 1997
2. A data-sharing agreement is established with SOICC.	November 1997
3. SOICC begins matching SISD student data to available databases.	March 1998
4. SISD receives follow-up data and reports from SOICC.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact below represents the costs to SISD if the statewide system is not funded. SISD would not be charged a fee in the first year, since the service has already been funded for 1997-1998 for districts volunteering to participate. Assuming the 1996-97 enrollment for each successive SISD graduating class at a cost of \$1.70 per student, the cost to implement a follow-up program with SOICC over the next five years would be \$12,116. SISD has been spending approximately \$700 in postage and printing in addition to personnel time to conduct surveys. Therefore, the actual cost for this service will be \$8,616 over five years. If TEA decides to fund a statewide follow-up system, SISD could participate for free.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Establish an agreement with SOICC for a follow-up study of graduates	\$700	(\$1,391)	(\$1,838)	(\$2,386)	(\$3,701)

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

B. Student Performance

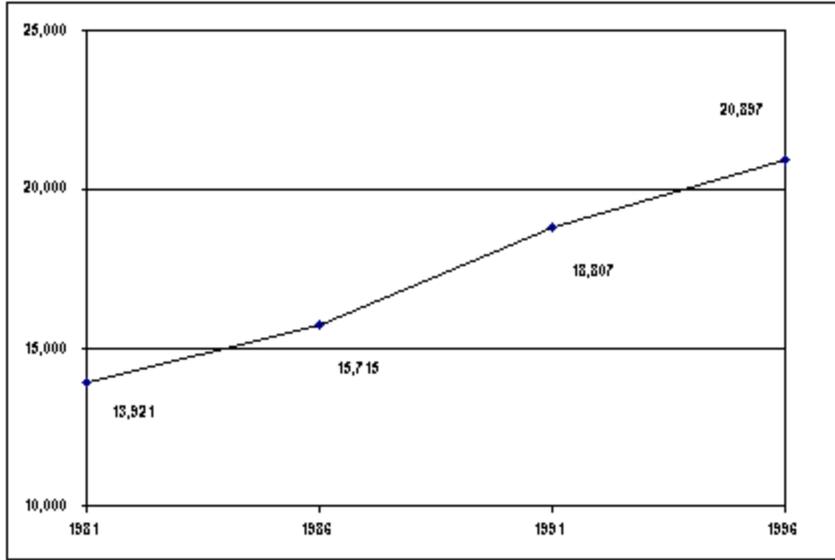
CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's increasing diversity is reflected in an increasing number of students receiving free and reduced-price lunches, which are provided to low-income children. From 1985 to 1996, the number of economically disadvantaged students in SISD increased from 4.7 percent to 30.5 percent of the student population, a six-fold increase in 10 years. In many school districts, a surge in the number of economically disadvantaged students is accompanied by flattened or depressed student performance. SISD, however, has run against the grain, with student performance improving over the years.

While SISD's enrollment (**Exhibit 2-11** and **Exhibit 2-12**) increased 50 percent between 1981-82 and 1996-97, the number of students considered Limited English Proficient (LEP) increased by more than 500 percent during the same period, from 1.2 to 7.2 percent of the student population. From 1985-86 to 1996-97, the proportion of students receiving free and reduced-price meals (**Exhibit 2-13**) increased from less than 5 percent of the student population to almost 31 percent.

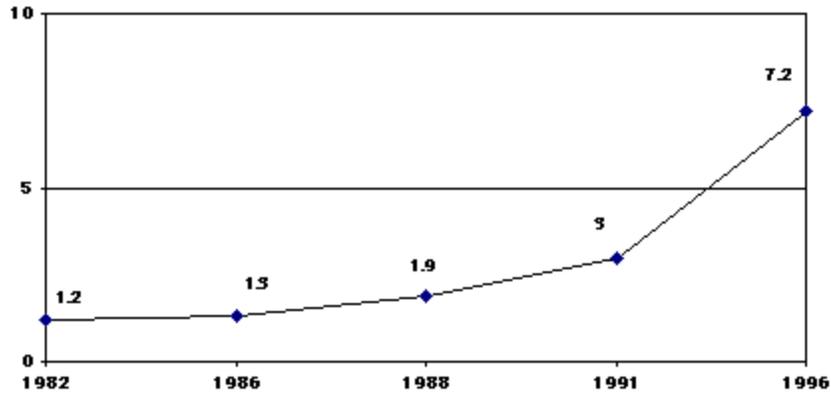
Exhibit 2-11 SISD Enrollment

1980-81 through 1995-96



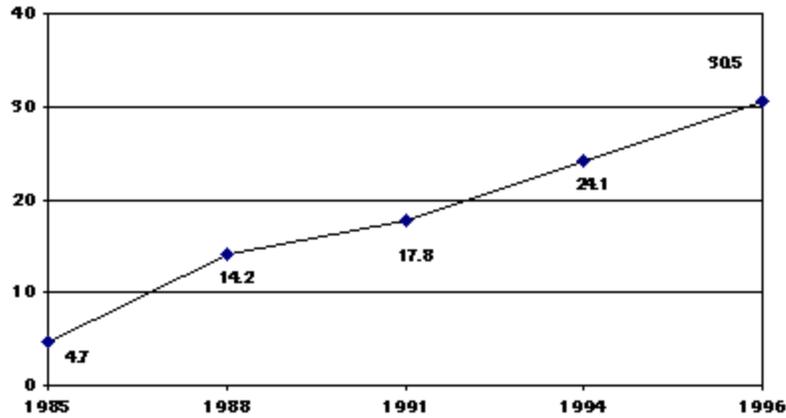
Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

**Exhibit 2-12
SISD Students With Limited English Proficiency
By Percent of Student Population
1981-82 through 1995-96**



Source: AEIS and SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

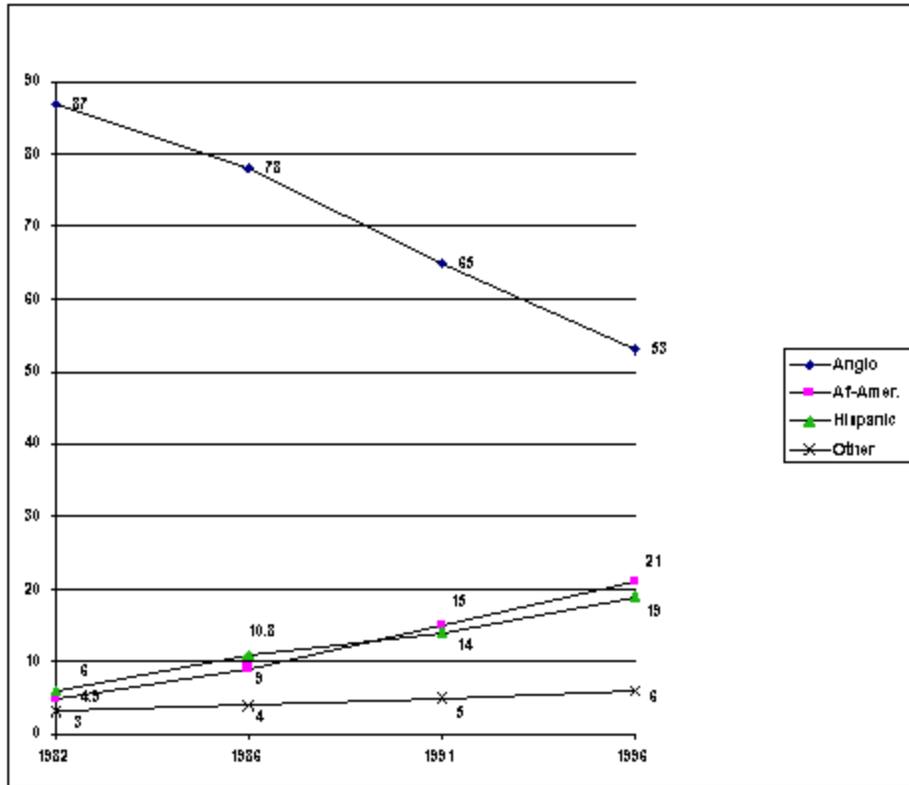
**Exhibit 2-13
SISD Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students
1984-85 through 1995-96**



Source: AEIS and SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

From 1981-82 through 1995-96, Anglo student enrollment decreased 34 percent; African-American enrollment increased 16 percent; Hispanic enrollment increased 13 percent, and all other enrollment rose 3 percent (**Exhibit 2-14**). During 1996-97, SISD's enrollment was 53 percent Anglo, 21 percent African American, 19 percent Hispanic, and 6 percent Asian and other.

**Exhibit 2-14
SISD Ethnic Diversity
1982-83 through 1996-97**



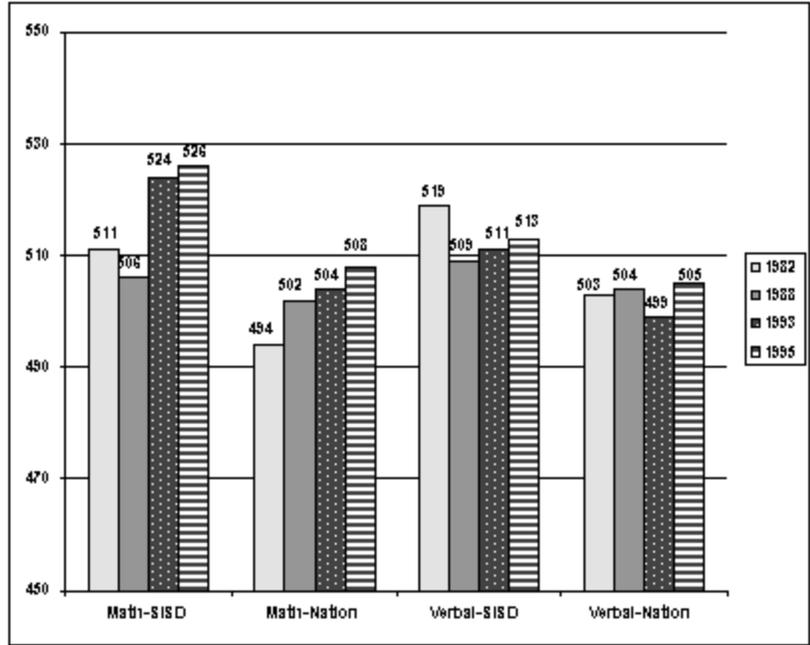
Source: AEIS and SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

Spring ISD Student Outcomes

In addition to TAAS, SISD uses two standardized tests to measure student performance. The Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT7) is a norm-referenced test that compares SISD student's achievement with students nationwide. The Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) also is norm-referenced and helps to forecast how students should perform on school-related tasks, particularly against similar students nationwide.

SISD students outperform national averages in both verbal and math scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) that students take upon application to college (**Exhibit 2-15**).

Exhibit 2-15 SISD SAT Verbal and Math Scores 1981-82 through 1994-95

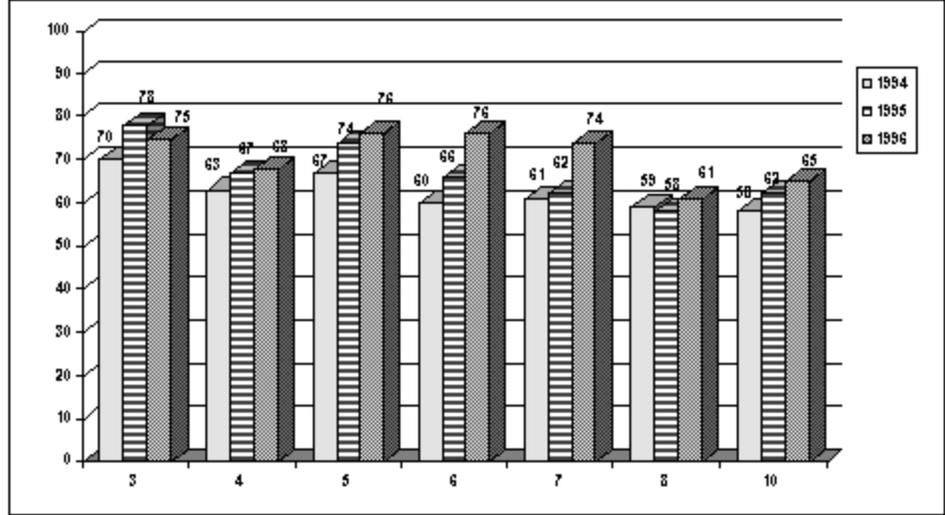


Source:

College Board

Since 1994, students have recorded small but consistent gains in passing the reading, writing, and math portions of the TAAS (Exhibit 2-16).

Exhibit 2-16
SISD Students Passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Reading, Writing, and Math
1993-94 through 1995-96



Source: AEIS, 1994-96

During 1995-96, in fact, 11 of 13 elementary schools and all secondary schools increased the proportion of students passing all sections of the TAAS compared to 1993-94 passing rates

(Exhibit 2-17).

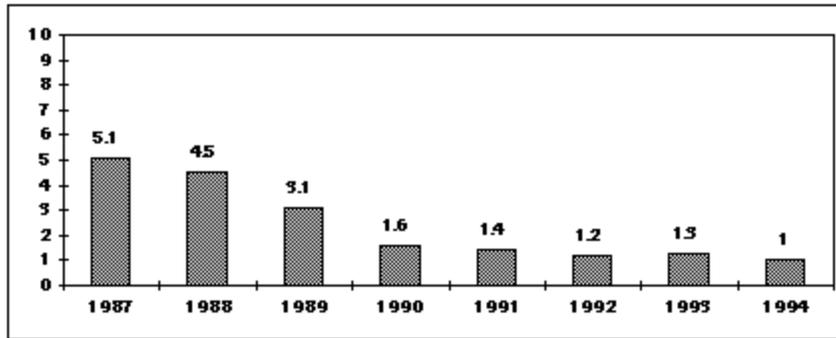
Exhibit 2-17
SISD Student Passing Rates on Texas Assessment
of Academic Skills, By School
1993-94 through 1995-96

School	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Anderson Elementary	75%	75%	71%
Bammel Elementary	60%	64%	68%
Beneke Elementary	56%	70%	68%
Clark Elementary	46%	60%	54%
Hirsch Elementary	79%	87%	86%
Jenkins Elementary	64%	70%	72%
Link Elementary	54%	56%	57%
Meyer Elementary	53%	71%	64%
Oak Creek Elementary	82%	79%	89%
Ponderosa Elementary	74%	87%	84%
Salyers Elementary	76%	83%	87%
Smith Elementary	67%	68%	79%
Winship Elementary	84%	84%	79%
Bammel Middle	58%	55%	68%
Dueitt Middle	61%	61%	68%
Twin Creeks Middle	64%	71%	74%
Wells Middle	57%	61%	70%
Spring High School	59%	61%	68%
Westfield High School	58%	63%	62%

Source: AEIS, 1993-1995

SISD's student dropout rate (**Exhibit 2-18**) dropped from 5.1 percent in 1987-88 to 1 percent in 1994-95, a reduction attributed by teachers and administrators to more systematic investigation of students' enrollment status along with specific programs at the high school level.

Exhibit 2-18
SISD Dropout Rates
1986-87 through 1993-94



Source: AEIS and SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

SISD assesses student performance using results from TAAS and norm-referenced achievement and ability tests. The district also draws upon TEA accountability ratings of individual schools, student enrollment in honors courses, student class failure rates, dropout and attendance rates, college admissions results, and College Board Advanced Placement test results.

During 1996-97, SISD spent \$27,740 on standardized test materials and scoring achievement and ability tests in grades 2, 4, 5, and 7. These tests are designed to provide information for gifted and talented screening at grade 2 and data for use in placement decisions and program evaluation at other grades. Several of the peer districts test students on norm-referenced exams. Fort Bend ISD uses the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in four different grades, while Spring Branch and Klein use the tests in three grades. Among the peer districts answering review team inquiries, only Goose Creek ISD does not conduct achievement testing, opting instead to rely on TAAS.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

TAAS is a state-administered, criterion-referenced test used in the state's public schools since 1990-91 to measure student performance in reading and math in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10; writing, in grades 4, 8, and 10; science and social studies, in grade 8, and end-of-course results for Biology 1 and Algebra 1 students. The evaluation draws its objectives

from the state-mandated essential elements and emphasizes the measurement of academic skills, with a focus on reasoning and skills application. TAAS gauges grade-level skills at a passing rate established by the State Board of Education (SBOE); schools, districts, regions, and the state can use this test's results in planning and accountability.

FINDING

The parents, teachers, and leaders of Wells Middle School, through the SBDM process, have created a model project to address their students' learning and behavioral needs. An after-school program called the Success Club is central to their activities. The Success Club is designed to improve the relationship between students at risk of dropping out and their schools. It was initially funded through a grant from the SISD Education Foundation, and students were selected on the basis of low or failing grades, zeroes on daily assignments, poor performance on TAAS, a lack of connections to school, and evidence of poor study habits. The primary components include study skills development, homework completion, remediation in language arts and math, TAAS remediation, and character education. Participants attended two-hour sessions after school to work on both academic and social skills and received transportation home. Although complete evaluation data are not compiled, of 206 participants, 90 percent passed all of their courses for the year; 146 others passed at least one section of TAAS, and 95 students passed all sections of the exam. The program is being continued with district funding for 1997-98, and successful aspects of the plan are being expanded to other schools.

COMMENDATION

SISD's Wells Middle School has created an after-school Success Club that has enhanced student performance. FINDING SISD's TAAS passing rates have increased at most levels in all subjects since 1993-94 (Exhibits 2-19 through 2-26).

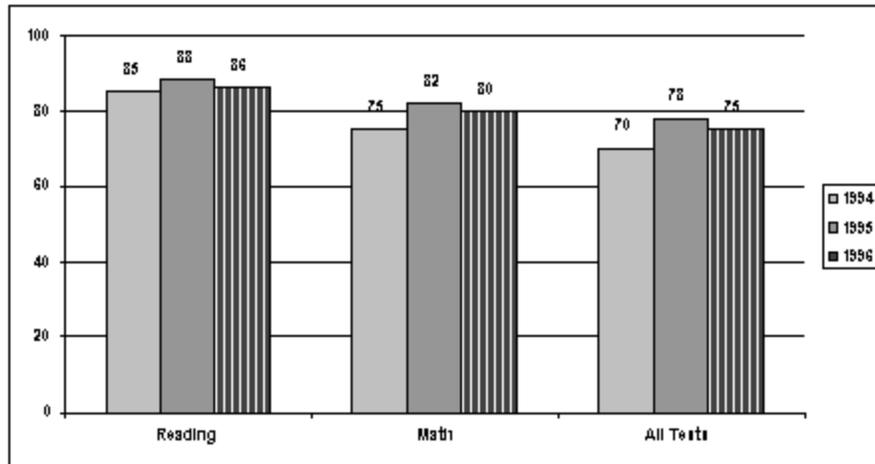
Exhibit 2-19
SISD and Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grades 3-8 & 10
1993-94 through 1995-96

Subject	1994	1995	1996			
	Spring	Texas	Spring	Texas	Spring	Texas
Reading	83.6%	76.5%	84.0%	78.4%	84.7%	80.4%
Writing	83.8%	79.0%	84.9%	82.0%	85.0%	82.9%
Math	66.5%	60.5%	70.7%	65.9%	78.1%	74.2%

All Tests	62.6%	55.6%	66.4%	60.7%	70.4%	67.1%
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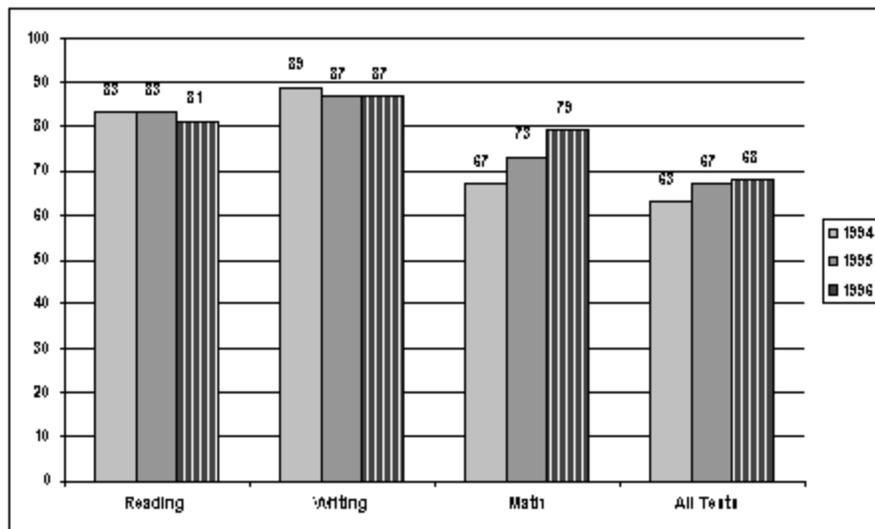
Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-20
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 3
1993-94 through 1995-96



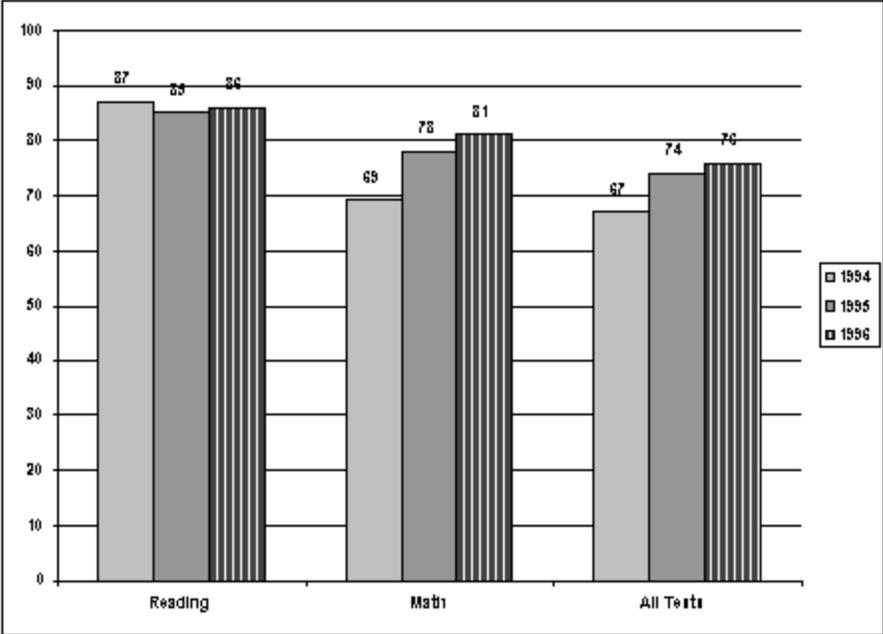
Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-21
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 4
1993-94 through 1995-96



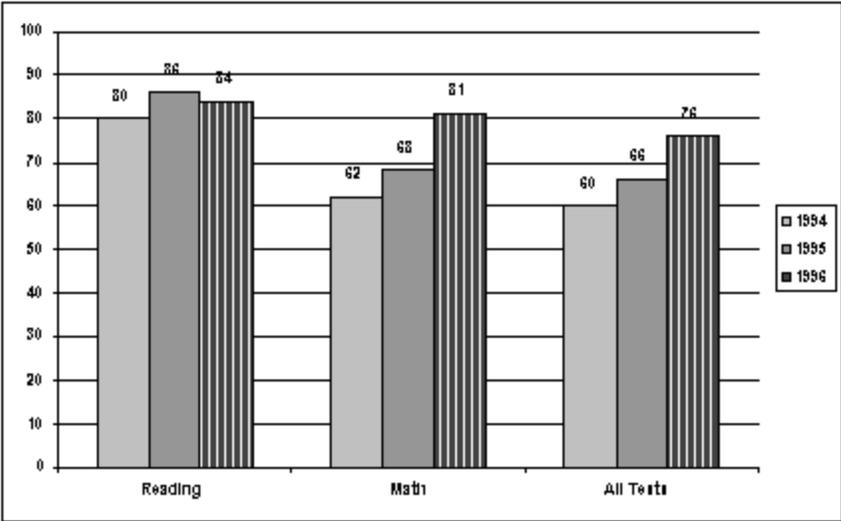
Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-22
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 5
1993-94 through 1995-96



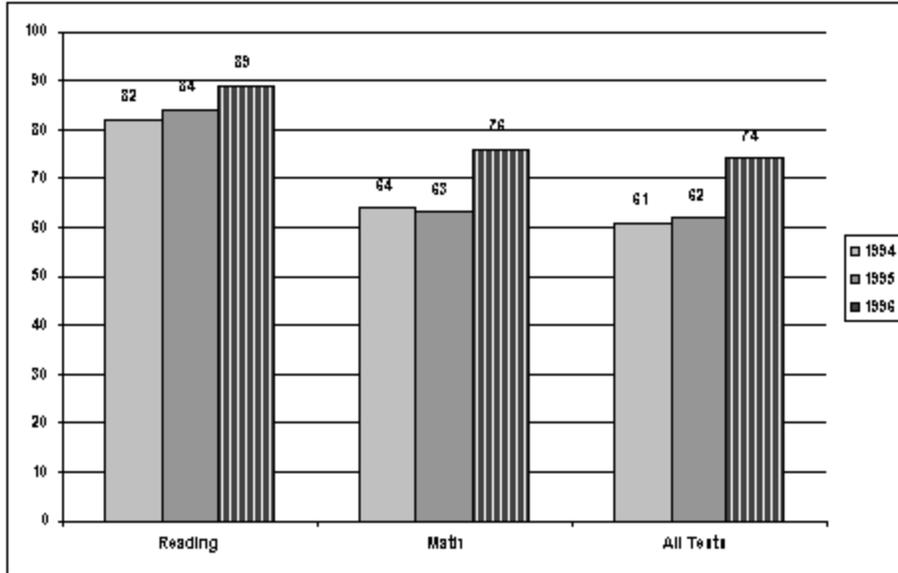
Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-23
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 6
1993-94 through 1995-96



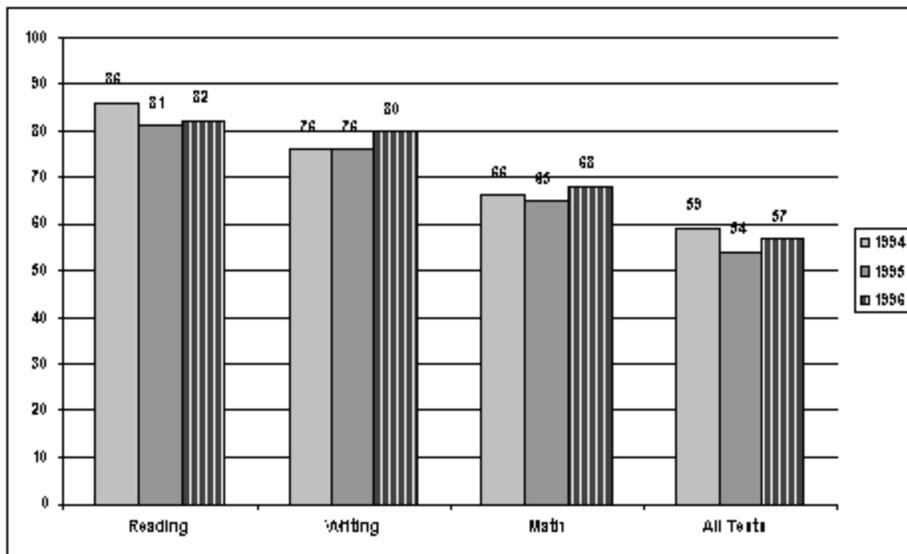
Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-24
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 7
1993-94 through 1995-96



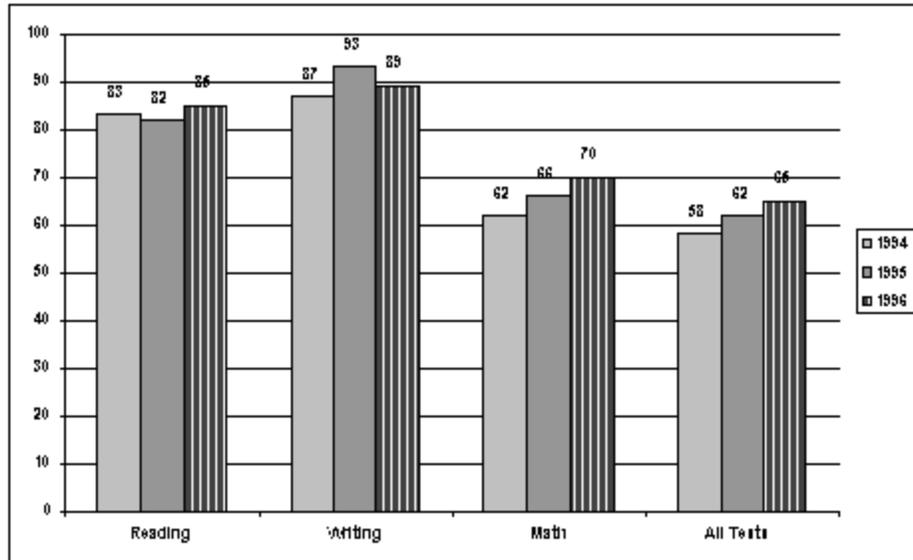
Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-25
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 8
1993-94 through 1995-96



Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

Exhibit 2-26
SISD Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates - Grade 10
1993-94 through 1995-96



Source: AEIS, 1994-1996

In most grades, student achievement in successive years has improved, with the greatest improvements in grades 6 and 7.

TAAS improvement has been the result of a specific plan for improvement and a focus on student achievement at all academic levels. The improvement plan has several components including staff development directed at the identification and remediation of student deficiencies. A second component is the provision of reports and summaries of TAAS data to schools. The purpose of these TAAS reports is to provide individual student data and summarized data to teachers and other campus staff assisting them in identifying the remedial needs of individual students and groups of students. Remediation efforts vary by school, but their focus is on individual and small group remediation activities offered during, before, and after school.

Some of the TAAS reports provided by the district to assist teachers in remediation efforts include:

- Student information: A printout is available to each teacher of language arts, English, reading, math, science, and social studies that provides information on their students including a listing of individual students, the number of items correct on each objective, and the passing status of each student. Summary data include the

proportion of students in the class who passed each objective to help teachers identify individual students for remediation.

- TAAS Historical Data: Lists for each campus by grade level of all TAAS data for students beginning in grade 3 through exit level to help campuses track individual student performance over time.
- TAAS Most Recent Scores: lists of students and their most current TAAS scores by subject to provide a master list of students status for remediation efforts.
- TAAS Non-Mastery Lists: lists of students who did not pass the most recent TAAS test by subject.
- TAAS Rank Order Lists: lists of students from highest to lowest score on each section of the TAAS.
- TAAS Objectives: Lists of students by grade level giving their status on each TAAS objective by subject, to identify students who may need remediation on a specific objective.
- TAAS Student Confidential Report: A district-produced report of individual student status on each TAAS objective for all subject areas. This report for each student at a campus or grade level generally is used to review a student's status by subject and by objective with the student and his or her parents.

Other TAAS reports provided for administrators include:

- Printouts/analyses of TAAS passing rates by student placement level (below grade, on grade, above grade, Tier 4) and by course at the secondary level to allow examination of differences and discrepancies.
- Printouts of TAAS passing rates by teacher within placement or course to examine results for teacher effects.
- Lists of students who meet specific criteria as designated by the campus staff or other analyses as requested by campus personnel.

COMMENDATION

SISD has remained above state passing rates, tied for second among its peer districts in its cumulative percent of students passing the exit-level exam, and increased its passing rates at most levels in all subjects during the last three years.

FINDING

Compared to state averages, SISD has smaller proportions of its population exempted from the TAAS (**Exhibit 2-27**). The state allows exemptions for some LEP and all special education students, and if these students are tested, TAAS results are not used to evaluate the performance

of the school district. SISD focuses its school improvement plans on the achievement of *all* students.

One focus of SISD has been the inclusion of special education students into the state's assessment system. Special education students who are being prepared on grade-level objectives as a part of the regular curriculum are tested with TAAS. Although students can be exempted by the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee, exemptions are granted only if the student is not being prepared on grade-level objectives. This practice helps ensure that students are tested on the basis of their preparation, not on the basis of whether the ARD committee believes the student can pass the TAAS. As a result, a smaller proportion of students in SISD receive a special education exemption. This same philosophy applies to the preparation of students who are limited English proficient. Those students being prepared on grade-level objectives are tested with TAAS, resulting in a smaller proportion of students designated as exempt due to LEP status.

Exhibit 2-27
SISD and Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Percentage of Exemptions by Subject
1995-96

TAAS Test	SISD	Texas
Reading		
Limited English Proficient	2.4%	3.8%
Special Education	3.6%	5.8%
Writing		
Limited English Proficient	2.4%	4.0%
Special Education	3.3%	5.9%
Mathematics		
Limited English Proficient	2.4%	3.8%
Special Education	3.0%	5.4%

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

COMMENDATION

A small percentage of SISD's limited-English-proficient and special education students are exempt from the Texas Assessment of

Academic Skills (TAAS) because of SISD's practice of assessing the performance of all students being prepared on grade-level objectives.

FINDING

In 1996, the Texas Commissioner of Education's first goal for the Regional Education Service Centers stated: "Student Performance in each region will improve as a result of effective and efficient technical assistance and program support." A measure of success was "the gap in student achievement in each region between minority and non-minority students as measured by the TAAS results will be reduced." In response, SISD set a priority in its Five-Year Education Plan to reduce the distance between TAAS passing rates of students by ethnicity. The gap between African-American and Anglo performance and between Hispanic and Anglo performance on the TAAS tests has fallen since 1993-94 (**Exhibit 2-28**).

Exhibit 2-28
SISD Student Differences in Texas Assessment
of Academic Skills (TAAS)
Passing Rates By Ethnicity
1993-94 - 1995-96

Subject	Student Group Comparisons	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	Change from 1993-94 - 1995-96
Reading	Anglo-African American	20.9%	20.9%	20.6%	gap decreased by 0.3
	Anglo - Hispanic	12.7%	13.8%	13.0%	gap increased by 0.3
Math	Anglo -African American	33.5%	31.6%	26.7%	gap decreased by 6.8
	Anglo - Hispanic	20.1%	19.8%	18.5%	gap decreased by 1.6
Writing	Anglo -African American	17.9%	15.2%	16.3%	gap decreased by 1.6
	Anglo - Hispanic	12.7%	8.4%	13.5%	gap increased by 0.8

Source: AEIS, 1993-1996 and SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

Passing rates of African-American and Hispanic student groups are approximately 13 to 27 points lower than those of Anglo students. Over the three-year period, the gap between passing rates of Anglo, African-

American, and Hispanic students was reduced in all subjects for African-American students and in math for Hispanic students. The most positive results were seen in math, where the distance between passing rates of Anglo and African American students fell by almost 7 percentage points.

District teachers and administrators said progress on closing the achievement gaps were accomplished by placing and maintaining high achievement expectations for all students, offering tutorials after school and providing transportation following those sessions, and working with minorities in the community to assist with remedial and enrichment activities in school. According to Dr. Joseph Johnson Jr. at the Charles A. Dana Center of the University of Texas at Austin, Texas schools are closing the achievement gap faster than any other state and this progress is reflected in state and national assessment data. While Dr. Johnson attributes some of this success to statewide initiatives such as the school accountability system, he also notes successful practices that have been used in Texas schools. These successful practices were identified through a 1995-1996 Dana Center study of 26 high-achieving, high-poverty schools in Texas. The study is entitled *Successful Texas Schoolwide Programs*.

This study identified characteristics that were shared by each of the schools. These characteristics have been grouped into the following seven themes:

A strong focus on academic achievement for every student: Schools establish clear measurable goals; stress the individual needs of students; and use the primary goal of ensuring success for every student to guide all major decisions on the use of fiscal resources, staff development strategies, school calendars, and the use of building space.

A refusal to accept poor performance: The schools share a basic philosophy that any student can succeed. To make this a reality, the schools work with families and the community to leverage their resources and build strong partnerships.

Willingness to Experiment: The districts encourage careful experimentation with new instructional techniques; failures are viewed as learning experiences that can be built on.

Involvement of the entire school community in the learning process: All school personnel, parents and community are involved to help students succeed. For example, secretaries listen to students read, central office staff serve as tutors, custodians serve as mentors, and the schools conduct intensive outreach to families.

Sense of Family: Special attempts are made to make students and parents feel "at home". Examples include culturally and linguistically diverse curriculum materials, school hallways that display student work, bilingual office staff, and special parent rooms at the schools.

Collaboration and Trust: Team teaching is often used and schools conduct many formal and informal meetings and workgroups so that staff can plan and work together.

Passion for Learning and Professional Growth: The schools do not stop reaching for greater levels of success when improvements are made in student performance. Professional development is an integral part of every school day, not just a one or two-day activity.

To support the infusion of these promising practices into other Texas schools, the Dana Center has published a self-study and planning guide that draws upon the seven themes discussed above. Additional resources such as suggestions for technical assistance providers is also available. The center's services can be accessed on the Internet at <<http://198.213.2.23>>.

In addition to successful practices identified in the Dana Center study, the Region 13 Education Service Center has developed a Mentor School Network. This network identifies promising practices of high-achieving schools in Texas at the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels. Region 13 publications provide detailed matrices that show promising practices that are used in the areas of organizational structure, curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional growth and development and student support and community involvement.

Recommendation 9:

Apply model practices to eliminate the gap in performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) between African-American and Anglo students and Hispanic and Anglo students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The superintendent requests the program director for Research and Evaluation to assemble a five-year profile of ethnic student performance both across the district and at the schools within each feeder pattern.	September 1997
2. The superintendent asks the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services to assemble a status report from each principal regarding specific programs and initiatives	September 1997

designed to decrease the performance gap among student ethnic groups.	
3. The superintendent requests that the program director for research and Evaluation and the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services investigate promising practices from the Dana Center study and the Texas Mentor School Network and make recommendations	November 1997
4. The superintendent and senior staff review findings and recommendations and present them to the board.	December 1997
5. Action plans in the district's Five-Year Education Plan are modified to reflect the new initiatives that will be used to eliminate the achievement gap.	January 1998
6. Begin implementation of promising practices.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation.

Norm-Referenced Testing Program FINDING Unlike the TAAS, norm-referenced tests allow SISD to examine student performance in reading, math, and problem solving and compare those results with students nationally. SISD uses the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT7) at grades 2, 4, 5, and 7. SISD also administers a school ability test, the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), which helps predict how well students will perform on school-related tasks. The OLSAT is used in conjunction with the MAT7 in grades 2, 4, 5, and 7 to determine how SISD students score compared to other students like them in school ability (**Exhibit 2-29**).

Two types of scores are available through the SISD's testing program. First, national percentile ranks (NPR) tell how well students achieve in reading comprehension and math concepts and problem solving against students nationwide. Second, the achievement/ability comparison score (AAC), on a scale of -100 to +100, indicates how well students achieve on the MAT7 compared to other students with similar OLSAT scores. Positive AAC scores indicate that MAT7 achievement is better than other students of similar ability in the national norm group, while a negative score indicates achievement lower than other students of similar ability in the national norm group.

Exhibit 2-29
SISD Norm-Referenced Achievement and Ability Test Results
Metropolitan Achievement Tests-7 and Otis Lennon School Ability

**Test (OLSAT)
1994-95 through 1996-97**

Grade Level	Reading Comprehension	Mathematics Concepts and Problem Solving	OLSAT				
	Number Tested	National Percentile Rank	AAC Score	Number Tested	National Percentile Rank	AAC Score	National Percentile Rank
1996-97							
Grade 2	1381	54	8	1411	59	21	49
Grade 4	1372	62	19	1380	73	52	54
Grade 5	1434	64	15	1462	77	49	62
Grade 7	1470	57	10	1482	73	51	52
1995-96							
Grade 2	1391	53	9	1410	57	21	47
Grade 4	1426	62	9	1438	73	46	60
Grade 5	1421	61	--	1414	74	--	--
Grade 7	1455	54	13	1456	67	43	46
1994-95							
Grade 2	1356	52	6	1359	57	21	49
Grade 4	1426	62	9	1438	73	46	60

Grade 5	1421	61	--	1414	74	--	--
Grade 7	1455	54	13	1456	67	43	46

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department AAC = Achievement/ability comparison scores

The AAC scores can also be analyzed by several variables including ability levels, ethnicity, and economic status (**Exhibit 2-30**).

Exhibit 2-30
SISD Achievement Ability Comparison (AAC) Scores
1996-97

Group	Reading Comprehension		Math Concepts and Problem Solving		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 7		Grade 7	
	n	AAC	n	AAC	n	AAC	n	AAC	n	AAC	n	AAC
Ability												
Low	255	29	220	21	288	4	255	51	214	48	289	44
Average	729	14	734	11	760	13	722	51	744	47	768	54
High	360	23	462	19	365	6	362	54	462	51	373	52
Ethnicity												
Asian	79	8	59	14	89	19	80	56	60	65	87	70
Af. Am.	298	15	309	2	314	2	291	38	312	31	312	45
Hispanic	204	7	213	3	250	5	206	40	215	44	254	44
Anglo	758	25	827	23	758	12	757	60	825	55	775	55
Ec. Disad.												
No	972	24	1034	20	1021	11	972	56	1036	53	1030	55
Yes	372	6	382	2	392	4	367	40	384	37	400	42

Grade	1372	19	1434	15	1470	10	1380	52	1462	49	1482	51
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Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

SISD students, whose scores display average levels of ability, also demonstrate above-average performance in reading comprehension and math. In 1996-97, reading comprehension NPR scores ranged from 57 to 64 and math scores ranged from 73 to 77. A national percentile rank of 77 indicates that the typical student in SISD scored better than 77 percent of the nation's students in math.

The achievement-ability comparison scores indicate that SISD students in all grades and in all subjects score better than predicted compared to other students with similar ability levels. This same result is evident when scores are broken down by ability groups, ethnicity, and economic status. Across all these data, SISD students display better performance in math than in reading. SISD students, including all ethnic groups and the economically disadvantaged, achieve at levels higher than predicted by their ability. The results of these tests are used for student placement, program evaluations, and district accountability purposes.

Recommendation 10: Address the difference in positive achievement between reading and math as measured by norm-referenced tests, raising the level of reading achievement to that of math.

Improving achievement is a complex initiative. It requires building on strengths, recognizing weaknesses, and developing an energized plan with the total support of students, teachers, administrators, parents, the board, and the community. A true spirit of reform must be present. SISD must realize that if their students can perform well in math, they should be able to achieve equally well in reading tasks. High, but attainable, student expectations must be established in all curricular areas.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The program director for Research and Evaluation assembles a status report regarding the profile of academic performance among SISD students in reading and math on norm referenced tests.	September 1997
2. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services assembles a committee of teachers, counselors, and administrators representative of the elementary and middle schools to review SISD data; analyze areas of the MAT7 and the OLSAT where students are having difficulty, especially in reading; review textbooks and curriculum documents to gauge	November 1977

instructional strengths and weaknesses in these areas; and identify teacher training and additional instructional materials needed.	
3. The committee gives the assistant superintendent recommendations for teacher training and for the development of new instructional materials	March 1998
4. The assistant superintendent and program directors design teacher training, initiate the development of new curriculum materials, and integrate the plan into the program development cycle.	April 1998
5. Program directors conduct training activities and distribute new curriculum materials to appropriate teachers. Program directors monitor and evaluate training initiatives and curriculum materials.	August 1998 through May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

These activities should be planned within the department's operating budget for teacher training and curriculum materials development without allocation of additional expenditures. **Other Measures BACKGROUND**

Since 1993, Texas has rated and accredited districts and schools based on specific performance measures including the reading, writing, and math portions of the TAAS and dropout and attendance rates. Districts are evaluated each year and rated as Accredited, Warned; Accredited; Recognized, or Exemplary. In 1995, of the 1,045 districts in the state, 14 were rated Exemplary; 137, Recognized; 860, Accredited; and 34, Accredited, Warned. Schools within districts are evaluated and categorized as Not Rated, Pending, Low-Performing, Acceptable, Recognized, or Exemplary. In 1995, of the 6,220 schools in the state, 255 were categorized Exemplary; 1,004, Recognized; 4,345, Acceptable; 268, Low-Performing; 254, Pending; and 94, Not Rated.

For 1997, the accountability system uses TAAS performance, annual dropout rates, and student attendance rates as its base indicators for determining district and school ratings. TAAS includes the percent of non-special education students enrolled in SISD as of October 25, 1996 who passed each subject area. Also considered are passing rates, by subject, for all students. African-American, Hispanic, Anglo, and economically disadvantaged students are considered in each sub-group if at least 30 students are in that group and if the group comprises at least 10 percent of all test takers. The TAAS passing rates required for each rating level are as follows:

Exemplary	90% passing each test (all students and each group)
Recognized	75% passing each test (all students and each group)

Academically Acceptable	35% passing each test (all students and each group)
Academically Unacceptable	Below 35% passing each test (all students and each group)

In addition to TAAS passing rates by subject, schools and districts must demonstrate required improvement on TAAS for all students and each group. That is, improvement over the prior years' rates must exceed the change needed to reach 90 percent for recognized or 50 percent for acceptable within five years.

All schools must also have at least a 94 percent attendance rate at grades 1-12 for all accountability levels, and secondary schools must meet the following requirements for dropout rates:

Exemplary	1% or less (all students and each group)
Recognized	3.5% or less (all students and each group)
Academically Acceptable	6.0% or less (all students and each group)
Academically Unacceptable	above 6.0% (all students and each group)

Accountability rating standards for schools are based upon TAAS scores, dropout rates, and attendance rates. In general, SISD schools have achieved excellent dropout and attendance rates. However, TAAS averages must improve to boost school accountability ratings.

The state requires at least 90 percent of a school's students to pass the reading, writing, and math portions of the TAAS to receive the highest, or "exemplary," rating. The same average performance must be attained within the Anglo, African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged groups.

To receive ratings of "recognized" or "academically acceptable" in 1995-96, students and student groups must have at least passed 70 percent and 30 percent of the TAAS exams, respectively, while also demonstrating improvement from the previous year. The state's lowest rating, "academically unacceptable/low performing," is given to schools where less than 30 percent of students or student groups pass the reading, writing, or math portions of TAAS.

FINDING

In 1995-96, the state classified SISD (**Exhibit 2-31**) as "academically acceptable" based on its accountability ratings. Six of SISD's schools were

rated "recognized" or "exemplary." No schools were rated "low performing."

Exhibit 2-31
Texas Education Agency Accreditation Ratings
of SISD Schools by Level (Number of Schools)
1995-96

Level	Low Performing	Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
Elementary*	0	8	5	1
Middle	0	4	0	0
High	0	2	0	0
Total	0	14	5	1

*Includes Wunsche

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

It would be easy to rest on such achievement. Still, even in such an academically outstanding district, strategies might be devised to raise every school to the exemplary level if the district were to emphasize certain areas of instruction. For instance, **Exhibit 2-32** shows that some schools could achieve the next higher state rating by improving TAAS scores or making required improvement in particular subjects and among specific student groups.

Exhibit 2-32
SISD Improvement Needs on Texas Assessment
of Academic Skills (TAAS)

School	Accountability Rating	Assessment of Academic Skills, Improvement Needs, By Group				
		All Students	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Econ. Disad.
Anderson Elementary School	Acceptable					

Reading				[radical]		[radical]
Math						[radical]
Writing						
Bammel Elementary School	Acceptable					
Reading		[radical]				X
Math		[radical]				X
Writing						
Beneke Elementary School	Acceptable					
Reading		[radical]	X	[radical]		X
Math		[radical]	X	X		X
Writing						
Clark Elementary School	Acceptable					
Reading		[radical]	X	[radical]		X
Math		X	X	X	[radical]	X
Writing						
Hirsch Elementary School	Recognized					
Reading						
Math						
Writing		X			X	
Jenkins	Acceptable					

Elementary School						
Reading						
Math		[radical]		X		[radical]
Writing						[radical]
School	Accountability Rating	Assessment of Academic Skills, Improvement Needs, By Group				
		All Students	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Econ. Disad.
Link Elementary School	Acceptable					
Reading		[radical]	X	[radical]		X
Math		X	X			X
Writing		[radical]				[radical]
Meyer Elementary School	Acceptable					
Reading		[radical]	[radical]	[radical]		[radical]
Math		[radical]		X		
Writing					[radical]	
Oak Creek Elementary School	Exemplary	NA				
Reading						
Math						
Writing						

Ponderosa Elementary School	Recognized					
Reading						
Math		X				
Writing						
Salyers Elementary School	Recognized					
Reading						X
Math						X
Writing		X				
Smith Elementary School	Recognized					
Reading						X
Math		X		X	X	X
Writing		X			X	
Winship Elementary School	Recognized					
Reading		X			X	
Math		X			X	
Writing						
Bammel Middle School	Acceptable					
Reading						
Math			X	X		X
Writing						

Dueitt Middle School	Acceptable					
Reading			X			[radical]
Math			X	X		X
Writing		[radical]	X			
Twin Creeks Middle School	Acceptable					
Reading						
Math						X
Writing						X
Wells Middle School	Acceptable					
Reading			[radical]	X		X
Math			X	X		X
Writing				X		
Spring High School	Acceptable					
Reading						
Math				X		X
Writing			[radical]			
Westfield High School	Acceptable					
Reading				X		X

Math		X	X	X		X
Writing			[radical]	X		X

Source: AEIS, 1995-96; Texas School Performance Review. A check mark indicates student TAAS averages did not make required improvement for group. An X mark indicates student TAAS averages did not reach required passing rate for group. NA = Not applicable

Some 60 Texas public school districts, including Houston and Spring Branch ISDs, have taken advantage of a precise method for identifying individual student needs based on TAAS scores. The pilot project of the Educational Productivity Council of the University of Texas Department of Educational Administration is intended to produce a model system for gleaning useful student performance information by tracking TAAS results by student, class, and the entire student population year after year. The resulting long-term, or longitudinal, database is to be used to evaluate the effects of instructional strategies, time, curricula, and other educational factors on individual students, classes and schools.

From the model, teachers and principals can diagnose specific student needs and change teaching strategies. In each case, the model generates a graph showing how each student in the class met each tested concept. A graph might show that five students in one class have not yet grasped basic multiplication. The teacher then could concentrate on reviewing basics with those students before turning to other tasks.

The detailed data and analysis are received in early September each year, for use in planning curricular and instructional adjustments. In 1996, Houston schools in the pilot that had applied results from the project generally reported improved TAAS scores.

Recommendation 11: Increase the number of schools attaining the "recognized" and "exemplary" ratings. Improving the rating of a school is a complex initiative and part of a district's overall renewal program. It requires building on strengths, recognizing weakness, and developing an energized plan with the total support of students, teachers, administrators, parents, the board, and the community.

This recommendation would require one school to maintain its excellence and 19 schools to move to the next level of success. Hirsch Elementary School, for example, is currently a recognized school. To obtain an exemplary rating, the school must improve the TAAS passing rate for all students and for Anglo students. Bammel Elementary School is currently rated as acceptable. To achieve a recognized status, the school must improve reading and math TAAS scores among economically

disadvantaged students and make required improvement level for all students in reading and math.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The superintendent assembles the senior advisors to analyze SISD's performance measures, compare the results with the criteria for achieving recognized and exemplary status, and develop plan with measurable indicators to present to the board.	September 1997
2. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services directs principals to assemble school committees to analyze the school's performance measures, compare the results with the criteria for achieving recognized and exemplary status, and develop a plan with measurable indicators to present to the assistant superintendent and program directors.	September 1997
3. The board reviews, modifies, and approves the plans.	November 1998
4. SISD implements, monitors, and evaluates the plans.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation. ***Failure Rates and Dropouts*** More than 40,000 Texas students dropped out of public schools during 1993-94. These students represented 2.6 percent of all students. A disproportionate number of the dropouts were minority students. The Hispanic dropout rate was 3.9 percent, the African-American dropout rate was 3.2 percent, the Asian and Native American dropout rate was 1.7 percent, and the Anglo dropout rate was 1.5 percent. The number of dropouts was greatest among students in grade 9, but the dropout rate was greatest among senior high school students. About 34 percent of all dropouts were economically disadvantaged, and 74 percent were over-age for their grade. Urban and large districts consistently have greater dropout rates. TEA has calculated that for every 1,000 students enrolled in grade 7 during 1993-94, only 856 were enrolled in grade 12 five years later.

FINDING

Decreasing proportions of SISD middle school students since 1993-94 failed one or more courses for the year. Included in **Exhibit 2-33** is the percentage of students who earned at least one failing grade at the semester, high school, or the end of year, middle school.

Exhibit 2-33
SISD Secondary Course Failure Rates
Proportion of Students Failing One or More Courses
1993-94 through 1995-96

Level	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Middle Schools	14%	11%	11%
High Schools			
Semester 1	26%	27%	30%
Semester 2	26%	26%	27%

Source: AEIS, 1993-96

About one in four SISD high school students failed at least one course at the end of each semester (**Exhibit 2-34**). Students in grade 9 were more likely to have failed one or more courses than students at other grade levels.

Exhibit 2-34
SISD Failure Rates by Grade Level, One or More Courses
1995-96

Grade Level	Semester 2
9	33%
10	28%
11	26%
12	13%
Total	27%

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Failure rates among secondary students participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics, music, cheerleading, and clubs were about 66 percent lower in the first six weeks of 1996-97 than for the total student population (**Exhibit 2-35**).

Exhibit 2-35
SISD 5th Six-Weeks Failure Report for
Students in Extracurricular Activities
1996-97

School	Number of Students	Number of Failures	Percentage of Failures	Percentage of Failures Among all Students
Spring HS	1,131	127	11%	36%
Westfield HS	614	75	12%	35%
Bammel MS	600	70	12%	22%
Dueitt MS	648	32	5%	15%
Twin Creeks MS	670	62	9%	16%
Wells MS	1,004	69	7%	19%
Totals	4,667	435	9%	27%

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

Exhibit 2-36 shows the dropout and attendance rates in 1994-95.

Exhibit 2-36
SISD, Texas Dropout and Attendance Rates
1994-95

Performance Indicator	Spring ISD	Texas
Attendance Rate	95.7%	95.1%
Dropout Rate	1.0%	2.6%

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

Dropout rates for all SISD students are low and decreased during 1995-96. SISD's dropout rate reached 1 percent, compared to 2.6 percent for the state (**Exhibit 2-37**). Hispanic students had a dropout rate of 1.8 percent, while African American students had a dropout rate of 1.6 percent.

Exhibit 2-37
SISD Dropout Rates by Ethnicity
1991 - 1994

Student/Group	1994-95	Historical Dropout Rates
---------------	---------	--------------------------

	Number of Dropouts	Enrollment Grades 7-12	Dropout Rate(%)	93-94	92-93	91-92
All Students - Gr. 7-12	97	9,369	1%	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%
African American	21	1,756	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%
Hispanic	26	1,473	1.8%	2.4%	2.5%	2.7%
Anglo	50	5,580	0.9%	1%	0.9%	1.1%
Native American	0	24	0%	0%	NA	NA
Asian/Pac. Islander	0	536	0%	0.6%	NA	NA
Economic Disadv.	13	1,471	0.9%	1.4%	0.9%	0.9%

Source: AEIS, 1991-1994

District officials said that keeping students in school is a priority, and that the board establishes annual objectives to reduce the dropout rate.

Understanding the link between students who fail and students who eventually drop out, SISD has an objective in its Five-Year Education Plan to reduce course failure rates for students in secondary schools. Priority 2, Objective 1 of the district's plan states that failure rates should be reduced to no more than 10 percent at middle schools and 25 percent of high schools. The board will likely strengthen its focus on the goal of reducing the percent of high school students failing one or more courses.

COMMENDATION

SISD is addressing the issue of student failure rates, which is tied directly to eventual dropout rates.

College Admissions

Every school district tries to prepare students for additional education after high school. Almost 65 percent of Texas high school graduates take the major college admissions tests, the SAT and ACT. Nationally, about 41 percent of high school graduates took the SAT, and about 37 percent of students took the ACT. In 1995, more than 100,000 Texas students took either the SAT, the ACT, or both. About 1,000 students, or 17.4 percent,

scored at or above the accountability criterion score established by the State Board of Education of 1000 on the SAT and 24 on the ACT.

FINDING

The proportions of SISD graduating seniors taking college admissions tests (**Exhibit 2-38**) has remained stable since 1982, with scores remaining above the state and national averages

(**Exhibit 2-15**).

**Exhibit 2-38
SISD, Texas, U.S. College Admissions Testing
Class of 1995**

Performance Indicator	SISD	Texas	Nation
Students Scoring at or Above Standard	24.7%	18.0%	NA
Percentage Tested	71.2%	64.8%	41%*
Average SAT Score	931	891	910
Average ACT Score	20.9	20.0	20.8

Source: AEIS, 1995-96. NA = Not available

SISD has more students achieving or exceeding the standard score, a greater percentage of students taking college admissions tests, and higher average scores than state and national expectations for the SAT and ACT tests.

During 1994-95, nearly 800 SISD students enrolled in more than 15 different advanced placement courses, which lead to opportunities to take standardized exams for college credit (**Exhibit 2-39**). SISD students took 368 advanced placement exams and earned credit on 75 percent of these exams.

**Exhibit 2-39
SISD Enrollment in College Board Advanced Placement Courses
1994-95**

Course	Enrollment		
	SISD	Spring HS	Westfield HS
1. American- U. S. History	72	32	40

2. Art History	13	13	-
3. Art - Studio General	19	7	12
4. Biology	31	10	21
5. Chemistry	38	23	15
6. Computer Science	34	34	-
7. Economics - Micro	44	25	19
8. English IV	181	73	108
9. Rhetoric and Composition	71	17	54
10. Government	58	32	26
11. Latin IV	2	-	2
12. Mathematics Calculus AB	76	29	47
13. Mathematics Calculus BC	73	49	24
14. Music Theory	6	3	3
15. Psychology	15	11	4
16. Spanish IV	27	10	17
Total Enrollment in ADVANCED PLACEMENT Courses	760	368	392

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Most universities award college credit based on advanced placement exam scores of "3" or higher. Of SISD students tested (**Exhibit 2-40**), 75 percent earned a score of "3" or higher, compared to 61 percent of students statewide.

Exhibit 2-40
SISD Students With Advanced Placement Scores of "3" or Better
1994-95

Advanced Placement Examination	SISD	Texas	Southwest Region*	Inter-national	SISD Compared to International	
	N=	%	%	%	%	
American - U. S. History	61	61%	49%	47%	51%	Higher

Art History	5	40%	65%	68%	77%	Lower
Art - Studio General	13	85%	84%	83%	76%	Higher
Biology	22	91%	61%	61%	64%	Higher
Chemistry	11	100%	60%	59%	57%	Higher
Computer Science A	6	50%	54%	53%	44%	Higher
Economics - Micro	10	60%	48%	50%	62%	Equivalent
Economics - Macro	17	88%	64%	64%	60%	Higher
English Language and Comp.	16	44%	50%	50%	53%	Lower
English Literature and Comp.	85	66%	68%	67%	68%	Equivalent
French Language	1	100%	60%	59%	65%	Higher
Government & Politics - U.S.	25	84%	64%	64%	64%	Higher
Mathematics Calculus AB	48	56%	60%	59%	59%	Equivalent
Mathematics Calculus BC	12	92%	80%	78%	79%	Higher
Music Theory	3	100%	81%	74%	71%	Higher
Psychology	9	89%	71%	68%	72%	Higher
Spanish Language	21	100%	85%	84%	79%	Higher
Total Tested in Advanced Placement Courses	368	71%	61%	61%	62%	Higher

Source: College Board Advanced Placement Reports, 1994-95

* Southwest region includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and New Mexico.

SISD's survey of its 1996 graduates found 48 percent said they were well or very well prepared for college; 37 percent said that they were somewhat prepared, and 15 percent said they were poorly or very poorly prepared. Although SISD's students scored higher than state and national averages on both the ACT and the SAT, SISD ranked sixth among eight peer districts in both areas in 1995-96 (**Exhibit 2-3**). SISD exceeded the state average in the number of students scoring "3" or better on advanced placement exams, but ranked sixth among the eight peer districts in this category.

Recommendation 12: Apply exemplary aspects of peer district programs to prepare graduates for college.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and the program directors evaluate SISD's performance among students involved in advanced placement courses and their ACT and SAT test scores.	September 1997
2. SISD collects data regarding this issue from the five peer districts performing at a higher level and designs a plan to increase student performance even further beyond state and national averages to move into a leadership position among the peer districts.	November 1997
3. The assistant superintendent directs principals to design measurable objectives to increase performance and to incorporate those objectives in the school improvement plans.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

C. Organization

CURRENT SITUATION

The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services reports directly to the superintendent and is responsible for educational planning, curriculum development and implementation, interpretation and assessment of curriculum, staff development, teacher evaluation, educational facility planning, enrollment projections, and all special programs including special education, gifted and talented, bilingual/ESL, Title 1, counseling, libraries, school business partnerships, and parent education. In addition to the assistant superintendent, the Curriculum and Instructional Services Department (**Exhibit 2-41**) comprises one executive director, two directors, eight program directors, two coordinators, and one teacher leader.

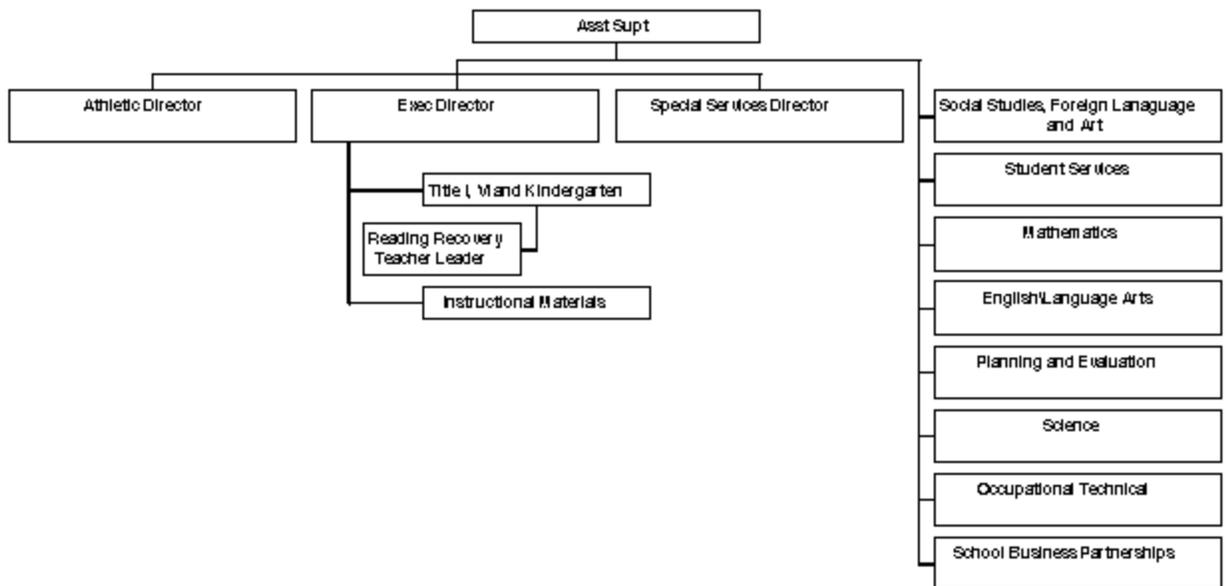
Curriculum and Instructional Services is organized to reflect the board's central values and to provide the leadership and coordination needed to carry out eight of the 11 priorities of the Five-Year Education Plan. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services provides leadership for all instructional functions, as well as planning activities across functions. The review team noted that the department includes all parts of the SISD organization related to its functions. Some districts separate certain instruction-related functions, such as federal programs, special education, vocational education, music, and athletics, among different organizational groupings, causing conflict and communication problems.

SISD's program directors have no supervisory responsibilities; instead, they are responsible for working with teachers of their respective subjects in development, staff training, implementation, and assessment functions.

SISD allows program directors to organize work groups of teachers for the purposes of program development, evaluation, and training, and the provision of centrally purchased instructional materials. These costs are primarily reflected in the department budget, although some costs may be found in the special education, vocational education, music, athletic, ESL/Bilingual, Pre-K, and federal project budgets. The review team found that within the 1996-97 Curriculum and Instructional Services budget,

regular professional salaries related to program and staff development functions totaled \$321,361; instructional administration functions totaled \$249,364; salaries related to evaluation functions totaled \$21,623, and salaries related to general administration functions totaled \$37,576. Supplemental teacher salaries for purposes of staff development, curriculum development, and program evaluation totaled \$344,814. Another \$50,354 in substitute salaries was allocated for these same functions to allow teachers to take class time off for training. Finally, the department budget includes a materials budget of \$142,264. The total department budget was \$2,180,707.

Exhibit 2-41
SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department
1996-97



Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

FINDING

SISD students attend schools within into two geographically distinct feeder patterns (**Exhibit 2-42**); students within each pattern attend a set group of elementary, middle and high schools and effectively do not cross paths during the school day with students attending schools in the other feeder pattern. In a sense, consequently, the district serves students as if it was two districts. It is possible, then, that by closely monitoring performance among students within each feeder group, principals, teachers, and parents might identify particular challenges difficult to decipher when studying SISD student performance overall. It might be, for instance, that students who attend a particular elementary and middle school within a feeder pattern drop out more frequently than students who

attend other schools. To date, however, SISD does not analyze student performance within its feeder patterns.

**Exhibit 2-42
SISD School Attendance Patterns**

Spring HS (9-12)						
Dueitt Middle School (6-8)			Twin Creeks Middle School (6-8)			
Anderson (PK-5)	Jenkins (PK-5)	Smith (22%) (PK-5)	Hirsch (PK-5)	Salyers (80%) (PK-5)	Smith (78%) (PK-5)	Winship (K-5)
Westfield HS (9-12)						
Bammel Middle School (6-8)			Wells Middle School (6-8)			
Bammel (PK-5)	Clark (PK-5)	Link (65%) (PK-5)	Beneke (PK-5)	Link (35%) (PK-5)	Oak Creek (K-5)	Thompson (PK-5)
Meyer (PK-5)	Ponderosa (PK-5)	Salyers (20%) (PK-5)				

*Schools with values in parentheses are schools with split attendance patterns. The value in parentheses indicates the proportion of students promoting to the next school.

Wunsche School**

*Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department **This school serves special populations from the entire district.*

Three elementary schools have split school attendance patterns and send students to two middle schools rather than one. Salyers Elementary School promotes 80 percent of its students to Twin Creek Middle School and 20 percent to Bammel Middle School. Link Elementary promotes 65 percent of its students to Bammel Middle School and 35 percent to Wells Middle School. Smith Elementary School promotes 78 percent to Twin Creeks Middle School and 22 percent to Dueitt Middle School. Although not desirable, the split patterns are necessary to prevent middle schools from becoming overcrowded.

Recommendation 13: Adjust attendance boundaries to create identifiable school attendance patterns wherever possible, without creating additional crowding.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and the program directors design a management plan for each school attendance system with specific performance measures addressing both SISD and attendance pattern issues.	September 1997
2. The assistant superintendent presents the plans to school principals for review and refinement.	November 1997
3. Principals present the plans to faculties for review and refinement.	January 1998
4. The assistant superintendent and program directors meet with principals in attendance pattern groups to modify plans as needed.	February 1998
5. The assistant superintendent presents the plans to the superintendent and senior staff for review.	March 1998
6. The superintendent presents the plans to the board for approval.	April 1998
7. Program directors design curriculum materials and teacher training initiatives as indicated in the plans.	June and July 1998
8. Principals implement the plans	August 1998
9. The assistant superintendent and program directors monitor performance measures.	August 1998 through May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

D. Staffing and Scheduling

CURRENT SITUATION

Average class sizes in SISD elementary schools are the same as the state average. Secondary classes, by subject area, are slightly larger, by about one student, than the state average (**Exhibit 2-43**).

Exhibit 2-43
SISD Class Size by Subject Area
1995-96

Level/Subject	Average Size	
	District	State
Elementary	20.0	20.0
Secondary		
English	22.3	21.0
Foreign Language	23.4	22.1
Mathematics	23.3	21.0
Science	23.4	21.9
Social Studies	23.3	22.8

Source: PEIMS, October 1995

The student to teacher ratio (**Exhibit 2-44**) is 16.1, compared to a statewide average of 15.6.

Exhibit 2-44
SISD Average Student/Teacher Ratio
1995-96

	District	State
Student/Teacher Ratio	16.1	15.6

Source: PEIMS, October 1995

SISD teachers are slightly more experienced than teachers statewide but their average years of experience in SISD are slightly lower than the state average (**Exhibit 2-45**).

Exhibit 2-45
SISD Average Teacher Experience
1995-96

Teacher Experience	SISD	State
Average years experience	11.9	11.7
Avg. years experience with district	7.3	8.0

Source: PEIMS, October 1996

About 27 percent of SISD teachers (**Exhibit 2-46**) have less than six years experience, while the average statewide is about 33 percent.

Exhibit 2-46
SISD Teachers by Years of Experience
1995-96

Years Experience	SISD		State	
	Number of Teachers*	%	Number of Teachers*	%
Beginning	57	4.5%	15,093	6.3%
1-5 Years	288	22.9%	64,837	27.0%
6-10 Years	236	18.8%	43,191	18.0%
11-20 Years	476	37.9%	72,136	30.0%
Over 20 Years	198	15.8%	45,113	18.8%

Source: PEIMS, October 1996 * Rounded

FINDING

SISD has conducted a survey each March since 1991-92 using the Organizational Health Inventory, an instrument allowing staff members to rank the leadership quality of their superiors on factors such as communication and the ability to hear and implement suggestions. This

provides useful feedback to principals and other administrators on the organizational health of their schools and on important aspects of their leadership. Scores above 500 indicate a healthy climate, while those below 500 suggest problems. Scores are broken down and analyzed by elementary, middle, and high schools. From this information, the district develops a profile of principals and other administrators and designs appropriate staff development measures to enhance their performance.

SISD's average scores at all levels indicate an open climate, and over the years the scores have become more positive. Based on these data, SISD schools exhibit very positive organizational health.

COMMENDATION

Using the Organizational Health Inventory, SISD annually gauges its organizational climate in its schools and within district leadership.

FINDING

SISD has instituted an innovative program in grades K-12, the Teachers-As-Counselor program, that spreads counseling into the teaching function. A three-day training session, accompanied by a guide book, prepares teachers for the project. These trained teachers meet weekly with eight to 10 students experiencing similar problems to solve problems and prevent them from becoming more serious. Students not responding to these group meetings are returned to the school counselor. 66.9 percent of the elementary school parents responding to the Texas A&M University survey gave high marks to the counseling function. Staffing ratios for counselors are shown in **Exhibit 2-47**.

**Exhibit 2-47
SISD Counseling Staffing Allocations
1996-97**

Elementary	Middle	High
0-749 students = 1 counselor	1 counselor for each 400 students (or major fraction thereof -201)	1 counselor for each 400 students
750-999 students = 1.5 counselors		(or major fraction thereof -201)
1000-1249 students = 2 counselors		plus 1 vocational

		counselor and 1 drug education specialist
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Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

SISD ranks in the middle of peer districts on its number of students served by each elementary counselor (**Exhibit 2-48**).

Exhibit 2-48
Peer Districts Comparisons of Elementary Counselor Staffing
1996-97

District	Number of Elementary Students	Current Number of Elementary Counselors	Number of Students Served by Elementary Counselor
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	12,310	22	560
Duncanville ¹	3,539	7	506
Fort Bend ²	22,139	30	738
Goose Creek	8,933	18	496
Klein	13,520	16	845
Richardson	17,600	44	400
Spring ³	10,359	20	518

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

¹ *Duncanville also has intermediate schools that may include 4-6 grades. The enrollment in those grades is 1,755, with 5 counselors.*

² *Includes special education.*

³ *57 elementary students are served at the Wunsche School by a counselor not classified as an elementary counselor. These students have been removed from the elementary student count.*

TEA recommends a maximum ratio of one counselor for every 300 students. The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals and the

Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association recommend one counselor for each 350 students.

While SISD does not fully meet all of the recommended ratios, the district's counseling arrangement incorporates four important safeguards: every school has at least one certified counselor; teachers are trained and monitored by certified school counselors; students requiring more intense guidance are referred to certified counselors; and school site-based teams have the flexibility to hire additional counselors if they do not feel the current system meets student needs.

COMMENDATION

SISD uses a unique system to handle counseling, saving the district more than \$320,000 annually while still providing a high level of service to the students.

This program has allowed the district to avoid hiring eight additional counselors at an average salary plus benefits of more than \$40,000 annually.

FINDING

The majority of SISD's students and staff are Anglo (**Exhibit 2-49**). The student body is 53 percent Anglo, 21 percent African American, 19 percent Hispanic, and 6 percent Other. Total SISD personnel is 82 percent Anglo. Ninety-four percent of teachers, 87 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 92 percent of counselors are Anglo. The percentage of total minority staff is less than that in all but two of SISD's peer districts, and the district's percentage of African-American teachers is the lowest.

**Exhibit 2-49
SISD Ethnicity of Staff and Students
1996-97**

Ethnic Group	Students	Total Personnel	Teachers	Principals/ Assistant Principals	Counselors
African American	21.3%	9.3%	2.0%	13.2%	4%
Anglo	53.2%	82.2%	93.9%	86.8%	92%
Hispanic	19.3%	6.4%	3.4%	0%	4%
Other	6.2%	2.2%	0.4%	0%	0%

Source: 1996 PEIMS and SISD Personnel Office

The teachers assigned to special programs (**Exhibit 2-50**) are predominantly Anglo.

Exhibit 2-50
SISD Special Programs Teaching Staff by Ethnicity
1996-97

Ethnicity	Special Education	Alternative Education	Bilingual/ ESL	Title 1	Tier 4	Total Teachers
African American	5%	--	2%	--	2%	21%
Anglo	92%	94%	61%	100%	98%	53%
Hispanic	1.5%	6%	33%	--	--	19%
Other	1.5%	--	4%	--	--	6%

Source: 1996 PEIMS and SISD Personnel Office

Recommendation 14: Ensure proportional representation of ethnic group members among SISD's teaching, counseling, and leadership forces.

SISD should make the recruitment of outstanding minority teachers, counselors, and administrators a major goal. The director of Personnel Services should survey colleges and universities producing large numbers of minority teachers and expand contacts with them. Committees should conduct ongoing interview sessions at these locations. Outstanding minority students should be contacted during their junior years to express interest and provide information about job opportunities. The director should create a minority network system to maintain contact with practicing minority teachers and administrators. Local minority business executives, professional leaders, and parents should be asked to assist SISD in locating minority applicants and help with follow-up communications to promising applications.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The superintendent assembles a group of community minority business executives, professional leaders, and parents to inform them of SISD's initiative and to solicit their assistance in locating	September 1997
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outstanding minority applicants and to assist with follow-up communications to promising applicants.	
2. The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Support Services to develop a plan for the recruitment of minority teachers, counselors, and leaders.	September 1997
3. The assistant superintendent for Personnel contacts placement offices in universities throughout the state and region to inform them of SISD's initiative and to solicit opportunities to interview outstanding minority candidates.	September 1997
4. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services contacts the chairs of education departments throughout the state to inform them of SISD's initiative and to solicit opportunities to contact outstanding minority students in their junior year of study.	September 1997
5. The assistant superintendents create recruitment teams made up of SISD minority teachers and leaders to visit universities and interview promising applicants	September 1997
6. The assistant superintendent for Personnel and the executive director of Board and Community Services design and implement an aggressive communications campaign for professional journals and the media.	September 1997
7. SISD recruits experienced minority teachers and administrators.	September 1997 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact. Funds could be prioritized in budgets allotted for personnel recruitment, marketing, and communications.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

E. Staff Development and Teacher Evaluation

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's staff development and teacher evaluation program is intended to improve teaching in each SISD school. The National Staff Development Council, a non-profit group of educators committed to high professional development standards, has established national standards for staff development programs, including:

- Continuous improvement as the norm.
- Strong leadership and the support of all shareholders.
- Alignment with the district's strategic plan.
- Line item funding in the budget.
- Provision of adequate time during the work day devoted to staff development.
- Staff development processes that are innovative and include study of the change process.
- Knowledge of human learning and development.
- Careful analysis of disaggregated student data regarding goals for student learning.
- An ongoing process including multiple sources of information and focusing on all levels of the organization.
- A variety of approaches to accomplish improved instruction and student success.
- Necessary follow-up to ensure improvement.
- Application of collaborative skills, collegial work, and teamwork.
- Understanding of school environments responsive to teaching and learning.
- Facilitation of equitable and quality education.
- Stress on high expectations for student learning.
- Awareness of the importance of the support of families.
- Training in the various types of performance assessments.
- Development of interdisciplinary teams.

FINDING

SISD staff development is managed by the Curriculum and Instructional Services Department using a program development cycle related to the implementation of new, expanded, or revised curriculum. The cycle also responds to priorities contained in the Five-Year Education Plan, such as technology applications and peer mediation for conflict resolution, and to needs identified at each school and included in school improvement plans. Each school develops school improvement plans to identify how teachers and administrators will address state, SISD, and school objectives for such issues as TAAS improvement, student discipline, dropout prevention, and staff development. Participation in the staff development program is integrated with the performance pay process. In addition to staff development offered as a part of the state-mandated four days of staff development when students are not in school, SISD-sponsored staff development is offered by Curriculum and Instructional Services staff during the school year after school hours, on Saturdays, and during the summer (**Exhibit 2-51**).

Exhibit 2-51
SISD Staff Development Training for Teachers
Conducted Outside Work Hours

Year	Number of Workshops*	Number of Participants
1992-93	40	1,517
1993-94	65	784
1994-95	58	988
1995-96	127	3,062

*Workshops vary from 2 hours to 3 weeks in length

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

The review team found that SISD offers a large and varied staff development program following standards established by the National Staff Development Council and involving large numbers of staff. In 1995-96, SISD offered more than 100 workshops for teachers and support staff, with more than 3,000 participants in attendance. SISD's teachers, on average, attended about two and one half workshops beyond those held during the regular school day.

Included among summer workshops for teachers are two kinds of experience worthy of special mention. Each year, all teachers who joined SISD after the first day of school in the preceding year attend a two-day New Teacher Institute designed to introduce SISD's programs and practices. It typically involves one-half day at the school and one and one-

half days at a central location and features workshops in each subject, a session on instructional expectations with the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services, and a session with the superintendent.

The second initiative is a one-day workshop held for new team leaders and department chairs, followed by a one-day workshop for elementary team leaders and another for secondary team leaders and department chairs. The workshops are designed to make teachers feel a part of SISD's management activities.

Presenters for most of these workshops are SISD teachers who have been trained under the leadership of the program directors. The review team found that evaluations of workshop presenters were more positive for internal teacher-presenters than for outside consultants.

In addition to these staff development efforts, each school offers workshops that award professional development hours. During 1995-96, individual schools offered 62 school-based workshops, involving 1,285 participants, that awarded professional development hours. Data for previous years have not been kept and were unavailable to the review team. Evaluating site-based and central staff development hours together, each teacher, on average, participated in approximately three and one-half workshops outside of regular school hours.

Program directors stated that SISD recognizes the importance of teacher time by paying them to attend some staff development activities. In 1995-96, SISD began paying teachers a stipend of \$80 for attendance at selected teacher workshops of six hours in length. The stipends helped boost the number of workshops held that year and attendance at them. In addition to payment for selected hours, the incentive program includes:

- A requirement that teachers at the top of the pay scale--more than half of all SISD teachers--who wish to be considered for more than the minimal level of performance pay must earn a minimum of 12 professional development hours a year.
- An opportunity for all teachers who participate in 12 or more hours of professional development to be included in a pool of teachers eligible for attendance at about 30 state, regional, and national conferences at SISD expense.
- Reimbursement of up to \$48 per credit hour for participation in graduate courses that advance professional development in a teaching field.

In addition to formal workshops, teachers have been engaged in team study related to professional development. Every school has one or more

study teams involving volunteer teachers devoted to the analysis of problems experienced by students.

SISD has engaged in a number of cooperative efforts with institutions of higher education, including:

- The establishment of a professional development school for pre-service training for teachers and graduate courses for SISD teachers at Westfield High School, in cooperation with Texas A&M University.
- Professional development activities at Bammel Elementary School for pre-service teachers from the University of Houston and at Salyers and Winship elementary schools for pre-service teachers from Sam Houston State University.
- Training in reading for young children through cooperative arrangements with the University of St. Thomas, the University of Houston at Clear Lake and Texas Women's University.
- The promotion of teacher research through membership in the University of Houston School/University Research Collaborative.
- The promotion of study teams and other forms of collaborative inquiry through membership in the National Coalition for Equality in Learning, managed from the University of Massachusetts, and through cooperative work with the other member districts of the coalition.

COMMENDATION

SISD has developed a comprehensive professional training program incorporating incentives designed to motivate participation.

FINDING

During interviews and focus groups, the review team heard some professionals state that, while the district's staff development program is excellent, most of the training is devoted to a single grade level, subject, topic, or school faculty. Several expressed a desire to participate in training sessions with other teachers in different grade levels and from other schools. Opportunities for cross-training of this kind would permit teachers to share strategies and materials and allow for smoother student transitions from one grade to the next.

Recommendation 15: Give teachers more opportunities to share teaching strategies and successful programs across grade levels and schools.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and program directors create sharing sessions designed to accommodate across-grade and across-school staff development.	January 1998
2. Administrative program directors schedule the training sessions and notify principals of planned sessions.	February 1998
3. Program directors facilitate the training.	February 1998 through May 1998
4. The assistant superintendent, principals, and teachers monitor training effectiveness.	February 1998 through May 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact.

FINDING

SISD provides a one-day training program each year for new and returning substitute teachers. The training includes workshops on classroom management, characteristics of middle school students, cultural diversity, peer mediation, special education, health services, Title 1, reading recovery, and reader's/writer's workshop.

Although no special training on working with bilingual/ESL is provided as a part of the substitute program, SISD encourages substitutes for these areas to be selected for their second language ability and special knowledge and skills in working with limited English proficient students. The review team, however, was told by some teachers and program directors that often substitutes for special population classes are selected from the regular pool of substitutes and are not well enough equipped to provide successful assistance.

Recommendation 16:

Create a special pool of substitute teachers trained to work with special education and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

SISD should design staff development including appropriate laws, specific SISD procedures, modified curriculum, and special learning and behavioral conditions associated with teaching special populations students and provide this training to substitutes wishing to serve in these classes. In addition, SISD should identify professionals with appropriate

training and experience to be placed on a substitute list for special populations classes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and the program directors create training designed for substituting in special populations classrooms.	September 1997
2. Appropriate program directors schedule the training sessions and notify principals that substitute teachers for special population classes must be sought first from those certified in the area of specialization or those who have participated in SISD's special training.	September 1997
3. The assistant superintendent notifies people on the substitute teaching list of the new procedures and the training opportunities provided by SISD.	September 1997
4. Program directors provide the training.	October 1997
5. The assistant superintendent and principals monitor the effectiveness of the training.	October 1997 through May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation.

Teacher Evaluation System

FINDING

SISD has implemented a plan for teacher evaluation, which assumes that teachers want to improve their teaching and is oriented toward the professional development of teachers. After the state provided the ability to waive state teacher evaluation procedures in 1991, SISD developed its own program, retaining some of the features of the state system. New teachers and teachers with poor evaluations are still evaluated, in part, by use of the Texas Teacher Appraisal system (TTAS). All other teachers develop an individual improvement plan called a Professional Development Plan (PDP) which became a part of the SISD teacher evaluation system in 1993. The PDP must specify an instructional behavior on which the teacher intends to work in a given year, indicate the activities by which the behavior will be improved, and detail the evaluation procedures by which the teacher and the teacher's appraiser will know the plan has been accomplished. The PDP is written by the teacher, approved by the appraiser in a conference scheduled as soon as the PDP is

prepared, reviewed at mid-year, and evaluated at the end of the year. The appraiser is responsible for ensuring that the teacher is fulfilling professional responsibilities and carrying out effective classroom organization and management.

The PDP focuses the collaboration between the teacher and appraiser to a personalized approach toward remediation. They might decide, for instance, that researching different teaching styles or teaming with another teacher successful in an identified teaching style would improve performance. As one teacher told the review team, "SISD makes you feel special. The administration knows who you are and is supportive of what you do."

COMMENDATION

SISD has created an evaluation process that allows the teacher to design, in conjunction with the designated appraiser, a unique Professional Development Plan that promotes instructional growth and enhances collaborative, innovative, and research-oriented plans specific to the teacher's needs and SISD's goals.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

F. Special Education

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's special education program is designed to comply with appropriate laws, mandates, and procedural safeguards. Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations states that the purpose of special education is to: ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate, public education that includes special education and related services to meet their unique needs; to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected; to assist states and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities, and to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate those children.

The Texas education code speaks to equal educational services and opportunities, stating:

"An educational institution may not deny services to any individual eligible to participate in a school district's special education program as provided by Section 29.003, but the educational institution shall provide individuals with disabilities special educational services as authorized by law or, where expressly authorized, assist in and contribute toward the provision of appropriate special educational services in cooperation with other educational institutions and other appropriate agencies, institutions, or departments."

The State Board of Education Rules, contained in *Rules and Regulations for Providing Special Education Services*, apply these national and state laws by stating in General Provisions, Section 89.1001 -- Scope and Applicability, that special education services shall be provided to eligible students in accordance with all applicable federal law and regulations, state statutes, rules of the State Board of Education (SBOE), directives of the commissioner of education, and the State Plan Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

FINDING

From 1993-94 through 1995-96, SISD's percentage of special education students remained stable, while state percentages increased (**Exhibit 2-52**).

**Exhibit 2-52
SISD Student Enrollment in Special Education**

Student Enrollment	SISD	Texas
1995-96	10%	11.5%
1994-95	10%	11.1%
1993-94	9.9%	10.7%

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

The distribution by ethnic group (**Exhibit 2-53**) of SISD's special education population and total population are similar.

**Exhibit 2-53
SISD Students by Ethnicity for District and Special Education
May 1996**

Group	African-American	Hispanic	Anglo	Other
District Enrollment	20%	18%	56%	6%
Special Education Enrollment	25%	14%	59%	2%

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

SISD serves about the same proportion of students by disability as does the county and state (**Exhibit 2-54**), with two exceptions. A larger percentage of students are classified as emotionally disturbed (ED), 19.7 percent compared to 7.9 percent for Texas, and a smaller percentage is classified as learning disabled, 43.3 percent to 56.1 percent.

**Exhibit 2-54
Percentage of SISD Special Education Population by Disability
1996**

Disability	SISD	Harris County	Texas	Nation
Orthopedically Impaired	1.0	2.0	1.4	1.0
Other Health Impaired	5.0	5.4	4.6	2.0

Auditorially Impaired	1.0	1.8	1.3	1.4
Visually Impaired	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6
Mentally Retarded	5.5	7.2	6.6	11.6
Emotionally Disturbed	19.7	9.4	7.9	8.6
Learning Disabled	43.3	51.5	56.1	51.0
Speech Impaired	20.8	19.9	20.1	21.0
Other	2.0	2.1	1.1	2.8

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

During 1995-96, the population of students with emotional disturbance in SISD grew by 113 new students. In the summer of 1996, an analysis was done in an effort to explain the growth in this population. The study revealed that there was a total of 113 new ED students added to SISD during the year, and that 71 students, 63 percent, moved into SISD with a prior label of ED. Forty-two students, 37 percent, were identified by personnel after they entered SISD. There was a total growth of 5.5 percent in SISD's ED population. A related finding was that 93 ED students moved out of SISD during the 1996-97 school year. This is significant because of the diagnosis and treatment time devoted to the needs of this shifting population.

This greater incidence of emotionally disturbed students in the student population may be one of the reasons SISD received a January 1997 letter from the TEA. The letter indicated that SISD exceeded by 25 percent or more in both 1994-95 and 1995-96 the statewide ratio of the number of full-time equivalent students placed in partially or totally self-contained classrooms, more than half the day, to the number of full-time equivalent students placed in resource room or mainstream instructional arrangements. What this means is that SISD removes students from regular classrooms and places them into special education classes to a greater extent than other districts in the state and more than is considered appropriate by state law.

SISD's director of Special Services replied to TEA in March 1997 offering three reasons for the districts' higher than average use of self-contained classroom settings. These three factors were the higher incidence of emotionally disturbed students in SISD, who typically require more restrictive settings; the maintenance of alternative classes in science, social studies, and health, in contrast to mainstreaming; and a more intensive co-teaching model, classified as partially self-contained. The corrective steps specified by the district were to: discontinue alternative classes in science

and social studies effective the 1997-98 school year; and change some co-teaching arrangements to less restrictive helping teacher arrangements in the 1998-99 school year.

According to TEA officials, SISD is required to evaluate the instructional options that they have for special education students and develop a plan to train staff in serving special education students in regular classrooms. Additionally, state law stipulates that districts exceeding the ratio may have their special education allotment reduced to the level it would have been if the ratio were not more than 25 percent higher than the statewide average.

In interviews with the review team, TEA staff said that there are a lot of resources available to districts to reduce the use of self-contained classrooms for special education students. The Region 20 Education Service Center in San Antonio is charged with the responsibility of providing assistance to school districts statewide on moving special education students into regular classrooms. Areas that are often looked at for possible improvements include how to provide better information and training about placement options to Admissions, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committees, who make placement decisions for special education students, and training teachers, and hiring personnel who are skilled in teaching special education students in regular classrooms. Additionally, a rider to the 1997 TEA appropriations bill provides funding for staff development activities to help districts serve students with disabilities in regular classroom settings.

Recommendation 17: Evaluate the quality of special education placement information provided to ARD committees, and seek assistance from the Region 20 Education Service Center to build capacity of district staff to serve students with disabilities in regular classroom settings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent requests a detailed report from the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services regarding the status of placements of students into educational settings for children experiencing emotional disturbance.	September 1997
2. The director of Special Services contacts Region 20 Education Service Center to identify available assistance and financial resources to help districts serve students with disabilities in regular classroom settings.	September 1997
3. The assistant superintendent directs the director of Special Services to have the eligibility folders evaluated. Psychological	September 1997

testing studied, Admission Review and Dismissal procedures checked, Individual Educational Plans reviewed, and teachers interviewed for all students diagnosed as emotionally disturbed and the director of Special Services prepares a briefing regarding the findings with recommendations for changing any of the district's placement options or ARD committee procedures.	
4. The district initiates new procedures for ARD committees and training for teachers and district staff	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

SISD spends (**Exhibit 2-55**) more of its budget on special education programs than the average among districts throughout the state. Although SISD ranks sixth among the peer district group in expenditures for regular education, SISD spends a larger percent of its budget for special education than six of the seven other districts in the peer group.

Exhibit 2-55
SISD Program Participation and Expenditures and Peer Comparisons
1995-96

Program Participation and Expenditures	Carrollton Farmers Branch	Duncanville	Fort Bend	Goose Creek	Klein	Richardson	Spring	Spring Branch	Texas
Enrollment by Program									
Special Education	10.8	10	8.1	9.8	11.5	11	10.0	10.6	11.5
Expenditures by Program (%)									
Regular Education	69.8	80	83.2	94.3	75.2	74	70.9	68	67.4
Special Education	11	9	9.7	6.8	15.9	11	15.2	10.1	11.4

Source: AEIS, 1995-96

SISD's percent of students placed in special education classes is 1.5 percentage points lower than the state average and about even with the average among the peer districts, but the costs for educating those students is disproportional with both peer districts and the average among the districts in the state.

In SISD, the youth services workers, nurses, some legal expenses, and some technology costs are included in the special services budget. Such general education costs may not be part of the special education budgets in comparison districts. Since salary is the major component of any budget, it is significant to note that 28 percent of special education teachers in SISD have 20 or more years in education. This compares to 18 percent of total district teachers with the same 20 years of experience. These two issues could account for some of the above-peer districts expenditures as well as the higher than average number of students served in self-contained classrooms.

State funding formulas are weighted based on the educational setting where students are served. This means, for example that the district receives more money for homebound or hospital bound students than students in a regular classroom, since it is obviously more costly to deliver one-on-one instruction to a student at home or in the hospital.

According to TEA's Summary of Finance documents for the 1993-94 through 1996-97 school year, SISD's special education allotment increased from approximately \$6 million in 1993-94 to and estimated \$7.5 million in 1996-97 (**Exhibit 2-56**).

Exhibit 2-56
SISD's State Special Education Allotment
1993-94 through 1996-97

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96*	1996-97**
Total Special Education Allotment	\$6,011,197	\$5,702,489	\$7,093,127	\$7,466,322
Total Student FTEs Served	708.6	697.4	842.5	889.5
Total Weighted FTEs	2338.7	2149.3	2492.6	2836.5

*Source: TEA's Summary of Finance 1993-94 through 1996-97 *Near Final Version **Planning Version FTE = Full-time equivalents*

One reason for SISD's drop in funding from 1993-94 to 1994-95 for special education was a change in the law over the last few years that was designed to encourage placing students in less restrictive environments. For example, funding for students served in a self-contained, severe setting dropped roughly \$1,200 annually while funding for students served in a mainstream setting increased by roughly \$2,125 annually.

Classroom settings are determined by ARD committees based on individual student needs. Yet, understanding the funding formulas can allow a district to better manage its resources.

Recommendation 18: Analyze special education expenditures and revenues and seek to maximize the district's resources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services requests the director of special services to assemble a task force of selected teachers, principals, special educators from peer districts, representatives from Harris County Department of Education, consultants from Region IV Education Service Center, professors from local universities, and personnel from TEA to evaluate SISD program costs and revenues.	September 1997
2. The director of Special Services assembles and charges the committee to review SISD's special educational programs and associated costs and revenues. The director's staff serves as resources and technical advisors to the committee.	October 1997
3. The committee conducts the program review.	October 1997 through November 1997
4. The committee prepares a report of findings and recommendations regarding the nature of the programs and the appropriateness of expenditures and revenues.	December 1997
5. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and the program directors study the committee's findings and prepare a response.	January 1998
6. The committee presents its report and recommendations to the board.	February 1998
7. The board considers the committee's findings and the staff's response.	March 1998
8. The board determines a course of action regarding the special education program and directs the assistant	April 1998

superintendent to implement the plan.	
9. The assistant superintendent implements the plan and initiates proper monitoring initiatives.	August 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

G. Career and Technology

According to fall 1996 PEIMS data, Career and Technology Education (CTE) is a popular option for SISD students. Approximately 77 percent, 4,494 of 5,762, of all high school students in SISD are enrolled in an CTE program. **Exhibit 2-57** shows student enrollment by sex and ethnicity.

Exhibit 2-57
SISD Enrollment in Career and Technology Education by Sex and Ethnicity
1996-97

Occupational/Technical Education Enrollment by Sex and Ethnicity									
1996-97									
	District-wide			Spring High School			Westfield High School		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Econ. Disadvantaged			22.60%			15.6%			25.5%
Limited English Proficient			1.90%			0.3%			2.2%
Handicapped			12.50%			15.9%			9.1%
White	30.6%	23.8%		41.7%	32.8%		16.9%	16.1%	
Hispanic	10.1%	9.1%		7.7%	7.4%		11.4%	11.3%	
African American	10.6%	9.9%		3.8%	4.8%		18.1%	15.9%	
Asian or Pacific Islands	3.1%	2.6%		0.8%	0.5%		5.3%	4.8%	
Native American	0.1%	0.2%		0.3%	0.2%		0%	0.1%	

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department

Of these, 1,697 are enrolled in a state-approved Technical Preparation (Tech Prep) program. Tech Prep is a program jointly approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the TEA that combines the junior-senior years of high school with two years at the junior or community college. The plan leads students toward associate degree or baccalaureate degree programs and helps students prepare for jobs in at least one field of engineering technology, applied science, health, or business through a planned, sequential program of study.

Tech Prep programs in Texas provide training that prepare students for high skill, high wage jobs by supplying the education and training that those jobs require. The program results in cost and time saving incentives to students and their parents who no longer pay college tuition, fees, and related costs for duplicated courses, materials, or academic remediation. Enrollment by high school is shown in **Exhibit 2-58** below.

Exhibit 2-58
SISD Career and Technology Education (CTE) Enrollment
1996-97

School	Total Enrollment	CTE Enrollment
Spring High	2,613	1,511
Westfield High	3,032	1,492

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Program enrollment in SISD is at 21 percent of total enrollment--the highest of all comparison districts except Duncanville, which is at 28 percent. Delivery of quality programs is also accomplished with fewer staff than comparison districts--3 percent as compared to 4 percent in Aldine and Klein. The review team found that interest in the program at Spring High School increased, while interest at Westfield High School has essentially remained constant (**Exhibit 2-59**).

Exhibit 2-59
SISD Career and Technology Education (CTE) Enrollment as a
Percentage of
Total High School Enrollment

School	1996-97	1995-96
Spring High	57.8%	53.1%
Westfield High	49.2%	49.5%

Source: PEIMS

SISD students may choose from more than 80 CTE courses representing eight different program areas including Agricultural Science, Business, Health Occupations, Home Economics, Industrial Technology, Marketing, Trades and Industrial courses, and Career Investigation. In addition, other special programs such as Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), BESTT, and Teen Parenting are specially funded programs. Business Education is the largest program. Enrollment by program is shown below (**Exhibit 2-60**).

**Exhibit 2-60
SISD Career and Technology Course Enrollments**

Program	District Enrollment	Number of Teaching Staff
High School		
Agricultural Science	417	4.5
Business Education*	1,638	16
Health Occupations	130	2
Home Economics*	725	12
Industrial Technology	371	4
Marketing*	193	3
Trades and Industry*	495	10
Bridging The Education Scene for Teachers of Tomorrow (BESTT)	29	4
JTPA: Title IIA	24	1.5
Title IIB (Summer)	43	3
Teen Parenting	129	1
Total High School	4,194	57.4
Middle School		
Career Investigation	487	4
Intro. Industrial Tech.	809	3.5
Life Management Skills	253	4
Total Middle School	1,549	11.5

*Includes Cooperative Education		
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Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Funding for the program comes from a number of sources. The program director investigates and seeks out grants to supplement state and local funding. Those funds and their sources are outlined below (**Exhibit 2-61**).

Exhibit 2-61
Sources of Funding for SISD Career and Technology Education Programs
1996-97

Program	SISD Budgeted Expenditures	Source of Funds		
		State	Federal	Other Grants
Career and Technology Ed. (600.997 FTE's)	\$2,236,709	\$2,188,507	\$97,906	*\$6,500
Teen Parenting Program:				
Teen Parenting Grant	\$50,000		\$50,000	
PEP Grant	\$50,000			**\$50,000
JTPA Title IIA (year program)	\$63,840		\$26,465	
JTPA Title IIB (summer '97)	\$73,458		\$73,458	

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

*Tech Prep Grant

**State Grant

Texas school districts receive state funding based on attendance and, in the case of Career and Technology education, the state has a weighted funding formula that is designed to compensate districts for additional operating costs associated with certain CTE programs. That formula is the Adjusted Basic Allotment multiplied by 1.37. The intent of that funding is to compensate for lower student/teacher ratios in laboratory classes where equipment use is a safety concern, programs requiring expensive

technology/equipment as teaching tools, career guidance and planning services, and development of partnerships with business and industry.

The PEP, *Parenting Education Program*, program is funded by a competitive grant through the TEA. The program was mandated in Senate Bill 1 and is funded from the top of the state's Compensatory Education Fund. The purpose of the funding is to provide support services for parenting teens such as child care, access to community services, and transportation that enables them to remain in school. SISD has received this funding for three years and expects to receive continued funding in the foreseeable future.

FINDING Instruction within the department is focused on preparation for careers or additional occupational training. Seven years ago, recognizing the need to provide alternate methods of delivering occupational instruction that would result in relevant learning and cost savings to SISD, a school-to-work program was implemented in partnership with the Wyndham Greenspoint Hotel to prepare students for careers in the hospitality services industry. Since that time, additional partnerships with McDonald's Corporation to prepare students for management positions, partnerships with local car dealerships to prepare students for technician positions, and partnerships at local hospitals have been implemented. These programs are taught at the businesses which results in savings of classroom space and facilities, materials, and equipment. The review team found that SISD continues to seek partnerships with business and other delivery systems to strengthen the programs.

SISD draws upon the volunteer services of more than 100 local business people to form an advisory board to make recommendations regarding program content and to evaluate those programs on their effectiveness in meeting stated goals and objectives. This process sets the direction for the programs and ensures that students receive relevant instruction that prepares them to enter employed occupations upon graduation or to continue their education.. Composition of the advisory board is shown in **Exhibit 2-62**.

Exhibit 2-62
SISD Career and Technology Advisory Board

Program	Number of Advisory Members
Agricultural Science	4
Business Education	11
Health Occupations	3
Home Economics	31

Industrial Technology	5
Marketing Education	9
Trades and Industrial Education	22
Teen Parenting	10
Members at Large	11
Total Members	106

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

COMMENDATION SISD seeks business partnerships, and uses advisory boards including teachers, parents, and community leaders to assist in directing the Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs. **FINDING** SISD has a process for re-engineering programs that have been undersubscribed. Examples of program improvements and cost savings are included in **Exhibit 2-63**.

Exhibit 2-63
SISD Modifications in Career and Technology Courses

Program	Intervention /Action Taken
Automotive Technician; Air Conditioning and Refrigeration; and Welding Programs:	When student interest in these specialized programs dropped, the district began contracting instruction with North Harris College. Under the terms of the contract, the college provides on a per-student-cost basis a separate high school class for juniors and seniors who wish to enroll. The contract calls for SISD to pay \$700 per student each semester, thereby eliminating teacher salary, operating expenses, and equipment costs.
Drafting	When the district examined the cost per student associated with purchase of CAD equipment and software for a limited number of students, an investigation of alternate ways to deliver the instruction was conducted. A plan was developed in partnership with ITT Technical Institute, and agreement reached, to transport the 20-25 students from the district's two high schools to the Institute for CAD instruction. ITT agreed to provide instruction for those students at no cost to the district.
Electronics	When enrollment continued to drop over a two-year period from 1994-96, reaching fewer than 20 enrollees, the district began to investigate new directions for the

	program. A new program, Computer Maintenance Technician, will be implemented beginning in the Fall 1997. A total of 39 students have enrolled for the Fall 1997 semester.
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Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Comments from staff interviewed and student participation records, however, indicate that more obsolescing programs should be removed so that funding, teaching, and planning can be directed toward more productive programs.

Recommendation 19: SISD should review Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs that are undersubscribed to eliminate or re-direct them to meet the needs of students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent requests a detailed report from the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services regarding the status of CTE programs.	September 1997
2. The assistant superintendent directs the director of Occupational/Technical Education to review the cost/benefit/participation factors for each CTE program.	September 1997
3. The director meets with the CTE Advisory Board to review findings and create a recommended plan.	October 1997
4. The assistant superintendent reviews the findings of the study and prepares a report and recommendation for the superintendent's consideration.	November 1997
5. The assistant superintendent requests the director to review the issue and the recommended plan with TEA	November 1997
6. The superintendent presents a recommended plan to the Board.	December 1997
7. The director activates the plan.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation. Funds from obsolete programs should be redirected to expanding and new programs.

Chapter 2

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

H. Gifted and Talented

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

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

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD provides a five-tier instructional plan called the Pyramid Program for gifted and talented students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The Pyramid Program includes students designated as gifted and talented as well as a substantial talent pool. The base of the pyramid, tier one, is a talent pool. The talent pool, consists of classes in which students are taught on grade level with enrichment designed to foster talents.

In tier two of the Pyramid Program, students work on curriculum that is enriched as well as accelerated by one grade level. Tier two consists of classes in science, social studies, math, and language arts and include the honors courses offered in grades 8-12. Tier three students may have skipped a grade in specific subject areas so that they can take advantage of a higher-level curriculum. Tier four consists of honors classes in language arts and math for students in grades 3-9 who are high achieving, rapidly progressing, and working two or more grade levels ahead. In grades 10-12 all students may select from 22 College Board Advanced Placement courses and take additional electives and advanced science and social studies courses beyond graduation requirements. In Tier five, students

may have skipped grades across all subject areas as provided in state rules for credit by examination.

Additional enrichment programs address high levels of creativity, leadership and talents across a variety of areas. SISD programs that serve these students include the Mentor Program, Special Experiences, and Future Problem Solving.

SISD identifies gifted and talented students for the Pyramid Program using a variety of criteria depending upon the tier in which the student is served. Identification criteria include measures of general academic ability, standardized achievement in specific subject areas, teacher observations of classroom performance and products, behavior checklists, and may include portfolio samples and auditions as necessary. Referrals for the various tiers of the Pyramid Program come from teachers, parents, counselors, administrators, and other students. A committee of teachers, counselors, and administrators at each campus makes the final determination of which students will be served in the various levels of the Pyramid Program.

In April 1997, a review was conducted by the Pyramid Program Advisory Committee. This committee was made up of 23 parents, teachers, students, administrators, and counselors from every school level. The review measured SISD's Pyramid Program against the 1996 standards established in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.

While giving SISD high marks for meeting the standards established in the state's Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, the Pyramid Program Advisory Committee recommended that the district continue to make improvement toward the goal of having the gifted/talented program reflect the population of the total district. The committee noted that gains had been made over the past two years in this area.

FINDING

Smaller proportions of African American and Hispanic students are served in tiers two through five of SISD's gifted and talented program than are Anglo, Asian, or American Indians. The proportions increase, however, when the talent pool, tier one, is considered.

Exhibit 2-64 contains the proportion of students by ethnic group who are placed in one or more levels of the Pyramid Program beyond the tier one talent pool.

Exhibit 2-64
Proportion of SISD Students by Ethnicity Identified as Gifted/Talented

Am. Indian	Asian	Af. American	Hispanic	Anglo	Total
33%	50%	16%	19%	38%	31%

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

The proportion of African American and Hispanic middle school students enrolled in honors courses (**Exhibit 2-65**) has increased only modestly over the past three years. There has been a 1.2 percent increase in the proportion of African American middle and high school students enrolled in honors courses and a 0.6 percent increase in the proportion of Hispanic middle and high school students enrolled in honors courses.

Exhibit 2-65
SISD Honors Course Enrollment by Ethnicity
1993-94 through 1995-96

Student Group	1993-94			1994-95			1995-96		
	HS	MS	Total	HS	MS	Total	HS	MS	Total
Asian	54%	58%	56%	55%	55%	55%	52%	61%	56%
African American	15	17	16	13	20	17	13	23	18
Hispanic	18	19	18	18	20	19	18	21	19
Anglo	33	43	38	34	44	39	35	47	40

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Identifying and serving gifted and talented students from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds is an area that has received considerable attention in the educational literature on gifted and talented programs. This research indicates that traditional assessment measures that have been used to identify gifted and talented students often underidentify gifted and talented minority students.

This research on identifying gifted and talented students was considered and analyzed in a 1996 study sponsored by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented. This study found that most districts in Texas report that they rely heavily on standardized achievement tests to identify gifted and talented students. This runs contrary to the preferred method of a total talent portfolio, identified in the research on gifted and talented programs.

Total talent portfolios may include writing samples in the student's primary language, artwork, teacher observations, behavior checklists and other types of student work and can provide a rich view of the student's abilities. Experts in the area of gifted and talented education who were surveyed in the Texas study, agreed that a wide range of assessment tools, such as portfolio assessment, should be used to equitably identify gifted and talented students.

Houston Independent School District (HISD) has also dealt with the issue of equitably identifying and serving gifted and talented students from minority groups. A task force appointed to examine HISD's gifted and talented admissions policies met throughout spring 1997 and held five public hearings to receive input from the community. The task force reported that an ethnic mix would occur naturally in the district's gifted and talented programs if the application process was revamped.

According to the HISD task force recommendations, test scores should account for only 40 percent of the criteria in selecting students, while subjective factors such as teacher and parent assessments, desire and determination, should account for 60 percent. Other recommendations included centralizing the selection process at the district level instead of at each school, and the development of a strong marketing program to inform parents about the district's gifted and talented programs.

Recommendation 20: Review SISD assessment procedures for identifying gifted and talented students to ensure that a wide range of measures are used.

SISD should consider recommendations from the 1996 Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented study that encourage districts to reduce reliance on standardized ability and achievement tests and to incorporate more qualitative identification measures such as teacher observations, behavior checklists and other types of student work. Recommendations from the HISD task force, that assign specific weights to the varying types of assessments, and strong marketing of the program to parents, should also be considered.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. Information on the district's gifted and talented programs is distributed to all parents	September 1997
2. Elementary, middle and high school counselors conduct exploratory meetings with African American and Hispanic students and parents to provide appropriate information, allow teachers of honor courses and participating students to discuss the nature and	September 1997

benefit of the courses, and receive input from those attending regarding factors that might be inhibiting greater participation.	
3. The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services to prepare a report on current studies and issues related to identifying gifted and talented students, especially minority students. The report should include any models recommended by the Texas Association of the Gifted and Talented	September 1997
4. The superintendent convenes a task force to review the district's assessment procedures to identify gifted and talented students.	October 1997
5. The task force reviews the report produced by the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services and develops recommendations to the superintendent.	November - February 1998
6. The superintendent and senior staff review the task force recommendations and present them to the SISD board for approval.	March 1998
7. New identification procedures for gifted and talented programs are implemented.	April 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 3

Community Involvement

This chapter assesses the manner in which community involvement functions are handled in the Spring Independent School District (SISD). It is organized as follows:

- A. Organizational and Administrative Issues
- B. Public Information
- C. Community Input Mechanisms
- D. Volunteer Activities
- E. Collaborative Partnerships

Chapter 3

Community Involvement

A. Organizational and Administrative Issues

CURRENT SITUATION

Community involvement activities include those activities that enable parents, business leaders, and others with a stake in public education to become involved in the district's activities. Since many of these activities are highly visible in the community, they often are coordinated through the superintendent's office or a department that reports directly to the superintendent.

In SISD, community involvement activities are primarily the responsibility of the Board/Community Services Department, which reports to the superintendent. Additional community relations functions are carried out by a program director for School-Community Partnerships in the Curriculum and Instructional Services Department and an assistant to the superintendent for Administration.

The Board/Community Services Department is responsible for a wide range of activities including community outreach, public information, media relations, board relations, and coordination of election activity. In addition, the department is responsible for public information and public relations activities associated with the development of the Five-Year Education Plan.

The executive director for Board/Community Services manages the operations of the department and supervises two paraprofessionals. The executive director's duties include board relations, public relations, media relations, electoral functions, and support of and training for the officers and committees of the 38 school PTA, PTO, and booster organizations. The executive director also updates and distributes the district's policy and management guidelines manuals.

A technical specialist coordinates and monitors departmental secretarial duties and workload; designs publications that originate in the department; designs and maintains the district's website; develops web pages for other departments and SISD schools; and designs mastheads for school newsletters, slide presentations, logos, posters, invitations, and awards.

The technical specialist also conducts a newsletter workshop for individual schools.

A secretary performs routine office functions, including typing correspondence, filing, telephone answering, routine referrals, and mailings. This person also designed the student handbook cover for the last two years.

The executive director for Board/Community Services has been in the position for 16 years, and the two support personnel have been in the department for 10 and five years, respectively.

The program director for School-Community Partnerships reports to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services. This position is responsible for facilitating partnerships with parents, businesses, and other members of the community. Duties include coordinating the activities of the SISD Education Foundation, serving as liaison to and facilitator for the Parent Education Program, identifying school and program needs that can benefit from partnerships and/or grant funding, promoting partnerships, and keeping track of volunteer hours.

This program director staffs a districtwide Parent Advisory Committee and performs staff development duties. About 10 percent of this individual's time is devoted to staff development. The program director for School-Community Partnerships is a 14-year employee of the district.

An assistant to the superintendent for Administration acts as the superintendent's primary representative for student discipline and all parental concerns.

Finally, Open Records requests are fielded by the office of the superintendent and are referred to the appropriate department for handling.

FINDING

At one time, community outreach, board relations, and school-community partnerships functions were administered by Board/Community Services. The person whose title now is program director for School/Community Partnerships was a communications specialist for Board/Community Services. Six years ago, this individual was moved to the Curriculum and Instruction Department to provide communications support for Curriculum and Instruction programs and to coordinate staff development. Shortly thereafter, the position title was changed to program director.

The division of community outreach duties between Board/Community Services and the office of the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and

Instruction, however, results in a fragmented approach to community outreach. The Board/Community Services' staff perform numerous functions, such as preparing and distributing publications, handling board relations, and conducting election activities; but because of the broad scope of activities, this department cannot devote enough effort to community outreach. The executive director is the only professional-level person in Board/Community Services focusing on community outreach, and this position has numerous other duties.

The program director for School-Community Partnerships performs a critical community outreach function--that of nurturing and facilitating partnerships between the larger community and the school district. The placement of this function outside the department that holds primary responsibility for community involvement represents a misalignment of functions. Moving the program director for School-Community Partnerships into the Board/Community Services Department would consolidate like functions.

Recommendation 21:

Transfer the program director for School-Community Partnerships into the Board/Community Services Department.

This would result in a more focused and comprehensive approach to community outreach. Coordination with curriculum and instructional activities staff should continue to be a priority.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent reorganizes the Board/Community Services Department to incorporate the position of program director for School-Community Partnerships.	September 1997
2. The executive director for Board/Community Services revises the job description of the program director for School-Community Partnerships and submits the revised job duties to the director of Personnel Services.	September 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

The technical specialist for Board/Community Services designed and maintains the general SISD web page. The web page contains information

about the district, photos and information about board members, and a message from the superintendent. This responsibility is related to maintaining the image of the district; in other words, it is a community outreach function, so Board/Community Services is an appropriate location for this function. However, the duties of the technical specialist have evolved to include the design of websites for virtually the entire district. For example, the technical specialist is designing a web page for the Food Services Department.

The design and maintenance of web pages, other than the general SISD web page, should be a function of the MIS Department, which is responsible for technical support and software development. It is appropriate to ensure that the Board/Community Services Department continues to review web pages prior to placing them on the Internet, due to its role in projecting the district's public image. However, web page design and maintenance functions not related to the SISD web page more appropriately reside in MIS.

Recommendation 22:

Transfer web page development and maintenance duties to the Office of the Manager of Technical Support and Software Development in the MIS Department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

<p>1. The executive director for Board/Community Services drafts a memorandum for districtwide distribution, indicating that the technical specialist will no longer design web pages and referring persons in need of such assistance to the manager of Technical Support and Software Development.</p>	<p>September 1998</p>
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.

FINDING

In addition to community outreach functions, the Board/Community Services Department is responsible for board relations. The executive director for Board/Community Services attends the monthly board meeting and prepares minutes of the proceedings.

This responsibility for board support is a substantial one and the current alignment weakens the department's community relations focus.

According to the executive director, about 15 percent of his time is spent on board activities.

SISD's location of board support functions in the department that is also responsible for community outreach is unusual, as is the requirement that a professional position be responsible for board support. In all of SISD's other peer districts, board support functions are the responsibility of a paraprofessional.

Although the background and qualifications of the executive director make him suited for this role, the current alignment results in an overload of tasks for the executive director and a blurring of the department's focus. In focus group meetings and interviews, participants gave little indication that they view the Board/Community Services staff as a visible and active force in the community. When participants made a specific reference to community outreach, it was the superintendent who was most often mentioned.

Recommendation 23:

Reassign board support functions to a paraprofessional in the superintendent's office.

Removal of board relations from this unit would free staff to spend more time on community outreach functions and events.

The Board/Community Services Department should be renamed to reflect the elimination of board functions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent transfers the board relations function to the Office of the Superintendent.	January 1998
2. The director of Personnel rewrites the job description of the executive director for Board/Community Services.	January 1998
3. The board adopts a new name for the Board/Community Services Department.	January 1998
4. The executive director of the newly named department prepares a press release announcing the change.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Board/Community Services Department personnel perform numerous functions, such as publishing newsletters, handling election activities, updating policy and management guideline manuals, and supporting 38 PTA, PTO, and booster organizations. The department's plans to allow a student from an SISD high school to serve as an intern next year will expand staff capacity.

The intern will assist with website development. This idea grew out of the incoming intern's interest in this process. There is no indication, however, that this activity is viewed as a pilot project that may lead to further use of interns if the pilot proves successful. The routine use of such interns would allow Board/Community Services to expand staff capacity at no cost, while providing the student intern with work experience.

College interns represent another low-cost means of expanding staff capacity. Many nonprofit and governmental agencies use internship programs to provide students with work experience while giving their agencies a wider range of skills to tap. Use of college interns also represents an opportunity to implement an additional collaborative partnership with North Harris County Community College.

Recommendation 24:

Develop a formal internship program in cooperation with high schools and community colleges.

The Board/Community Services Department should use student interns to assist with its functions. In addition to interns from within SISD, district officials should approach the North Harris County Community College about establishing an internship program beneficial to both the district and the students.

Interns may be used during the school year or only during the summer, depending on departmental needs and the availability of students who are capable of performing critical tasks. College interns would be contract employees who would be paid up to \$10 per hour, depending on qualifications.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director for Board/Community Services researches internship programs.	March 1998
2. The executive director for Board/Community Services meets	April 1998

with North Harris County Community College to discuss the possibility of an internship program.	
3. The executive director for Board/Community Services writes a job description for an intern and submits it to the director of Personnel.	May 1998
4. The executive director for Board/Community Services advertises for an intern to be assigned to the department.	July 1998
5. The executive director for Board/Community Services hires and trains an intern.	September 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Hiring an intern who would be paid \$10 per hour for 20 hours a week for nine months of the year would cost the district \$7,200 annually.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Develop an internship program.	(\$0)	(\$7,200)	(\$7,200)	(\$7,200)	(\$7,200)

Chapter 3

Community Involvement

B. Public Information

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD'S jurisdictional area is geographically fragmented and diverse. The district is divided by an elevated section of the North Freeway (Interstate Highway 45 North), a major geographic barrier. The district encompasses Spring, Texas and a portion of Houston, Texas.

The Houston Chronicle, a large daily newspaper, covers activities in the district as part of its twice-weekly regional coverage. Also, there are three local newspapers, the 1960 Sun, the Spring Observer, and the Leader. The 1960 Sun's coverage extends to areas outside of SISD. The Spring Observer primarily covers the northeast portion of the district, while the Leader covers less than half of SISD's southwestern portion.

According to the executive director for Board/Community Services, SISD is considering a pilot project to establish an FM radio broadcast at one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The broadcast range would be one mile and the station would feature live productions and live newscasts, including school news. If the pilot is successful, one school will be added per semester.

Westfield High School, Spring High School, and Bammel Middle School have automated telephone messaging systems that enable teachers and school administrators to communicate, via recorded message, with parents and students. SISD also operates a 24-hour information hotline that provides information about school closings and general meetings.

FINDING

SISD communicates with its constituents via three publications. Springboard is a weekly publication distributed to all employees and about 1,500 persons considered to be "opinion-shapers" due to their positions as real estate agents, clergy, former school board members, Harris County legislators, Harris County school superintendents, PTA/PTO/booster officers and former presidents, and retired district employees. Spring Schools is published and distributed two to three times a year to all homes, apartments, and businesses in SISD. The third publication is a calendar that is published and distributed to parents and other members of the SISD community at the beginning of each school year. The calendar is an especially useful publication as it contains not only the calendar of school

events and dates for all scheduled school board meetings, but also information about Solutions To Eliminate Problem Situations (STEPS), the formal procedure for providing input to SISD. STEPS establishes the "chain of command" for resolving problems between and among citizens and employees of SISD.

In addition to these three publications, other means of communication include weekly releases to the news media, periodic newsletters published and distributed by individual schools, and various general information and specific program brochures. Moreover, SISD maintains a website on the Internet and publishes an eye-catching brochure depicting school zones, apartments in the district, and names of real estate agents. Lastly, SISD assembles information packets containing useful information, such as the calendar publication, Springboard, the school zone map, and other pertinent information for distribution to real estate agents. SISD economizes by using only one color, and has established a recognizable identify by using the same color for most publications.

Interviewees were complimentary of the district's publications and often made reference to information contained in the calendar.

COMMENDATION

SISD communicates with its constituents through a variety of print media.

The production of a variety of printed materials to keep parents and other constituents, such as real estate agents and retirees informed and markets the district to potential residents.

FINDING

SISD maintains a website to disseminate information to existing and potential constituents. The website includes names and photographs of board members and a message from the superintendent as well as the district's news releases and links to websites of individual SISD schools and departments. This is a useful source of information for current SISD constituents as well as persons considering moving into the district.

The maintenance of a website reflects the SISD's commitment to using every effective means available to communicate with stakeholders. Although Board/Community Services staff realize that computer technology is not available to every household, they view maintenance of a website as one of a variety of mechanisms for maintaining contact with the public and disseminating information about the district.

COMMENDATION

The website developed and maintained by Board/Community Services is an innovative means of disseminating information about the district.

FINDING

Springboard began as an employee publication and has expanded to include SISD news of interest to parents and other constituents who are considered to be "opinion-shapers." Springboard is published 35 times a year and is circulated to about 3,000 employees and 1,500 "opinion-shapers." The limited size of its circulation outside of district employees has created a perception among some interviewees and focus group participants that the decision as to who receives Springboard is selective in nature.

TSPR noted some confusion among parents and other community members about who receives Springboard and why. Springboard has garnered a reputation for exclusivity that suggests a need to expand the publication's circulation, so that stakeholders will not feel unduly excluded.

Spring Schools, which is distributed two to three times a year to 58,000 households and businesses, contains information of interest to a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

Currently, the cost of publishing and mailing Spring Schools is \$26,892 for three issues, according to the executive director for Board/Community Services.

The Five-Year Plan Parent and Community Involvement task group is recommending an increased frequency for Spring Schools.

Recommendation 25:

Increase Spring Schools' frequency to five issues a year.

Publish Spring Schools five times a year, beginning September 1997. Announcement of the change in frequency of distribution and the reason for the change should be made in Spring Schools prior to institution of the change. The latter announcement will serve to make readers aware that SISD is seeking ways to expand the number of constituents with which it communicates on a regular basis.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Board/Community Services publishes first of five annual issues of Spring Schools.	September 1997
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FISCAL IMPACT

The combined unit cost for printing, postage and labels is \$0.154551. The projected cost of printing and mailing 58,000 copies five times annually is \$44,820 ($\$0.154551 \times 58,000 \times 5$) Thus, the impact of increasing distribution would be an additional cost of \$17,928.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Increase Spring Schools frequency to 5 times a year.	(\$17,928)	(\$17,928)	(\$17,928)	(\$17,928)	(\$17,928)

FINDING

Springboard's content is a mixture of news of general interest to stakeholders and items primarily of interest to SISD employees. For example, Springboard might carry news on a bond election as well as well-wishes for employees or employee family members who are convalescing. In short, it is used both as an internal publication and an external news organ.

However, because of Springboard's dual purpose of providing information of general interest and information of primary interest to employees, the amount of space devoted to employee issues is limited.

The postage cost of distributing Springboard to non-employees of the district accounts for \$18,375 of the distribution costs. Printing 4,500 copies 35 times a year further costs the district \$12,395 annually. Total costs for printing and mailing is \$30,770.

Recommendation 26:

Convert Springboard to an employee newsletter and modify its content to reflect the change.

Refocusing Springboard's content on employee issues, such as employee insurance, staff development, and upcoming meetings, and a column for recognizing outstanding performance and awards received, would better serve employees.

Restricting Springboard to employee news and circulating it only to SISD employees would make the publication more sharply focused and allow for a dramatic reduction in costs. Non-employees who no longer receive

Springboard would continue to receive Spring Schools, but on a more frequent basis.

Reducing the frequency of publication to four times a year and circulating it through an internal distribution network, as opposed to first-class mail, would further reduce costs.

Stacks of the newsletter could be left in the principal's office, lounge, and other places where employees gather. Advance announcement of changes in procedures should be made in Springboard.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Board/Community Services department uses Springboard to announce change and to solicit employee feedback regarding the preferred content of a modified.	September 1997
2. Board/Community Services department publishes first modified newsletter and distributes it through internal channels.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on figures provided by the executive director for Board/Community Services, the current unit cost of printing Springboard is \$.0787.

Discontinuing the practice of mailing Springboard to 1,500 persons would save approximately \$18,375 annually. Printing costs are approximately \$12,395. Based on a unit printing cost of \$.0787, printing 2,970 issues of Springboard four times a year would cost \$934.96 (\$.0787 x 2970 x 4). A savings of \$29,835 would be realized.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Convert Springboard to an employee newsletter.	\$29,835	\$29,835	\$29,835	\$29,835	\$29,835

Chapter 3

Community Involvement

C. Community Input Mechanisms

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's primary vehicles for identifying its constituents' concerns are PTA/PTO and booster organizations, the long-range planning process, membership in the district's Parent Advisory Committee, and direct input to the board.

Each elementary and middle school, except for the multipurpose Wuncshe School, has a PTA or PTO that parents may join. At the middle and high schools, those functions are performed by booster organizations for such student activities as athletics, band, choir, drill team, and Future Farmers of America.

SISD's long-range planning process, known as the Five-Year Education Plan, is a means of involving parents, teachers, administrators, and business leaders in the process of planning for the district's future. At the outset, a Five-Year Education Plan Steering Committee is appointed to guide the process. It has a great deal of input into which issues are addressed in a survey circulated to teachers, parents, and students.

In a collaborative effort with teachers, parents administer the student survey over the phone or interview groups of students. Parents also interview other parents. Teacher volunteers coordinate the scheduling of student interviews.

A new planning cycle began in 1996; surveys were completed and results published in brochures. The surveys give stakeholders an opportunity to rate the district, addressing such issues as instructional services, parent involvement, safety, transportation services, extracurricular activities, and special programs. Parents are given an opportunity to rate principals, assistant principals, office staff, and SISD as a whole.

The teacher survey gives teachers an opportunity to rate their fellow teachers, transportation services, parental participation, and safety, among other things. Some items students rate include educational services, extracurricular activities, food service, teachers, principals, assistant principals, and library services.

The survey results, among other data, help the Steering Committee to establish priorities to recommend to the board for inclusion in the Five-

Year Education Plan. These priorities guide the work of Five-Year Education Plan task groups, which produce action plans to guide district activities. SISD's board reviews the plans annually and adopts new objectives for the upcoming year. A publication is prepared for distribution so that people have a report card on the district's progress.

The District Parent Advisory Committee is composed of a parent representative from each school and is staffed by the program coordinator for School-Community Partnerships. Its purpose is to exchange ideas about increasing parent involvement. The Parent Advisory Committee met three times in 1997.

SISD board meetings also provide an opportunity for constituents to share ideas and concerns with board members. The time, date, and location of each regularly scheduled monthly board meeting is printed in the annual Community Calendar that is mailed to more than 58,000 homes, apartments, and businesses in the district. The district has two methods that permit stakeholders to formally bring issues to the board. A written request may be made to the superintendent for time on the next board agenda. In addition, constituents may sign up at each board meeting to address the board about a topic at the end of the meeting. In both cases, the board does not take any action at the meeting at which the issue is brought forward. Action on such items is scheduled for a subsequent meeting, after the administration has investigated the situation and reported back to the board.

Finally, the district has adopted the STEPS (Solutions to Eliminate Problem Situations) process for use in resolving misunderstandings and problems that inevitably arise between and among citizens and employees in a system as large and diverse as SISD. STEPS establishes the "chain of command" for resolving problems and emphasizes their resolution at the lowest possible level.

FINDING

The survey that precedes the development of the Five-Year Education Plan allows teachers, parents, and students to provide input about a wide range of concerns. Survey results are then compiled and distributed in an easy-to-read format. Survey results form the basis for the development of action plans by 18 groups composed of parents, business leaders, community leaders, and members of the community.

The district builds community ownership in the process by involving parents and teachers in the administration of the survey. Community representatives also are given an opportunity to participate as members of

task groups formed to address priorities identified in the survey through participation in the development of action plans.

Brochures are prepared and distributed allowing stakeholders to see the concrete results of their participation in the process. The action planning process enables constituents to see that survey results are translated into action.

The Five-Year Education Plan process is an example of a public entity demonstrating a willingness to have its constituents rate its effectiveness, obtain their input regarding key issues, and actively involve them in planning for the future. SISD's willingness to allow stakeholders to publicly assess its performance on a regular basis is an indication of a desire to engage in an ongoing dialogue with constituents and remain sensitive to their concerns.

COMMENDATION

SISD gives parents, teachers, and students an opportunity to rate the performance of the district.

FINDING

Some persons who were interviewed or who participated in focus groups indicated that SISD makes a concerted effort to be inclusive. Others, while not denying that SISD makes such attempts, complained that the process of assembling Five-Year Education Plan Steering Committee and other committees is too selective, resulting in the same group of people being selected over and over again. In addition, some expressed concern that the district has not tried hard enough to involve retirees in the process.

The review team was told that SISD assembles committees by asking constituent groups to send representatives, asking principals for student names, and selecting staff members who are most directly affected by the issue at hand. An effort is made to achieve ethnic, gender, and geographic balance. However, judging from some of the comments heard, this process may need to be modified to identify new sources of committee members, including retirees and individuals with talents not previously tapped.

Recommendation 27:

Develop new ways of identifying and selecting committee members.

In keeping with SISD's commitment to inclusion, the district should take additional steps to identify and make use of new talent pools. With the exception of site-based committees, which have state requirements for

representation, the goal should be committees with representation from parents, community leaders, and elderly taxpayers, with at least two-thirds of the representatives being parents.

SISD also should contact community-based organizations, such as churches, and nonprofit organizations (such as the YMCA and Northwest Assistance Ministries, minority community leaders, retiree organizations, CARES, civic clubs, and PTO/PTA/booster groups), to solicit recommendations for committee memberships. Finally, SISD should enlist the assistance of the Minority Task Force (see Recommendation 3-7) in identifying minority stakeholders.

A plan for expanding committee representation should be drafted by the executive director for Board/Community Services and circulated to department staff and selected administrators and teachers for review and comment. The workplan should incorporate the ideas discussed above.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Executive director for Board/Community Services drafts a plan for expanding committee representation and circulates it for comments.	April 1998
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

SISD is becoming increasingly diverse economically, racially, and culturally. At this time, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians make up 47 percent of the total district student population. In their respective focus groups, minority parents, especially non-English-speaking Hispanics, expressed questions and concerns about the adequacy of community outreach efforts.

African Americans and Hispanics also said that their needs are not adequately monitored. Hispanics were especially concerned about the limited number of Spanish-speaking staff in the district and the limited amount of printed materials published in Spanish.

Many African-American and Hispanic parents feel that traditional methods of involving parents in district activities, such as parent-teacher and booster organizations, are not working for them. These parents believe they have to be vigilant to ensure that their children are treated fairly, especially in the areas of academic tracking and discipline.

Recommendation 28:

Take steps to identify and address the needs of SISD's increasingly diverse student and constituent population.

Ways to address the needs of SISD's ethnic population could include convening a Minority Task Force, hiring a community outreach specialist, and making bilingual staff members available for written and oral translation.

The mission of the Minority Involvement Task Force would be to develop ideas for improving communication between members of minority groups and district teachers, administrators, and board members regarding issues of particular concern to minority parents. SISD should involve minority community members and community social service agencies with large minority client representation in the development of the task force and enlist their help in urging people to attend its meetings. SISD should solicit names of potential members from these individuals and entities. The district could hold meetings in venues frequented by members of the minority community, such as Southwell Community Center, the YMCA, the Bridges Community Center, and minority churches.

The task force's mission would be to identify issues of specific concern to minority parents, identify ways to increase minority involvement in district activities, and identify minority parents and leaders who can serve on committees and provide input on important decisions. It should convene two or three times and issue a report that would be publicized in Spring Schools. The superintendent would appoint a chair and is encouraged to place the full force of his authority behind the effort and ensure that its recommendations are given full attention.

The task force would not be a permanent fixture, although it could be convened periodically, as needed. Care should be taken that the task force is not institutionalized as a vehicle for minority input. SISD must continue its efforts to "mainstream" minority parents and other minority stakeholders, with respect to the activities of the district.

A staff person should be appointed to serve as a liaison to the minority community. The community outreach specialist mentioned in District Organization and Management would play this role, attending meetings in minority communities, organizing events of special interest to minorities, and identifying their special needs through a variety of means including focus-group sessions.

Lastly, the district should designate bilingual employees to help with written and oral translations when the situation warrants.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Executive director for Board/Community Services and staff solicit names of minority community leaders for a Minority Task Force.	September 1997
2. Convene minority task force.	January 1998
3. The director of Personnel Services, with input from the executive director for Board/Community Services, writes a job description for a community outreach specialist.	June 1998
4. The director of Personnel Services places a job announcement for the position of community outreach specialist.	July 1998
5. The director of Personnel Services extends a job offer to the preferred candidate for the position of community outreach specialist.	August 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Some focus-group participants and other persons interviewed expressed concern about the difficulty of getting parents involved in school activities. The increasing prevalence of two-income, and one-parent households was cited, as were parental apathy and disillusionment with traditional avenues of involvement. New mechanisms for involving parents and senior citizens in the schools are needed. The Community Involvement task group of the Five-Year Education Plan recognized the problem when it included an action item in its action plan: "identify ways to involve all segments of the community in SISD activities."

This is a problem that many school districts across the nation are facing. One way to address it is to provide a forum where many minds can come together to exchange ideas and information regarding the issues. Although a forum is provided for PTO and PTA presidents on a monthly basis, a forum specifically designed to stimulate volunteerism might yield a set of useful ideas.

While some SISD schools have adopted techniques for reaching out to heterogeneous populations, and some teachers attended a workshop on this subject, SISD has not seen a widespread sharing of best practices regarding this issue.

Recommendation 29:

Convene an annual summit to address ways to increase parent and community involvement in the schools.

The primary goal of an annual SISD Community Outreach Summit would be to give community members an opportunity to exchange ideas and information about effective ways to involve parents in SISD activities.

The summit would give staff and volunteers a forum for showcasing effective community outreach and volunteer programs on their respective campuses. It would also give participants the opportunity to brainstorm and share innovative techniques for involving working parents, low-income parents, minority parents, retirees, and other groups, especially those whose involvement is relatively low.

SISD should include teachers, principals, parents, and community leaders in the summit.

Finally, a summary of the summit proceedings should be prepared by Board/Community Relations and widely distributed. Its availability should be advertised in Springboard and Spring Schools. The summary should be provided to each PTA, PTO, or booster organization president, and to each principal and school library.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Executive director for Board/Community Services, program director for School-Community Partnerships, superintendent, and board identify and recruit a loaned executive to coordinate the first annual Community Summit.	March - June 1998
2. Program director for School-Community Partnerships drafts workplan for summit and circulates for review and comment.	July - September 1998
3. SISD convenes first annual Community Summit.	October 1998
4. Board/Community Services mails summary of proceedings to parent leaders, principals, etc.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

The SISD board does not appear to have a high visibility level in the community, particularly in comparison to the superintendent.

Board meetings are held once a month. The time, date, and location of each regularly scheduled board meeting is printed in the annual Community Calendar that is mailed to more than 58,000 homes, apartments, and businesses in the district. Meeting notices are posted outside the south entrance in a covered, lighted area that is accessible 24 hours a day. However, the review team heard a significant number of complaints pertaining to procedures for posting notices for board meetings. Some persons indicated that the posting of meeting notices at the south Administration Building instead of on the "front" door of the building provides inadequate visibility. Although the current method of posting board meetings meets the requirements of *Cox v. Austin*, it is not "user-friendly."

The review team also heard a significant number of complaints pertaining to procedures for appearing before the board. Community members complained that public comment is relegated to the end of the school board meeting agenda. They stated that the result of this practice is that board members typically are tired and distracted by the time that speakers come forward, since many items have been covered by that time, often including numerous presentations of awards and recognition of employees and students. Some expressed frustration with their inability to present concerns before the apparent waning of board members' attention.

The Parent and Community Involvement task group is recommending "Your Turn" forums twice each semester in each of the district's geographic sections to promote dialogue between trustees and students, parents, community members, and district staff.

Recommendation 30:

Encourage public participation in board meetings by reassessing current practices.

First, consider posting meeting notices on the front door and notices of regular and special board meetings should be posted on school marquees. If it is not feasible to post notices on the front door, an inexpensive standard can be purchased to post board notices just inside the foyer of the Administration Building.

Second, board members should consider holding more community meetings, especially on substantial issues such as board elections and bond elections.

Another idea is to create a speaker's bureau consisting of board members, and making board members available to business and civic organizations when the district faces a "hot" issue.

Finally, the board is encouraged to adopt a procedure of providing a period for constituents to address the board at the beginning of board meetings instead of the end of the meeting at least every other month. When a high-profile issue like a bond election is pending, the board is encouraged to set aside a period of time for constituent comments at the beginning of the meeting, even if it is an off month.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The SISD board schedules first round of "Your Turn" forums.	September 1997
2. Person in charge of board relations arranges to have board meeting announcements posted on school marquees and front door of Administration Building.	September 1997
3. SISD board creates a speaker's bureau.	September 1997
4. Board adopts procedure for public input at the beginning of alternate board meetings.	September 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Prior to the last bond election, the superintendent appointed a steering committee to decide which items to recommend for inclusion in the bond issue. Subsequent to review of the steering committee report, the school board made a formal recommendation.

At a September 24 special board meeting, the bond election was called. The lead story of the September 25 issue of Springboard announced the bond issue. The election was announced to the press on September 25 and held on November 23.

A citizens volunteer group that supported the bond issue, For Our Kids, was organized to hold meetings with interested persons. For Our Kids was given information regarding meetings of parent groups and civic groups at the individual schools so they could make these groups aware of their availability to speak about the bond issue. However, a substantial number

of persons who volunteered an opinion on this issue felt that SISD did not do an adequate job of community outreach on the bond issue. Respondents felt that SISD did not allow adequate lead time and held too few community meetings to explain the elements of the bond issue.

Recommendation 31:

Involve constituents in any future decision-making processes such as bond elections and tax rate hikes by having geographically dispersed meetings to explain the elements of the issue, answer questions, and address concerns.

Board members, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, and Board/Community Services staff should share the responsibility of meeting with small groups of taxpayers. Involving board members as well as administrators would disperse the increased workload associated with these meetings, so as not to overburden a few people.

The meetings should be held at least four months prior to the elections. They should take place at geographically dispersed community locations, such as churches, community centers, YMCAs, and schools, and should be held at times convenient to stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The board establishes a plan whereby public input is gathered and information is shared with the public prior to future bond elections, tax rate hikes, or other such decision-making.	November 1997
2. Executive director for Board/Community Services, in conjunction with the board and SISD administrators, conduct meetings to explain elements of the bond issue.	Months prior to any election

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 3

Community Involvement

D. Volunteer Activities

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD provides many avenues for parent involvement, such as Parent-Teacher Organizations, Parent Teacher Associations, and booster organizations for band, athletic and academic activities. Decisions about how these organizations use and raise funds are made by officers elected annually by each organization's membership, in accordance with adopted by-laws.

Other programs involving parent volunteers include after-school tutoring, parenting education, and mentoring. The Practical Parent Education program is implemented by parent-volunteers. Parent-volunteers trained by the program coordinator for school-community partnerships facilitate parent education sessions in 12 schools.

Jenkins Elementary School parent and citizen volunteers implement an Invest in Success tutoring program. These volunteers are recruited and trained by the school to provide weekly in-school tutoring for children needing additional instructional support.

SISD provides support for volunteer organizations via Board/Community Services staff and the program director for School-Community Partnerships. The district holds an annual training session for incoming presidents and treasurers, an annual school of instruction for incoming officers and committee chairs, and a newsletter workshop for PTO/PTA/booster organizations.

FINDING

Volunteers who have played leadership roles in volunteer organizations often obtain a wealth of knowledge. The same is true of former district employees. SISD has made use of these resources by forming an alumni association of past presidents of parent-teacher organizations and booster clubs, and an association of retirees. The executive director for Board/Community Services and the superintendent meet with the past presidents of PTA, PTO, and booster clubs three times a year. Staff meet with the retiree group once a year.

COMMENDATION

Alumni organizations are an excellent way to allow former parent organization leaders and former administrators to remain involved in district activities.

This is an excellent means of keeping these persons involved and connected to district activities. In recognition of this concept, the Texas School Public Associations conferred a "Bright Idea" award on the executive director for Board/Community Services.

FINDING

Volunteer activities are initiated and coordinated at the school level. Although SISD schools offer opportunities for membership in PTA, PTO, or booster organizations, there is no formalized parent involvement plan at every campus and no centralized volunteer coordination function. SISD has no database of best practices, no central database of volunteers, and incomplete reporting of volunteer hours.

Some schools are implementing innovative and exemplary practices that could benefit other schools, but in the absence of a centralized database, this information is not being shared.

With respect to the reporting of volunteer hours, volunteers sign in at the time they arrive for their volunteer assignment and each school tabulates volunteer hours annually and submits a report to the program director for school-community partnerships. In 1995-96, only 13 out of 21 schools reported volunteer hours.

An accurate record of volunteer activity would allow the district to compare its results with that of other school districts to determine where SISD stands with respect to volunteer activity, and to look for ways to improve campuses that are lagging behind.

Recommendation 32:

Assign the function of volunteer coordination to a staff member in Board/Community Services.

The volunteer coordinator should create a database of best practices (in the district and across the nation), work with individual campuses and promote volunteerism and seek to develop an automated database of volunteers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1 Executive director for Board/Community Services assigns the	September
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volunteer coordination function to a staff member.	1997
2. Volunteer coordinator works with executive director and other Board/Community Services staff to create an automated database of volunteers.	September 1997
3. Volunteer coordinator develops a more formal system for documenting volunteer hours.	November 1997
4. Volunteer coordinator identifies schools with exemplary programs and others in need of assistance and begins to work with those that need assistance.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 3

Community Involvement

E. Collaborative Partnerships

CURRENT SITUATION

Collaborative partnerships are an excellent way for nonprofit organizations such as SISD to leverage limited resources and build trust and confidence. SISD has forged partnerships with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and neighborhood-based civic associations. Examples of collaborative partnerships include McManagement, a collaboration with McDonald's Corporation wherein McDonald's trains students in restaurant management skills; a partnership with Star Enterprise to provide a portable lab for astronomy studies in the elementary school science program; and a partnership with Wyndham Hotels to provide on-the-job training for high school students. SISD has taken the lead in developing a collaborative partnership with the Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce to implement a Taking Education to Work program, creating linkages between classroom and "real world" learning.

The Shriners, Masons, and Northwest Assistance Ministries provide support for the Teen Parent program. The day-care program and teen parents are provided with services and materials through these organizations. Other partnerships include YMCA after-school programs conducted at school sites, outdoor learning centers, reading programs, and the SISD Mentor Program. The latter program features professionals and business representatives mentoring high school students after school for six months to one year. The objective of the program is to give students an opportunity to explore careers and industries.

Individual schools have forged unique partnerships. Link Elementary has a school-neighborhood partnership. The school and the neighborhood association plan activities to bring the community and the school closer together. Spring High School has a program called BLAST (Business Leaders Assisting Spring Teens) that uses a group of business leaders recruited and trained by the school to provide individual weekly support and to serve as role models for at-risk students. Wells Middle School's Wells Power Lunches program enables students showing improvement or a need for improvement to have lunches with community leaders.

SISD has incorporated a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that raises funds for innovative teaching projects in the district. The Spring ISD Education Foundation raises funds by sponsoring special events.

The mix of programs varies widely from school to school and for the most part, school-business partnerships and school-community partnerships are initiated at the school level, with the program director for School-Community Partnerships offering support and resource development.

FINDING

The Bridges Community Friends partnership involves a number of community-based organizations, including SISD.

With the assistance of the program director for School-Community Partnerships, the Bridges Community Friends was formed to provide services at the 392-unit Bridges apartment development owned by Houston's Inter-Faith Housing Corporation. The board of directors of this corporation includes SISD, the Sheriff's Department, Northwest Assistance Ministries, and churches. A 3,000-square foot community building was built to house an array of services, including a library staffed by a volunteer SISD librarian, on-site volunteer tutoring, Adult English as a Second Language training, parenting education, cooking classes, reading classes, math workshops for parents, and elderly services. The community center contains meeting rooms, classrooms, and a kitchen.

COMMENDATION

The Bridges Community Friends partnership provides a good model for collaborative partnerships.

FINDING

The SISD Education Foundation is governed by a board consisting of business leaders, parents, and interested parties. Its by-laws permit up to 21 board members. The foundation receives staff support from the program director for School-Community Partnerships.

Revenue is generated through fund-raisers such as golf tournaments, home tours, and community carnivals. The SISD Education Foundation raises \$50,000 a year; of this, an average of \$10,000 is added to an endowment fund and \$15,000 is awarded to individual teachers, groups of teachers, or campus collaboratives in the form of grants. Remaining funds go into the operating budget and fund balance.

The SISD Education Foundation is used to fund innovative teaching approaches in SISD. Some of the projects the Foundation funds are viewed as pilot projects, allowing for experimentation with new approaches and innovations that often are continued by the district with regular funding, after the pilot proves effective. Examples of projects the

Foundation has funded include a summer reading program at a school library, books for bilingual education, freshman orientation for high school, and the provision of substitute teachers to allow business teachers to spend time in businesses in order to keep in touch with developments in the business world. Since its inception five years ago, it has funded 50 such projects with about \$70,000 in grants.

COMMENDATION

SISD has created a separate fund-raising arm to support innovative academic projects.

The foundation's activities have resulted in unique pilot projects. Teachers who spoke to the review team view the activities of the SISD Education Foundation very favorably.

FINDING

The Education Foundation's fund-raising efforts are hampered by the fact that relatively few large employers reside within SISD's boundaries. The program director for School-Community Partnerships is the staff person dedicated to the foundation's activities along with other duties, which hampers aggressive fund-raising. The Foundation board of directors are volunteers, so they too have limited time to devote to fund-raising.

The foundation's fund-raising efforts are impressive but are outstripped by some other school districts of its size (Exhibit 3-1). While the SISD Education Foundation has raised \$26,000 during the past year and has \$73,000 in funds reserved for future projects (an endowment), a survey conducted by the review team indicated that the Harris County Department of Education Foundation and the Fort Bend Education Foundation raised \$440,000 and \$111,000 respectively last year, and the Cypress-Fairbanks, Fort Bend, LaPorte, and Clear Creek Education Foundations had endowments of \$700,000, \$228,000, \$174,000, and \$130,000, respectively.

**Exhibit 3-1
Funds Raised by SISD and Selected Districts
to Support an Education Foundation**

District Education Foundation	Net Income Raised in 1996-97	Total Endowment
Clear Creek	\$50,000	\$130,000
Cypress-Fairbanks	\$76,000	\$700,000

Fort Bend	\$111,000	\$228,000
Harris County Department of Education	\$440,000	\$17,000
LaPorte	\$50,000	\$174,000
Spring	\$26,000	\$73,000

Source: Telephone survey, June-July 1997.

The education foundations included in the survey use differing techniques to raise money. Cypress-Fairbanks and Fort Bend hold one annual event that provides from 20 to 50 percent of their annual revenues, while LaPorte and Clear Creek receive large donations from local corporations. Several foundations indicated that they are considering volunteer employee contributions through payroll deduction as another source of revenue.

Although the SISD Education Foundation appears to be doing a fairly good job of developing and distributing resources in a community that lacks a large number of major employers, this resource could be more fully exploited if fundraising efforts could be more focused.

Recommendation 33:

Encourage SISD Education Foundation to expand fundraising efforts.

The Foundation's board of directors should be encouraged to submit proposals to local foundations and corporations, coordinate more directed fund-raising events, identify innovative ways to raise funds, or coordinate a larger number of fund-raising events. When feasible, the Foundation should consider hiring a full-time employee to coordinate fundraising activities.

If expansion of the board of directors is required, or if a development council made up of minimum contributors will benefit the district, decisions should be made and candidates identified.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Chair of board of SISD Foundation, with help from the program director for School-Community Partnerships, should ask board members to actively participate in identifying fundraising opportunities and sponsor some expanded events.	November 1997
2. Board of SISD Foundation should select profitable fundraisers.	January

set annual goals, and implement them.	1998
3. Board of SISD Foundation reports to the SISD board on progress.	April 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Business leaders who were interviewed or who participated in the business leaders focus group were favorably impressed with SISD's outreach to business, citing various activities such as mentoring programs and school career days, the School to Work program with the Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce, and the commitment of SISD to making partnerships work. However, a segment of the business community east of I-45 perceives that SISD does not make enough of an effort to collaborate with them.

Recommendation 34:

Increase efforts to reach out to merchants in all parts of the district and involve them in mentorships and other school-business partnership activities.

Such efforts could include focus groups, group breakfasts with the superintendent, "Your Turn" meetings with the board, appointment of a liaison to the Old Town Spring Merchants Association, and inclusion of Old Town Spring merchants in the school-business advisory committee.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Executive director for Board/Community Services appoints liaison to Old Town Spring Merchants Association from among staff of department.	September 1998
2. Executive director for Board/Community Services or community outreach specialist holds focus group with Old Town Spring merchants as part of cycle of focus groups mentioned in Recommendation 3-7.	November 1998
3. Superintendent and executive director for Board/Community Services convene a group breakfast with Old Town Spring merchants.	December 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

The subchapters within this chapter include the following:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Salary Administration
- C. Recruitment and Employee Turnover
- D. Personnel Records
- E. Benefits
- F. Job Descriptions, Appraisals, and Procedures
- G. Staff Development

BACKGROUND

In most public school districts, a human resources or personnel department manages employee-related tasks. These tasks include:

- Development of wage and salary schedules
- Administration of salary systems that includes placement of positions on the salary schedules and periodic review of the schedules to ensure that they are competitive with other area employers who compete for similar positions
- Classification of all positions
- Development of job descriptions for all positions and the periodic update/modification of the job descriptions to reflect changes in responsibilities
- Development and administration of training programs for some or all district personnel
- Development of personnel staffing tables and review of staff allocation formulas
- Administration of an employee grievance process
- Recruitment of personnel to fill vacant positions
- Maintenance of required employee records
- Administration of certification and permit processes
- Issuance of contracts and nonrenewal or dismissal notices
- Placement of substitutes
- Recruitment and placement of student teachers
- Development of board policies regarding personnel issues
- Development and administration of an employee benefits program
- Preparation of periodic reports to address local board and state reporting requirements.

Chapter 4

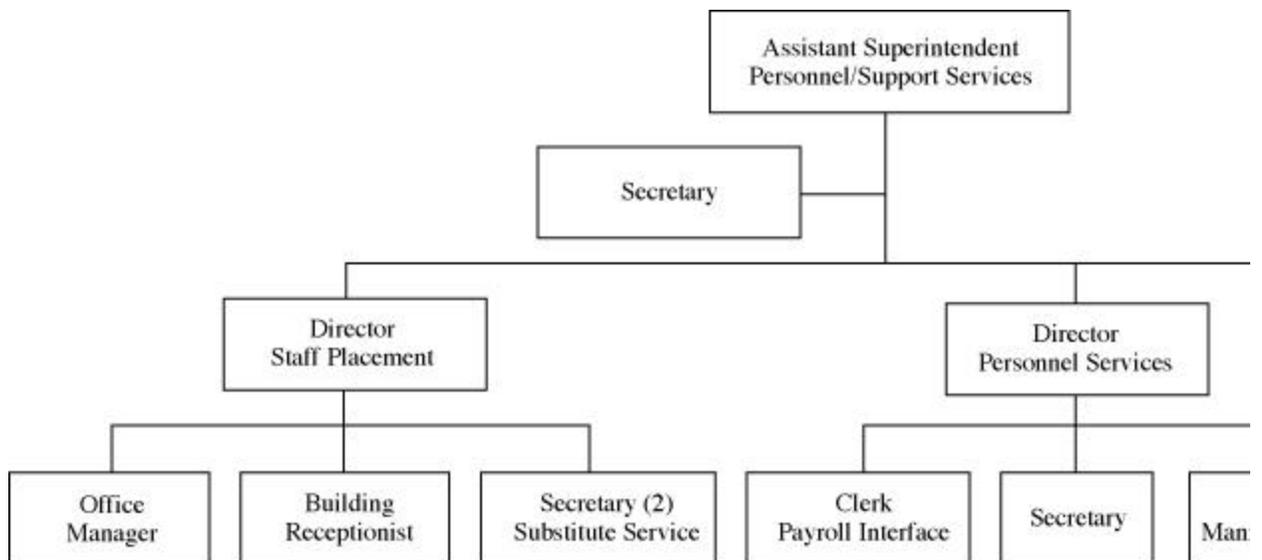
Personnel Management

A. Organization and Management

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's Personnel/Support Services Department manages the district's personnel functions. Its staff consists of the assistant superintendent for Personnel/Support Services; directors of Staff Placement, Personnel Services, and Staff Benefits; eight paraprofessional positions; and a receptionist, for a total of 13 employees. **Exhibit 4-1** shows the organization of Personnel/Support Services.

Exhibit 4-1
Personnel/Support Services
Organization



Staff Placement administers the district's overall recruitment program, including screening applicants, establishing and coordinating all recruitment trips, developing student teaching arrangements with colleges and universities, and overseeing the substitute program.

Personnel Services completes all the necessary permit and certification work for new employees, prepares and maintains employee records for all certified and paraprofessional positions, and enters all information regarding employee pay and some portion of the benefits into the central computer system.

Staff Benefits develops the district's benefits and workers' compensation plans, conducts employee orientation sessions to convey this information, monitors the work of the third-party administrator responsible for processing claims, responds to employee questions and concerns, and maintains records for all classified personnel.

Remaining responsibilities of the Personnel department include the issuance of contracts, maintenance of service records, coordination of staff information for the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and planning and hosting staff appreciation functions. Personnel/Support Services also is responsible for providing some staff development training, developing employee handbooks, administering the wage and salary programs, monitoring the employee appraisal process, and determining staffing allocations for schools.

The district had 2,684.5 positions at the beginning of 1996-97 that were filled by 2,661 full-time-equivalents (FTE). These FTEs are categorized by position as shown in **Exhibit 4-2**.

Exhibit 4-2
SISD Employees by Category
1995-96 through 1996-97

Employee Category	FTE as of September 1, 1995	FTE as of September 1, 1996	Percentage Increase
Professional	1,539	1,670	8.5%
Paraprofessional	419	454	8.4%
Classified	524	537	2.5%
Total	2,482	2,661	7.2%

Source: SISD School Board Agenda Item, September 10, 1996 meeting.

Professional staff include administrators, teachers, nurses, speech and occupational therapists, librarians, trainers, counselors, diagnosticians, psychologists, and professional support positions. Paraprofessionals include central and campus clerical employees and educational aides; classified employees includes all food service, transportation, maintenance, and custodial personnel.

The total staffing by category and ethnicity is presented in **Exhibit 4-3**.

Exhibit 4-3
Number of SISD Staff by Category and Ethnicity
1996-97

Category	Native American	Asian	African American	Hispanic	Anglo
Professional	4	7	59	52	1,548
Paraprofessional	2	2	41	41	368
Classified	2	42	152	76	265
Total	8	51	252	169	2,181

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

Exhibit 4-4 shows district employees by age and gender.

Exhibit 4-4
SISD Employees by Age and Gender
April 1997

Age Group	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total by Age Group	Percentage of Total Employees
70-79 years old	2	3	5	0.2%
60-69	36	65	101	3.8%
50-59	106	465	571	21.2%
40-49	140	775	915	33.9%
30-39	136	572	708	26.3%
20-29	56	338	394	14.6%
Under 20	0	2	2	0.1%
Total	476	2,220	2,696	100%

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

FINDING

Personnel/Support Services develops staff allocations for each school and monitors those allocations each time enrollment figures are developed. These allocations are the basis for the salary portion of the budget each year. And, although individual campuses are allocating staff based on these formulas, campus site-based teams and principals have some flexibility to change positions within those allocated dollars. For example, Salyers Elementary was able to modify their half-time physical education (PE) position by hiring a full-time PE aide. Both Westfield and Spring High Schools were allowed to change their librarian allocations from a

half-time librarian to a full-time librarian aide, in addition to a full-time librarian.

School allocations for the current year for each grade level are included in **Exhibits 4-5** through **4-7**. **Exhibit 4-5** describes staffing allocations for elementary schools, which are grades K through five. Grades one through four are governed by state law requiring one teacher for every 22 students, unless a waiver is granted. For grade five, the allocation is one teacher for every 22.5 students.

Exhibit 4-5
SISD School Staffing Allocation
Elementary Schools

Position	Student Enrollment	Allocation
Principal	-	1.0
Assistant principal	0-749	0.5
	750-899	1.0
	900+	2.0
Counselor	0-749	1.0
	750-999	1.5
	1,000-1,249	2.0
Teacher:	22	1.0
	Pre-K-5	1.0
	Pre-First	1.0
	Music/P.E.	1.5
	750+	2.0
Librarian	-	1.0
Nurse	-	1.0
Clerical staff	For each 250 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0 (minimum of 3)
Library aide	440-659	0.5
	666+	1.0
Teacher aide	For each 300 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0
Pre-K aide	0.5 teacher	0.5
	1.0 teacher	1.0
	1.5 teachers	1.0
	2.0 teachers	1.0
	2.5 teachers	1.5
	3.0 teachers	2.0

Source: Staffing Report, SISD Personnel Department.

The allocation for middle schools is shown in **Exhibit 4-6**. The middle schools include grades six through eight. During the year a teacher may be added when the overall student-teacher ratio reaches 1:23; a teacher may be reassigned if the ratio drops to 1:21.

Exhibit 4-6
SISD Campus Staffing Allocation
Middle Schools

Position	Student Enrollment	Allocation	
Principal	-	1.0	
Assistant principal	0-399	1.0	
	400-799	2.0	
	800-1,199	3.0	
	1,200-1,599	4.0	
	1,600-1,999	5.0	
Counselor	For each 400 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0	
Teacher:	22	1.0	
	Regular	-	1.0
	classroom	Staffed out of laboratory regular teacher allocation	N/A
	Extension Center		1.0
	Reading Lab	0-124	2.0
	Band director	125-249	1.0
	Choral music	0-199	2.0
	200+		
Librarian	0-1,499	1.0	
	1,500-1,999	1.5	
	2,000-2,499	2.0	
	2,500-2,999	2.5	
	3,000+	3.0	
Nurse	0-749	1.0	
	750+	(3 days/week)	
Clerical staff	For each 200 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0 (minimum of 6)	
Library aide	750+	1.0	
Nurse aide	0-749	2 days/week	

Teacher aide	For each 300 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0
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Source: Staffing Report, SISD Personnel Department.

The staffing allocation for high schools is included in **Exhibit 4-7**. A high school teacher may be added when the overall student-teacher ratio reaches 1:26 or may be reassigned if the ratio drops to 1:24.

Exhibit 4-7
SISD Campus Staffing Allocation
High Schools

Position	Student Enrollment	Allocation	
Principal	-	1.0	
Assistant principal	0-399	1.0	
	400-799	2.0	
	800-1,199	3.0	
	1,200-1,599	4.0	
	1,600-1,999	5.0	
	2,000-2,399	6.0	
	2,400-2,799	7.0	
	2,800-3,199	8.0	
Counselor:	For each 400 students [or major fraction thereof]	Regular	1.0
		Vocational	1.0
	Drug education specialist	-	-
	Teacher:	25	1.0
Regular classroom	0-100	1.0	
Band director	101-200	2.0	
	201-300	3.0	
Choral music	0-199	1.0	
Drill team	200+	2.0	
Extension Center	-	1.0	
Independent study	-	1.0	
SWAS [5 periods per day]	Under 18 students [maximum: 7 sections]	1.0	
	10-15	1.0	
Basic skills lab	Staffed out of regular teacher allocation		
TAAS math	"		
TAAS reading/writing	"		
Librarian	0-1.499	1.0	

	1,500-1,999	1.5
	2,000-2,499	2.0
	2,500-2,999	2.5
	3,000+	3.0
Nurse	0-1,999	1.0
	2,000+	2.0
Clerical staff	For each 200 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0
Library aide	750+	1.0
Nurse aide	-	1.0
Teacher aide	For each 300 students (or major fraction thereof)	1.0
Instructional assistant	-	2.0
[color guard/percussion]		

Source: Staffing Report, SISD Personnel Department.

Additional special staffing allocations exist for the Wunsche School, special education, the alternative education program, the pyramid program, athletics, occupational/technical education, ESL/bilingual, and certain departments with classified employees, such as Food Service.

COMMENDATION

SISD maintains staffing allocations for elementary and secondary schools that are used to equitably distribute staff resources.

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

B. Personnel Contracts and Salaries

CURRENT SITUATION

Salary administration involves developing the district's compensation plan, recommending appropriate structures for all classifications of personnel, conducting annual salary surveys, recommending modifications to the classification and compensation structure, and conducting analyses of the impact of proposed salary and wage increases for both the regular system and the performance system.

The district prepares and updates salary schedules by type of positions, such as teachers, teacher supplemental, performance-based staff, paraprofessionals, summer program positions, classified employees (maintenance, custodial, transportation, food service, police), and substitutes.

SISD also uses a performance-based pay plan for teachers with certain levels of experience and degrees. The percentage of teachers on performance-based pay has increased from 41.8 percent in 1994-95 to 55.3 percent in 1996-97.

All administrators, including every position from assistant principal to superintendent, receive performance-based pay. The percentage increases for teachers and administrators in each type of salary plan are included in **Exhibit 4-8**.

Exhibit 4-8
SISD Salary Increase Percentages for
Teachers and Administrators
1994-95 through 1996-97

Year	Percentage Increase for Teachers on the Salary Schedule	Percentage Increase for Teachers on Performance-Based Pay	Percentage Increase for Administrators
1994-95	4.6%	3.2%	2.8%
1995-	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%

96			
1996-97	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

Personnel/Support Services is responsible for overall development and monitoring of the salary system. The district conducts annual salary surveys for all position levels, and uses a salary schedule for teachers based upon years of experience and degree earned. In 1996-97, SISD surveyed the Alief, Cypress-Fairbanks, Katy, Klein, and Spring Branch districts for all employee salaries. These districts are near SISD and regularly compete with SISD for employees. By developing information on other area districts' salaries, SISD can maintain its salary schedules that are competitive with other districts and area employers. **Exhibit 4-9** provides the average SISD teacher salary by years of experience for the past three years.

Exhibit 4-9
SISD Average Teacher Salary by
Years of Experience
1994-95 through 1996-97

Years of Experience	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Beginning teachers	\$23,290	\$24,308	\$26,254
1-5	\$25,224	\$25,793	\$27,133
6-10	\$30,959	\$32,414	\$32,266
11-20	\$34,662	\$38,225	\$39,120
Over 20	\$38,861	\$43,233	\$44,612

Source: TEA, Snapshots, 1994-96.

FINDING

The SISD board sets aside two amounts within its budget for salary increases: one for those employees on regular pay schedules and another for those in the performance-based pay plan.

All administrators above assistant principal are required to participate in the performance-based pay plan. The district's administrative performance evaluation system provides the basis for the performance-based pay plan and is used to determine salary rewards. The process begins with an

annual adoption by the board of district objectives as updated in the Five-Year Education Plan.

Administrative work plans, completed by each administrator in SISD, indicate what they will do in a given year to help achieve district and school objectives. The work plans are developed to reflect relevance to district objectives, internal consistency, feasibility, consistency with job description functions, and consistency with district policies and procedures. In addition, at least one objective must relate to the individual's professional development.

Objectives are set by each administrator and their supervisor. Once the objectives and performance criteria have been set and confirmed by each employee's supervisor, the administrative performance evaluation process monitors achievement of the objectives. Using the personnel evaluation system, supervisors measure how well administrators performed in accomplishing their objectives.

Teachers remain on the regular salary schedule until they reach the top step, which occurs at the ninth year of service for those with doctorate degrees; tenth year for those with masters degrees; or eleventh year for those with bachelors degrees. Once a teacher has served one year at the top step, the teacher moves to the performance-based pay plan.

Principals consider each individual's performance independently when recommending salary increase for teachers under the performance-based pay system. Performance in all assigned teaching areas, except supplemental assignments, where other evaluation instruments are considered. To be eligible for the maximum increase, the teacher must have an outstanding evaluation plus completion of 12 hours of approved staff development. Middle range increases are given to those exceeding expectations plus 12 hours of staff development. Bottom range increases are given to those with no eligibility requirement, however, the individual may need a professional growth plan.

The process of setting annual performance pay levels for all employees in the performance-based pay plan begins with a review by principals (for teachers and assistant principals) or assistant superintendents (for administrators) of personnel evaluations within their part of the organization. Next, employees are ranked on the basis of their evaluation and rankings are submitted to the superintendent. The ranking includes notations of those recommended for pay increases and suggested levels of pay based upon available funds. The superintendent reviews the recommendations and pay levels and communicates performance pay amounts to each affected employee.

Interviews with administrators, principals, and teachers indicated universal praise and support for the performance-based pay plan. Each person interviewed indicated that the process not only helped them focus on achieving priorities set out in the Five-Year Education Plan but also helped them grow personally and professionally.

Texas Association of School Board's (TASB) Division of Personnel Services recently complimented SISD's system: "District trustees and administrators regularly ask...about performance pay plans. There are very few school districts that use such a scheme...Spring ISD is a source I suggest they contact...Developing such a plan requires time, trust, and leadership."

COMMENDATION

SISD uses an innovative compensation strategy to reinforce the achievement of district priorities.

FINDING

As noted earlier in this report, SISD's salaries for central administrative staff are the highest among peer districts (**Exhibit 4-10**).

**Exhibit 4-10
SISD and Peer District Central Administrative Salaries
1996-97**

District	Average Salary for Central Administrators
Spring	\$77,687
Spring Branch	\$74,798
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$72,600
Duncanville	\$68,227
Klein	\$67,923
Richardson	\$64,418
RESC IV	\$64,292
Goose Creek	\$61,722
Texas	\$58,606
Fort Bend	\$55,319

Source: Texas Education Agency, Snapshots and AEIS data, 1995-1996.

The district uses four levels for senior administrators: assistant superintendent, assistant to the superintendent, executive director, and director.

The review team noted a lack of consistency in the use of the executive director title. For example, the executive director for Facilities Management/Security supervises three directors, one supervisor, and the chief of police. The incumbent receives a salary of \$77,650 and has 33 years experience. The executive director for Curriculum and Instructional Services supervises two coordinators. The incumbent receives a salary of \$75,920 and has 31 years of experience.

The executive director for Board and Community Services supervises two paraprofessionals. The current incumbent receives a salary of \$74,500 and has 26 years of experience.

The executive director for Facilities Management/Security has a larger supervisory role in terms of budget, employees, and complexity of overall responsibilities, yet this position is set at the same level as two other positions with less responsibility.

Inconsistencies in pay and roles and responsibilities, put the district at risk for claims of discrimination. Many districts regularly review their compensation schedules and conduct job audits to ensure equitable treatment of employees. A typical standard used in private industry is to review a various classification of employees each year to see if any need adjustment. High turnover, market conditions, or difficulties in filling a position can be signals that a problem exists in a given classification of employee. Piecemealing the job in this fashion avoids undue burdens on personnel staff. A reasonable amount per year is one-fourth of all positions, so that all positions are reviewed every four years.

Each spring, SISD reviews its salary schedules against information collected in local salary surveys it conducts and from other organizations such as TASB. Periodically, the district conducts classification audits to update SISD positions and compares them to other districts and employers. In 1992, TASB conducted a classification audit of SISD paraprofessional positions; in 1995, TASB audited the district's professional positions. However, SISD is not examining a cross-section of its positions, with the exception of teachers, on an annual basis and this has led to inconsistencies in salaries and responsibilities across the district.

Recommendation 35:

Conduct an annual audit of jobs and salaries paid to a selection of positions within SISD and review all positions at least once every four years.

Salaries that are not consistent can be frozen if well above comparable internal positions or the external market; if a position is well below the market or comparable internal positions, an accelerated increase in salary can be granted.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Personnel Services prepares a schedule of the salaries for all positions and recommends a schedule to review one-fourth of the positions and salaries each year.	October 1997
2. The assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services reviews the schedule and makes any modifications before approving it.	October 1997
3. The director of Personnel Services develops an internal task group to assist in the review of the first quarter of all positions and identifies sources of published information on salaries.	November 1997
4. The task group reviews the information and compares the jobs, their responsibilities, and their salaries and recommends adjustments accordingly.	November 1997
5. The director of Personnel Services reviews the recommendations and fiscal impact with the assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services.	February 1998
6. The assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services reviews the recommendations with the superintendent for inclusion in the budget.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Conducting a job and salary audit can be done internally at no cost to the district. Savings or costs may be incurred if current salaries are frozen or increased to meet current market conditions.

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

C. Employee Turnover and Recruitment

FINDING

Personnel/Support Services monitors the district turnover rate. Turnover is a measure of workforce stability, job satisfaction, and the adequacy of programs and incentives designed to retain qualified personnel. **Exhibit 4-11** indicates that SISD's turnover has averaged about 10.6 percent over the last three years for all professional staff.

Exhibit 4-11
SISD Professional Staff Turnover
1993-94 through 1995-96

Year	Turnover Rate
1993-94	9.98%
1994-95	10.45%
1995-96	11.31%

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

The Conference Board, a private industry information clearinghouse, estimates that the average turnover rate in most private-sector organizations for professional staff is 17 to 20 percent. Any turnover rate approaching 10 percent, such as SISD's, is considered excellent.

For teachers--the largest group of employees and the hardest to recruit--the personnel department tracks the reasons for departure to determine whether changes in programs, incentives, or policies and procedures are warranted. However, SISD does not track the years of service for teachers who leave. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics for school years between 1993-94 and 1994-95, more teachers left teaching for retirement (31 percent), family or personal move (11.4 percent), and pregnancy/child rearing (15.6 percent). The top three reasons SISD's teachers left were taking a position in another school district, moving, and family/health reasons. **Exhibit 4-12** illustrates

teacher turnover at SISD and common reasons for departure over the last three years.

Exhibit 4-12
SISD Teacher Turnover
and Reasons for Departure
1994-95 through 1996-97

Reason for Leaving	1994-95 (actual number)	1995-96 (actual number)	1996-97 (actual number)	Three-year Average (percentage)
Take a position in another district	27	31	49	29%
Moving	45	36	20	27%
Family/health reasons	27	17	32	21%
Take job outside of education	15	9	6	8%
Retiring	5	8	11	6%
No reason given	0	10	0	3%
Returning to school	0	1	4	1%
Take college position	3	0	1	1%
Did not meet certification	2	0	2	1%
Temporary contract	2	0	1	1%
Take position closer to home	3	0	0	1%
Job dissatisfaction	0	2	0	1%
Deceased	1	0	0	-
Total	130	114	126	100 %

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

The district's teacher turnover rate of 10.7 percent is lower than in all but three of its peer districts and lower than the region and state rates (**Exhibit 4-13**).

Exhibit 4-13
SISD and Peer District Teacher Turnover Rates
1995-96

District	Teacher Turnover Rate
Fort Bend	0.5%
Klein	9.3%
Goose Creek	10.1%
Spring	10.7%
Spring Branch	10.7%
Region IV	10.9%
Texas	12.1%
Richardson	12.3%
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	14.6%
Duncanville	15.1%

COMMENDATION

SISD effectively manages its employee retention programs to maintain low turnover levels and low retraining costs.

FINDING

SISD's substitute teacher placement service recruits and trains qualified candidates. The district requires that each substitute candidate attend training session at the beginning of each school year. Candidates receive basic training in classroom management, effective teaching techniques, and district policies and procedures, including discipline management.

Also, the district recently implemented an automated substitute system that makes substitute placement much more efficient and effective. When principals or teachers need a substitute, they call an automatic substitute phone line and request a substitute by date, time, location, etc. The system then automatically calls each qualified substitute until the request is filled. Maintenance of the system requires only a small amount of the Staff Placement office's time.

SISD's substitute handbook provides district policies, procedures, and methods specifically for all currently qualified substitutes and anyone interested in substituting in the future.

COMMENDATION

SISD's substitute program is well organized, brings well-trained personnel to the schools, and requires minimal personnel time to maintain.

FINDING

Teacher recruitment has become a major concern to school districts throughout Texas and the nation. SISD's director of Staff Placement indicated that some colleges now charge districts fees for the privilege of interviewing their graduates.

Demand is particularly keen for minority graduates, especially in Texas, where a growing Hispanic population makes competition brisk for bilingual teachers, counselors, and aides. While the demand for such personnel is high, the supply of minority graduates is low, primarily because private industry can offer minority candidates higher pay.

The Texas State Board for Educator Certification indicates that, during the past 10 years, it issued 174,172 initial teaching certificates. Of those, 7 percent or 12,192 were issued to Hispanic graduates and 3.5 percent, or 6,096, were issued to African American graduates.

Compounding the situation is the fact that more than 40 percent of those certified during the past 10 years no longer teach in Texas public schools; a rate of departure that is similar for all ethnicities.

SISD has an elaborate program to recruit teachers that includes:

- Involvement of principals in the recruiting process, both at college campuses and in the schools.
- Screening of all applicants by the Staff Placement office.
- An applicant rating system.
- A student teacher program that involves contracts with nine universities and special placement arrangements with several others.

Exhibit 4-14 through **4-16** show SISD's recruiting schedules over the past two years.

Exhibit 4-14
SISD Recruitment Activity
1994-95 through 1995-96

Recruitment Activity	1994-95	1995-96
Total job fair contacts	N/A	1,636
Total interviews	1,469	1,381
Total minority contacts	N/A	431
Total campuses visited	53	57

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

Exhibit 4-15
SISD College Recruitment Schedule
Fall 1995

Date	College	Cost	Contacts
9/28/95	SHSU Student Teacher Inservice Presentation to 100 students		
10/10-10/11/95	Lesley College, Cambridge MA Presentations to 76 students	\$866.00 ST	7 contacts; 1 minority
10/13/95	Baylor Education Career Fair (ST)	\$251.92 ST	19 Contacts; 1 Minority
10/17/95	Texas A&M - Corpus Christi Career Fair	\$425.11	24 Contacts; 14 Minorities
10/18/95	Texas A&M - Kingsville Job Fair	See CCA&M	29 Contacts; 19 Minorities
10/18/95	Sam Houston State University Job Fair	\$94.50	100 Contacts; 10 Minorities
10/20/95	University of Houston Education Fair A&M, TSU, PVA&M (100 students)	ST	73 Contacts; 18 Minorities
10/20/95	SED Tri- Alliance Student Night (Sp/Oc Therapists) Houston	\$229.20	67 Contacts 13 Minorities
11/1/95	SHSU Interview Day	\$87.00	61 Interviews; 5 Minorities
11/9-10/95	University of Texas - Austin	\$214.60	12 Interviews:

			5 Minorities
11/13/95	Reg. IV Alternative Certification Job Fair		25 Contacts; 7 Minorities
11/30/95	Univ. of Houston - Clear Lake Job Fair	\$37.19	10 Contacts; 0 Minorities
12/4/95	SF. Austin Job Fair/Interview Day	\$366.25	35 Contacts; 3 Minorities
12/5/95	Piggy Back Job Fair, San Marcos TX	See SFA	47 Contacts; 8 Minorities
12/11/95	Texas A&M Univ. Interview Day	\$363.58	9 Interviews; 0 Minorities
12/12/95	SW Texas State Univ. Interview Day	See A&M	11 Interviews; 0 Minorities

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

Exhibit 4-16
SISD College Recruitment Schedule
Spring 1996

Date	College	Total Cost	Contacts
1/29-30/96	Huston Tillotson College - Austin Interviews and Presentation to 30 students	\$388.88	22 Contacts; 20 Minorities
2/9/96	Texas A&M Univ. Career Fair	\$52.90	90 contacts; 7 Minorities
2/16/96	Univ. of Houston Student Teacher Fair; Also, presentation 55 students	\$50.64	125 Contacts; 5 Minorities
2/16/96	Baylor Univ. Student Teacher Fair	\$172.02 ST	27 Contacts; 0 Minorities
3/2/96	SISD Transfer Job Fair In-district only		
3/6/96	Sam Houston State Univ. Job Fair	\$129.70	131 Contacts; 10 Minorities
3/7/96	Huston-Tillotson College Job Fair	\$121.00 ST	22 Contacts; 20 Minorities

3/13/96	Sam Houston State Univ. Interview Day	\$30.00	57 Interviews; 4 Minorities
3/20/96	Jarvis Christian College - Hawkins, TX	\$218.30	9 Contacts; 9 Minorities
3/25/96	Stephen F. Austin Univ. Career Day	\$50.15 ST	64 Contacts; 10 Minorities
3/25/96	University of Louisiana - Lafayette	\$780.67	15 Contacts; 2 Minorities
3/26/96	Southern Univ. - Baton Rouge		12 Contacts; 11 Minorities
3/27/96	Louisiana State - Baton Rouge		24 Contacts/2 Minorities 11 Interviews
3/28/96	Southeastern Louisiana St. - Hammond		16 Contacts; 0 Minorities
3/29/96	New Orleans Job Fair		26 Contacts; 7 Minorities
4/3/96	Texas A&M (Kingsville) Job Fair	\$438.83	34 Contacts; 15 Minorities
4/4/96	Texas A&M (Corpus Christi) Job Fair	Kingsville	28 Contacts
4/9/96	Texas Womens Univ. Job Fair	\$300.84	13 Contacts; 2 Minorities
4/10/96	North Texas State Univ. - Denton	TWU	11 Contacts; 1 Minority
4/10/96	Prairie View A&M Job Fair	\$74.00	32 Contacts; 22 Minorities
4/11/96	Univ. of Texas (Austin) Interview Day	\$728.50	31 Interviews; 7 Minorities
4/12/96	National Minority Job Fair - San Marcos	See UT	57 Contacts; 27 Minorities
4/16/96 4/17/96	University of Northern Colorado Greeley Colorado	\$671.55	61 Contacts; 1 Minority
4/18/96	Lamar Univ. - Beaumont	\$62.10	16 Interviews; 5 Minorities
4/22/96	Stephen F. Austin Univ.	\$219.80	22 Interviews; 0

	Interview Day		Minorities
4/23 & 4/24/96	Texas Tech Univ. Job Fair/Interview Day	\$721.82	30 Contacts; 22 Interviews
4/25 & 4/26/96	Univ. of Nebraska-Kearney, NB	\$278.00	5 Contacts; 0 Minorities
4/26/96	Texas Southern Univ. Job Fair	\$46.00	32 Contacts; 25 Minorities
5/7/96	Baylor Univ. Interview Day	See SWTS	9 Interviews; 0 Minorities
5/8/96	SW Texas State Univ. Interview Day	\$955.82	14 Interviews; 2 Minorities
5/9/96	Texas A&M Univ. Interview Day	See SWTS	20 Interviews; 0 Minorities
5/6/96	University of Houston Interview Day	\$31.36	20 Interviews; 2 Minorities
5/14 & 5/15/96	Iowa Job Fair/Presentation to 10 students	\$473.45	53 Contacts; 1 Minority
5/15/96	University of Houston at Clear Lake	\$23.70	7 Interviews; 0 Minorities
6/3 & 6/4/96	Gulf Coast Job Fair, Houston	--	229 Total Contacts; 12 Minorities
6/17/96	Region IV Alternative Cert. Job Fair		39 Contacts; 8 Minorities

Source: SISD Personnel Department

**Exhibit 4-17
SISD College Recruitment Schedule
Fall 1996**

Date	College	Total Cost	Contacts
9/12/96	Tri-Alliance Student Night (Speech Path.)	\$16.12	60 contacts; 6 minority
10/9/96	Sam Houston State University Job Fair	\$104.30	93 contacts; 6 minority
10/11/96	Baylor Career Fair	\$171.80	23 contacts; 3 minority

10/11/96	Univ. of Houston Teacher Council Job Fair	\$47.50	110 contacts; 22 minority
10/11/96	Univ. of Houston Presentation (50 students)		
10/15/96	Texas A&M - Corpus Christi Job Fair	\$442.94	47 contacts; 18 minority
10/16/96	Texas A&M - Kingsville Job Fair	See above	28 contacts; 21 minority
10/23/96	SHSU Interview Day	\$149.42	62 interviews; 4 minority
11/18/96	Stephen F. Austin Job Fair	\$221.87	36 interviews; 4 minority
11/20-21/96	University of Texas-Austin Interview Days	\$249.02	14 interviews; 4 minority
12/2/96	University of Houston-Clear Lake Job Fair	\$27.59	9 contacts; 1 interview
12/9/96	University of Texas Job Fair	\$488.46	24 contacts; 2 minority
12/10/96	Piggy Back Job Fair - San Marcos	See above	35 contacts; 4 minority
12/11/96	Baylor University Interview Day	See above	4 interviews; 2 minority
12/16/96	Southwest Texas State Univ. Interview Day	\$339.30	5 interviews; 2 minority
12/17/96	Texas A&M University Interview Day	See above	10 interviews; 0 minority
12/18/96	Houston Baptist Job Fair	\$29.20	38 contacts; 10 minorities

Source: SISD Personnel Department

Beginning with the spring 1997 recruitment efforts, SISD began identifying the reason for each recruitment trip. **Exhibit 4-18** shows the results of the spring recruiting schedule using this information.

Exhibit 4-18
SISD College Recruitment Schedule
Spring 1997

Date	College	Cost	Contacts (number of minority >candidates)	Reason for Trip
2/7/97	Texas A&M Univ. Career Fair	\$104.66	77 contacts (5)	Quality candidates/hard to fill areas - ST program
2/21/97	Univ. of Houston Student Teacher Fair	\$14.57	125 contacts (41)	Min. contacts/low cost/ST program
2/24/97	Baylor Univ. - Waco	\$40.00	38 contacts (1)	Quality candidates - ST program
3/1/97	SISD Transfer Job Fair In-district only	---	---	
3/3- 5/97	Lesley Col./Student Teachers	---	11 contacts (0)	Quality candidates - ST program
3/4/97	Sam Houston State Univ. Job Fair	\$33.48	143 contacts (15)	# of candidates/cost/ST program
3/6/97	Huston-Tillotson College Job Fair	\$216.93	16 contacts (15)	Minority contacts
3/26/97	SHSU Interview Day	\$58.52	79 contacts (3)	Large hire rate/cost/ST program
3/26/97	Our Lady of the Lake Job Fair	\$284.93	14 contacts (7)	Bilingual/MA Sp. Path. candidates
4/2- 3/97	University of Texas Interview Day	\$245.43	18 contacts (2)	Quality candidates
4/7/97	Stephen F. Austin Univ. Career Day	ST acct.	67 contacts (0)	# of Candidates - ST program
4/8/97	Texas Womens Univ. Job Fair	\$195.24	14 contacts (2)	Low cost/with North Texas trip
4/9/97	North Texas State Univ. Interview Day	See TWU	13 contacts (1)	Quality candidates
4/9/97	Prairie View A&M Job Fair	\$25.11	26 contacts (21)	Min contacts/Alt. Cert./ST program
4/9/97	Louisiana State Univ.	\$426.36	12 contacts (1)	Good candidates
4/10/97	Southeastern Louisiana	See LSU	5 contacts (0)	Cost/with New Orleans Job Fair

4/10/97	Univ. of Texas Pan American	\$236.87	31 contacts (25)	# of Bilingual candidates
4/10/97	Texas Southern Job Fair	\$15.81	24 contacts (20)	Min candidates/alt. cert./ST program
4/10/97	Huston Tillotson Presentation			Min. contacts/proposed ST program
4/11/97	Nat'l Minority Job Fair (San Marcos)	\$228.36	46 contacts (21)	# Minority/bilingual candidates
4/11/97	New Orleans Job Fair	See LSU	15 contacts (11)	# Minority contacts
4/14-16/97	University of Northern Colorado Job Fair Greeley, CO	\$468.43	62 contacts (2)	# Quality candidates/hard to fill areas
4/16/97	Texas A&M (Kingsville) Job Fair	\$330.00	26 contacts (17)	Bilingual candidates
4/17/97	Texas A&M (Corpus Christi) Job Fair	Kingsv.	22 contacts (15)	Bilingual candidates
4/17/97	Lamar Univ. - Beaumont	\$73.16	11 contacts (3)	Local college - low recr. cost
4/21/97	Stephen F. Austin Univ. Interview Day	\$212.49	20 contacts (1)	Candidates/good hire rate/ST program
4/22-23/97	Texas Tech Job Fair/Interview Day	\$501.00 + ST acct.	29 interv. (3)	Quality candidates - hard to fill areas - proposed ST program
4/23/97	UT-El Paso	\$341.48	10 contacts (2)	# Bilingual/minority candidates
5/5/97	University of Texas Job Fair	\$425.00	27 contacts (2)	Quality candidates/hard to fill areas
5/7-8/97	Ball State Univ. - Muncie IN	\$486.00		Quality candidates/hard to fill areas
5/7/97	University of Houston Interviews		16 interv. (2)	Low recr. cost - ST program
5/13-14/97	Iowa Job Fair/Presentation to students	\$800.00		# Quality candidates - hard to fill areas

5/14/97	University of Houston at Clear Lake	\$35.00		Low recr cost - minority contacts
5/14/97	Baylor Univ. Interview Day	\$212.00		Quality candidates - ST program
6/2-3/97	Gulf Coast Job Fair, Houston			# Contacts - low recr. cost
5/5/97	Texas A&M Univ. Interview Day	\$120.00	27 contacts (?)	Candidates/hard to fill areas/ST program
5/6/97	SW Texas State Univ. Interview Day	See UT	14 interv. (2)	# Candidates
6/23/97	Region IV Alternative Cert. Job Fair	\$40.00		

Source: SISD Personnel Department

SISD offers a workshop to prepare principals to participate in the recruitment process. The workshop covers results of the prior year's recruiting efforts; legal issues surrounding the Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Employment Opportunity provisions, consistency, pre-employment guidelines, and reference checking; interviewing techniques; characteristics of a great recruiter; elements of a successful recruiting trip; and required forms and materials.

All applicants are rated based on their responses to questions on teaching techniques, knowledge of content, classroom management, student discipline, poise and confidence, relationships with parents and other staff members, and communications skills. Interviewers are trained to look for candidates who can articulate their ability to meet student needs, teach units in a child-centered manner, motivate students, create a discipline plan, react well under pressure, and gain the support of parents and the community.

SISD attempts to hire all new teachers by July 15 of each year.

SISD normally recruits from colleges and universities including:

- Ball State
- Baylor
- Houston (Clear Lake, University Park)
- Huston-Tillotson
- Iowa

- Jarvis Christian
- Lamar
- Louisiana State
- Nebraska
- North Texas State
- Northern Colorado
- Sam Houston State
- Southern
- Southeastern Louisiana
- Southwest Texas State
- Stephen F. Austin
- Texas
- Texas A&M System (Kingsville, Corpus Christi, College Station, Commerce and Prairie View)
- Texas Pan American
- Texas Southern
- Texas Tech
- Texas Women's University.

COMMENDATION

SISD's teacher recruitment process is well organized and involves principals and administrators.

FINDING

SISD has increased the number of African American teachers it has recruited in the past two years (**Exhibit 4-19**).

Exhibit 4-19
SISD Teachers Recruited by Ethnicity
1995-96 through 1996-97

Ethnicity	1995-96	1996-97
Anglo	93%	87%
African American	2%	7%
Hispanic	6%	5%
Asian	0%	0%
American Indian	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

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

Source: SISD Personnel Department.

SISD recognizes the benefits of minority teachers and administrators as role models for minority students. Efforts have been made to recruit minorities for teaching and administrative positions. For example, candidate information is solicited from community residents. SISD has increased the number of minority colleges that are visited, as well as increased the number of student teaching arrangements with minority colleges. SISD also attended community forums at minority churches and other locations and has involved the minority community on task groups to update the Five Year Educational Plan.

Despite these efforts, however, the ethnic composition of SISD's teachers continues to differ significantly from that of the student population (**Exhibit 4-20**).

Exhibit 4-20
SISD Ethnic Composition of Teachers and Students
1995-96 through 1996-97

Ethnicity	1995-96		1996-97	
	Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
African American	2%	20%	4%	21%
Anglo	94%	56%	92%	53%
Hispanic	3%	18%	4%	19%
Other	1%	6%	1%	6%

Source: TEA, Snapshots, 1995-96.

Twenty-one percent of SISD's students are African American and 19 percent are Hispanic. Yet only 4 percent of the district's teachers are African American and only 4 percent are Hispanic.

The first priority of the Five-Year Educational Plan is to enhance the quality of teachers and staff support. One objective within this priority is to increase minority professional staff. Among the specific targets for the most recent school year were to:

- Increase the proportion of minorities among professional staff to 8 percent and to 19 percent for all staff.
- Attend 16 minority job fairs.
- Use 15 minority staff members as recruiters.

- Continue contact with 22 minority universities, investigate additional relationships, and invite students at these universities to observe classes.
- Conduct follow-up contact with minority candidates.

For 1996-97, the district's minority teaching staff was 6.1 percent of all teachers; minorities represent 17 percent of the total staff. Both measures are somewhat below the district's goals. This percentage trails state and regional averages but is comparable to many of its peer districts (**Exhibit 1-9**).

SISD's principals were highly complimentary of the district's recruitment efforts and the quality of candidates solicited by the Staff Placement office. However, public input indicated a need for greater efforts to recruit minorities. For example:

- "More diversity in the teaching force is a top priority. The district is trying to do that."
- "Spring ISD needs to hire more Black teachers to be able to relate to our young Black children."
- "Need minority representation. Two or three schools don't have any minority administrators."
- "Need more minority teachers. SISD has worked hard on that. Blacks and Hispanics - everybody wants the good ones."
- "We need to see Hispanics and Asians in this part of Texas."
- "SISD is doing a lot to diversify the staff. With a diverse student body, the staff could be more diverse. SISD is working on that."

Some Texas districts facing problems with minority recruitment have successfully used emergency certification and alternative certification programs. The emergency certification program allows applicants meeting certain minimum requirements to teach while they work to obtain their teaching certificate. The alternative certification program targets individuals with bachelor degrees in disciplines other than teaching. Alternative certification typically involves intensive coursework during a summer prior to a school year and then at night during the school year while the participant teaches school. Upon successful completion of coursework and the first year of teaching, the participant receives full certification from the state. Houston ISD has a commendable alternative teacher certificate program called *Teach for America*.

Recommendation 36:

Expand minority recruitment efforts.

The district should examine its recruiting efforts over the past two years. Improvements could be made by identifying colleges and universities where recruitment of minorities has been particularly successful and intensifying efforts at those locations; contacting a sample of minority applicants who were offered positions but went to another district to learn their reasons and adjusting recruitment strategies accordingly; identifying minority community leaders who could participate in campus recruitment efforts, either through participation in interviews or presentations to student teachers; and surveying minority teachers and administrators to identify alumni associations and explore the prospect of using these groups to attract teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Staff Placement compiles and analyzes statistics on recruitment by ethnicity.	October 1997
2. The director of Staff Placement reviews the recruitment schedule and identifies opportunities to expand efforts at colleges and universities where efforts to recruit minorities have been particularly successful.	October 1997
3. The director of Staff Placement surveys minority teachers and administrators about alumni associations and their potential help in the recruiting process.	November 1997
4. The director of Staff Placement meets with minority administrators and teachers to identify minority community members who could be used in the recruitment effort and to target opportunities for their participation.	November 1997
5. The director of Staff Placement modifies the current recruitment plan and recommends it to the assistant superintendent for Personnel/Support Services for approval.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Based on SISD's salary survey of five nearby districts, SISD's teacher salaries are relatively low for less-experienced teachers. For teachers with more experience, however, SISD teacher salaries are higher than peer district averages. **Exhibit 4-21** illustrates this pattern.

Exhibit 4-21
SISD Teacher Salaries
Compared to Selected Districts
1996-97

Years of Experience	Alief	Cypress-Fairbanks	Katy	Klein	Spring	Spring Branch
Beginning teachers	\$27,100	\$26,800	\$26,867	\$26,610	\$26,254	\$26,600
1-5	\$28,906	\$28,317	\$28,967	\$27,434	\$27,133	\$30,100
6-10	\$32,226	\$30,602	\$32,633	\$29,990	\$32,266	\$35,100
11-20	\$36,536	\$35,141	\$36,606	\$34,805	\$39,120	\$41,708
Over 20	\$42,435	\$40,455	\$44,475	\$43,427	\$44,612	N/A

Source: TEA, Snapshots, 1994-96.

According to interviews with SISD personnel, the district has been hiring more entry-level teachers over the last two years to reduce its overall personnel costs. Although annual salary surveys are done, the affect of lower-than-peer district starting salaries on overall recruitment efforts is not known.

Recommendation 37:

Analyze the affect of lower-than-peer district salaries for starting teachers on overall recruitment efforts.

The district should examine why teachers are leaving SISD and why candidates who have been offered teaching contracts turn them down, such as low pay. SISD also should examine its compensation philosophy for teachers to determine if a middle range approach would be more effective in recruiting new teachers. Salary extremes at both the low and high ends for beginning and long term teachers should be considered.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services and the director of Personnel develop a survey to determine the reasons why applicants turn down teaching contracts.	March 1998
2. The assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services and director of Personnel review the reasons why teachers are leaving the district. and begin to analvze whv potential applicants turn down	April 1998

teaching contracts.	
3. The assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services and the director of Personnel review salary surveys, conduct salary comparison studies of other districts, and reexamine the district's process for recruiting teachers.	May 1998
4. The assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services present the results of the studies to the superintendent.	June 1998
5. The superintendent determines if further action is needed based on the studies, whether changes should be made to the teacher recruitment process, and whether adjustments in starting teacher salaries are appropriate to ensuring that qualified teachers stay with the district.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

A quarter of SISD's employees are over 50 years old; 15 percent have at least 20 years of service. According to the Teacher's Retirement System of Texas (TRS), 4.2 percent of SISD employees are eligible for full retirement in September 1997.

TRS administers a defined benefit pension plan for school district employees. Under this plan, the state pays retirees a retirement annuity based on a benefit formula that uses the employee's years of service, multiplied times a benefit rate of 2 percent for each year of service, times the average of the three highest annual salaries.

TRS members are eligible for full or normal retirement at age 65 with five or more years of service, age 60 with 20 or more years of service, or age 50 with 30 or more years of service. Beginning September 1, 1997, TRS members with any combination of age and years of service equal to 80 will be eligible to retire, also known as the "Rule of 80." Members are also given the option to retire early with reduced benefits.

Turnover among SISD's professional staff has been 10.6 percent over the last three years. The average three-year salary levels for SISD teachers with at least 20 years of service are higher than their peer districts. Furthermore, salaries for SISD central administrators are among the highest--\$77,687 on average--33 percent more than top administrators statewide, and more than any of the administrators in their peer group.

Relatively high salaries coupled with an attractive benefit package contributes to the district's ability to retain experienced employees.

Early retirement incentives are often used as a tool to encourage employees to retire sooner than they had planned. Early retirement incentives are "temporary" increases in retirement benefits that are offered for a limited period of time known as a retirement "window." Retirement incentives can benefit employers by reducing payroll costs, creating a smaller workforce, and providing an opportunity to reorganize staff.

Early Retirement Incentive Plans (ERIP) take on many forms, but some of the most common plans offer cash incentives to retire early. For school districts, the objective of an early retirement incentive plan is to provide financial incentives for a district's most experienced, highly paid employees to retire. It has been argued that encouraging experienced employees to leave will have a detrimental effect on the school district, while others prefer a more controlled exit of eligible employees. Many public school employees welcome an opportunity for early retirement, and a sizable cash bonus, after years of dedicated work.

Early retirement programs offered by school districts in Texas are somewhat unique in that district employees have several options when retiring. District employees may elect to retire from the district, but are not obligated to retire from TRS too. Employees may, however, choose to retire from both the district and TRS.

Several Texas school districts have successfully implemented ERIPs. Some districts have offered lump-sum payments of up to 100 percent of an employee's salary payable in installments over a two- to four-year period. In 1993-94, Ector County ISD offered employees who are 55 years old with 25 years of service with TRS, and at least 10 years of service with Ector County ISD a cash incentive equal to 27 percent of the employee's salary to retire. Sixty-six employees retired under the incentive plan which resulted in a net savings of \$293,106 over four years. Employees of La Marque ISD with 20 years of service with TRS, and at least 10 years of service with the district were eligible to participate in the early separation incentive. Employees were offered a full-year's pay with provisions for the payment of unused sick leave. Thirty-three percent of eligible staff participated in the program and the district estimates \$1 million in savings over five years.

Districts must carefully consider all aspects of the retirement incentive and weigh the benefits of offering the incentive against the possible negative impacts of losing experienced employees. Districts that are concerned about losing too many key employees too quickly often adjust the retirement package being offered to reduce the number of eligible

employees. For example, offering the incentive only to employees with more than 30 years of service with TRS and 12 years of experience in the district may narrow the field of eligible employees to a manageable number. Other school districts that have offered ERIPs include Amarillo ISD, Arlington ISD, Friendswood ISD, Memphis ISD, McLean ISD, and Pasadena ISD, to name a few.

Recommendation 38:

Explore the option of offering a retirement incentive plan.

This recommendation is offered as an option but no fiscal impacts are claimed as part of the review. If SISD should decide to develop a retirement incentive plan, it should be made available to all district employees and customized to meet the needs of the district. Yet, it should be noted that a comprehensive analysis should be done to fully understand the impact of the program on the overall climate of the district and the management structure. As noted in the findings, there can be serious detrimental effects on a district if all of these changes are not fully thought out.

One possible implementation methodology is presented here to show how this program might work in SISD. The plan could be structured as a one-time cash incentive program, between 30 and 50 percent of the employee's annual salary, to benefit both the district and its employees; employees taking advantage of the program need not necessarily retire from the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS). SISD employees would be offered the following retirement options.

- Retire from SISD and receive the district's retirement incentive only;
- Retire from SISD and from TRS and receive both the district's retirement incentive and the TRS retirement benefit; or
- Decide against retirement.

Participants in the SISD plan should not be able to return to work for the district, however, to ensure that critical knowledge is not lost entirely, the plan should not preclude the district from re-employing a retired participant to the extent permitted by the TRS rules of employment applicable to retired employees.

When designing a plan, SISD administrators should be mindful of all the legal issues surrounding retirement incentives; these issues should be clearly communicated to interested employees as well. In compliance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the plan must be voluntary, and apply to all classes of employees. Money received by retiring

employees is considered taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service, but is not treated as income by TRS.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent, in cooperation with the assistant superintendent of Business/Financial Services and the assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services, request samples of retirement plans from the Texas school districts who have successfully implemented incentive plans such as Amarillo, Arlington, Ector County, Friendswood, Galveston, La Marque, McLean, Memphis, and Pasadena.	January 1998
2. The assistant superintendent of Business/Financial Services and the assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services review the list of district employees with creditable service in TRS and determine the appropriate age and length of service criteria for employees to be eligible for the retirement plan.	February 1998
3. The superintendent, the district's attorney, the assistant superintendent of Business/Financial Services, and the assistant superintendent of Personnel/Support Services fully explore the impact of a retirement plan on overall district operations.	February- March 1998
4. The superintendent presents findings to the board for discussion and/or approval.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact presented shows what the review team determined could be saved if a retirement plan were offered in SISD, however, no savings are claimed in the report since implementation of a retirement plan may not prove feasible or may not be undertaken until some later date.

For purposes of discussion, the review team assumed that all employees meeting TRS' criteria for full retirement would be eligible for the plan, and that all positions currently occupied will be refilled. TRS member records show that 113 Spring ISD employees are eligible for full-retirement as of September 1997. Thirty-nine additional district employees will become eligible to retire from TRS in August 1998. Possible savings from the implementation of a retirement incentive plan are reflected in **Exhibit 4-22**.

To be conservative, the three-year average salary provided by the district was used to as the average salary for all eligible employees; the average three-year salary for SISD employee with over 20 years of service was \$44,612. Lump sum payments, however, would likely be based on each

employee's salary base at the end of the 1997-98 school year. Key assumptions in the fiscal estimate include the following:

- One hundred thirteen SISD employees are eligible to participate in the plan;
- The average salary for eligible employees is \$44,612;
- An estimated 50 percent of eligible employees (57 employees) will elect to participate in the plan. Salaries for these employees total \$2.5 million

(57 employees x \$44,612 = \$2.5 million);

- Participants will receive a lump sum payment of 50 percent of salary, payable in two annual installments of \$11,153 per year per employee

(\$44,612 x 50 percent = \$22,306/2 years = \$11,153 per employee per year);

- The district's lump sum cost for participants would be \$635,721 per year (57 employees x \$44,612 x 50 percent = \$1.2 million/2 years = \$635,721 per year);
- Fifty seven new hires will replace retiring employees. The district, however, should evaluate each position before refilling it. The district will spend \$1.5 million on new hire's salaries (57 new hires x \$26,254 = \$1.5 million).

SISD may incur additional costs for accrued sick leave, but this amount should be capped for each employee based on a finite number of days at a reduced daily rate. These costs are not included in this estimate, but should not exceed \$50 per day per employee.

**Exhibit 4-22
Possible Savings from a Retirement Incentive Plan**

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Employees accept plan	\$2,542,884	\$2,542,884	\$2,542,884	\$2,542,884	\$2,542,884
Lump sum payment to employees accepting plan	(635,721)	(635,721)	-0-	-0-	-0-
Hire new employees to	(1,496,478)	(1,496,478)	(1,496,478)	(1,496,478)	(1,496,478)

replace employees accepting plan					
Net Savings (Cost)	\$410,685	\$410,685	\$1,046,406	\$1,046,406	\$1,046,406

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

D. Personnel Records

FINDING

Personnel files are maintained in hard copy files for all current employees and for all inactive employees for four years. Storage of these files requires one file room in the personnel office, which is not protected against destruction or damage by fire.

The Texas Education Code requires districts to maintain information in an employee's file including employment contracts, certificates, and teacher service records. Federal regulations associated with the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Omnibus Employee Training Act of 1991 require leave and absence reports, alcohol and drug screening test results, information from previous employers, and employment verification forms (I-9 forms). Other documents typically found in the main personnel file include applications, references, criminal history records, transcripts, performance appraisal records, personnel action memoranda and forms, documentation of attendance at staff development, awards and recognitions, and letters of commendation from parents. The review team noted that a number of personnel files were very thick and probably contained unnecessary information, particularly for former employees.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission has adopted standards for the electronic storage of records. These standards and methods already are in use throughout Texas cities, such as Dallas, and school districts, such as Katy, Cypress-Fairbanks, and Beaumont.

Recommendation 39:

Scan the files of all inactive employees and maintain all hard copy personnel files off-site.

The district has a highly advanced document scanner that is located in the Purchasing Department. Documents can be scanned onto CD ROM diskettes and read on a computer with a CD ROM attachment. The Personnel Department is networked to share documents on a CD ROM. The scanner is capable of scanning 27 documents per minute; each CD ROM diskette can store up to 30,000 documents.

All paper files should be stored in a fire-protected storage area in one of the district's warehouse facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Personnel Services meets with the record manager and the Purchasing director to develop a schedule for scanning documents.	September 1997
2. The district initiates scanning of documents and moves paper files to another location upon completion of scanning.	October 1997 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Since the district already has a scanner, this recommendation would involve no additional cost. However, depending on how many employees require access to scanned personnel files the district may need to consider whether the purchase of a file server is warranted.

FINDING

Applicant files are maintained on every job applicant. The application form is scanned onto a CD ROM diskette, which contains approximately 3,600 applicant files for the last two years. Approximately 2,000 hard-copy files of the current year's applicants also are kept.

Although each candidate is evaluated and rated according to their responses to various established criteria, the district makes no attempt to separate the files of qualified applicants from unqualified applicants. This forces the district to waste excessive space and time on file maintenance.

Recommendation 40:

Maintain automated or scanned files of qualified applicants only and archive all others.

After district records retention requirements are met, SISD should purge all remaining applications..

The district should maintain current files only, with the exception of qualified candidates, especially minorities, who take positions with districts in the greater Houston area. These applicants could be tracked and contacted in the second or third year to determine whether they might be interested in coming to work for SISD. This effort could lower recruiting costs and fill vacant positions with experienced teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Staff Placement reviews current applicant files to identify all candidates that meet district standard based upon ratings.	September 1997
2. The office manager purges all remaining files and maintains these files off-site until the records retention requirements have been met and then destroys the files.	September 1997
3. Applicants who were made offers but who chose positions in other area districts are identified in the system and tagged for future review.	October 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

See previous fiscal impact. The reduction in file storage would result in greater system efficiency and allow Staff Placement personnel to complete their work in a more timely fashion.

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

E. Benefits

CURRENT SITUATION

One of SISD's goals is to provide comprehensive health insurance coverage through a "free choice" system at a reasonable cost to the district and its employees. Free choice allows employees to choose between the SISD self-funded plan, which provides free choice of doctors and hospitals, or the Prudential HealthCare (HMO) plan. The self-funded plan has certain providers that are included within its preferred provider organization (PPO), for which an employee receives a higher percentage reimbursement of claims.

The program includes group health/accident, dental, life/disability, legal liability and workers' compensation insurance for all eligible staff members. Employees that work at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month, excluding overtime, are eligible for the plan. The plans are reviewed annually for type and amount of claims paid, costs, and actuarial reliability.

SISD also provides a fully funded hospital indemnity/vision plan for staff members who are covered under another medical plan and who do not choose one of the two plans offered by SISD.

SISD's self-funded plan features a \$100 deductible per year for PPO services and a \$300 annual deductible for non-PPO services. The maximum deductible to a family in any year is

\$900.

Participants pay no charge for hospital confinement as long as the stay is in compliance with Med-Watch. Med-Watch, a hospital administrative service, must be contacted by an employee prior to any hospital stay or procedure. Med-Watch then takes over all administrative paperwork involved. If admittance is due to an emergency, this requirement is waived. Otherwise, a \$300 charge per confinement. The maximum out-of-pocket expense to an employee is \$2,500 in a year.

A summary of the key plan provisions is provided in **Exhibit 4-23**.

Exhibit 4-23
Summary of SISD Medical Plan Benefits
1996-97

Benefit	Employee reimbursement of PPO provided service	Employee reimbursement of Non-PPO provided service
Childhood immunizations	90%	80%
Hospital [semi-private room]	90	80
Physician's hospital or office fee	90	80
Second opinion for surgery: Cost of consultation Surgery for specified procedures	100 50-90	100 50-80
Outpatient surgical facility	90	80
Psychiatric/chemical dependency: In-hospital care Out-of-hospital care	80 80 (maximum of \$80/visit with maximum 50 visits per year)	50 50 (maximum of \$80/visit with maximum 40 visits per year)
Annual physical exam	100 (\$250/person/year)	100 (\$250/person/year)
AIDS	90	50
Other eligible expenses	90	80
Supplemental accident benefit	100	100

Source: SISD, Overview of Benefits Program, 1996-97.

Immediate care and mail-order prescriptions are handled by TDI Managed Care Service, Inc., and its subsidiary, Express Pharmacy Services. More than 20,000 pharmacies participate including Wal-Mart, Randalls, Eckerds, K-Mart, Albertsons, Kroger, Red Oak, and Brookshire Brothers.

At the time of purchase, employees pay a copayment of \$12 for generic drugs, \$12 for a brand name when no generic is available, and \$12 plus the cost difference when the beneficiary opts for a brand name and a generic drug is available. For non-network pharmacies, the reimbursement is 60 percent of cost.

For mail-order pharmaceuticals, a minimum 90-day supply must be ordered. Copayments are \$12 for generic, \$12 for brand name when no generic is available, and \$24 for a brand name when a generic drug is available.

Other provisions of the plan include the following:

- Skilled nursing facility - 100 days maximum
- Surgery for Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction - \$1,000/person/calendar year
- Hospital newborn well-baby care - 5 days in hospital
- Psychiatric/chemical dependency - \$10,000/calendar year and \$25,000 in a lifetime
- Chiropractic services - \$1,000/calendar year
- Hormonal disorder - \$2,500/person/calendar year
- All causes combined - \$1,000,000 in a lifetime

The HMO plan benefits are summarized in **Exhibit 4-24**.

Exhibit 4-24
SISD HMO Plan Benefits
1996-97

Benefit	Cost to Employee
Hospital (semi-private room)	No charge
Physician/surgeon services	No charge
Operating room/intensive care	No charge
General nursing care	No charge
Psychiatric	No charge (maximum 20 days)
Hospital emergency room treatment	
MacGregor Center	\$10
Non-MacGregor Center	\$75
Office visit	\$10
Maternity	\$10 (first visit only)

Immunizations	\$10
X-ray/laboratory services	No charge
Allergy tests	50 % of charge
Eye exam	\$10
Prescription drugs	
At designated pharmacies	\$5 generic; \$10 brand
Mail order [maximum 90-day supply]	\$5 generic; \$10 brand
Mental health service	100 % after \$35 copayment (maximum 20 visits/year)
Infertility	75 % of charge

Source: SISD, Overview of Benefits Program, 1996-97.

SISD contributes \$109 per employee to fund its plan. Employee contributions are detailed in

Exhibit 4-25.

**Exhibit 4-25
SISD full-time Employee Monthly
Premiums for Medical Coverage
1996-97**

Category	SISD Health Plan	Prudential Plan
Employee only	\$ 46	\$ 89
Employee + children	\$155	\$224
Employee + spouse*	\$167	\$265
Employee + family*	\$288	\$411

*A spouse can only be enrolled in the SISD plan if there is no group coverage available through his/her employer or coverage under the SISD plan can only be secondary for the spouse.

Source: SISD, Overview of Benefits Program, 1996-97.

To be eligible for the SISD dental plan, an employee must be enrolled in one of the district's two health insurance plans. The employee may purchase coverage under the dental plan for his or her family if the employee and at least one family member are covered under one of the

two health plans. The dental plan has an individual annual deductible of \$50 with a maximum \$150 deductible per family.

A summary of key provisions of the dental plan are included in **Exhibit 4-26**.

Exhibit 4-26
SISD Dental Plan Benefits
1996-97

Benefit	Coverage
Preventive and diagnostic services (periodontal cleanings, flap surgery, gingivectomy, or osseous surgery)	100 % (2/person/calendar year)
Basic services (fillings, oral surgery, endodontics, periodontal cleanings, curettage, flap surgery, or gingivectomy)	80 %
Major (crowns, inlays, bridges, and dentures)	50 %
Maximum benefits/person/calendar year	\$1,000
Orthodontia (lifetime maximum)	50 % (\$1,000)

Source: SISD, Overview of Benefits Program, 1996-97.

SISD contributes \$12 per month for dental coverage for full-time employees and \$6 per month for half-time employees. Employee contributions are detailed in **Exhibit 4-27**.

Exhibit 4-27
SISD Full-Time Employee Monthly
Premiums for Dental Coverage
1996-97

Category	SISD Dental Plan
Employee only	\$12
Employee + family	\$49

Source: SISD, Overview of Benefits Program, 1996-97.

SISD also offers life insurance for employees, their spouses, and their children. SISD pays the entire premium for employees' life insurance. The amount of basic insurance per employee is equal to one and one-half times

the employee's salary. For example, an annual salary of \$25,000 equates to \$37,500 in covered insurance. Employees may pay for additional optional life to raise their coverage above what the district pays or to cover a spouse and/or dependent children.

Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code provides a pre-tax benefit that allows employees to deduct premiums for health, dental, cancer, other life insurance, and medical/dependent care reimbursement from their salary before federal income tax is calculated. SISD makes this option available to employees.

The SISD self-funded medical plan pays for a long-term disability program for all eligible employees. This plan provides coverage from the 91st calendar day of continued disability at 60 percent of an employee's monthly salary up to a maximum of \$5,000 per month. Certification of continued disability is required.

To qualify for coverage, the following conditions must apply:

- An employee must have completed his/her training period and been employed by the district at least 90 calendar days before the first day of his/her illness.
- The employee must be ill and absent for 90 consecutive calendar days before benefits begin.
- Pre-existing conditions apply.
- Verification forms are required to be filled out by the employee and the physician.

Monthly disability benefits are reduced by any income an employee may receive through the Teacher Retirement System, Workers' Compensation, or Social Security.

The district also provides optional short-term disability insurance that is only available at an employee's initial employment date. The short-term disability can reduce the aforementioned 90-day waiting period by 30 or 60 days. This plan also pays 60 percent of an employee's monthly salary up to a maximum of \$5,000 per month. Employee costs range from \$4 to \$36 per month depending upon the alternative selected.

SISD also carries legal liability insurance coverage for all employees, including substitutes and student teachers. This policy covers claims made against employees for errors, omissions, and/or breach of duty in the performance of their jobs for SISD.

The district's claims history for the self-funded medical plan for the past five years is summarized in **Exhibit 4-28**.

Exhibit 4-28
SISD Claims History
1992-93 through 1996-97

Year	Total Medical Claims
1996-97 *	\$4,143,353
1995-96	\$4,288,336
1994-95	\$3,947,795
1993-94	\$3,648,272
1992-93	\$3,800,539

(*)Through February 1997.

Source: Health Administration Services, Inc. and SISD Benefits Office.

A key indicator of the cost of a plan is the average cost per person covered by the plan. A person covered is either an employee, spouse, or a dependent of an employee, such as a spouse or child.

A school district usually builds its plan to encourage dependents to be covered through another plan if they are working. As noted in **Exhibit 4-24**, SISD employees pay a low percentage of the cost for individual coverage but a higher percentage as they add dependents to the plan.

Exhibit 4-29 summarizes the claims cost per person of SISD's plan for the past five years.

Exhibit 4-29
SISD Claims Cost per Person
1992-93 through 1996-97

Year	Claims Cost/Person
1996-97 *	\$1,569
1995-96	\$1,731
1994-95	\$1,697
1993-94	\$1,590
1992-93	\$1,674

(*)Through February 1997.

Source: HAS and SISD Benefits Office.

Based on a study completed by the district's third-party administrator, Health Administration Services (HAS), the district's cost per person covered is slightly above the average for districts within the Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth areas (**Exhibit 4-30**). Factors that affect the average cost per person include the rate of expansion and addition of new, younger staff; the average age of current employees; dependent participation; plan design; location; provider contracts; and the management of the plan.

Exhibit 4-30
SISD and Selected Districts Cost per Person
May 1996

District	Cost/ Person
Clear Creek	\$1,956
Channelview	\$1,874
LaMarque	\$1,745
Brazosport	\$1,628
Klein	\$1,608
Pasadena	\$1,580
Spring	\$1,570
Plano	\$1,524
Average	\$1,511
Richardson	\$1,387
Texas City	\$1,375
Deer Park	\$1,365
Pearland	\$1,341
Tomball	\$1,337
Humble	\$1,312
Galveston	\$1,063

Source: Survey conducted by HAS, May 1997.

Although the plan is extensive in its coverage, SISD pays only 49 percent of the total cost of the plan. Based upon the same study noted above, the

cost paid per employee by SISD is almost 20 percent below the average for other districts (**Exhibit 4-31**).

Exhibit 4-31
SISD Benefit Plan Cost versus Selected Districts
May 1996

District	Total Medical Claims		
Percentage Paid by District	Cost to the District/Employee		
Richardson	\$7,280,928	77%	\$246
Plano	7,980,037	77%	\$186
LaMarque	1,130,014	81%	\$165
Galveston	2,088,429	79%	\$163
Brazosport	2,843,234	74%	\$156
Clear Creek	3,067,336	86%	\$156
Average	3,200,646	61%	\$136
Texas City	1,423,813	75%	\$134
Channelview	1,035,417	57%	\$132
Pasadena	3,868,390	55%	\$130
Humble	3,625,634	41%	\$123
Pearland	1,274,511	62%	\$122
Spring	4,143,353	49%	\$109
Tomball	1,326,335	52%	\$106
Deer Park	1,711,346	48%	\$100
Klein	5,210,910	45%	\$100

Source: Survey conducted by HAS, May 1997.

SISD's self-funded plan is competitive with its HMO plan, and therefore the district has experienced minimal migration of the younger and healthier employees, thus keeping the average age and cost of the self-funded plan down (**Exhibit 4-32**). Since 1988-89, participation in the self-funded plan has risen by over 50 percent while participation in the HMO plan has declined by a similar amount.

Exhibit 4-32
SISD Medical Plan Employee Participation
1988-89 through 1995-96

Year	SISD Self-Funded Plan	HMO Plan
1995-96	1,397	257
1994-95	1,361	247
1993-94	1,335	240
1992-93	1,319	267
1991-92	1,236	320
1990-91	1,053	425
1989-90	962	434
1988-89	805	537

Source: Annual Benefit Plan Report, HAS, 1995-96.

FINDING

In addition to its regular coverage, SISD has two innovative optional programs its employees. The Spring Assistance for Educators (SAFE) provides monetary assistance to employees in need. These needs may be rent, utilities, medical, or auto expenses or any other expense. An interest-free loan is made to the employee and repaid through payroll deduction. The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank is a pool of local sick leave days established on a voluntary basis by district staff to be used by any member of the bank who suffers a catastrophic personal illness that extends beyond their own accumulated sick leave, personal leave, and accrued vacation days.

Both programs are overseen by separate boards of district employees and are not part of the district's budget. A separate account is maintained for the SAFE program that is tracked by the director and office manager of Staff Benefits. These individuals also maintain all records necessary to support the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank program.

Since its inception in 1991-92, SAFE has provided \$168,115 in assistance to 300 applicants (83 percent of those who applied). The primary uses of funds have been for rent/mortgage payments (48 percent), utilities (15 percent), and auto repairs (14 percent). **Exhibit 4-33** provides a summary of these distributions.

Exhibit 4-33
Spring Assistance for Educators (SAFE) Distributions
1991-92 through 1996-97

Year	Number of Recipients	Expenditures
1996-97*	19	\$14,572
1995-96	46	\$28,006
1994-95	40	\$29,420
1993-94	58	\$32,004
1992-93	53	\$23,233
1991-92	84	\$40,879
Total	300	\$168,114

*Through January 31, 1997.

Source: SISD Benefits office.

The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank program began in the 1989-90 school year. Since its inception, the bank has contributed 654 days to applicants (**Exhibit 4-34**). Among the reasons for requests were cancer (408.5 days), auto accident (40 days), aneurysm and disc herniation (38.5 days), pregnancy with complications (29 days), and emphysema (25 days).

Exhibit 4-34 summarizes the distributions by year.

Exhibit 4-34
Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Distributions
1989-90 through 1996-97

Year	Days Donated	Days Granted
1996-97	779.0	131.5
1995-96	824.0	19.5
1994-95	904.0	133.0
1993-94	880.0	31.0
1992-93	1,032.0	0.0
1991-92	882.0	4.5
1990-91	827.0	102.5

1989-90	275.5	232.0
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Source: SISD Benefits office.

The director of Staff Benefits conducts numerous employee orientation forums and presentations each year for all staff members. During the summer, the director conducts five to six sessions before school starts. Each new teacher must attend one session. The director uses Hispanic and Vietnamese translators when members of either group are present.

COMMENDATION

SISD provides a comprehensive benefits program for its employees.

The district also takes the necessary steps to ensure that all employees have a thorough understanding of the benefits available to them.

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

F. Job Descriptions, Appraisals and Handbooks

FINDING

Personnel/Support Services develops employee handbooks for all district functions, including those for general staff, substitutes, police, food service, transportation, maintenance, and supply services. Typically, Personnel/Support Services works with each functional area manager to develop a handbook or manual. Updates or modifications are then requested by the appropriate department to reflect changes in operations or procedures.

The department also prepares the handbook for interviewing, hiring, and assigning staff; the personnel procedures manual; and the benefits folder.

Employees and applicants are well-informed about SISD policies, procedures, and programs. Most districts have one employee handbook, but few have separate handbooks tailored to address the needs of diverse employee groups. Employee interviews indicated a thorough knowledge of district procedures and policies, as well as the specific rules for their department.

COMMENDATION

District employee and procedure handbooks provide accurate and timely information to employees and applicants.

FINDING

SISD maintains job descriptions on all positions. Periodically, these descriptions are updated to reflect changes in responsibilities.

Personnel/Support Services is in the process of updating paraprofessional job descriptions. As part of this process, Personnel Services has conducted 14 two-to-three hour focus sessions involving at least 150 paraprofessionals; provided copies of current job descriptions to all participants, other related documentation, and the results of the last job analysis; made presentations to each focus group to ensure they knew the purpose of the meeting and the expected outcomes from their work; and

used TaskMaster software to provide a systematic data-gathering process for job analysis.

The district uses similar processes to assess modifications needed in all job categories within the district. Last year, the assistant superintendent for Personnel/Support Services updated job descriptions for professional positions.

COMMENDATION

SISD maintains current, accurate job descriptions to guide employees in understanding their role and responsibilities.

FINDING

SISD's board policy specifically states that all administrators and teachers will be appraised annually. The district also has established procedures and instruments to evaluate all other positions in the district.

SISD's teacher evaluation process relies on both the Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) and Professional Development Plans (PDP) to evaluate certain teachers. The SISD process is based upon four assumptions:

- The primary purpose of teacher evaluation is improvement in instruction.
- Teacher evaluation systems should be developed with the majority of teachers in mind, not those few teachers experiencing serious problems.
- Most SISD teachers display the characteristics of outstanding educators who want to identify areas for improvement and want to improve the effectiveness of their teaching behaviors.
- Most SISD teachers are capable of identifying areas for improvement and devising goals, objectives, and activities directed toward improvement.

This system was adopted upon the recommendation of the SISD Teacher Evaluation Committee in 1996. It was reviewed by each of the grade-level principal groups and by the Advisory Committee on Education, the central site-based decision-making committee.

The appraisal system includes several components. For example, the TTAS will be used only for new teachers. Second-year teachers rated less than "clearly outstanding" on their last evaluation will be observed for one full cycle and will receive a PDP. A five-point rating scale (clearly outstanding, exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, below

expectations, and unsatisfactory) was added to the PDP. Finally, additional training on coaching skills, feedback systems, and teacher portfolios for evaluation has been emphasized.

An annual administrator appraisal system was first adopted in 1982-83 and includes many goals, objectives, and performance assessments. Appraisal instruments and procedures also exist for all school and support services positions.

COMMENDATION

SISD maintains an effective performance appraisal system that ties performance to professional development and compensation.

Chapter 4

Personnel Management

G. Staff Development

CURRENT SITUATION

During 1996-97, Personnel/Support Services presented training programs for administrators on general personnel practices; for SISD personnel performing candidate interviews on interview techniques; for paraprofessionals on general personnel and payroll matters; and for all staff on the district benefits program. **Exhibit 4-35** describes these programs.

Exhibit 4-35
SISD Staff Development Programs
1996-97

Type of Staff Development	Targeted Participants	Date Provided
General personnel practices	Administrators	July 1996
Personnel and payroll issues	Paraprofessional staff	July 1996
Substitute workshop	New and returning substitute staff	August 1996 (additional programs are held when additions are made to the substitute roster)
Hiring procedures	Food service managers	August 1996
Race discrimination	Maintenance staff	September 1996
Certification workshop	Out-of-state newly hired staff	September 1996
Sexual harassment	Custodial managers and police department	November 1996
Workshop about successful recruiting and interviewing techniques	Recruiters/Principals	February 1997
Staff benefits	New and returning employees	Periodically throughout the year

Source: SISD Staff Development Manual, 1996-97.

Personnel/Support Services also conducts in-service staff development training using personnel from relevant positions in the district. Occasionally, for targeted training, such as legal procedures to be used in applicant interviews, the department will ask the district's legal counsel to assist with training. During 1996-97, Personnel/Support Services spent \$3,840 on these staff development programs.

The Curriculum and Instruction department provides staff development for all instructional personnel. Information on this function is included in Education Service Delivery, Chapter 2.

FINDING

Several groups and individuals recommended that specific emphasis be placed on cultural diversity education and training for the current teacher staff until more minority teachers are recruited. The superintendent also emphasized this need.

The purpose of such training would be to acquaint the largely Anglo teaching staff with some of the issues that minority children may face in both home life and economic conditions. Acquainting teachers with these issues may help them develop better ways to interact with and educate minority children.

The Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA) of Harris County has developed cultural diversity training. MHMRA staff participate in annual, mandatory training as well as periodic events that foster awareness and understanding of diversity issues.

Recommendation 41:

Develop a cultural diversity training program for SISD teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Curriculum and Instructional Services gathers information about existing training programs.	October 1997 - December 1997
2. The executive director of Curriculum and Instructional Services develops a team of program directors and campus staff to review the information, observe actual training, and recommend a program for SISD.	January 1998- March 1998
3. Based upon the results, the executive director of Curriculum	April 1998

and Instructional Services recommends an in-service training program for inclusion in the 1998-99.	
4. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Services reviews and recommends the program.	May 1998
5. The superintendent approves the plan, and the executive director of Curriculum and Instructional Services initiates implementation.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Nonprofit organizations often will provide development assistance to similar organizations at no cost. It is likely that SISD personnel could observe MHMRA training, participate in meetings to design programs, and interview MHMRA personnel. If SISD wants to contract for such assistance, they may have to establish an interlocal agreement, but the cost for such services can be accommodated within existing staff development resources.

Chapter 5

Facilities and Use Management

This chapter presents the results of the review of SISD's facilities use and management functions. This review addresses the following functions:

- A. Facility Planning and Design
- B. Facility Maintenance and Operations
- C. Energy Management

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive facilities, maintenance, and energy management program should coordinate all the physical resources in the district. The program must effectively integrate facilities planning with all other aspects of school planning. Plant operations and maintenance personnel should be involved in design and construction activities, and facility management personnel should be knowledgeable about operations and maintenance activities. To be effective, facilities managers must also be involved in district strategic planning activities. Additionally, these departments should operate under clearly defined policies, procedures, and activities that can be adapted to accommodate changes in the district's resources and needs.

Chapter 5

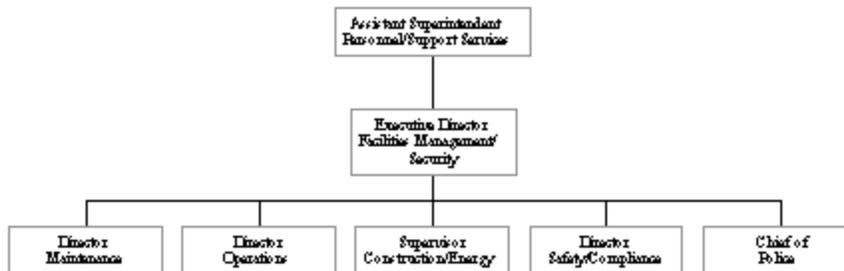
Facilities and Use Management

A. Facility Planning and Design

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD facilities planning is conducted through the board's Committee for Construction and Renovation, one of six standing board committees. Maintenance, operations, construction, and energy conservation functions are supervised by the executive director of Facility Management and Security (**Exhibit 5-1**). The executive director manages the activities of directors of maintenance, operations, and safety and compliance, as well as the supervisor of Construction and Energy and the district's chief of police. The executive director of Facility Management and Security reports to the assistant superintendent of Personnel and Support Services.

Exhibit 5-1
SISD Facility Maintenance and Operation Organization



On November 23, 1996, SISD's voters rejected a \$99.5 million bond package proposed to finance new school construction, renovations and additions for program needs, technology improvements, and deferred maintenance work. The recommended bond issue was to be allocated as follows in **Exhibit 5-2**.

Exhibit 5-2
1996 SISD Bond Issue Components

Bond Issue Components	Amount
Two New Elementary Schools	\$22,125,000
Capital Improvements for Program Needs	\$16,075,000

Technology Improvements	\$25,125,000
Renovations for health, safety, and protection of investment in facilities.	\$36,175,000

Source: SISD Bond Election Questions and Answers Document

These components were devised by a 27-member Citizen's Advisory Committee on School Facility Improvements and were endorsed by the school board's Construction and Renovation Committee. The Citizen's Advisory Committee consisted of one community member without children in school, 19 parents, two school administrators, and three teachers.

The bond issue's primary focus was on educational programs, technology, renovation, health and safety needs. It also addressed the issue of deferred maintenance work, including major equipment replacement, roof replacement, modifications for indoor air quality, parking lot repair, and correction of site drainage problems.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee reviewed proposals from individual school and district administrators, the district's technology committee, and architectural and technology consultants. Over a period of 18 months, the advisory committee reviewed various proposals with district staff and consultants and toured the district to gain an understanding of the proposals. After reviewing the proposals, the committee established priorities and made recommendations to the superintendent's Advisory Committee on School Facility Improvements that initially totaled about \$78 million. The recommended expenditures included improvements for science laboratories, special education classrooms and offices, library expansions, conversion of athletic facilities to comply with Title IX elements related to women's sports facilities, and additional facilities for physical education, music, choir, and theater arts.

Recommendations for health and safety needs included renovations and improvements to heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems to improve indoor air quality. These improvements were intended to bring existing facilities into compliance with recently adopted American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE) guidelines for outside air intake in older systems.

The recommended improvements were ranked by level of importance from one to five. Of the initial amount of \$78 million, \$16.1 million in capital improvements and \$36.2 million in facilities renovation projects were selected for inclusion in the bond proposal.

In addition, \$22.1 million was earmarked for two new elementary schools, to be based on a design developed for a 900-student elementary school. The proposed budget included costs for the school site, furnishings and equipment, technology equipment, security and telephone systems, and professional fees. These facilities were intended to relieve overcrowding in SISD's northeast and southwest portions.

The remaining \$25,125,000 was dedicated to technology improvement.

FINDING

SISD lacks a formal facilities master plan to serve as a guide for the development and renovation of facilities. An effective master plan builds on a school district's strategic plan. A facilities master plan is used to project and forecast demographic trends, educational and operational space requirements, and facility repair and renovation needs.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recommends a facilities planning process model to assist districts in organizing and planning for facility growth (**Exhibit 5-3**). A planning process such as this allows a variety of planning issues to be identified and addressed in the development of a comprehensive plan.

In 1992, SISD adopted a comprehensive Five-Year Education Plan that identified 12 areas to be addressed as part of a foundation for the educational program. Facility priorities included protecting SISD's investment in facilities and meeting needs for additional instructional space. In each successive year, the Five-Year Education Plan is updated with the previous year's results and revised objectives for the coming year.

**Exhibit 5-3
Recommended Facilities Planning Process**

Program Element	Mission	Responsibilities	Deliverables	SISD Deliverables
A. Planning	1. Needs Assessment	1. Identify current and future needs	1. Demographics, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis	1. Five-Year Education Plan, annual updates, and supporting correspondence
	2. Scope	2. Outline	2. Programming	2. Detailed lists

		required building areas; develop schedules and costs	cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis	prepared for work at each school with related costs.
	3. Strategy	3. Identify structure	3. Facilities project list, master schedule, budget plan, organization plan, marketing plan	3. Final project list, budget, and schedule
	4. Public Approval	4. Implement public relations campaign	4. Public and media relations	4. Promotional campaign
B. Approach	1. Management Plan	1. Detail roles, responsibilities, and procedures	1. Program management plan and systems	
	2. Program Strategy	2. Review and refine details	2. Detailed delivery strategy	
	3. Program Guidelines		3. Educational specifications, design guidelines, CADD standards	3. Design guidelines

Source: Planning model recommended by TEA and SISD Five Year Education Plan with annual updates.

While SISD's Five-Year Education Plan development process did not strictly follow the model shown in **Exhibit 5-3**, the plan and subsequent updates did allow the district to project growth and management needs.

The planning process identified renovations and improvements to meet educational program needs for each school; improvements to school sites, including drainage, lighting, and accessibility; environmental improvements related to indoor air quality; major mechanical and electrical equipment replacement and improvements; and building repairs and reroofing.

These needs were prioritized by the Citizen's Advisory Committee and endorsed by the board's Construction and Renovation committee. The final recommendation for the scope of facility improvement proposed by

the district was approved for presentation to the taxpayers by the school board.

**Recommendation 42:
Develop a long-range facilities master plan.**

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the supervisor of the Office of Construction and Energy prepare a comprehensive facilities master plan.	September 15, 1997
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the supervisor of the Office of Construction and Energy presents the facilities master plan to the board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration for comment and possible revision.	November 1, 1997
3. The executive director of Facility Management and Security receives the plan with revisions from the board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration and prepares a final draft.	December 15, 1997
4. The executive director of Facility Management and Security presents the plan to the board at the January meeting.	January 1998
5. The board approves the facilities master plan.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact.

FINDING

SISD has not established formal guidelines for assessing its educational and operational space needs. The lack of formal guidelines can lead to unnecessary building and inefficient usage of existing facilities.

TEA's minimum space planning standards (**Exhibit 5-4**) account for a variety of needs based on standard educational programs and are intended to apply to the planning of new construction and major renovations. Since the needs of special programs vary, TEA has not developed space planning standards for these programs. Additionally, due to changes in educational programs over the years, it is difficult to apply TEA's standards to older schools with rooms constructed for much larger classes. However, since these are minimum standards, they do allow for a general analysis of overall space allocation.

Exhibit 5-4
State of Texas Minimum Space Standards for School Buildings

Type of Space	Level	Required Square Footage
General Classrooms	PK through First Grade	36 sf per student
	Elementary	30 sf per student
	Secondary	28 sf per student
Specialized Classrooms		
Computer Laboratories	Elementary	41 sf per student
	Secondary	36 sf per student
Science Lecture/Lab	Elementary	41 sf per student
	Middle	50 sf per student
	Senior	50 sf per student
Physical Education Space	Elementary	3,000 sf minimum
	Middle	4,800 sf minimum
	Senior	7,500 sf minimum
Libraries	Elementary	3 sf per student (1,400 minimum)
	Middle	3 sf per student (2,100 minimum)
	Secondary	3 sf per student (2,800 minimum)

Source: Texas Education Code, Adopted amendments to Chapter 61, School Districts Subchapter H, School Facility Standards, August, 1996.

The review team applied the planning guidelines used in previous school reviews, in **Exhibit 5-5**, to analyze the capacity of SISD schools (**Exhibit 5-6**). The guidelines are based on gross building square foot area per student.

Exhibit 5-5
Guidelines for Space Planning School Buildings per Student

Level of School	Recommended Area Guideline
Elementary	90 - 105 gross sf per student

Middle	110 - 125 gross sf per student
Senior	135 - 150 gross sf per student

Source: Comptroller's Office, previous Management and Performance Reviews.

**Exhibit 5-6
Current School Building Capacity**

School	Date Built	Building Area (SF)	Current Building Capacity	Current Enrollment	Percent of Capacity Used	Building Area (SF) per Student at Capacity	Recommended Gross Building area per Student
Northeast							
Spring HS	1968	336,030	2,737	2,650	97%	123	135 - 150
Dueitt MS	1980	123,709	1,064	1,010	95%	116	110 - 125
Twin Creeks MS	1984	142,068	1,200	1,098	92%	118	110 - 125
Anderson EL	1979	70,642	760	880	116%	93	90 - 105
Hirsch EL	1978	71,738	763	657	86%	94	90 - 105
Jenkins EL	1976	74,075	853	1,014	119%	87	90 - 105
Salyers EL	1959	49,957	580	523	90%	86	90 - 105
Smith EL	1986	72,721	683	810	119%	106	90 - 105
Winship EL	1972	71,456	792	464	59%	90	90 - 105
Southwest							
Westfield HS	1976	513,341	3,635	3,091	85%	141	135 - 150
Bammel MS	1974	178,168	1,429	1,391	97%	124	110 - 125

Wells MS	1977	182,661	1,524	1,244	82%	120	110 - 125
Bammel EL	1965	48,957	546	592	108%	90	90 - 105
Beneke EL	1986	72,769	744	783	105%	98	90 - 105
Clark EL	1991	79,000	780	823	107%	101	90 - 105
Link EL	1982	69,197	694	771	111%	99	90 - 105
Meyer EL	1976	71,708	811	820	101%	88	90 - 105
Oak Creek EL	1973	71,724	766	715	93%	94	90 - 105
Ponderosa EL	1970	62,036	622	566	91%	100	90 - 105
Thompson EL	1996	108,400	900	786	87%	120	90 - 105
Wunsche School	1972	111,843	202				

Source: SISD inventory of facilities and 1996-97 enrollment projections.

Most SISD schools fall within the recommended guidelines for building area per student. Schools not within the guidelines are at least 20 years old and are within a few square feet of the minimum. Due to the types of programs located at Wunsche School and its transient student population, a standard space analysis cannot be applied to this facility. Wunsche School houses special education and day-care programs, along with a number of other programs for students who are transported to the building during the course of the day. This facility, when all classes are being held, is at its current capacity.

Although school overcrowding can be relieved temporarily with portable classrooms and adjustment of attendance zone boundaries, portable facilities do not offer the same quality learning environment that permanent facilities can. The 1996 proposed bond issue included the construction of two new 900-student elementary schools, one in the southwest part of the district and one in the northeast. Five-year student enrollment projections used by the district are shown in **Exhibit 5-7**. The northeast part of the district is expected to experience a 4.5 percent decline, while the southwest part is projected to rise by 17.1 percent.

The new site acquisition and construction, which was estimated in the 1996 bond election at \$22.1 million for two new elementary schools,

could have been reduced by the use of other options such as adjusted school attendance zones.

**Exhibit 5-7
SISD School 1996-97 Space Use**

School						
Date Built	School Capacity without Portable Buildings	Current Student Population	Over/(Under) School Capacity without Portable Buildings	Projected Enrollment for 2001	Projected Five Year Growth (%)	
Northeast						
Spring HS	1968	2,737	2,650	(87)	2,542	-1.6%
Dueitt MS	1980	1,064	1,010	(54)	898	-11.1%
Twin Creeks MS	1984	1,200	1,098	(102)	1,033	-5.9%
Anderson EL	1979	760	880	120	878	-0.2%
Hirsch EL	1978	763	657	(106)	699	6.4%
Jenkins EL	1976	853	1,014	161	1,027	1.3%
Salyers EL	1959	580	523	(57)	488	-6.7%
Smith EL	1986	683	810	127	773	-4.6%
Winship EL	1972	792	464	(328)	361	-22.2%
Southwest						
Westfield HS	1976	3,635	3,091	(544)	3,667	18.6%
Bammel MS	1974	1,429	1,391	(38)	1,641	18.0%
Wells MS	1977	1,524	1,244	(280)	1,401	12.6%
Bammel EL	1965	546	592	46	695	17.4%
Beneke EL	1986	744	783	39	1,090	39.2%
Clark EL	1991	780	823	43	1,061	28.9%

Link EL	1982	694	771	77	727	-5.7%
Meyer EL	1976	811	820	9	981	19.6%
Oak Creek EL	1973	766	715	(51)	755	5.6%
Ponderosa EL	1970	622	566	(56)	577	1.9%
Thompson EL	1996	900	786	(114)	963	22.5%
Wunsche School*	1972	202*	153	(49)	162	5.9%
Hospital and Homebound			56		97	73.2%
Total Capacity						
	22,085	20,897	(1,244)	22,516	7.8%	

*Source: SISD inventory of facilities and 1996-97 enrollment projections. * Wunsche School houses alternative, special education, and facilities for programs not offered at other schools. The student population shown does not reflect total facility use due to the number of students brought to the school from other schools.*

**Recommendation 43:
Establish and approve formal guidelines for assessing educational and operational space needs, by type of space within the district, to be used in making facility and budgeting decisions.**

Space guidelines would provide a basis for efficient and effective space use and sound assessment of future needs. These guidelines would aid in facility planning and provide important information for setting budget priorities.

By having formal district space guidelines for each type of program space (i.e., general classroom, physical education, science, etc.) the district will be better able to assess it's needs. A formal set of guidelines, based on generally accepted standards, will enable the district to base facility decisions on actual needs rather than perceived needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the supervisor of the Office of Construction and Energy prepare formal guidelines for assessing SISD's educational and operational space needs.	September 15, 1997
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the supervisor of the Office of Construction and Energy present these guidelines to the board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration for approval and possible revision.	November 1, 1997
3. The executive director of Facility Management and Security receives the guidelines with revisions from the board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration and prepares final draft of guidelines.	December 15, 1997
4. The executive director of Facility Management and Security presents formal guidelines to the board at the January meeting.	January 1998
5. The board approves the formal guidelines	February 1998
6. The executive director of Facility Management and Security incorporates formal space guidelines into districts formal facilities master plans.	March 1998
7. The executive director of Facility Management and Security coordinates the inspection of all district facilities using the established space guidelines.	April 1998
8. The board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration reviews the findings of this inspection and makes recommendations to the full board.	June 1998
9 The director of the Office of Maintenance uses the facilities master plan for facility modifications and improvements.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation should have no fiscal impact since these activities can be accomplished by existing personnel.

FINDING

As a school approaches 90 percent capacity, districts typically begin exploring various options to reduce overcrowding, including adjusting attendance zones. Portable classrooms normally are used as a temporary measure to relieve overcrowding. SISD has placed portable buildings at schools experiencing crowded conditions. Of the portable buildings listed

in **Exhibit 5-8**, all are used for instructional space except for one portable at Jenkins Elementary that provides additional restrooms; one portable each at Bammel and Wells Middle Schools used for weight rooms; and one portable at Dueitt Middle School used for music. Each portable building typically contains two classrooms.

**Exhibit 5-8
Placement of Portable Classroom Buildings**

School						
Percentage of Capacity Used without Portable Buildings	Number of Portable Buildings / Area (SF)	Total Building Area (with Portable Buildings)	Portable Building Area as a Percentage of Building Area	Building Area (SF) per Student with Portable Buildings	Recommended Gross area per Student	
Northeast						
Spring HS	97%	2/2,688	338,718	less than 1%	128	135 - 150
Dueitt MS	95%	2/2,688	126,397	2%	125	110 - 125
Twin Creeks MS	92%	2/2,688	144,756	2%	132	110 - 125
Anderson EL	116%	8/10,752	81,394	13%	92	90 - 105
Hirsch EL	86%	0	71,738	0	109	90 - 105
Jenkins EL	119%	10/13,440	87,515	15%	86	90 - 105
Salyers EL	90%	0	49,957	0	96	90 - 105
Smith EL	119%	6/6,064	80,785	7.5%	100	90

						- 105
Winship EL	59%	0	71,456	0	154	90 - 105
Southwest						
Westfield HS	85%	0	513,341	0	166	135 - 150
Bammel MS	97%	1/1,344	179,512	less than 1%	129	110 - 125
Wells MS	82%	1/1,344	184,005	less than 1%	148	110 - 125
Bammel EL	108%	8/10,752	59,709	18%	101	90 - 105
Beneke EL	105%	8/10,752	83,521	13%	107	90 - 105
Clark EL	107%	4/5,376	84,376	6%	103	90 - 105
Link EL	111%	6/8,064	77,261	10%	100	90 - 105
Meyer EL	101%	5/6,720	78,428	9%	96	90 - 105
Oak Creek EL	93%	3/4,032	75,756	5%	106	90 - 105
Ponderosa EL	91%	0	62,036	0	110	90 - 105
Thomson	87%	0	108,400	0	138	90

EL						- 105
Wunsche School		3/4,032	115,857	4%		

Source: SISD inventory of facilities and 1996-97 enrollment projections

The national average square footage for portables is 10 percent of all gross square footage at the elementary level and 5 percent at the secondary level. Anderson, Jenkins, Bammel, Link, and Beneke elementary schools currently exceed the national average.

SISD's planning for the use of portables is part of its five-year plan annual updates. The use of these buildings has allowed SISD to maintain almost all schools within the TEA-prescribed minimum space allocations on a temporary basis.

Another method of dealing with overcrowding at particular campuses is adjusting attendance zone boundaries to allow students at overcrowded schools to attend less crowded schools. An adjustment of SISD attendance zones could relieve crowding without requiring new construction or additional portable buildings, in the northeast part of the district:

- Winship Elementary school, which is at 59 percent capacity with no portable buildings, and nearby Smith Elementary, which is at 119 percent capacity with six portable buildings (12 classrooms).
- Hirsch Elementary, which is at 86 percent capacity with no portable buildings, and nearby Jenkins Elementary, which is at 119 percent with ten portable buildings.

In the southwest area of the district, Ponderosa Elementary, which is at 91 percent capacity with no portable, and nearby Bammel Elementary, which is at 108 percent capacity with eight portable buildings, also could be considered for adjustment.

A change in attendance zones would allow schools to operate at optimum capacity and more equitably distribute the student population among schools.

In a previous review of Beaumont ISD, the review team found that adjusted attendance zones would improve efficiency and generate savings. The team estimated that Beaumont ISD could eliminate some portable buildings, and reduce maintenance costs for these building. The district followed these recommendations and was able to redirect \$11.8 million bond money to more productive projects.

**Recommendation 44:
Adjust school attendance zones to relieve overcrowding and optimize district space usage.**

This would give SISD more flexibility to accommodate short-term changes in student growth.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. District administration reviews areas of student population growth and recommends possible attendance zones changes and portable building placements on an annual basis.	October 1, 1997
2. The board seeks public review and input on these recommendations.	November 1, 1997
3. The board approves recommendations with any modifications and implements the changes at the beginning of the next school year.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Adjustment of SISD attendance zone boundaries could eliminate 18 portable buildings (six at Smith Elementary, or approximately 6,064 square feet; seven at Jenkins Elementary, or approximately 9,380 square feet; and five at Bammel Elementary, or approximately 6,720 square feet) at an average size of 1230 square feet per unit. This would reduce portable building use by approximately 22,164 square feet. The district could generate one-time revenues of about \$54,000 through the sale of these portables at \$3,000 per unit. The district would also achieve annual saving from reduced maintenance expense for the portable buildings sold. Spring ISD's annual maintenance cost for the school year 1996-97 was \$2,624,957, the approximate square footage for all district facilities (including portable buildings) is currently 2,762,266. The approximate cost of maintenance per square foot is 95 cents ($\$2,624,957 / 2,762,266 = .95$). Eliminating 22,164 square feet of space will result in annual maintenance savings of about \$21,000 (95 cents per square foot x 22,164 square feet).

Recommendation					
1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	
Adjust attendance zone boundaries	\$0	\$75,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000

FINDING

The size and cost of new SISD facilities seems high compared to those for facilities constructed in other suburban school districts in the greater Houston area. Costs normally included in construction cost budgets include site work, building construction, utilities, landscaping and irrigation. Construction costs compiled in the F. W. Dodge & Company's construction cost database for new elementary schools bid in 1996 and 1997 range from \$68.50 to \$80 per square foot (**Exhibit 5-9**). The construction cost of the last elementary school constructed in SISD, Thompson Elementary School was \$70.79 per square foot excluding the cost of land acquisition.

Renovation costs are difficult to compare due to individual program requirements and differing conditions at existing schools. The cost of new construction at Westfield High School (\$63 per square foot) compares favorably to recent local new construction ranging from \$59 to \$76 per square foot for high schools.

Exhibit 5-9
Elementary School Construction Costs

District	School	Date Bid	Construction Cost	Area (sf)	Cost per sf
Humble	Elementary #18	1994	\$5,627,752	83,384	\$67.49
Ft. Bend	Elementary #30	1996	\$5,487,000	80,000	\$68.58
Spring					
Thompson EL	1995	\$7,674,088	108,400	\$70.79	
Conroe	Elementary #20	1995	\$5,740,000	80,071	\$71.69
Ft. Bend	Elementary #31	1996	\$5,772,800	80,000	\$72.16
Conroe	Buckalew EL	1997	\$6,197,000	85,000	\$72.90
Houston	Elementary #21	1996	\$6,479,000	80,950	\$80.03

Source: F. W. Dodge & Company construction cost database and SISD project cost records.

Although the cost for Thompson Elementary was comparable with costs experienced in surrounding districts, Thompson is much larger than most modern elementary schools in the area. Texas elementary schools typically are designed for 700 to 750 students and occupy from 80,000 to 85,000 square feet. Thompson Elementary School is designed for 900 students and occupies more than 108,000 square feet with an average of 120 square feet per student. Based on school planning minimum space criteria identified earlier in this report, the design standard for elementary schools is 90 -- 105 square feet per student. By reducing the size of future elementary schools to about 105 square feet per student, a 900-student facility would occupy 13,500 fewer square feet. And cost approximately \$956,000 less, using Thompson Elementary's cost per square foot of \$70.79.

Recommendation 45:
Use the established space planning guidelines when constructing new school buildings and building to existing facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security uses established space guidelines to determine district's needs for new facilities.	April 1998
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security presents revised plan to the board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration for review and presents to the full board for approval.	June 1998
3. The board approves, after any necessary changes, the facilities master plan.	September 1998
4. The director of the Office of Maintenance uses the facilities master plan for facility modifications and improvements.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

These revisions to the size of elementary schools constructed in the district would reduce the cost of each school by approximately \$956,000. This savings would be realized at the time of planning and construction.

FINDING

Surveys of parents and teachers done in 1992 and 1996 as part of the Five-Year planning process, included questions about facilities and funding facility improvements. The survey responses by parents are in **Exhibit 5-10** and the teacher responses are in **Exhibit 5-11**.

Exhibit 5-10
Results of the 1992 and 1996 Survey of SISD Parents

Question	Yes	No	No Opinion
Think for a moment about the overall condition of your school building. These conditions include such things as construction, maintenance, safety, and physical appearance. Are you satisfied with these conditions?	1992 - 90.1%	1992 - 7.7%	1992 - 2.2%
	1996 - 84.8%	1996 - 10.7%	1996 - 4.5%
	Too Much	Too Little	About Right
Is the amount of enclosed classroom space in your school: too much, too little, about right, no opinion?	1992 - 1.8%	1992 - 23.6%	1992 - 66.5%
	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
Suppose the school district said it needed to build additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools. Would you approve, disapprove, or have no opinion about a proposal to building additional schools.	1996 - 91%	1996 - 4.1%	1996 - 4.9%
	Yes	No	No Opinion
Suppose Spring ISD said they needed more money. As you feel at this time, would you favor raising taxes?	1992 - 64%	1992 - 27.7%	1992 - 7.7%
	1996 - 49.4%	1996 - 30.2%	1996 - 20.4%

Source: SISD Five-Year Plan Survey

Although the 1996 report was released after the bond election, the survey said that parents' willingness to pay additional taxes for school construction fell 15.2 percent while the undecided group of parents increased 12.7 percent.

Exhibit 5-11
Results of the 1992 and 1996 Survey of SISD Teachers

Question	Yes	No	No Opinion
Think for a moment about the overall condition of your school building. These conditions include such things as construction, maintenance, safety, and physical appearance. Are you satisfied with these conditions?	1992 - 54.8% 1996 - 63.2%	1992 - 40.9% 1996 - 33.9%	1992 - 4.3% 1996 - 2.9%
	Too Much	Too Little	About Right
Is the amount of enclosed classroom space in your school: too much, too little, about right, no opinion?	1992 - 1.9%	1992 - 44.7%	1992 - 50.5%
	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
Suppose the school district said it needed to build additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools. Would you approve, disapprove, or have no opinion about a proposal to building additional schools.	1996 - 98.4%	1996 - 0.4%	1996 - 1.2%

Source: SISD Five-Year Plan Survey

In comparing the responses of teachers in 1992 and 1996, SISD has improved conditions in the schools and has the teachers' support for future growth.

The surveys did not, however, address the opinions of district taxpayers without children in school. Since the Citizen's Advisory Committee included only one district taxpayer without children in school, the district did not hear from a full range of the district's taxpayers.

Recommendation 46:
Increase the involvement of *all* district taxpayers in all future facility planning processes.

The difference in knowledge about the condition of facilities among groups that are regularly in the schools and those that are not, reflects a lack of communication with district citizens on the conditions of schools. Involving more of the public in the planning process would increase SISD's understanding of facility needs and the steps needed to remedy problems. It also would help the public better understand the complexities and costs of facility maintenance. The district should encourage the entire

taxpayer base to participate in planning activities through public forums and other activities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The board develops a structure for involving district taxpayers to assure participation in the process.	October 1997
2. The board identifies interested district taxpayers and groups to involve in the planning process for future district facilities and form a citizen's committee.	November 1997
3. The citizen's committee meets and recommends improvements to the board's Construction and Renovation Committee.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact.

FINDING

SISD's construction projects completed before April 1994, do not conform to the current Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR).

The Texas Education Code states that school districts shall comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (Title I and Title II) as applicable. New and renovated facilities must be brought into compliance.

The district has provided limited accessible parking at each school. The recently rejected bond issue would have funded improvements to restrooms and drinking fountains in each school. An estimated \$700,000 of additional improvements recommended by facility planners were not included in the bond proposal; these proposed modifications included work such as ADA-compliant doors at school entrances and interior signs. Even with these improvements, some schools would still require additional work to achieve full ADA compliance.

Also, the district's 24 schools and four support facilities are of varying ages; the oldest school was constructed in 1959. As the district has grown in size and its needs have changed, numerous additions and renovations have been completed. Building codes also have changed over the years, and schools that complied with these codes when built will require additional improvements when renovated.

The Texas Education Code requires districts in areas without building codes to adopt and use the latest version of the Uniform or Standard Building Code. Since Harris County does not have a county building code, SISD has adopted the Uniform Building Code with City of Houston amendments.

The Texas Education Code also requires an independent third-party review of all construction plans for code compliance. SISD uses the City of Houston to perform its third-party reviews.

**Recommendation 47:
Perform a facility needs assessment to determine the district's level of compliance with the Texas Accessibility Standards, Americans with Disabilities Act, and applicable building code.**

To ensure that the district facilities are in compliance with provisions of the ADA and other building safety codes and to effectively plan for future improvements, each facility should have an assessment of code compliance. All noncomplying areas identified in district facilities should be prioritized based on requirements for student and staff use of educational facilities, public access for programs, and access to facility service areas.

By addressing and upgrading facilities for code and safety issues, the district will remedy problems in older schools and will have a basis for developing future improvements that will comply with building codes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security establishes a fee budget for the services of an accessibility and building consultant and includes the cost in the district's operating budget.	September 1997
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security coordinates interviews and selects a consultant and approves the contract.	October 1997
3. The consultant performs a survey and makes recommendations for improvements.	December 1997
4. The executive director of Facility Management and Security presents a prioritized list of recommendations to the board for consideration and approval.	January 1998
5. The executive director of Facility Management and Security implements approved recommendations.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

A code compliance assessment would cost \$162,000 in consultant fees phased in over three years (**Exhibit 5-12**). Fees for each elementary school are estimated at \$5,600, each middle school at \$8,250, each high school at \$12,500, and each support facility at \$5,600 each.

**Exhibit 5-12
Consultant Review Fees**

Facility	Number of Facilities	Review Fee	Total
Elementary	13*	\$5,600	\$72,800
Middle	5*	\$8,250	\$41,250
High	2	\$12,500	\$25,000
Support	4	\$5,600	\$22,400
Total			
\$161,450			

** Excludes Thompson Elementary completed in 1996 and includes Wunsche School as a middle school.*

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Perform a facility needs assessment		(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$53,450)	0
					0

Chapter 5

Facilities and Use Management

B. Facility Maintenance and Operations

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's maintenance and operations functions are the responsibility of the director of Maintenance and the director of Operations. The director of Maintenance oversees a staff of 48 including the supervisor of Construction and Energy. This department is responsible for the maintenance of all SISD buildings, grounds, and equipment. A scheduled preventive maintenance program for all district buildings is monitored by this department. Maintenance also is responsible for minor Construction and Renovation projects such as carpet replacement and the upgrading of equipment such as chillers and boilers. The director of Operations is responsible for the district's custodial functions and oversees a staff of 145.

FINDING

SISD's preventive maintenance program is detailed in **Exhibit 5-13**. This program is designed to extend the life of the facilities and ensure that they operate at optimum efficiency and that costly repairs to facilities and equipment are identified early. The schedule of preventive measures includes air conditioning system cleaning and testing, cleaning of plumbing systems and roof drainage, inspection of interior and exterior lighting, bleacher maintenance, interior finish inspection and cleaning, and exterior lighting and finish assessment.

Exhibit 5-13
Preventive Maintenance Program Schedule

Preventive Maintenance Activity	Activity Frequency
Clean A/C unit filters	bi-monthly
Change A/C unit filters	3 to 12 week intervals
Clean chiller condenser coils	bi-annually
Clean fan coil and air handler evaporator coils	annually

Clean ice machine condenser coils	every 4 months
Inspect and capacity test chillers	annually
Change chiller compressor oil and cores	every 2 years
Check chemical levels in closed loop chilled and hot water piping	monthly
Clean grease traps	every 3 months
Inspect and test boilers	annually
Check roofs, downspouts, and gutters	monthly, repair as needed - 20 year roof replacement
Inspect exterior lighting	semi-annually
Inspect elementary play gym lighting	annually
Inspect and clean gym gas heaters	annually
Inspect playground equipment	monthly, repair as needed
Clean fire alarm system smoke detectors	semi-annually
Inspect all interior and exterior bleachers	annually, repair as needed
Clean, tighten, and lubricate roll out bleachers	annually
Check exterior building and concrete caulking	annually - 8 year replacement
Stripe exterior parking lots	annually
Check condition of asphalt parking lots	annually - 12 year replacement
Check carpet	15 year replacement
Check vinyl composition tile floors	20 year replacement
Spray wash exterior soffits and building	every 2 years or as needed
Replace glass and Plexiglas	as needed
Paint interior of facilities	every 5 years
Paint exterior of facilities	every 8 years
Perform general facility inspections	annually

Source: SISD Preventive maintenance program.

COMMENDATION

SISD has a comprehensive preventive maintenance program.

Regular review of the facilities ensures that potential problems are identified early, before they become expensive emergencies.

FINDING

The Operations Department is responsible for district custodial services. The department includes 145 positions including the director, building mechanics and coordinators, a project repairman, pest control technician, custodians, and clerical support. The number of custodial positions is based on a staffing ratio of one custodian for every 20,000 net square feet of facility space. This exceeds custodial ratios found in other TSPR reviews, which typically range from 17,000 to 19,500 square feet per custodian. A 30-hour training program for new staff members includes asbestos and chemical training, equipment care, and basic and advanced cleaning techniques. Employees are evaluated during classroom training and during the first 180 days of employment.

COMMENDATION

The Operations Department provides a comprehensive training program and staffing ratios exceed standards.

FINDING

The percentage of SISD's general operating funds budgeted for facility management, maintenance, and operations has fallen steadily since 1991-1992 (**Exhibit 5-14**). This drop from 6.86 percent to 5.63 percent for 1996-1997 has resulted in a growing list of deferred maintenance needs. Comments received from the community regarding the 1996 bond election expressed concern over the amount of bond money designated for maintenance items. The district does not have a scheduled long-range capital maintenance program for major equipment and facilities and does not typically include capital maintenance needs in the operating budget. Therefore a reliance on bond funds for maintenance, replacement of major equipment, and facility upgrades related to changing codes and design requirements, has created an irregular schedule for this work and consequently greater chances of unbudgeted, emergency expenditures.

Exhibit 5-14
SISD Facility Management, Maintenance, and Operations
Department Budgets

Budget Year	Total Operating	Facility Management	Maintenance Department	Operations Department	Percentage of
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	Budget				Operating Budget
1990-91	\$71,234,208	\$462,425	\$4,259,643	See Note 1	6.62%
1991-92	\$76,394,276	\$244,992	\$5,003,015	See Note 1	6.86%
1992-93	\$79,779,391	\$229,648	\$5,088,511	See Note 1	6.66%
1993-94	\$79,069,046	\$341,950	\$2,770,523	\$2,094,406	6.58%
1994-95	\$82,413,321	\$325,834	\$2,814,564	\$2,278,321	6.57%
1995-96	\$89,559,675	\$397,227	\$2,563,791	\$2,499,196	6.09%
1996-97	\$99,007,357	\$266,394	\$2,624,957	\$2,686,517	5.63%

Note 1: The Maintenance and Operations departments were combined.

Source: SISD approve general operating budgets.

Recommendation 48:

Develop a long-range maintenance program.

The district should develop a long-range maintenance plan that will identify scheduled maintenance tasks to be performed on major equipment and building components (e.g. roofs) over a five to ten year period as well as planned maintenance schedules for major equipment such as air conditioner, or chillers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security prepares a long-range maintenance plan and schedule based on prioritized maintenance items and assessed district facility needs.	October 1997
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security presents the long-range maintenance plan and schedule to the board committee on Construction and Renovation and district administration for comment and possible revision.	December 1997
3. The executive director of Facility Management and Security	January

presents the revised long-range maintenance plan and schedule to the board.	1998
4. The board approves, after any necessary changes, the long-range maintenance plan and schedule.	February 1998
5. The executive director of Facility Management and Security incorporates the long-range maintenance plan and schedule into the district's formal facilities master plan.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Establishing a long-range maintenance plan and schedule should have no fiscal impact since it can be accomplished internally.

FINDING

The Food Service Department employs a person to repair food service equipment in the school kitchens. This person occasionally requires support from the Maintenance Department when electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work is required, and when replacement and new equipment is installed. The Maintenance Department has not charged the Food Service Department for providing this support. The support that the Maintenance Department is providing is reimbursable by the Food Service Department with proper documentation of service provided.

Recommendation 49:

Implement a method for recovering the costs of Maintenance Department materials and labor used to repair and maintain Food Service Department equipment.

This process would allow the district to better identify its total costs for maintaining kitchen equipment and allow the Maintenance Department to budget costs more effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Maintenance develops a work order policy to track material and labor costs of maintenance activities for Food Service.	
	October 1997
2. The director of Maintenance implements a work-order system.	November 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would increase revenues available in the general fund since this would reduce the district's Maintenance Department annual general fund expense by about \$20,000 in time and materials and would be paid for Food Service funds that are not part of general fund.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Implement a cost recovery program with Food Services.	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000

FINDING

The Maintenance Department has established a training program for new building mechanics that includes orientation in hazardous materials, material safety data sheets (MSDS), fire safety, basic first aid, and asbestos awareness training. Each new operator completes 24 hours of hands-on training at another school and eight hours at their assigned school with an experienced building operator, for a total of 32 training hours. Trainees also must complete a 180-day probationary period.

In spite of this training, however, several school principals told the review team that SISD needs more training in each assigned school to familiarize the trainee with the school and its individual systems.

Recommendation 50:

Adjust the amount of training for new building mechanics at their assigned schools to 24 hours (three days), with eight hours at another school.

This would give new mechanics more opportunity to identify and evaluate normal occurrences at their assigned schools. It also would provide a greater opportunity for supervision under varying conditions experienced during a span of days.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Maintenance revises requirements of training program.	October 1997
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have no fiscal impact.

Chapter 5

Facilities and Use Management

C. Energy Management

CURRENT SITUATION

The Maintenance Department's office of Construction and Energy is staffed by one supervisor, with clerical support furnished by the department.

During 1994, SISD installed an energy management system for schools and other facilities called FASER Energy Accounting Software. FASER is a facilities management program that enables users to directly track utility and maintenance costs associated with managing energy systems for buildings. This system is a widely accepted computer program for managing energy usage. Yearly budget adjustments are made to account for portable buildings, rental hours, summer school, utility rate increases, and any construction activities or renovations effecting the electrical usage of each building. As energy budgets are prepared, usage at each building is reviewed and adjusted based on the previous three years' consumption. Weather data is also factored in when comparing yearly energy consumption. The review team has confirmed that this process is followed properly and does not believe that SISD intentionally establishes excessive energy budgets.

Electrical power accounts for about 90 percent of the district's total yearly budget, with the remainder attributable to natural gas. The district has been successful in controlling electrical consumption (**Exhibit 5-15**). These budgets accommodate building expansions and renovations completed as part of the bond issue work from 1992 and 1994 as well as equipment replacement performed on an annual basis. Over the five year span listed, energy budgets increased \$448,481 while actual costs increased \$390,670, representing a five-year savings of almost 13 percent.

Exhibit 5-15
SISD Electrical Energy Budget and Actual Use Comparison

School Year	Total Energy Budget	Total Actual Energy Costs	Over/(Under) Budget	Percentage Savings
1991-92	\$2,841,773	\$2,438,469	(\$403,304)	14%
1992-93	\$2,943,832	\$2,591,449	(\$352,383)	12%

1993-94	\$3,071,133	\$2,853,667	(\$217,466)	7%
1994-95	\$3,123,493	\$2,743,761	(\$379,732)	12%
1995-96	\$3,290,254	\$2,829,139	(\$461,115)	14%

FINDING

As part of its energy management program, SISD has developed a rebate program that rewards each school for efficient energy use. A school that reduces its usage below the budgeted amount shares the cost savings with the district and receives a check for 50 percent of the savings amount. The remaining 50 percent is used by the district to fund energy-related building and equipment improvements, such as chiller replacement. Each month, the office of Construction and Energy reviews actual energy costs for each school against that school's energy budget and sends it an energy report. To achieve energy savings, school principals have developed programs to involve students in energy conservation by promoting measures such as "Watt Savers," which encourages students to participate in activities such as turning off lights when leaving a room and closing classroom doors to retain conditioned air in the classrooms. Some principals have encouraged energy conservation among building operations staffs by sharing cost savings with the mechanics.

Energy reports are presented to the board and checks are distributed to schools that cut their energy use below the budgeted amount every six months. This program allows students, staff, and building mechanics to see tangible results of conservation that will motivate their continued efforts to reduce energy consumption.

COMMENDATION

The office of Construction and Energy's energy management program promotes and rewards student and staff participation in reducing energy consumption and promoting conservation.

FINDING

SISD's last facilities energy audit was performed in 1990. Industry experts agree that school energy audits should be performed about every five to seven years. Energy consultants also suggest that school districts perform energy audits whenever energy rates change; after a major equipment failure; and when the district makes additions to existing facilities. These audits should keep school district officials aware of new energy technology that promises improvements in energy efficiency.

Many districts have demonstrated an interest in improved energy efficiency but may lack the resources to achieve them.

Energy cost per square foot is a good measure of facilities' energy efficiency. Experts told the review team that, on average, energy costs per square foot should range from 70 cents to 85 cents in an efficient facility. However, other factors such as local climate, the utility company providing service, and the specific uses of campus facilities may impact this average. For SISD, an average cost of 85 cents to \$1 per square foot may be more appropriate.

SISD's energy costs have averaged \$1.11 per square foot over the last three years.

In the 1994-95 school year, Ponderosa Elementary, which was built in 1970, and Twin Creeks Middle School, built in 1984, had the district's lowest energy costs, at 89 cents per square foot (**Exhibit 5-16**). Link Elementary, built in 1982, had the district's highest energy cost, at \$1.38 per square foot. During the 1994-95 school year, 17 of the district's 21 schools had energy costs exceeding \$1 per square foot.

Exhibit 5-16
Annual Energy Cost per Square Foot

Yearly Energy Cost					
School	Year Built	Building Area	1993-94 ACTUAL COST/SF	1994-95 ACTUAL COST/SF	1995-96 ACTUAL COST/SF
Salyers EL	1959	49,957	\$1.25	\$1.20	\$1.21
Bammel EL	1965	48,957	\$0.96	\$0.93	\$1.06
Spring HS	1968	336,030	\$1.09	\$1.10	\$1.26
Ponderosa EL	1970	62,036	\$0.96	\$0.86	\$0.89
Winship EL	1972	71,456	\$1.33	\$1.30	\$1.29
Wunsche	1972	111,843	\$1.10	\$1.03	\$1.20
Oak Creek EL	1973	71,724	\$1.17	\$1.14	\$1.18
Bammel MS	1974	178,168	\$1.24	\$1.22	\$1.24
Jenkins EL	1976	74,075	\$1.30	\$1.13	\$1.08
Meyer El	1976	71,708	\$1.29	\$1.19	\$1.17

Westfield HS	1976	359,917	\$1.06	\$1.01	\$1.03
Westfield Music Bldg		25,001	\$1.00	\$0.97	\$1.16
Wells MS	1977	182,661	\$1.16	\$1.21	\$1.20
Hirsch EL	1978	71,738	\$1.29	\$1.15	\$1.02
Anderson EL	1979	70,642	\$1.35	\$1.23	\$1.16
Dueitt MS	1980	123,709	\$1.17	\$0.99	\$1.00
Link EL	1982	69,197	\$1.33	\$1.23	\$1.38
Twin Creeks MS	1984	142,068	\$0.93	\$0.93	\$0.89
Beneke EL	1986	72,352	\$1.08	\$1.20	\$1.23
Smith EL	1986	72,721	\$1.12	\$0.97	\$0.94
Clark EL	1991	79,000	\$0.89	\$0.89	\$0.95
Thompson EL	1996		Not Built	Not Built	Not Built
All Schools		2,345,377	\$1.13	\$1.09	\$1.13

Source: Spring Independent School District

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) has created a new service, the Energy Efficient School Partnership Service, that works with school districts to assess their energy expenditures. The service will provide walk-through energy assessments of one to three campuses, identify operations and maintenance procedures that could cut energy waste in all buildings, identify capital-intensive energy projects that would provide significant savings over time, and evaluate financing options for these projects.

This service is provided at no charge to eligible districts willing to make key commitments to the partnership. Participating districts are responsible for:

- providing utility billing data and individual building square footage to SECO contractors.
- designating a district contact to work with SECO during the term of the partnership.

- allowing SECO to present its evaluation findings and recommendations to the school board, superintendent, and top district business officials.

Another issue on the horizon that will affect school districts is the ongoing deregulation of utilities. Proposed deregulation will empower school districts to negotiate their own rates. This will make it important for district officials to be thoroughly knowledgeable about energy issues, programs, and technologies that may affect their rates.

Recommendation 51:

Contract with SECO's Energy Efficient School Partnership Service for an energy audit.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the supervisor of the Office of Construction and Energy meet with SECO to join the Energy Efficient School Partnership Service.	September 15, 1997
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the director of Finance review a memorandum of understanding with SECO.	September 18, 1997
3. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the director of Finance prepare recommendations for involvement in SECO's Energy Efficient School Partnership Service program.	September 22, 1997
4. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the director of Finance make a recommendation to the board at the November meeting.	November 1997
5. The board approves the recommendations for involvement in SECO's Energy Efficient School Partnership Service program.	November 1997
6. Energy audit begins.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would not entail any initial cost.

FINDING

Spring ISD uses money saved through its energy management efforts to fund conservation enhancements, thus avoiding expenses associated with borrowing funds for such work. However, Spring's 1996 bond package

would have funded the replacement of heating and air conditioning equipment at various district facilities.

In September 1994, Longview ISD had similar energy retrofit projects that needed funding. The firm hired to perform this work guaranteed savings as a result of the energy retrofit. This arrangement allowed the district to use savings generated by the retrofits to repay a low-interest loan used to pay the contractor. Longview's performance contract guaranteed savings sufficient to repay the loan, and obligated the performance contractor to pay the difference if the savings were not sufficient to repay the loan. The contract also required the performance contractor to provide a bond to guarantee the contract agreement. The \$966,140 lease/purchase contract provided district-wide lighting retrofits and air conditioning controls that promise to save the district \$350,000 more than the annual lease payments over a ten-year lease period. Savings thereafter are estimated at \$177,000 per year. Longview's director of Plant and Auxiliary Services told the review team that the arrangement is working well and that the district has realized total savings of \$380,000 to date, with a net savings of \$90,000 after the loan repayment.

The State Energy Conservation Office's (SECO's) Loans to Save Taxes and Resources (LoanSTAR) Program offers low-interest loans at a current rate of 4.04 percent for financing conservation retrofits of this type. The program allows loan repayment to be timed with the realization of energy savings from the projects. Retrofit work financed through this program include energy efficient lighting systems, high-efficiency heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, energy management systems, boiler efficiency improvements, energy recovery systems, building shell improvements, and load management projects.

Humble ISD, a school district with 28 campuses and a total enrollment of approximately 24,000 students, recently borrowed \$675,000 from SECO's LoanSTAR Program to upgrade its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems at one of its middle schools. This project will include installation of:

- energy efficient electric thermal lights
- new energy efficient LED exit signs
- lighting controls
- efficient motors
- a thermal storage unit including two chillers

The loan has an eight-year payback period, with projected annual savings of \$84,491. Total savings after the loan is repaid should total \$675,928. Humble will fully recover the cost of the retrofit and reap additional savings for years to come.

At present, 21 school districts are borrowing from SECO's LoanSTAR Program. Loan amounts to these districts have ranged from \$12,500 to \$1 million. The average loan was \$471,679.

In the past, SISD has declined to use alternative funding sources such as SECO or performance contracts for its retrofit projects. Instead, the district has relied upon bond sales or energy savings earned in prior years.

SISD has identified the following conservation projects funded from energy savings achieved during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 budget years:

PROJECT NAME	COST	CONTRACT DATE
Energy Management Systems Completed August 1996	\$72,277	May 24, 1996
Jenkins Chiller Replacement Completed January 1997	\$157,542	September 24, 1996
Landis & Staefa (L&S) Annual Technical Support Agreement for Energy Management Systems	\$7,164	January 1 through December 31, 1997
Proposed Energy Management System Upgrades- Various Campuses	\$25,000 (estimated)	June 1997
United Environmental Service (USE) Annual Technical Support Agreement for Energy Management Systems	\$16,284 (estimated)	September 1997
Total Approximate Cost	\$278,267	

SISD also is considering a district-wide lighting retrofit to replace existing light bulbs and ballasts with more energy-efficient versions. The cost of this project has not been specified by the district but SISD projects an annual savings of \$315,000 and an estimated payback period of 37 months.

Recommendation 52:

Explore alternative methods to fund energy retrofit projects, including SECO's LoanSTAR Program and performance contracts.

SISD should continue to fund energy retrofit projects with energy savings earned in prior years, but should consider taking advantage of alternative financing sources when savings from prior years are insufficient.

SISD has recognized that SECO's LoanSTAR program finance rate is "very economical." Other Texas school districts have used both SECO and performance contracting successfully to fund energy retrofit projects that yield long-term savings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The executive director of Facility Management and Security along with SECO make presentation on the findings from a SECO energy audit and makes recommendations to the district's board.	March 1998
2. The executive director of Facility Management and Security and the supervisor of the office of Construction and Energy identifies and prioritizes major energy retrofits based on SECO's energy audit.	April 1998
3. The executive director of Facility Management and Security proposes energy retrofit projects and method of financing to the board.	May 1998
4. The board approves energy retrofit projects and method of financing.	June 1998
5. Energy retrofit projects begin.	July 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

SISD's total annual energy cost, based on its three-year average of \$1.11 per square foot, is about \$2.6 million (assuming a total area for SISD schools other than Thompson of 2,345,377 square feet). SISD should be able to reduce its energy costs to \$1 or less per square foot through conservation measures funded through SECO and performance contracting.

At \$1 per square foot, SISD's total annual energy cost would be approximately \$2.3 million, resulting in an annual savings of about \$258,000.

An approximate retrofit cost of \$1 million with an eight-year payback would result in loan repayment amounts of approximately \$125,000 annually, for net annual savings of \$133,000.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Seek alternative methods to fund energy retrofits	\$0	\$133,000	\$133,000	\$133,000	\$133,000

Chapter 6

Financial Management

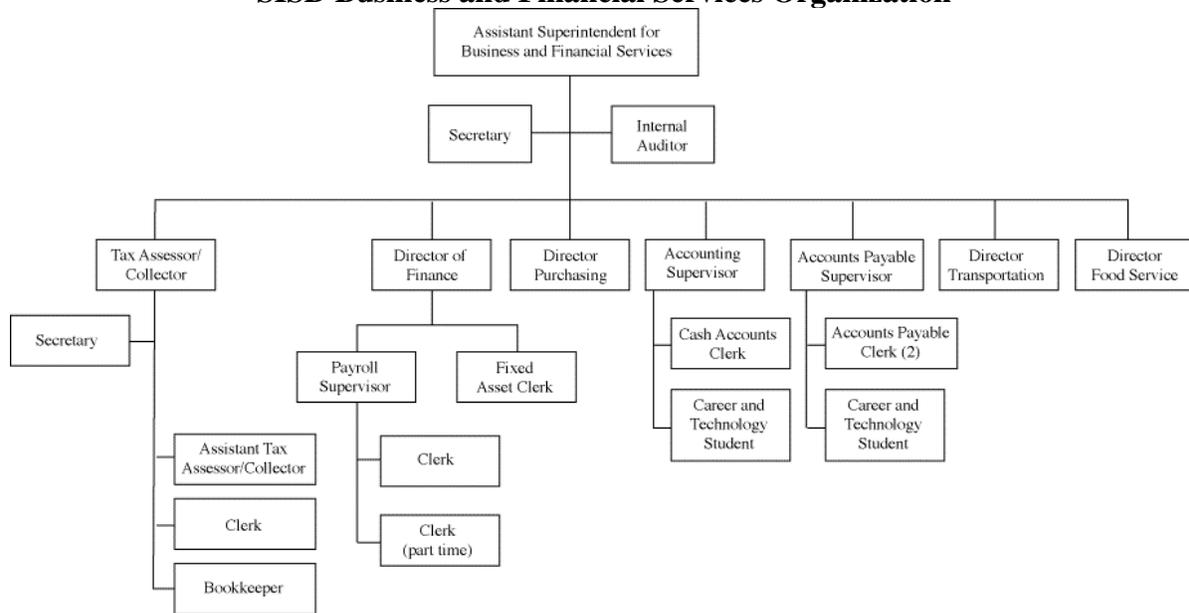
This chapter reviews the Spring Independent School District's (SISD) financial management and accounting functions, including such key elements as payroll, purchasing, budgeting, accounts payable, general ledger, and financial reporting. This section of the report will address the following areas:

- A. Financial and Accounting Organization
- B. Tax Collections
- C. Payroll
- D. Budgeting

CURRENT SITUATION

The assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services is responsible for accounting, budgeting, purchasing, fixed assets, tax collection, food service, internal audit, transportation, financial management, and asset and risk management. Within these areas, directors supervise food services, transportation, purchasing, and finance. **Exhibit 6-1** shows the organization structure of Business and Financial Services.

Exhibit 6-1
SISD Business and Financial Services Organization



Source: SISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Financial Services

SISD uses a financial accounting software package called Bi-Tech that operates on an HP3000 mainframe computer. This software has been customized extensively to accommodate SISD's financial needs. It is used by the business office for accounting and budgeting, and by each school and department

for access to the purchase order system, which authorizes accounts payable to pay vendors when items are received. SISD also uses the payroll module of the Bi-Tech system to generate all paychecks and the resulting entries to record payroll transactions. Cash receipts are entered each day to the Bi-Tech general ledger system.

Bi-Tech also generates all payments to vendors. Items are entered for payment after the school or department has noted that the item was received. Accounts payable clerks verify that the district has been invoiced for the proper quantity and unit price. Once verified, the invoice is entered for payment. Discounts for early payment are taken whenever offered by the vendor. If accounts payable receives an invoice before the item is marked as received on the system, the school or department is contacted to determine if the item has in fact been received. Checks are issued weekly on Wednesday.

The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services is responsible for cash management and investment activities. The cash accounts clerk, under the direction of the accounting supervisor, is responsible for all cash receipts and transfers as necessary for investment purposes. Each day the cash accounts clerk gives the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services a listing of all bank accounts and the balance in each account. The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services then directs the cash accounts clerk as to investments to be made. SISD employs a career and technology student part time in the accounting department and this position enters all cash receipts each day by journal entry. The cash accounts clerk has on-line access to all bank accounts and can reconcile cash on a daily basis.

Chapter 6

Financial Management

A. Financial and Accounting Organization

FINDING

The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services is responsible for food services, transportation, internal audit, tax, finance, accounting, purchasing, and accounts payable. Each of these areas is headed by a director who reports directly to the assistant superintendent, except for accounts payable and accounting, which are headed by supervisors. Accounts payable consists of one supervisor and two clerks. The accounting function has one supervisor, one cash accounts clerk and a part-time career and technology student.

The director of Finance is responsible for fixed assets, which are managed on a day-to-day basis by a single clerk; the payroll function; quarterly reports for grants; and special projects especially as they relate Bi-Tech. The Payroll Department consists of one supervisor, two clerks and one part-time clerk. Since the Payroll Department already has a supervisor, the director of Finance becomes involved in payroll only when problems arise.

In most districts, assistant superintendents do not directly manage supervisory level staff; more typically, they manage directors of major functional areas. The review team found that SISD's current management structure can impair the assistant superintendent's strategic planning and oversight responsibilities. Moreover, the director of Finance lacks the full spectrum of duties and functions normally attributable to a director-level position.

Some districts employ a controller to manage financial functions within their organization. Controllers have the necessary budgeting, accounting, and supervisory skills to manage all the financial functions of a school district. **Exhibit 6-2** shows the typical duties of a controller, and contrasts them to the limited scope of duties in the director of Finance's job description. Again, most of the director of Finance's responsibilities are tied to payroll and fixed-asset functions.

Exhibit 6-2 **Comparison of**

**SISD Director of Finance Responsibilities
and General Functions of a Controller**

Typical Duties of a Controller	
Duties of the SISD Director of Finance	
Supervise all accounting functions including monthly financial reporting, cash management, bank reconciliations, general ledger maintenance, and journal entries	Maintain financial accounting system in accordance with accepted standards for school accounting as prescribed by TEA
Supervise the federally funded programs and all related reporting	Fulfill all financial reporting requirements for federal, state, and local grants
Assist in the preparation of the annual budget including the tax rate calculations and projections of all revenue sources	Prepare and issue annual 1099s and related reports
Prepare budget review (held three times a year)	Maintain detailed fixed-asset inventory and site based inventories
Supervise the payroll function and act as liaison between payroll and personnel	Assist in the annual financial audit and any special audit
Supervise the accounts payable area and assist with issues between accounts payable and purchasing	Assist in the preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
Act as assistant superintendent in this official's absence	Maintain reporting requirements and prepare responses to inquires or audits by the Internal Revenue Service
Update policies and procedures as necessary to accommodate changes in the computer system and accounting requirements	Maintain reporting requirements and prepare responses to inquiries by the Teacher Retirement System
Enforce compliance with district policies and procedures as they relate to the financial and budgeting areas	Assist in the preparation and issuance of W-2s and related reports
Preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report	Supervise the payroll operation to ensure staff salaries are paid correctly
Provide training to financial staff and users of the financial system	Prepare the financial PIEMS data for submission to TEA
Assist with budget preparation for	Provide staff training in the areas of

alternative funding sources	fixed assets, payroll and the financial accounting system
Supervise fixed assets and all year-end reconciliations	Act as a resource for principals, division heads, and director in understanding and using the financial operations of the district

Source: SISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Financial Services

SISD's director of Finance does not supervise all financial functions of the district, nor does the position manage the budget development process, invest and manage cash reserves, or assume assistant superintendent responsibilities as necessary.

Recommendation 53:

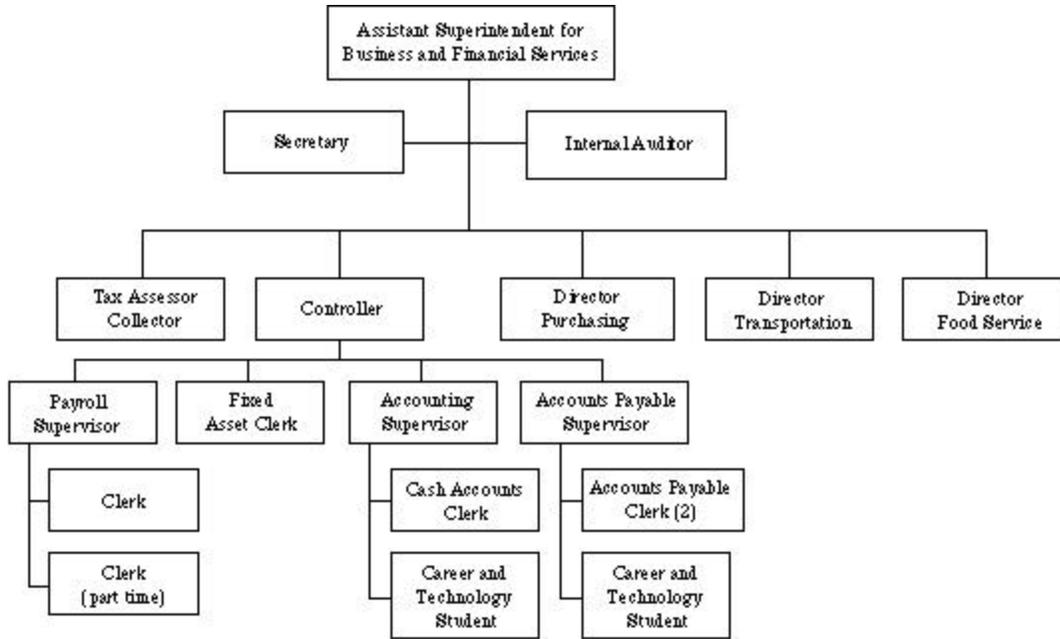
Eliminate the position of director of Finance and create the position of Controller to supervise accounting, payroll, fixed assets, and accounts payable functions .

The controller should report directly to the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services. The supervisors for accounts payable and accounting should report to the controller rather than the assistance superintendent for Business and Financial Services. This provides a sharper focus on the full spectrum of financial activities in the district under the controller's supervision, while allowing the assistant superintendent to concentrate on strategic planning and other high-level management and oversight activities.

The district should develop a job description for the controller including the activities and duties outlined in **Exhibit 6-2**, and solicit qualified applicants to compete for the position.

This revised organization chart is contained in **Exhibit 6-3**.

**Exhibit 6-3
Proposed SISD Business and Financial Services Organization**



Source: WCL Enterprises

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent authorizes the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services to reorganize the department which includes establishing a controller position and eliminating the director of Finance position.	December 1997
2. Assistant superintendent conducts interviews and selects the most qualified controller candidate.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources. The controller position can reasonably be hired at or below the current salary level of the director of Finance.

Chapter 6

Financial Management

B. Tax Collections

BACKGROUND

Local property taxes generally provide the largest share of district operating funds. An efficient tax collection system that produces a high collection rate is essential to generating the resources necessary to cover daily operations.

School districts adopt a tax rate each year for general operations and debt service. Calculation of this rate is dependent upon the certified tax roll provided by a central appraisal district. Taxes are levied on real and personal property. Exemptions are offered for homesteads that have an age 65 classification and land used for agricultural purposes.

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD received more than \$65 million in 1996-97 from property tax collections. This amounted to more than 55 percent of the district's total revenues for the year. SISD operates its own tax collection department, which is located at the central administration building. Property values are established by the Harris County Appraisal District (appraisal district) and transmitted to the district. The appraisal district sends corrections and updates to the district periodically throughout the year.

The tax office is supervised by the tax assessor-collector and includes four additional staff members. The office is responsible for generating and mailing tax notices and collecting payments. The tax office uses Protech software, which operates on the HP3000 mainframe computer. This software allows SISD to download appraisal rolls from the appraisal district as well as accommodate tax statement requests from mortgage companies. Payments from the mortgage companies are accompanied by a tape listing every account paid. This eliminates the necessity for tax office personnel to manually enter each of SISD's 36,963 accounts.

When taxes are remitted by mail, receipts are issued only if requested by the taxpayer. For those who pay their tax bills in person, the tax office provides an automated receipt.

FINDING

SISD realized a 98.4 percent collection rate on taxes owed by SISD property owners in 1996. When delinquent tax collections from previous years are added in, the combined collection rate for 1996 is 101.8 percent. **Exhibit 6-4** shows tax collection rates for the past 10 years.

Exhibit 6-4
SISD Tax Collection Percentages By Year
1987 through 1996

Year		
Current	Overall*	
1996	98.42%	101.75%
1995	98.06%	101.24%
1994	97.69%	100.27%
1993	97.17%	105.05%
1992	96.49%	104.32%
1991	95.86%	100.46%
1990	96.39%	101.76%
1989	96.00%	99.86%
1988	94.55%	101.43%
1987	92.52%	101.16%

*Source: SISD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. *Overall rates include current and delinquent taxes*

SISD contracts with a tax attorney to collect its delinquent taxes. State law allows the tax attorney to add an additional 15 percent collection fee to taxes outstanding as of July 1 of each year. When delinquent taxes are collected, the attorney retains the 15 percent minus \$30,000 per year for tax collection support provided by the SISD tax office. The district keeps the taxes collected plus penalty and interest. **Exhibit 6-5** shows the tax levies and current and delinquent tax collection rates of SISD and peer districts.

Exhibit 6-5
Current and Overall Tax Levies and Rates
SISD and Peer Districts
1995-96

District	Levy	Current 8/31/96	Overall* 8/31/96
Spring	\$57,094,317	98.42%	101.75%
Klein	\$74,920,895	99.17%	100.92%
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	\$114,887,343	99.50%	100.40%
Spring Branch	\$134,035,038	97.71%	99.75%
Fort Bend	\$112,973,231	98.60%	99.70%
Richardson	\$164,900,220	98.73%	99.53%
Duncanville	\$32,576,000	98.60%	99.50%

*Source: Telephone survey of peer districts * Overall tax levies and rates include current and delinquent taxes*

COMMENDATION

SISD has achieved a high overall tax collection rate.

SISD provides direction to the tax attorney in collecting a high percentage of delinquent taxes without penalizing elderly and other exempt property owners in the district.

FINDING

The SISD tax office has an operating budget of \$757,810 for 1996-97, of which \$502,456 is a fixed cost paid to the appraisal district for appraising property values in the district. All taxing entities are required by law to use the county appraisal districts for this purpose. The remainder of the budget (\$255,354) covers salaries and benefits for five tax office employees, printing, stuffing and mailing, computer hardware and software, equipment, and other operating expenses. Employees include a director (tax-assessor collector), an assistant director (assistant tax-assessor collector), and three support employees. Facility and utility costs for the tax office are not included in this budget.

The review team contacted the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector's office and several private tax collection organizations to determine the costs of using an outside tax collection entity. Both Harris County and the private entities indicated that they could operate a full-scale tax collection operation for SISD for less than \$100,000 per year.

Harris County could collect the district's taxes at a lower cost than the SISD tax office because it already collects other taxes from SISD's

taxpayers, thus avoiding duplicative mailing and stuffing costs. Harris County, which collects taxes for 33 different taxing units in the county, had an overall collection rate of 97.32 percent countywide in 1996. Although, on average, Harris County's countywide collection rate is slightly lower than the rate for Spring ISD, Harris County's collections in predominantly suburban areas of the county meet or exceed the Spring collection rate.

The Property Tax Code allows school districts to contract out its collections to a public entity in accordance with the Interlocal Cooperation Act. A 1989 Texas Attorney General's opinion states that in all cases a tax-collector assessor should be named by school districts as a responsible party for all tax collection operations. School districts that contract for their tax collection operations rely on the contractor to perform all technical and day-to-day operations on the district's behalf. The staff person designated as tax assessor-collector manages the overall tax collection function and oversees the contractor's activities.

Of the six peer districts, Duncanville's tax collection operations are handled by Dallas County. In addition, the Houston Independent School District contracts its current and delinquent tax collection operations to a private entity.

Recommendation 54:

Transfer the tax office functions to Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector.

SISD should establish an interlocal agreement with the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector to provide tax collection functions and possibly the assessment functions currently handled by the district's tax office. This agreement should address all pertinent SISD tax policies and such key areas as the frequency and method of fund transfers, calculation of the effective and roll-back tax rates, mailout and payment schedules, reporting requirements and the handling of tax refunds. Special provisions should be made to ensure that current overall tax receipts remain at or above the high levels now experienced by SISD as well as for special contingencies such as the cost of mailing corrected bills when necessary. The district should explore the option of including delinquent tax collections as part of the agreement.

SISD should designate one full-time tax assessor-collector for the district as required by law. This position would not be required to have hands-on technical expertise in tax collections, since this would be the responsibility of Harris County. However, they may be required to oversee a delinquent

tax collections contractor if this portion of the tax collection function remains with the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The board approves the development of a cooperative agreement between SISD and the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector.	November 1997
2. The superintendent signs an agreement with Harris County.	December 1997
3. The assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services develops a transition plan for transferring tax functions from the tax office to Harris County, including any staff reductions to be handled through attrition.	March 1998
4. Harris County begins handling SISD's tax collection functions.	August 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Excluding the costs for the appraisal district and facility and utility costs, the tax office's operating budget is approximately \$255,000. Based on cost estimates from the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector and private entities, SISD tax collection operations should be able to be delivered at a cost of less than \$100,000 per year, plus the cost of the SISD tax-assessor collector, which would be approximately \$46,000 per year including benefits. The savings is \$109,000 per year. Additional savings will result from re-assigning some of the office space now used by the SISD tax office.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Transfer the tax office functions to Harris County		\$109,000	\$109,000	\$109,000	\$109,000

Chapter 6

Financial Management

C. Payroll

CURRENT SITUATION

The Payroll Department is responsible for the timely and accurate payment of all district employees, all benefit deductions and the payment of those premiums, all IRS-related matters, court-ordered deductions, deductions for participation in the Teacher Retirement System, and Medicare/Social Security.

Payroll provides semimonthly checks to 2,460 salaried SISD employees, including contract employees, substitutes, paraprofessionals, and administrators. Of these, 1,868 are paid by direct deposit; Payroll submits these requests to the Accounts Payable Department for all deductions. The district's remaining employees, including maintenance, food services, transportation, custodial, and other classified staff, are paid hourly wages on alternate Fridays.

The Payroll supervisor reports to the director of Finance. Three full-time employees, including the supervisor, and one part-time clerk are assigned to Payroll.

FINDING

SISD has implemented a pilot program for an on-line payroll module that is part of the Bi-Tech financial system. The program includes four test sites including one middle school, one elementary school, and the Custodial and Purchasing Departments. The test sites enter their information directly into the payroll system and send a manual back-up record of the same information. Over a four-month period, this dual system has confirmed the accuracy of the on-line payroll module for these four sites. Based on the experience of the pilots, once the dual system has confirmed accuracy for a period of about three months, it will no longer be necessary to maintain the manual backup records.

The district has developed a plan for implementing the on-line system districtwide. However, implementation has been delayed, partially due to software issues. For example, security issues allowed campus personnel to change payroll information. All these software issues have now been resolved.

The middle school has been a test site since April 1996 and the other three test sites were added March 1997. Although the district has a written plan for fully implementing the on-line payroll system districtwide, the plan does not contain timelines and the steps needed to connect the remaining schools and departments and implementations has not been assigned to specific staff persons. Consequently, these other schools and departments must submit payroll information in writing on transmittal forms generated by Bi-Tech's payroll module. Manual data is input by a Payroll Department part-time payroll clerk.

According to the Payroll supervisor, some schools will not be immediately given on-line capabilities because they lack personnel qualified to enter the information. However, the assistant superintendent indicated that special training will be provided to designated staff at each school and department.

Recommendation 55:

Implement the on-line payroll system at all schools and departments.

Once the payroll system has been implemented at each school and department site, manual records should be maintained for up to three months to confirm the accuracy of the automated system. During this time, schools will enter information directly into the system and submit a manual transmittal form. The payroll clerk will reconcile the two and verify that all information was entered correctly. Once the system is fully on-line districtwide, the part-time payroll clerk position should be eliminated.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Payroll supervisor eliminates the manual record keeping requirement at all four pilot test sites.	October 1997
2. Payroll supervisor develops procedures manual for on-line payroll reporting and conducts training sessions for all schools and departments.	October 1997
3. Payroll supervisor develops timetable to complete conversion by August 1998.	October 1997
4. Payroll supervisor begins adding schools and departments each payroll period.	November 1997
5. On-line implementation complete districtwide and manual reporting requirements are eliminated.	August 1998
6. Superintendent eliminates part-time Payroll clerk position.	August 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The temporary, part-time clerk works between 30 to 35 hours per week, and is paid an hourly rate of \$6.50 per hour without benefits. Elimination of this position would save the district \$10,140 per year based on 30 hours per week @ \$6.50 x 52 weeks per year.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Implement the on-line payroll system districtwide	\$0	\$10,140	\$10,140	\$10,140	\$10,140

FINDING

The Personnel Department is responsible for setting up and maintaining all employee records. These records contain all the information necessary to generate a pay check, including base salary and any supplemental pay amounts.

Personnel changes and updates are entered into the payroll module, which generates paychecks to district personnel. Errors can result if personnel changes are not correctly entered. During fiscal 1994, when the Bi-Tech personnel/payroll system was brought on-line, errors caused overpayments to some employees when supplemental pay and coaching supplements were not correctly entered into the payroll module.

Each year information is rolled over, but all information has to be verified to ensure that supplements have not changed. Changes in supplemental pay must be interfaced to the payroll system from Personnel. This can only be done for six people at a time, by social security number. An edit report is printed that details the information and this report is sent to Payroll. Besides supplemental pay changes, the interface also changes addresses, account codes, beginning/ending pay date and amount to be paid. The Payroll Department reviews all interface edit reports to confirm that the changes have been made.

Although district personnel have avoided overpayments since 1994, the procedures involved require precise steps in both Personnel and Payroll that involve several employees. While all of the employees interviewed by the review team in the Personnel and Payroll Departments knew exactly how to make changes on the system, no formal written documentation of these steps is contained in either department's procedure manuals. This could cause a recurrence of past problems if staff turnover occurs among the employees responsible for these procedures.

Recommendation 56:

Write personnel and payroll procedures to ensure payroll accuracy.

All required steps and procedures to ensure payroll accuracy should be officially documented, incorporated into the Payroll and Personnel procedure manuals, and distributed to appropriate Payroll and Personnel staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Director of Personnel Services documents all procedures for entering personnel changes into the payroll system and for verifying edit reports.	September 1997
2. Director of Personnel Services and Payroll supervisor formally document all required steps into the existing procedure manuals for each department.	November 1997
3. Director of Personnel Services and Payroll supervisor ensure that appropriate staff are trained in established procedures.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 6

Financial Management

D. Budgeting

BACKGROUND

Budgeting involves the planning and management of the district's resources and programs. This process is critical to accomplishing the district's long- and short-term goals and the allocation of funds to those goals.

CURRENT SITUATION

Budgeting is the primary responsibility of the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services. SISD has an annual operating budget of \$99,007,357 and a total expenditure budget for all funds of \$121,630,428 for 1996-97. Payroll accounts for 86.7 percent of the operating budget.

Exhibit 6-6 provides a breakdown of budgeted revenues by source for 1996-97.

Exhibit 6-6
SISD Budgeted Revenues by Source (All Funds)
1996-97

Revenue Source	Total	Percent of Total
Local	\$65,149,785	55.69%
State	\$48,177,138	41.18%
Federal	\$3,658,815	3.13%
Total	\$116,985,738	100.00%

Source: SISD 1996-97 Budget

Fund balance is the reserve that the district sets aside for contingencies and to accommodate fluctuations in cash flow.

Following is a projected reconciliation of fund balance for the year ending August 31, 1997 for all funds.

Beginning Fund Balance 9/1/96 \$19,726,436
Add: Budgeted Revenue \$116,985,738
Less: Budgeted Expenditures \$121,630,428
Projected Ending Fund Balance 8/31/97 \$15,081,746

Included in the beginning fund balance is \$3,888,000 designated for capital projects. These are the remaining bond funds from the 1995 issue and can only be used for construction projects.

Typically, a district will attempt to maintain a fund balance in the general operating fund equal to two to three months' worth of operations. Under this scenario, the district would need a fund balance of \$16,501,226 for a two-month reserve. TEA has established an optimum fund balance calculation to assist districts in establishing a reasonable fund balance. According to the SISD optimum fund balance calculation, the optimum fund balance for the general fund was \$16,240,415 for the year ending August 31, 1996. The actual fund balance for the same year was \$13,880,759 resulting in a fund balance deficit of \$2,359,656. Since 1994, when

the general fund balance was \$8,996,315, the district has made a concerted effort to increase its fund balance.

FINDING

Each year, SISD's board sets priorities as part of the Five-Year Education Plan, which is updated prior to the beginning of the budgeting process (this plan is discussed in more detail in the District Organization and Management Chapter of this report). As the budget is formulated, the board's priorities are communicated to all district employees and principals are encouraged to budget funds according to these priorities. While all districts adopt a budget based upon board goals, SISD has expanded this to identify the dollars budgeted for each priority. **Exhibit 6-7** shows the funds allocated to each goal of the the Five-Year Education Plan.

Exhibit 6-7
General and Special Revenue Funds Budget by Priorities
1996-97

Goal	Budget	Percentage
1. Enhance the quality of teachers and support staff		
Recruiting	\$482,913	0.47%
Salary and Benefits	\$59,026,039	57.58%
Teacher Incentives and Recognition	\$2,352,032	2.29%
Teacher Development and Improvement	\$1,578,837	1.54%
Total	\$63,439,821	61.89%
2. Strengthen student achievement and educational programs	\$12,502,709	12.20%
3. Increase the quality and quantity of parent involvement	\$1,086,683	1.06%
4. Provide strong fiscal management, protect the District's investment in facilities and equipment and meet instructional space needs	\$12,221,996	11.92%

5. Reduce the number of students at risk for dropping out of school	\$1,417,880	1.38%
6. Provide for safety of students and staff in the schools	\$969,734	0.95%
7. Increase the effectiveness of student discipline	\$2,104,071	2.05%
8. Eliminate substance abuse	\$800,104	0.78%
9. Improve the transition of students from elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, and from high school to college and work	\$1,149,095	1.12%
10. Expand computer support applications for teachers and instructional services for students	\$1,517,800	1.48%
11. Expand school-business partnerships	\$31,000	0.03%
Total Five Year Education Plan Priorities	\$97,240,893	94.86%
Other General Support [Transportation, tax office, school activity]	\$5,269,386	5.14%
Total General and Special Revenue Funds Budget	\$102,510,279	100.00%

Source: SISD Five-Year Education Plan Budget Priorities

Exhibit 6-8 shows an increase in the dollars expended per student over the 1995-96 year. This increase is reflected in instruction, instructional support, data processing, and pupil services, which includes transportation. Areas of decline include general administration and plant maintenance and operations. These changes are in line with the Five-Year Education Plan goals.

Exhibit 6-8
Summary of SISD General Fund Expenditures By Function
1995-96 vs. 1996-97

Function	1995-96 Budget	Percent of Total	Cost/Student	1996-97 Budget	Percent of Total	Cost/Student
Instructional	\$55,422,700	59.55%	\$2,731	\$59,594,849	60.19%	\$2,853
Instructional Resources/Media	\$1,516,671	1.63%	\$75	\$1,654,463	1.67%	\$79

Curriculum/Staff Dev	\$1,286,766	1.38%	\$63	\$1,434,593	1.45%	\$69
Instructional Leadership	\$1,500,582	1.61%	\$74	\$1,523,312	1.54%	\$73
School Leadership	\$6,108,895	6.56%	\$301	\$6,487,784	6.55%	\$311
Guidance and Counseling	\$3,510,363	3.77%	\$173	\$3,744,687	3.78%	\$179
Social Work Services	\$95,380	0.10%	\$5	\$70,380	0.07%	\$3
Health Services	\$604,372	0.65%	\$30	\$821,553	0.83%	\$39
Student Transportation	\$3,987,263	4.28%	\$196	\$4,376,461	4.42%	\$210
Co-curricular Activities	\$2,119,694	2.28%	\$104	\$2,150,440	2.17%	\$103
General Administration	\$3,427,012	3.68%	\$169	\$3,493,735	3.53%	\$167
Plant Maintenance & Operation	\$11,197,962	12.03%	\$562	\$11,341,924	11.46%	\$543
Security Services	\$696,576	0.75%	\$34	\$873,166	0.88%	\$42
Data Processing Services	\$715,413	0.77%	\$35	\$843,079	0.85%	\$40
Community Services	\$133,469	0.14%	\$7	\$156,529	0.16%	\$8
Debt Service	\$291,915	0.31%	\$14	\$13,836	0.01%	\$1
Facilities Acq. & Construction	\$416,592	0.45%	\$21	\$390,611	0.39%	\$19
Fiscal Agent	\$35,955	0.04%	\$2	\$35,955	0.04%	\$2
Totals	\$93,067,580	100.00%				
\$4,596	\$99,007,357	100.00%	\$4,741			

Source: SISD 1996-97 Budget

Most school districts build their budgets by incremental changes to the previous year's budgets. Campuses receive funds based on how persuasive their principals are in selling their needs to central administration rather than on the numbers and types of students served and actual program costs. Under this arrangement, inequities can arise and accumulate, because schools with higher funding can keep building on already inflated allocations.

By contrast, SISD's superintendent, with extensive input from and district staff at all levels, determines each campus's allocation based on projected enrollments and the type of school. Staffing allocations follow standards established in part by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; they specify the appropriate numbers of administrative, teaching, counseling, and support staff per campus.

The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services sets the budget calendar in February. For fiscal 1997-98, the board adopted the budget in June on a schedule contained in **Exhibit 6-9**. Budget packages are sent to each school and department and contain prior-year expenditures and budget information.

**Exhibit 6-9
Budget Calendar
1997-98**

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date
Meet with Health Administration Services to discuss health benefits for 1997-98 budget	Asst. Superintendents for Business and Personnel	2/5/97
Approval of current staffing guidelines	Board of Trustees	2/11/97
Meet with Health Administration Services to discuss health benefits for	Asst. Superintendents for Business and Personnel	2/12/97

1997-98 budget		
Review of budget calendar and discuss budget process and per student allocations	Superintendent's Cabinet	2/18/97
Send out 1997-98 Budget Packets to Schools and Departments. Arrange individual work sessions as needed.	Assistant Superintendent for Business	3/7/97
Discuss revenue forecasts and overall financial condition	Superintendent's Cabinet	4/1/97
Discuss salaries and fringe benefits	Superintendent's Cabinet	4/1/97
Schools and departmental budgets and staffing forms completed and returned to Business Office	Principals, Supervisors and Superintendent's Cabinet	4/7/97
Review by Superintendent's Cabinet preliminary budget package, non-allocated requests and staffing proposals	Asst. Superintendents for Business and Personnel	4/15/97
Benefits Committee meeting	Benefits Committee	4/15/97
Review tentative budget	Superintendent's Cabinet	4/22/97
Budget study session with board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	4/22/97
Budget study session with board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	4/29/97
Budget study session with board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	5/6/97
Budget study session with board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	5/13/97
Publish Notice of Public Hearing for 1997-98 budget	Asst. Supt. for Business	5/20/97
Public Hearing on Proposed 1997-98 budget	Board of Trustees	6/3/97
Adoption of 1997-98 budget	Board of Trustees	6/10/97
Vote on intent to increase tax rate if increase of more than 3 percent is proposed. Schedule public hearing on proposed tax rate increase	Board of Trustees	7/8/97
Receive Harris County Appraisal District Certified 1997 Roll	Tax Assessor/Collector	8/29/97

Calculation of effective and rollback tax rate. Submit to board	Tax Assessor/Collector	8/29/97
Publication of effective and rollback tax rates; schedules of fund balances; submission to Board of Trustees	Tax Assessor/Collector	9/9/97
Publish "Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Increase" (if necessary) at least seven days before hearing	Tax Assessor/Collector	9/11/97
Conduct public hearing on proposed tax rate (if necessary). Schedule and announce meeting to adopt tax rate.	Board of Trustees	9/23/97
Publish "Notice of Vote on Tax Rate" before meeting to adopt tax rate	Tax Assessor/Collector	9/25/97
Adoption of 1997-98 Tax Rate	Asst. Supt. of Business	10/7/97

Source: SISD Memorandum from Stuart Snow to Gordon Anderson

The district allows individual schools to allocate funds as they see fit within the context of their total budget. This allows schools to change their staffing patterns, supply costs, equipment, printing, and audio visual needs, but still holds them to the total budget allocation amount. Each school's budget is submitted to the Business Office where they are combined. The preliminary budget then is presented to the superintendent's cabinet for review.

After this review, the preliminary budget is presented in board workshop sessions. These sessions are open to the public and occur during the months of April and May. During the workshops, the budget is reviewed for compliance with the Five-Year Education Plan.

The SISD budget is amended only three times a year. Amendments are reviewed and approved by the board as a part of the budget review conducted three times a year. Amendments to general fund

revenue and expenditures for 1996 are detailed in **Exhibit 6-9**. While revenues increased 4.9 percent during the course of the year, expenditures increased 5.8 percent. SISD used its fund balance to compensate for this excess of expenditures over revenue.

Exhibit 6-9
Reconciliation of Adopted Budget to Year End Budget
1995-96

Expenditures		Revenue	
Adopted Budget	\$89,559,675	Adopted Budget	\$89,559,675
Adjustments:		Adjustments:	
First review -		First Review	
TRS "On-behalf" payments	\$3,960,777	TRS "On-behalf" payments	\$3,960,777
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$911,486	State Foundation Program	-\$1,040,000
Capital Improvements	\$57,618	Technology Fund to SRF	-\$543,698
Salary Supplements	\$4,800		
Per Student Allocations	\$3,376		
Beneke Portable Buildings	\$76,000		
Technology Fund to SRF	-\$543,698		
Music Instrument Repairs	\$6,650		
Second review -		Second review	
Payroll for New Positions	\$173,692	State Foundation Funds	\$169,386
94-95 Tech Funds to SRF	-\$114,040		
Saratoga ROW Survey	\$3,648		
SHS Press Box	\$2,097		

Renovation			
Roof Inspection Fees	\$5,026		
Third review -		Third review	
Relocate Portable Buildings	\$86,000	State Foundation Funds	\$1,627,967
Building Renovations	\$57,900	Tax Revenue	-\$60,150
Dueitt Sound Wall	\$9,445	Child Care Revenue	\$7,500
TANS Interest Expense	-\$213,824	Regular School Tuition	\$5,625
Superintendent Search	\$10,600	Interest Earnings	\$138,264
Purchase 2 Buses	\$99,460	Instrument Rental Fees	\$1,672
Contribution to TRS	\$109,598	Facility Rentals	\$13,632
Increase Legal Fees	\$120,795	Medicaid Reimbursement	\$98,959
Part-time Position MIS	\$11,000		
Technology Cabling	\$30,642		
Thompson Library Books	\$15,000		
Full day K Instructional Supply	\$316,410		
Budget, August 31, 1996	\$94,760,133	Budget, August 31, 1996	\$93,939,609

Source: SISD Business and Financial Services Department.

COMMENDATION

SISD has tied its budget planning process to specific priorities established by the board.

Each campus budget and subsequent expenditure is accountable to one or more board priorities to ensure that district dollars are supporting the Five-Year Education Plan approved by the board.

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

This chapter addresses the management and protection of SISD's monetary and physical assets. This chapter contains the following sections:

- A. Workers' Compensation
- B. Property and Casualty Insurance
- C. Fixed Assets
- D. Auditing
- E. Cash and Investments
- F. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness

Primary responsibility for the safekeeping of district assets lies with the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services, except for workers compensation, which is the responsibility of the director of Safety and Compliance.

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

A. Worker's Compensation

FINDING

SISD's workers' compensation plan is a self-funded policy administered by Health Administration Services, Inc. This company also administers all health-related coverages for the district. The office of Safety and Compliance is responsible for planning, development, coordination, assessment, and interpretation of all phases of the district's safety, case management, and transitional duties programs. This program includes monitoring and reducing workers' compensation claims and student injuries, and other safety efforts discussed in Chapter 12 of this report. Workers' compensation claims have been reduced 46 percent since 1995-96. **Exhibit 7-1** outlines the net claims paid for the last four years.

Exhibit 7-1
SISD Workers' Compensation
Claims Paid/Reserves/Recovered
1993 through 1996

Year	Claims Paid	Reserves	Recovered	Net
1996	\$170,216	\$49,331	\$0	\$219,547
1995	\$388,734	\$30,343	(\$12,628)	\$406,449
1994	\$578,743	\$28,090	\$0	\$606,833
1993	\$363,961	\$4,851	(\$10,447)	\$358,365

Source: SISD Open and Closed Claims Report

Workers' compensation claims have declined over the last two years after a high of \$606,833 in 1994. This decline coincides with the addition of the director of Safety and Compliance and is the result of policies and procedures initiated to identify areas for safety improvement. Also, SISD works directly with injured employees to assure their timely return to work.

COMMENDATION

SISD has reduced worker's compensation claims through a policy review, staff training, and work location evaluation.

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

B. Property and Casualty Insurance

FINDING

The independent insurance agent for SISD's property and casualty insurance policies was selected two years ago through a request for proposals (RFP) process that weighed the expertise of proposing firms and the cost of recommended policies. The board's Insurance and Legal committee reviews coverages, liability limits, and deductibles on an annual basis with the assistance of the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services and the insurance agent.

Property and casualty policies include liability for facilities, equipment and vehicles, personal injury, professional and general liability, and loss of property.

SISD has comprehensive and collision coverage for 20 police cars, plus collision coverage for 13 trucks and vans used by the Maintenance and Supply Departments. The total collision insurance costs for these vehicles is \$4,055 annually. The policy also provides special causes of loss on all vehicles without comprehensive coverage at an annual cost of \$7,071. This insures all buses and other vehicles against losses from such causes as fire, lightning or explosion, theft, flood, mischief or vandalism, and collision or derailment of any conveyance transporting a covered auto. This coverage has been included in the auto policy due to the catastrophic potential inherent in the fact that all buses are parked at one location. The total annual cost of physical damage insurance included in the auto policy is \$14,380.

As illustrated in **Exhibit 7-2**, property and casualty insurance premiums cost the district about \$368,000 in 1997, a 10 percent increase from the previous year.

Exhibit 7-2
SISD Property and Casualty Insurance Coverages and Premiums
1996-1997

Type	Details of Coverage	Liability Limits	'97 Premium	'96 Premium	Difference	Percent Change
Automobile National Union Fire	Comprehensive Automobile Liability. Uninsured/automobile physical damage on all scheduled vehicles including leased vehicles. \$1,000 deductible on specified vehicles, \$100 comprehensive on cars per	\$1,000,000	\$141,243	\$130,380	\$10,863	8.33%

	schedule					
Equipment Floater MidContinent Casualty	Covers maintenance equipment such as tractors, mowers, etc. and police equipment. Deductible \$250. Rental Equipment	\$238,000 \$35,000	\$1,841	\$1,841	\$0	0.00%
General Liability National Union Fire	Commercial general liability including bodily injury and property damage.	\$2,000,000 per occurrence \$2,000,000 aggregate	\$53,845	\$45,023	\$8,822	19.59%
Comprehensive Property Zurich Insurance	Blanket coverage on real and personal property, including data processing equipment Business interruption Deductible \$25,000	\$204,666,000 \$19,665,000	\$102,833	\$89,980	\$12,853	14.28%
Fidelity and Crime Aetna Casualty & Surety	Employee theft Forgery or alteration Theft, disappearance or destruction inside or outside Computer fraud Deductible \$1,000	\$1,000,000 \$250,000 \$50,000 \$250,000	\$11,125	\$10,822	\$303	2.8%
Boiler and Machinery Kemper Insurance Co.	Blanket coverage on steam boilers refrigeration systems, compressors and generators Extra expense Deductible \$2,500 minimum	\$5,000,000	\$10,747	\$10,134	\$613	6.05%
Educators-Errors and Omissions	Covers board members and all SISD staff members Deductible \$25,000	\$1,000,000	\$20,569	\$20,569	\$0	0.00%
Flood Insurance Omaha Indemnity Co.	Bammel Middle School Deductible \$750	\$500,000 each building/contents	\$5,429	\$5,429	\$0	0.00%
Notary Bonds Universal Surety Western Surety	Notary Bonds-six staff members Notary Bonds-45 staff members	\$2,500	\$ 50 each \$2,550	\$ 50 each \$2,550	\$0	0.00%
Notary Public- Errors and	Liability arising from errors and omissions as a notary	\$10,000	\$562	\$624	(\$62)	(9.99%)

Omissions Western Surety Co.						
Public Official Bond	Tax assessor bond	\$50,000	\$250	\$250	\$0	0.00%
Peace Officers Bond Universal Surety	Peace Officer Bond - 18 officers	\$1,000	\$ 50 each \$900	\$ 50 each \$900	\$0	0.00%
Law Enforcement Professional Liability National Casualty Co.	Peace Officers Professional Liability Deductible \$10,000/claim	\$1,000,000 each person and occurrence	\$11,669	\$11,669	\$0	0.00%
Underground Storage Tank Liability Commerce & Industry	Underground storage tank Deductible: \$5,000 each loss	\$1,000,000	\$2,030	\$2,030	\$0	0.00%
Fiduciary Liability Aetna Casualty & Surety	Spring ISD Medical and Dental Protection Plan; Deductible \$5,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,124	\$2,124	\$0	0.00%
Total			\$367,717	\$334,325	\$33,392	10%

Source: SISD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

As shown, property insurance costs increased from \$93,837 to \$102,833 because of the addition of Thompson Elementary and Westfield High School to the policy, and an overall increase of 4 percent to keep up with increasing replacement costs. The rate charged for both years is 5 cents per \$100.

Auto insurance premiums rose from \$130,380 to \$141,243 in 1997 because of an increase in the number of vehicles from 227 to 247, and a higher number of accidents, causing the experience modifier used in determining the liability portion of the policy cost to rise from 0.60 to 0.73.

General liability insurance rose from \$45,023 to \$53,845 based on a 5.7 percent increase in the student population, the addition of two swimming pools and a day care facility, and other related variables.

A report submitted by the insurance agent to the board's Legal and Insurance Committee raised concerns about the automobile liability policy. Settlement of open claims was higher than projected and the district experienced an increase in accident frequency in 1997, with 15 accidents reported in three months. These accidents and the increase in claim settlements has contributed to an increase in

premium. An accident review committee within the Transportation Department assesses the cause of each accident and makes recommendations to eliminate the type of accident. No other committee or individual within the district reviews claims, frequency, and cause of loss. This committee acts in a reactive rather than a preventive mode and to date has not affected the overall premium cost or losses due to claims.

SISD's insurance agent has full responsibility for analyzing the district's property and casualty insurance needs, and for recommending appropriate companies, coverages, and deductibles to the board. No staff member, however, provides an objective review of these areas to ensure that the recommended coverages are in the district's best interests. While the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services is responsible for recommendations to the board, he depends upon the insurance agent for analyzing needs, pricing, and policy limits.

The director for Safety and Compliance in Facility Management and Security oversees workers' compensation insurance coverage as described in Section B of this chapter. But this individual does not monitor claims for property and casualty policies, nor does this position recommend strategies to reduce overall insurance costs. This position reports to the executive director, Facility Management and Security.

Recommendation 57:

Assign all property and casualty insurance activities to the director of Safety and Compliance.

Since facilities, equipment, and security activities are the responsibility of the executive director of Facility Management and Security, SISD insurance coverages for these areas also should also be assigned to this department. By including a thorough analysis of the district's insurance needs in the director of Safety and Compliance's job description, the district should be able to target its coverages more effectively and reduce its costs accordingly. This position also should initiate prevention programs in areas of high loss.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent approves the assignment of property and casualty insurance activities to the director of Safety and Compliance.	October 1997
2. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services develops a timeline for converting responsibilities to coincide with individual policy expirations.	November 1997
3. Executive director of Facility Management and Security revises job description of the director of Safety and Compliance to include responsibility for property and casualty insurance coverage and claims monitoring.	December 1997
4. Director of Safety and Compliance works with insurance agent and director of Transportation to develop a plan for reducing automobile policy claims.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

C. Fixed Assets

FINDING

SISD accounts for all fixed-asset items with a cost greater than \$5,000 and a useful life expectancy of at least two years. Certain fixed assets, such as student desks, are recorded in total for each facility and not listed as separate items. In addition, equipment purchased with federal grant funds and budgeted as a capital outlay in the grant application is considered a fixed asset regardless of its value. Furniture and equipment valued at less than \$5,000 are not considered fixed assets and are accounted for in the site-based inventory management system.

All fixed assets are tagged when received and assigned a fixed-asset number. Assets purchased with a value less than \$5,000 are tagged as property of SISD but no number is assigned. These tags are not bar-coded and fixed-asset counts are performed manually at the schools and departments. The review team found no discrepancies between SISD's accounting records and year-end counts.

As noted elsewhere in this report, SISD uses Bi-Tech as its financial accounting software. The district evaluated the fixed-asset module of this software, in 1991, and concluded it was not adequate for SISD's needs.

Instead, SISD designed a customized database program for its fixed-asset needs. This FoxPro program produces monthly reports that detail all fixed-asset items and locations. The fixed-asset clerk runs a report that lists all purchases and then pulls invoices from the paid file to determine the item purchased. This information is entered into the central database, after which, to maintain current values by location, district employees must manually reenter this same information from the accounts payable system.

Bi-Tech told the review team that the current version of its fixed-asset module automates the tagging and inventory functions. It automatically assigns all purchases to a fixed-asset account code and updates the fixed-asset listing. In paying invoices, accounts payable would enter information relative to the purchase, such as the item description, and the system would automatically update the fixed-asset ledgers thereby eliminating the need to manually reenter accounts payable data.

Recommendation 58:

Develop or purchase an integrated fixed asset module that automatically updates the fixed asset ledger.

SISD could develop an interface between the FoxPro program and the fixed asset ledger however, this could require extensive customization that should be evaluated and compared to what may be available commercially before making a final decision. Ultimately, the programming efforts to maintain the customized database would be reduced and the need for duplicative data entry activities eliminated. The fixed-asset clerk would be able to devote more time to other activities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services reassesses the Bi-Tech fixed-asset module and evaluates the in-house development of an integrated fixed asset module.	January 1998
2. The assistant superintendent decides whether to buy or develop a fixed asset system based on reassessment of the Bi-Tech fixed asset module and evaluation of the development of an in-house integrated fixed asset module.	
3. The assistant superintendent works with the MIS department on installation.	February 1998
4. The assistant superintendent sets training schedule for fixed- asset clerk and related accounting staff.	February 1998
5. The assistant superintendent conducts school and department level training if necessary.	March 1998
6. The assistant superintendent reviews work level of fixed asset clerk to determine if other responsibilities could be assigned.	August 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Bi-Tech stated that the cost of the fixed-asset module is \$6,000. This would be a one-time cost to the district. However, if an integrated module can be developed in-house, there would be no cost to the district.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Develop or purchase a fixed asset module	(\$6,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

D. Auditing

FINDING

SISD contracts for an outside financial audit on an annual basis. SISD has used the same firm since 1984. As outlined in **Exhibit 7-3**, audit costs for SISD have increased since 1992. While SISD is not required to rotate auditors, many Houston area districts have an informal policy of doing so every three to five years to ensure objectivity. SISD has never used an RFP to procure competitive pricing for this service or to compare levels of service.

Exhibit 7-3
SISD Audit Costs
1992 through 97

YEAR	COST	PERCENT INCREASE
1992	\$33,000	--
1993	\$37,000	13%
1994	\$46,000	25%
1995	\$51,000	11%
1996	\$51,000	0%
1997	\$53,500	5%

Source: SISD audit engagement letters

In addition, SISD employs a CPA as internal auditor. As a part of the external audit, the internal auditor provides 100 hours of audit assistance with a conservative value of \$6,000. The review team was told that the increase in audit costs would have been higher without the internal auditor's assistance. Both the internal auditor and the external auditor submit reports to an audit committee of the board.

Although state law does not require competitive bids for this type of professional service, an RFP process would allow SISD to measure

competing firms' technical expertise, size and structure, personnel qualifications, fee structure, and adequacy of proposed workplans. Firms then would be evaluated on a point system.

SISD receives a high quality and scope of services from its current provider. However, discussions with other districts in the Houston area and SISD's peers indicate that they receive the same level of service at a lower cost (**Exhibit 7-4**).

Exhibit 7-4
Audit Fees
1995-96

District	Audit Fee
Spring	\$53,500
Spring Branch	\$53,000
Fort Bend	\$53,000
Conroe	\$33,600
Clear Creek	\$28,000
Duncanville	\$17,750
Average without Spring	\$37,070

Source: Telephone interviews

SISD also has used its external auditor to perform other professional services such as:

- Actuarial study conducted every other year - \$10,000
- Evaluation of computer security - \$1,000
- Review of 403B plan - \$3,175
- Arbitrage calculation - \$1,200

The Professional Services Procurement Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 2254, Subchapter A) clearly states that contracts or engagements for professional services with any state agency, political subdivision, county, municipality, district, authority, or publicly owned utility may not be competitively bid. The acceptable criteria for selecting vendors of professional services include demonstrated competence and qualifications to perform the services and a fair and reasonable price. The act goes on to say that the price or fees under the contract must be consistent with and not higher than the recommended practices and fees published by the applicable professional association and may not exceed any maximum

provided in law. SISD appears to be in compliance with this law, yet the fees remain above the average of area peer districts.

The State Board of Public Accountancy's Rules of Professional Conduct, Section 501.45 ©, suggests that a fee estimate, in lieu of a competitive bid, is an acceptable alternative.

A fee estimate from multiple vendors could provide SISD a clear and comprehensive description of all services to be performed; a description of reports and the date by which those reports would be delivered; a commitment as to the class and qualifications of the individuals who will perform the services; and a clear statement of the estimated fees for those services, including per diem and hourly rates, by class of employee and the number of estimated days or hours, by class of employee required to perform the services.

Recommendation 59:

Request fee estimates for external financial audit services and establish a policy of rotating auditors at least every five years.

Although not required by law, the board should establish district policy to seek fee estimates for external financial audit service and to rotate external auditors at least every five years. Understanding the services provided and the associated costs and comparing services and costs offered by multiple vendors will allow the district to obtain the needed services at the best price.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Board establishes policy to seek fee estimates for external financial audit services and to rotate auditors at least every five years.	November 1997
2. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services prepares request for fee estimate.	February 1998
3. Assistant superintendent analyzes estimates.	April 1998
4. Assistant superintendent makes recommendation to board and contract is awarded.	June 1998
5. Audit conducted for 1997-98.	September - October 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on an average of fees paid by peer districts, \$37,070, the review team estimates that SISD's fees can be reduced by about \$16,000, beginning in fiscal 1998.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Competitively bid external financial audit services.	0	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000

FINDING

The internal auditor reports both to the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services and to the board. This dual reporting arrangement is a common occurrence and assures that the internal auditor has ready access to the board if items arise that need immediate board attention.

SISD's internal auditor provides a wide variety of functions. Key responsibilities include:

- Audit activity funds.
- Assist with the independent financial audit.
- Update activity fund policies and procedures and provide training to staff.
- Assist with preparation of the tri-annual budget review.
- Assist with budget preparation and monitoring.
- Post journal entries for budget adjustments.
- Assist in preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Best practices indicate that most of these items listed are outside the usual scope of the internal audit function. These tasks are best performed as a part of the district's accounting functions. An internal auditor should verify that district policies and procedures are being carried out, not establish policies and procedures or participate in general accounting activities that they are also responsible for auditing. Tasks currently outside of the internal auditors powers should be reassigned to appropriate personnel. A November 23, 1994 letter from the external audit firm mentioned that "additional business office responsibilities have been assigned to the District's internal auditor limiting availability to complete a comprehensive internal audit schedule."

Recommendation 60:

Revise the job description of the internal auditor to focus on audit responsibilities and prepare an annual audit plan for board approval that reflects these responsibilities.

The assistant Superintendent for Business and Financial Service should manage all policy development activities in conjunction with the superintendent and the board, and assign additional internal audit activities to the internal auditor, including reviews of the Purchasing Department, athletic/co-curricular revenues, payroll/personnel interfaces, travel requests, and tax collections.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services manages all policy development activities.	October 1997
2. Assistant superintendent assigns non-internal audit functions to the director of Finance.	November 1997
3. Internal auditor prepares an audit plan to include additional areas for review and submits it to the assistant superintendent for approval.	November 1997
4. Assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services revises internal auditor job description to include additional internal audit activities.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

E. Cash and Investments

CURRENT SITUATION

Spring's cash management investment policy is designed to ensure the prudent management of public funds; the availability of operating, capital and debt service funds when needed; and a competitive return on investments. The policy was reviewed and approved by the board' Policy Committee in April 1997. No changes were made to the existing policy, which was last modified on December 12, 1995.

The district's investment portfolio is designed to earn the maximum rate of return within the policy's safety and liquidity objectives. The policy addresses the issue of diversification with the following statement: "The investment portfolio will be diversified to avoid incurring undue concentration in securities of one type or securities of one financial institution, so that no single investment or class of investments can have a disproportionate impact on the total portfolio." This restriction does not apply to U.S. Treasury securities or investment pools.

SISD's public funds are divided into three categories: operating, capital, and debt service. District investment objectives and policies vary with the nature of the fund, using income generated as a supplementary source of revenue.

SISD uses Nations Bank as its depository. Depository contracts are typically bid and issued for a two year period, however recent legislation allows a district to renew depository contracts for two additional years if the service is considered satisfactory. This contract is up for renewal in fiscal 1997. Nations Bank provides on-line banking, including wire transfers, transfers between accounts, and account analysis. All accounts are interest-bearing and clearing accounts are used for payroll and accounts payable. Each day, the cash accounts clerk reviews account balances for each of 19 district bank accounts and informs the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services of the balances. Because the interest rates for these accounts typically are lower than those earned from other investments, the district attempts to keep these balances at a minimum. The cash accounts clerk is directed by the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services as to the amount and type of investments to make.

FINDING

SISD's separate checking accounts are outlined in **Exhibit 7-5**. One account is set up for the debt associated with each bond issue and another for the resulting construction funds. This practice results in two accounts for each bond issue.

Exhibit 7-5
SISD Checking Accounts With Nations Bank
1996-1997

Account Title	Average Ledger Balance 3/97
Self-funded health insurance	\$53,434
9.6 Million-1990 Debt Service	\$5,173
1991 Debt Service	\$7,602
Self Funded Workers Comp	\$9,902
1993 Bond	\$80
1993 Debt Service	\$7,855
1993 Debt Refunding	\$4,759
1995-B Bond	\$45
1995-B Debt Service	\$6,957
Clearing Account	\$106,435
Payroll	\$3,774
Food Service	\$36,926
Debt Service	\$21,535
Special Revenue	\$9,647
Operations	\$229,749
1995-A Bond	\$59
1995-A Debt Service	\$5,168
Accounts Payable	\$729,845
Payroll Clearing	203,482

Source: SISD List of Bank Accounts

The depository agreement specifies that SISD will be charged an account maintenance fee of \$12 per account.

Recommendation 61:

Eliminate all but one of the debt service bank accounts and all but one of the construction bank accounts.

The district should account for its debt service and construction funds by using different fund numbers and/or object codes within each of the two remaining checking accounts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services authorizes closing all but one of the debt service bank accounts and all but one of the construction bank accounts.	October 1997
2. Accounting supervisor sets up account codes within the general ledger system to accommodate the various debt service and construction accounts.	November 1997
3. Accounting supervisor establishes procedures for reconciling these accounts and calculating arbitrage.	December 1997
4. Internal auditor conducts audit and analysis of the procedures initiated.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Closing 11 bank accounts with a monthly service charge of \$12 will eliminate \$1,584 in bank charges (11 x \$12 x 12 months).

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Eliminate all but one debt service and one construction account	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584

FINDING

SISD's investment policy allows for the investment of district funds in collective investment pools such as TexPool and LoneStar. These pools offer a higher rate of return than regular depository accounts and Certificates of Deposit. District funds invested in these pools are relatively secure and can be withdrawn on short notice, unlike investments with specified maturities.

The investment policy also permits investment in U.S. Treasury Bills and notes with maturities of less than one year and requires the development of

quarterly investment reports that detail the investment activity of the district and the interest rates earned on each investment.

SISD conducts a cash flow analysis at the beginning of each fiscal year . Payroll, accounts payable, and other district obligations are compared to anticipated income from tax receipts and other sources to determine if tax anticipation notes will be required. For the past three years, the district has not needed to issue notes as tax collections have been sufficient to handle cash demands.

This once-a-year cash flow analysis is not regularly updated, nor is it revised to reflect actual cash transactions. This analysis is not used to determine maturity requirements for district investments. Until recently, investments were limited to TexPool and interest bearing checking accounts. As shown in **Exhibit 7-5**, the investment reports to the board of trustees for the periods ending February 28 and May, 1997 included investments in U.S. Treasury securities and the Lone Star investment pool.

Exhibit 7-6 shows the investments of the district for the last three quarters, ending May 1997.

Exhibit 7-6
SISD Investment Balances and Average Yield/Interest Rates
as of May 31, 1997

Investment Vehicle	Balance	Average Yield/Interest Rate	Percentage of Total Investment
TexPool	\$16,421,351	5.362%	39.58%
Lone Star	\$10,694,891	5.346% for LoneStar Liquidity Plus investments and 5.670% for Lone Star U.S. Government Fund investments.	25.78%
US Treasury Securities	\$13,997,241	5.187% to 5.425% on U.S. Treasury Notes and 5.170% to 5.135% for Treasury Bills	33.73%
American United Insurance Company	\$378,584	3.75%	.91%
Total Investments	\$41,492,068		100.00%

Source: SISD Quarterly Investment Report

Exhibit 7-7 shows the investments purchased by other districts and the average rate of return.

**Exhibit 7-7
Investment Activity By District
1996**

		Avg. Funds	Avg.
District	Investment Type	Invested	Rate of
			Return
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	TexPool 40%, Loan Star 2%, CD's 58%	\$100,000,000	5.25%
Duncanville	3-6 month investments 75%, 1 year + 25%	\$12,000,000	6.00%
Fort Bend	Pooled investments 40%, Gov't agencies 60%	\$100,000,000	5.30%
Goose Creek	TexPool 30%, Gov't agencies 45%, Repos 25%	\$45,000,000	5.30%
Klein	TexPool 72%, Loan Star 20%, CD 8%	\$44,000,000	5.20%
Richardson	Pooled investments 5.005%, 90 days or less investments	\$50,000,000	5.50%
Spring Branch	Agency coupons + 1 year 50%, Bonds - 1 year 25%, Money Market 25%	\$100,000,000	5.60%
Spring	TexPool, LoneStar, US Treasury	\$41,500,000	5.37%

Source: Telephone Interview of Peer Districts, and SISD Quarterly Investment Reports

Duncanville has the highest rate of return, but maturities are longer than for most districts. Although SISD investment policy prohibits investments with maturities greater than one year, it expanded investments to Loan Star and short-term during the quarter ending February 28, 1997. Both TexPool and LoneStar allow the district to withdraw invested funds on a daily basis. U.S. Treasuries, however, are set maturities and must be held until maturity or sold to another investor. A detailed cash flow analysis would assist the district to identify specific cash requirements over the

year and to determine investment maturities that provide the highest possible interest rate while meeting these requirements.

Recommendation 62:

Cash flow analysis should be ongoing and include actual cash transactions to enhance the district's interest earnings.

Updating the cash flow statement for actual receipts and disbursements would provide detailed cash flow information so that district funds in U.S. Treasury can be invested longer-term, resulting in higher interest rates. The district should continue to invest funds in investment pools while determining the best investment opportunities for funds now invested in other instruments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services directs the cash management clerk to document and update actual transactions in cash flow analysis.	November 1997
2. Accounting supervisor enhances cash flow model to accommodate maturing investments.	November 1997
3. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services establishes investment portfolio to achieve optimum interest earnings.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

The amount of increased interest earnings cannot be calculated until the district completes its cash flow analysis.

Chapter 7

Asset and Risk Management

F. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness

CURRENT SITUATION

The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services is responsible for the issuance of bonds, debt funding and refinancing. The last successful bond referendum was in 1995, for the construction of an elementary school and renovations to a high school.

Exhibit 7-8 presents the district's outstanding bond debt at the end of fiscal 1996.

Exhibit 7-8
Bond Schedule

Description	Original Issue	Interest Rates	8/31/96 Outstanding
Unlimited Tax Refunding and Schoolhouse Bonds, Series 1989	\$40,500,000	7.25-7.45%	\$17,187,596
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Bonds, Series 1990	\$9,600,000	6.8-8.5%	\$2,525,000
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Bonds, Series 1991	\$5,000,000	7.25%	\$1,000,000
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Bonds, Series 1993	\$10,400,000	4.875-6.875%	\$10,400,000
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Refunding Bonds, Series 1993	\$29,665,324	4.15-4.75%	\$23,580,324
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Bonds, Series 1995-A	\$6,500,000	6.375-8.375%	\$6,500,000
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Bonds, Series 1995-B	\$17,450,000	5.5-7.5%	\$17,450,000

Source: SISD 1996 CAFR

The district contracts with a financial advisor and meets with them every six months to review market trends and opportunities for reducing the district's overall debt cost. In 1989 and 1993, the district refunded all outstanding bonds that would result in a savings. Bonds issued after 1986 can be refunded only one time and so the district, with the assistance of the financial advisor, continually evaluates the bond market to determine the appropriate timing for refunding. As a part of the refunding process, principal maturity dates are evaluated to determine if a shortened or lengthened maturity would have a positive impact on interest costs.

FINDING

While SISD does not have a written procedures manual regarding bond indebtedness, refunding issues have been addressed to reduce the district's interest costs. A written manual would provide a framework for recommendations regarding refunding as well as future issuances. This framework would include the district philosophy on the frequency that bonds could be issued, board and administration responsibilities, the optimum size of debt issuances, length of maturities, and the regularity of market reviews for the purpose of refunding.

Recommendation 63:

Develop a written debt issuance procedures manual.

This manual should outline the roles and responsibilities of administration and the board and serve as a guide for new employees and newly elected board members. It should incorporate refinancing and future bonding strategies that save the district money.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services prepares a bond issuance procedures manual.	November 1998
2. Assistant superintendent presents proposed bond issuance procedures manual to board for approval.	January 1998
3. Assistant superintendent distributes manual and ensures that appropriate staff are properly trained.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 8

Purchasing

The primary goal of the purchasing function is to provide goods and services in a timely fashion while offering the greatest value for each dollar expended. In accomplishing these objectives, the Purchasing Department must comply with state laws regarding purchasing as well as district policies.

This chapter will cover the following topics:

- A. Purchasing
- B. Supply Services

The SISD Purchasing Department includes all purchasing activities for the district, a Supply Services warehouse, and a records management custodian. The Supply Services warehouse and purchasing operations are fully automated, providing on-line access to goods and services.

Chapter 8

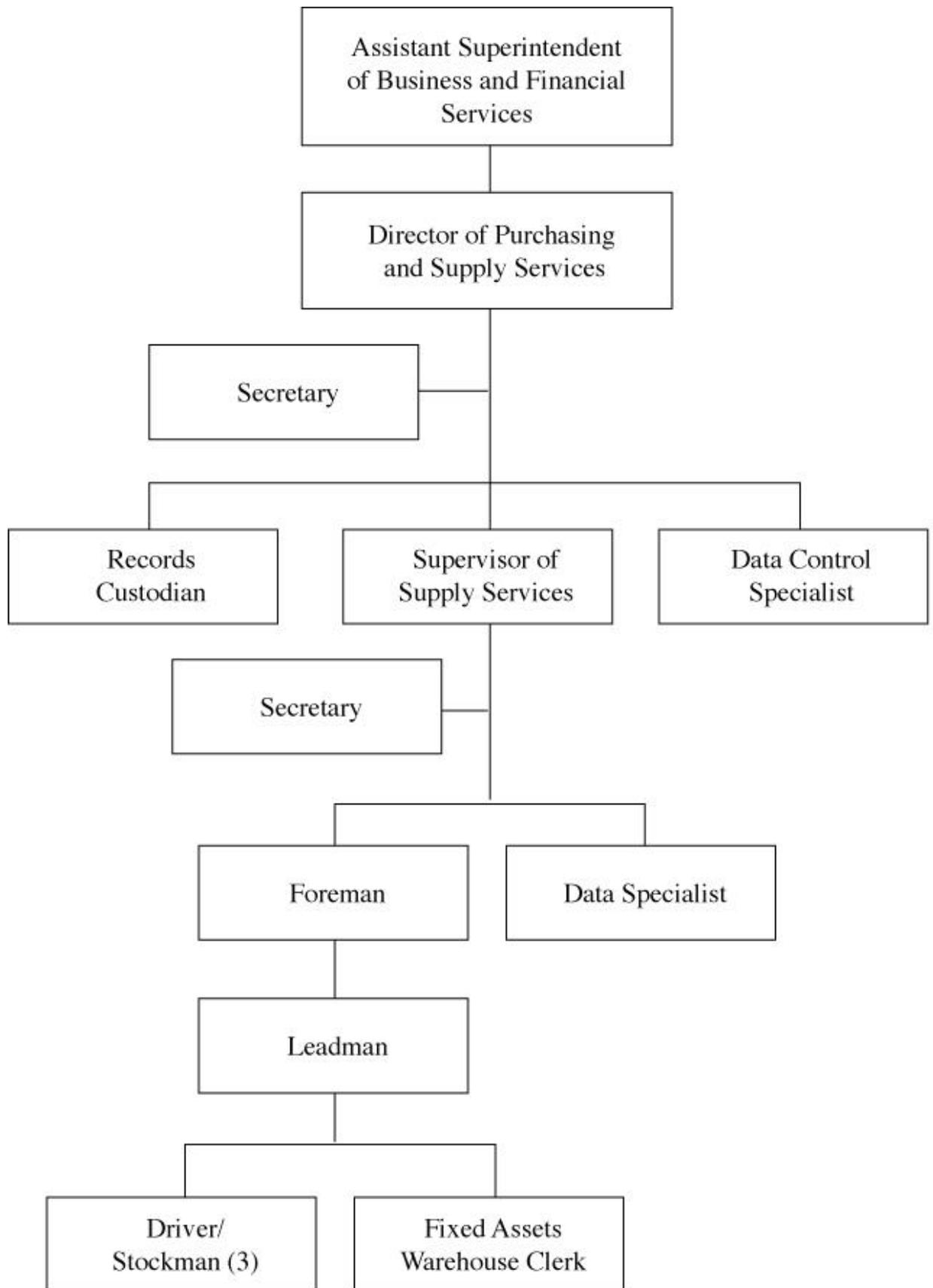
Purchasing

A. Purchasing

CURRENT SITUATION

The Purchasing Department's organization is described in **Exhibit 8-1**. There is one director for Purchasing and Supply Services who reports to the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services. The director is responsible for the district's purchasing and the selection of vendors. A records custodian is responsible for all district records, documents and files. The supervisor of Supply Services is responsible for warehouse activities.

Exhibit 8-1
SISD Purchasing Department And Supply Services (Warehouse)
Organization



A more detailed listing of responsibilities of the purchasing and supply services functions include:

- Initiating and participating in cooperative purchasing programs that benefit the district from a financial and quality perspective.
- Selecting qualified vendors through a competitive bidding process and monitoring vendor compliance with bid terms and conditions.
- Monitoring all district purchases for compliance with state laws and regulations and district purchasing policies.
- Maintaining the integrity of the on-line purchase order system, which allows individual schools and department to order supplies and services.
- Ensuring that purchase orders and contracts contain all information required.
- Receiving and delivering supplies and equipment to the school and maintaining the supply services facility that allows for bulk purchases.
- Delivering all school related mail.
- Maintaining the teacher work center.

The Purchasing Department operates under state law and ethics policies adopted by the board. The director of Purchasing is empowered by the board to:

- Plan for procurement of equipment.
- Request quotations.
- Negotiate for services.
- Sign purchase orders.
- Assist with development of specifications.
- Request and publicly open bid.
- Execute non-construction contracts.

All purchase orders issued by the Purchasing Department are based on information submitted by an electronic purchase order system. Funds are automatically encumbered at the same time. *Confirming purchase orders* allow schools and departments to procure items as they are needed, and reduce the timeframe between ordering and receipt of goods. *Direct pay purchase orders* are used to pay a vendor directly for medical and consultant services, activity fund reimbursements, membership fees and dues, entry fees, and registration fees. *Field purchase orders* are used to purchase needed items when the total purchase does not exceed \$500. All purchase orders, regardless of type, are entered into the on-line purchasing system. This process has reduced the processing time and cost of all purchase orders. **Exhibit 8-2** shows the volume of each type of purchase order.

Exhibit 8-2
Purchase Order Usage By Type

Usage 9/1/96		
Purchase Order By Type	Through 2/11/97	Percentage
Confirming, Do Not Mail	2,149	35.33%
Confirming, Mail to Vendor	160	2.63%
Direct Pay	1,622	26.66%
Field Purchase Order	374	6.15%
Mail Purchase Order to Vendor	1,598	26.27%
Pre-Pay Order	180	2.96%
Total	6,083	100.00%

Source: SISD Purchasing Department

Bids are solicited for all purchases totaling \$25,000 or more and construction and repair contracts totaling \$15,000 or more. During the 1997 school year, SISD bid items such as athletic equipment, food service contracts over \$10,000, automotive lubricants, bakery goods, computer hardware and software, computer maintenance, chalkboards, custodial chemicals, paper, furniture, frozen foods, musical instruments, and science supplies. When applicable, departments assist purchasing in the development of specifications for items being bid. For example, the Technology Department writes all specifications for the purchase of computer hardware, software, and supplies. After specifications have been developed, Purchasing then advertises the invitation to bid. If technical expertise is required in the bid analysis, the appropriate department is consulted. This year, SISD also began allowing vendors to access bid invitations on the Internet.

FINDING

SISD has developed purchasing cooperatives for the purchase of milk, automotive tires, and a food service computer system. The cooperative for tires was developed because SISD believed the state contract for tires was inadequate. The director of Transportation contacted other districts in the Houston area to determine interest levels. A membership list was developed and each of the districts submitted letters of commitment to participate. The SISD director of Purchasing then assumed responsibility for the bidding process. Participating districts assisted in analyzing bids and SISD awarded the contract to the lowest and best bidder. The

purchasing cooperative for automotive tires now serves 26 districts including SISD.

SISD also uses purchasing cooperatives offered by the Harris County Department of Education, the area's Regional Education Services Cooperative (RESC IV), General Services Commission, and Department of Information Resources. **Exhibit 8-3** shows items purchased and amounts saved in cooperative purchasing agreements.

Exhibit 8-3
Cooperative and State Purchasing Savings
1996-97

Item Purchased	SISD's Estimated Cost Outside Cooperative	SISD Actual Cost Within Cooperative	Amount Saved	Percent Saved
Supplies	\$140,400	\$108,000	\$32,400	23%
Police Cars (2)	\$34,000	\$32,000	\$2,000	6%
Copier Lease (8)	\$52,339	\$37,385	\$14,954	29%
Copier Purchase (1)	\$14,999	\$13,100	\$1,899	13%
Lamps	\$16,980	\$14,765	\$2,215	13%
Copier Service (10) Avg.	\$46,000	\$22,000	\$24,000	52%
Pager Service	\$20,625	\$16,500	\$4,125	20%
Tires	\$47,150	\$41,000	\$6,150	13%

COMMENDATION

SISD has reduced costs by engaging in cooperative purchasing practices.

FINDING

During fiscal 1996, SISD implemented an on-line purchase order system. SISD schools and departments enter all types of purchase orders directly from their location. This process has eliminated the need for the Purchasing Department to input purchase order information, other than that related to bid items. Throughout each working day, a purchase order data specialist prints purchase orders, obtains the signature of the director

of Purchasing, and distributes copies to the appropriate SISD offices and vendors. Prior to the introduction of the on-line purchase order system, the purchase order data specialist was responsible for entering all purchase orders.

COMMENDATION

SISD uses an on-line purchase order system to reduce processing time.

FINDING

Before the on-line purchase order system was implemented in 1995-96, the purchase order data specialist manually entered every purchase requisition, created vendor numbers, verified Social Security and tax identification numbers, prepared payrolls for the Purchasing Department, and ordered supplies. With the implementation of the on-line system, many of the responsibilities of the purchase order data specialist have been eliminated. The remaining duties which include printing purchase orders, maintaining vendor numbers, ordering supplies for the Purchasing Department, maintaining the postage machine, and training school personnel on the purchase order system could be handled by the purchasing secretary. The purchase order data specialist still works full time, and has not been given other assignments.

Recommendation 64:

Eliminate the purchase order data specialist position and reassign duties to the purchasing secretary.

The purchasing secretary should print purchase orders, obtain appropriate signatures, and maintain vendor numbers and the Purchasing Department payroll and assume any other responsibilities that were originally handled by the purchase order data specialist.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The board authorizes the director of Purchasing to reorganize the Purchasing Department to include elimination of purchase order data specialist position.	January 1998
2. Director of Purchasing reassigns purchase order responsibilities and vendor maintenance to the purchasing secretary.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating the purchase order data specialist position would result in an annual savings of \$27,525 in salary plus benefits of 12 percent. It is anticipated that this recommendation would be implemented at the beginning of 1998 and that the district will realize half the savings in the first year.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Eliminate purchase order data specialist position	\$15,414	\$30,828	\$30,828	\$30,828	\$30,828

FINDING

Every year-and-a-half to two years, SISD holds an auction to sell surplus assets of the district. Prior to this auction, these items are stored at the Fixed Assets Building, next to the Wunsche School. Surplus items are picked up by the Maintenance Department upon the request of individual schools or departments. Some school principals and secretaries regularly examine these materials to see if any can be used at their locations. The fixed-asset warehouse clerk (a paid, part-time position) maintains a list of all of these items, but this list is not circulated to schools or departments throughout SISD.

Items stored at the fixed-asset warehouse include furniture that could be recycled and used at other schools, such as tables, desks, chairs, racks, bookcases maps, screens, and room dividers. Other items such as computers, typewriters, and calculators that are no longer in working order have been scavenged for parts by district personnel.

Recommendation 65:

Circulate a list of surplus items to all principals and department heads on a quarterly basis and encourage re-use.

Schools and departments should be required to justify purchases of new items when a similar item is contained in the surplus stock.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Director of Purchasing updates list of items available since the May 1997 auction.	November 1997
2. Director of Purchasing circulates list to all schools and departments.	November 1997

3. Director of Purchasing develops a procedure to require justification for purchasing new items similar to those in surplus stock.	November 1997
4. Procedure is circulated to schools and departments and enforcement begins.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Each auction of surplus items generates approximately \$20,000. District personnel estimate that 70 percent of surplus furniture items with an estimated value of \$7,150 are reusable, which equates to a savings of \$5,000.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Re-use surplus items	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

Chapter 8

Purchasing

B. Supply Services

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's warehouse operation, Supply Services, carries 2,780 items. Two catalogs list these items and carry pictures of items that are difficult to identify by number. The first catalog is used by schools, food service, and administrative departments and carries 900 items. Total value of inventory on hand at August 31, 1996 was \$881,462.

The second catalog lists the remaining 1,880 items used primarily by the Maintenance Department. In addition to this extensive list of maintenance items, Maintenance makes its own purchases directly from vendors, totaling \$623,700 during the past year. Many of these items are stored at the maintenance facility located behind Supply Services.

Supply Services conducts an inventory count on Memorial Day each year when the schools are closed and no orders are processed. The on-line inventory system provides the total products on hand and actual counts are reconciled to those totals. As a part of the inventory process, and periodically throughout the year, items not being used are reviewed for removal from inventory. Obsolete items are removed from inventory and taken to the Fixed Assets Building, next to the Wunsche School, until sold through the district auction. Items that are date-sensitive or have a short shelf life are rotated so that the oldest products are shipped first. The inventory system includes a product re-order flag that alerts the supervisor of Supply Services to purchase additional products.

Supply Services also is responsible for the teacher work center, an area at the warehouse set aside for teachers to use in school-related programs and activities. Supplies are sold at cost to teachers, who are charged a minimal rate for the use of the equipment. This work center is most heavily used during the summer months.

FINDING

In August 1995, SISD implemented an on-line inventory system that allows schools and departments to requisition items directly from Supply Services and check for product availability. After entry of the order by the school, the school's budget is charged and an order ticket is printed at Supply Services. Supply Services employees then pull the items ordered and deliver them to the school the next working day.

COMMENDATION

SISD effectively uses technology in its warehouse function.

FINDING

A Maintenance and Operations Department buyer reports to the executive director of Maintenance. This buyer is responsible for purchasing all items necessary for the repair and maintenance of district facilities, such as lumber, sheet rock, doors, paint, plumbing supplies, and electrical supplies. Because of the size and quantity of some of the items purchased, they are delivered to the warehouse; larger items must be transferred by forklift from the loading dock to the Maintenance Department. These purchases are made independent of the Supply Services function and are never recorded as district inventory.

SISD reports that only about \$25,000 of its inventory is maintained in this facility at any given time, due to the rapid turnover of supplies. However, since no inventory value is associated with these items, they are not specifically covered by insurance. Should these items be lost or destroyed, the district would have difficulty in recovering their cost.

Recommendation 66:

Consolidate all warehousing functions within Supply Services and accurately maintain an inventory of all items in the warehouse.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Supply Services supervisor inventories items located at maintenance facility.	October 1997
2. Supply Services supervisor adds items to Supply Services inventory catalog.	October 1997
3. Director of Maintenance and Operations establishes procedures for stocking maintenance vehicles to account for items used.	November 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

The Maintenance and Operations buyer sets specifications and lets bids for all maintenance-related projects. Typically, all such bids are conducted by the Purchasing Department of each school district, with other departments

assisting in the writing of specifications and bid analysis. SISD, however, has divided the purchasing function by giving the buyer responsibility for bidding maintenance-related projects with little or no oversight by Purchasing. This method of operation is an exception to SISD's other purchasing policies.

Recommendation 67:

Transfer the Maintenance and Operations buyer to the Purchasing Department.

The buyer, in conjunction with the Maintenance and Operations Department, would continue to be responsible for devising bid specifications for maintenance-related projects. All purchasing functions would occur in the Purchasing Department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services directs the director of Purchasing to adjust job description for buyer to include purchases for all supply items with an emphasis on maintenance items.	October 1997
2. Director of Purchasing transfers buyer office to purchasing.	November 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Supply Services operates a teacher store and work center. Teachers can purchase supplies at cost for use in the classroom and use equipment for video production, laminating, and copying.

Store supplies are for special projects to supplement items provided by the district for general classroom use. Teachers reported that the store provides more convenience and lower costs than could be provided by retail outlets. Supply Services provides one staff member to assist with this function. to ensure that supplies are properly paid for, and that the work center remains neat and orderly.

Exhibit 8-4 shows the value of work center services and store purchases.

Exhibit 8-4
1996 Monthly Teacher Work Center & Store Usage
and Total Revenue Generated from these Operations

Month	Number of Teachers using Work Center Services	Value of Work Center Services	Number of Teachers purchasing Store Supplies	Value of Store Purchases	Total value of services and supplies
Jan-96	9	\$67.93	11	\$106.84	\$174.77
Feb-96	11	\$58.50	12	\$249.99	\$308.49
Mar-96	6	\$155.44	4	\$43.33	\$198.77
Apr-96	14	\$80.14	15	\$164.12	\$244.26
May-96	17	\$129.24	9	\$243.10	\$372.34
Jun-96	35	\$336.10	10	\$133.55	\$469.65
Jul-96	149	\$1,101.14	34	\$610.73	\$1,711.87
Aug-96	291	\$1,609.23	117	\$1,510.37	\$3,119.60
Sept-96	30	\$161.98	37	\$564.34	\$726.32
Oct-96	26	\$206.54	29	\$410.96	\$617.50
Nov-96	23	\$314.23	14	\$133.95	\$448.18
Dec-96	10	\$61.64	12	231.72	\$293.36
Total	621	\$4,282.11	304	\$4,403.00	\$8,685.11

Source: SISD Supply Services

The Supply Services secretary monitors the teacher work center. All employees using the center must fill out a form indicating the items used and certify that the materials or services used are for SISD educational purposes. The Supply Services secretary collects funds and tabulates information regarding center usage. This area is heavily utilized in the summer months just prior to the start of school.

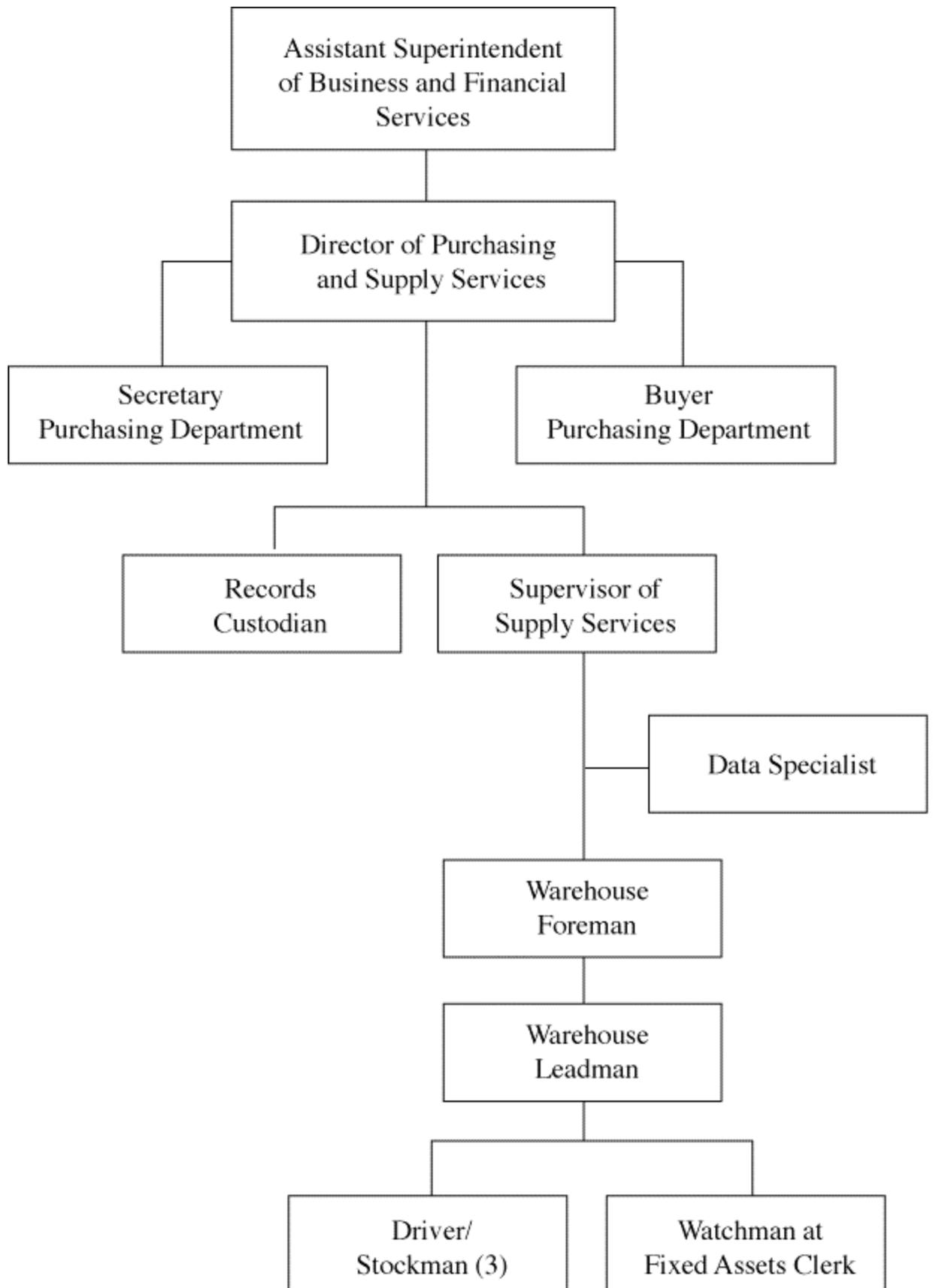
Recommendation 68:

Eliminate the Supply Services secretary position.

A part-time person could be used to assist in the summer months when the room is most heavily used. During other months, the Supply Services data specialist should monitor work center and store usage and collect funds.

Exhibit 8-5 shows the recommended reorganization structure of the district's Purchasing Department and Supply Services operations.

**Exhibit 8-5
Proposed ISD Purchasing Department and Supply Services
Organization**



Source: WCL Enterprises, Inc.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The board authorizes the Supply Services supervisor to reorganize the Supply Services department to include elimination of Supply Service Secretary.	September 1997
2. Supply Services supervisor hires part-time help for the summer months.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of part-time help for two months at 35 hours per week at a rate of \$7.00 per hour would be approximately \$2,000. Eliminating the secretary position would result in an annual salary savings of approximately \$26,000 including benefits of 12 percent.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Eliminate Supply Services secretary position	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000

Chapter 9

Computers and Technology

This chapter analyzes SISD's computers and technology and is organized in four sections:

- A. Planning and Organization
- B. Hardware and Software
- C. Networking Environment
- D. Business Partnerships and Community Involvement

CURRENT SITUATION

Texas public school districts either contract for their computing needs externally or maintain an internal department to support their computing needs. External agencies or organizations, such as the Region IV Education Service Center, perform specific computer-supported tasks for an organization, such as the processing of payroll checks, student grades, or financial information. SISD has chosen to handle this computing internally in the Management Information Services (MIS) Department, which supports student services, instructional computing, and business computing functions. MIS provides support for software and hardware in these areas:

Student Services

- Student information, including Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting
- Attendance reporting
- Health records
- Student grades
- Comparison reporting for Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) testin

Instructional Computing

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

Business Systems

- General ledger and budgeting
- Human resources

- Payroll
- Accounts payable and receivable
- Purchasing and inventory
- Tax collection
- Maintenance
- Food Service
- Transportation

SISD operates two wide area networks (WANs), a high-speed WAN and a low-speed WAN. A WAN connects the computing capabilities of a number of geographically dispersed locations on a common network. The high-speed WAN connects multimedia computers such as those with sound and graphic capabilities, while the low-speed WAN connects computers used in administrative applications.

Many instructional software packages have features that require multi-media computers. Use of the Internet for instruction is also dependent on multi-media computers and a high-speed WAN. A high-speed WAN will deliver instructional information at the right pace. Response time for a high-speed WAN is measured in seconds, whereas a low speed WAN's delivery of information is measured in minutes and hours.

SISD's secondary schools, including the four middle schools, two high schools, and the alternative school, are connected electronically with the administration building through the high-speed WAN for administration and multi-media applications. Thirteen of the 14 elementary schools are connected via the low-speed WAN and use Apple computers, rather than the IBM standard used by the rest of the district. The elementary schools use the low-speed WAN to connect to the mainframe for student services such as registration and attendance.

A 1996 report by the nonprofit RAND Corporation describes the advantages of using technology to restructure schools: "Technology provides the possibility for massive shifts in the ways in which students, teachers, and administrators use their time and for new and better forms of accountability to parents and the community." SISD has the infrastructure needed to work toward such a vision. The district anticipated the kind of data lines and hardware that would be necessary to link schools together and installed this technology. What they now lack is the software and workstations to make this a reality.

SISD is aware of the need for supporting technology, and spending for computers and related technology has risen over the past three years. The increase is similar to spending patterns at peer districts (**Exhibit 9-1**), yet SISD has the lowest technology budget, both total and per-student, of the peer districts.

Exhibit 9-1
Comparison of SISD and Peer District Technology Spending

District	Computers	MIS Staff	1994-95 Budget	1995-96 Budget	1996-97 Budget
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	2,000	23	\$1,200,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,400,000
Duncanville	2,700	8 Full-time 8 Part-time	Not available	\$1,200,000	\$1,350,000
Klein	3,412	15	Not available	Not available	Not available
Richardson	9,000	37	\$4,500,000	\$5,500,000	\$7,000,000
Spring	2,500	13	\$668,000	\$750,000	\$920,000

Source: SISD financial report and phone interviews with peer districts

In 1983 there was about one computer for each 125 students in the public schools of our nation, and by the fall of 1994, only 3 percent of the nation's K-12 students were in schools that had at least one computer for every five students. In 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act directed the development of a national long-range technology plan to promote higher student achievement. That year, America's schools spent about \$3 billion on computer and network-based technology, and education's technology now has a prominent position in our planning. According to a 1996 RAND study, however, information technology..."has not made even the barest appearance in most public schools."

SISD instructional technology applications arise from the program development cycle and are integrated with the development plans for each of the academic programs. This development process appears to be characterized by a shared philosophy across programs. Technology applications are viewed as helping to extend instruction by teaching problem solving and by allowing students to work effectively with more data.

Connections to the Internet and to CD towers through school libraries are designed to serve the information and research needs for instruction in all subjects. Some software designed to support a specific course and drill and practice applications are found in remedial programs.

Since instructional technology applications are intended to extend the instructional program, SISD has historically kept the choice of software and hardware for these applications under the purview of the program development process. This perspective dictates that subject area program directors, working with teachers in each of the subjects, make decisions regarding these issues based on the instructional objectives of the curriculum served. The trend in SISD has been to have hardware decisions follow the selection of software.

Exhibit 9-2
SISD Student-to-Computer Ratios
1996 through 1997

School Name	Enrollment in May 1997	Number of Computers	Students to Computer Ratio
Anderson Elementary	874	30	29 students, 1 computer
Bammel Elementary	605	30	20 students, 1 computer
Beneke Elementary	832	30	27 students, 1 computer
Clark Elementary	797	30	27 students, 1 computer
Hirsch Elementary	671	30	22 students, 1 computer
Jenkins Elementary	1031	30	34 students, 1 computer
Link Elementary	816	30	27 students, 1 computer
Meyer Elementary	853	30	28 students, 1 computer
Oak Creek Elementary	716	30	24 students, 1 computer
Ponderosa Elementary	564	30	19 students, 1 computer
Salyers Elementary	498	30	17 students, 1 computer
Smith Elementary	812	30	27 students, 1 computer
Thompson Elementary	809	30	27 students, 1 computer
Winshin	481	30	16 students, 1 computer

Elementary			
Wunsche School	137	32	4 students, 1 computer
Bammel Middle	1341	88	15 students, 1 computer
Dueitt Middle	1025	88	12 students, 1 computer
Twin Creeks Middle	1075	88	12 students, 1 computer
Wells Middle	1259	88	14 students, 1 computer
Spring High	2478	332	7 students, 1 computer
Westfield High	2899	371	8 students, 1 computer

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

During 1996-97, \$546,216 was budgeted centrally for the purchase of instructional technology services, installation costs, and equipment. Additionally, individual schools and organizations such as the PTAs and PTOs budgeted small amounts for computer software and hardware. The Curriculum and Instructional Services Department funded software purchases and provided funding for teacher technology training. The Management Information Systems Department also provided funding for teacher training and provided technical support for instructional technology installations.

Elementary Instructional Applications by Subject Area and Program

SISD provides elementary instructional applications equitably on a student-to-computer ratio to all elementary schools. There is a districtwide basis for selecting software applications and integrating them into curriculum for each subject area. Applications used in elementary schools include:

Language Arts

- Word-processing,
- Literature studies/interactive writing, and
- Data bases for selecting reading materials.

Math

- Problem solving,
- Programming in LOGO and BASIC,
- Use of spread sheet and data base, and
- Graphing data.

Science

- Problem solving,
- Simulation experiments,
- Generating and gathering experimental data, and
- Graphing data gathered from experimenting.

Social Studies

- Problem solving and simulation, and
- Use of prepared databases.

Middle School Instructional Computer Lab Installations

The review team found that middle schools are comparably equipped (**Exhibit 9-3**) for language arts, math, science, and social studies instructional labs. Classroom-size groups go to the labs, and the number of workstations are determined by the number of these groups in the school. SISD provides the hardware and software needed for keyboarding instructional labs based on school size.

Exhibit 9-3
SISD Instructional Computer Lab Installations by Middle School
1996 - 1997

Middle School	Number of Student Workstations	Type of Computers	Subjects Served by the Instructional Computer Lab
Bammel	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	25	386	Keyboarding/Word processing
	25	IBM PS -2	Keyboarding
Dueitt	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	25	386	Keyboarding/Word processing
Twin Creeks	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	28	386	Keyboarding/Word processing
Wells	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	17	486	English/Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
	25	386	Keyboarding/Word processing
	25	Tandy 1000	Keyboarding

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department. High School Instructional Computer Labs

Instructional computer lab installations are similar at the two high schools (**Exhibit 9-4**), differing only in number to meet student enrollment requirements.

Exhibit 9-4
SISD Instructional Computer Lab Installations by High School
1996 - 1997

High School	Number of Labs	Subjects Served by the Instructional Computer Lab	Type of Computers	Number of Student Workstations per Lab
Spring High	1	9th/10th English	486	32
	1	11th/12th English	Terminals connected to file server	24
	1	Computer Mathematics	486	25
	2	Mathematics/Science	486	17
	1	Mathematics/Social Studies	386	17
	1	Mathematics	486	17
	1	Business Computer Applications	386, 486	18

	1	Office Education	486	20
	1	Accounting	486	25
	4	Multipurpose Occupational Technical Classes	486	25
Westfield High	1	9th grade English/Social Studies	486	32
	1	9th grade English/Social Studies	486	32
	1	11th and 12th grade English	Terminals connected to file server	24
	1	Computer Mathematics	486	25
	2	Mathematics/Science	486	17
	1	Mathematics/Social Studies	386	17
	1	Mathematics	486	17
	1	Business Computer Applications	386, 486, IBM	20
	1	Office Education	486	20
	1	Accounting	486	25
	1	Keyboarding/Word- processing	IBM PS -2 upgraded to 286	20
	2	Multipurpose Occupational Technical Classes	486	25
	1	Multipurpose Occupational Technical Classes	586	25

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Wunsche Instructional Computer Applications

Instructional computers at the Wunsche School, SISD's Alternative School, (**Exhibit 9-5**) serve students in Computer and Technology

Education (CATE) courses from both high schools and the Wunsche School.

Exhibit 9-5
Instructional Computer Applications at Wunsche

Number of Labs/Classroom Installations	Subjects Served by the Instructional Computer Lab	Type of Computers	Number of Student Workstations per Lab or Classroom
1 lab	Business Office Services	486 and PS-2	24
1 classroom	Drafting	486	4
1 classroom	Electronics	486	4

Source: SISD Curriculum and Instructional Services Department.

Chapter 9

Computers and Technology

A. Planning and Organization

CURRENT SITUATION

During the 1980s, SISD considered itself a leader in the use of computers in the classroom, and was often visited by other school districts who wanted to emulate SISD's approach. As SISD grew, however, it was unable to keep pace with new technologies, as evidenced by feedback from district staff and the community: "We have fallen behind and are no longer a leader"; "SISD started out leading the state, but as money got tighter and the student population grew, [we] fell behind."

This type of response from teachers and the community, as well as a legislative requirement, motivated a 1995-96 project to develop a five-year technology plan. The superintendent formed a committee of parents and district staff to determine the facilities, hardware, and software needed to support the district's instructional programs. While the committee was instrumental in guiding the planning process, the district realized that it lacked the in-house expertise to assess its technology needs. Therefore, SISD hired Network Systems Engineering, a Houston firm, to develop a five-year technology plan.

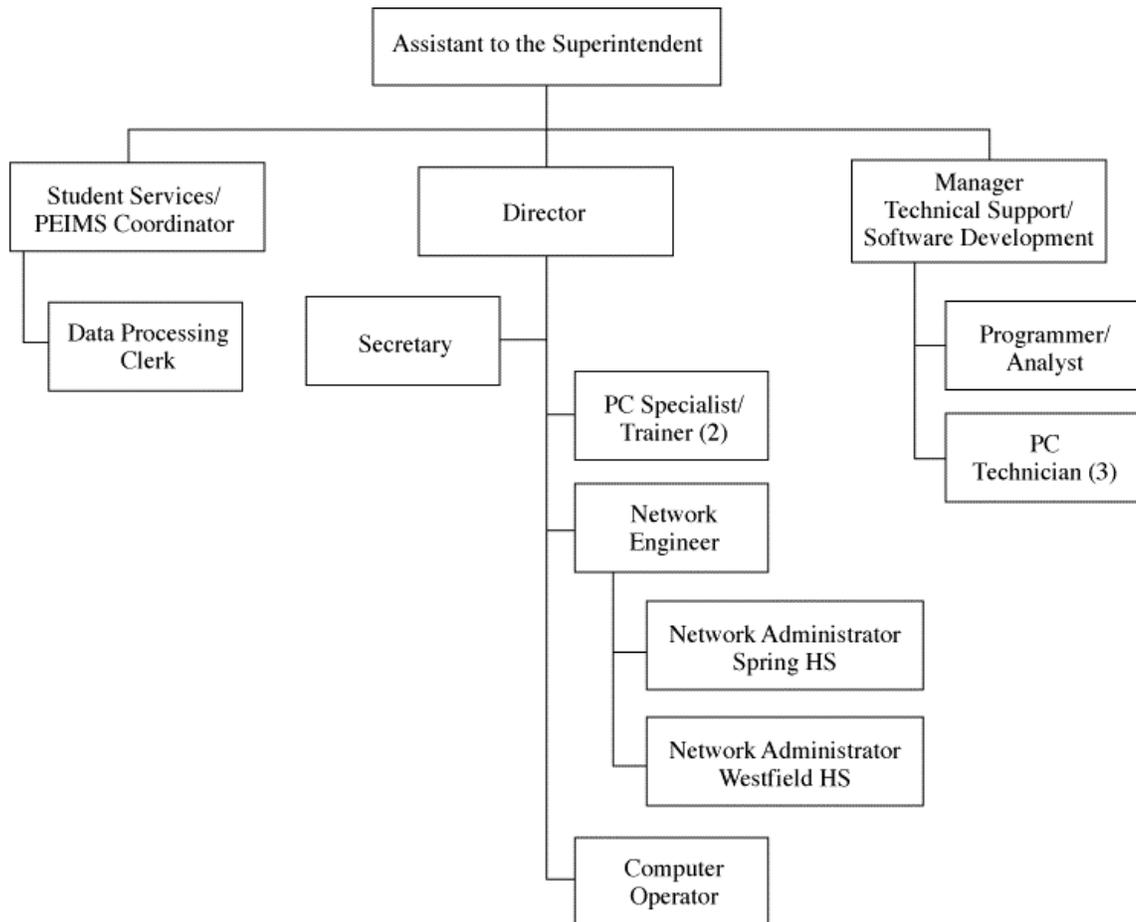
The resulting plan provided a blueprint for addressing SISD's instructional and administrative technology needs. The five-year plan included estimates for the cost of computer labs, wiring, personal computer (PC) workstations, and software. These estimates were the basis for the technology improvement portion of the failed 1996 bond referendum.

Organization

The MIS director manages the department and reports to the assistant to the superintendent for Administration, as do the Student Services/PEIMS coordinator and the manager of Technical Support and Software Development. PEIMS, is a student and financial accounting database maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Two PC specialist/trainers and the network engineer report to the MIS director, as do a secretary and computer operator. A data processing clerk reports to the Student Services/PEIMS coordinator, and a programmer analyst and three PC technicians report to the manager of Technical Support and Software Development. Two network administrators report to the network engineer. When interviewed by the review team, the assistant to the Superintendent said that the Student Services/PEIMS coordinator and the

manager of Technical Support and Software Development would report directly to the MIS director in the near future. **Exhibit 9-6** shows the organization chart for the MIS positions at the time of the review.

Exhibit 9-6
SISD MIS Organization



Source: SISD

FINDING

In 1993, SISD implemented a train-the-trainer program for teachers by designating one or more teachers at each school as Computer Liaison Teachers (CLTs). The number of CLTs varies depending upon each school's size and the number of computers available to teachers. At the time of this review, SISD had 53 CLTs.

Each CLT receives a stipend and serves as a mentor for other teachers. The CLT also provides troubleshooting and software training support for his or her school. This program was instrumental in achieving the district's

goal of 100 percent use of its automated gradebook software. This software, developed by the MIS Department, eliminates the need for manual grade reporting and grade data scanning.

The CLT positions have saved SISD the cost of additional staff for on-site training and support. At least six positions would have been needed, at an estimated total cost of \$180,000, versus the \$42,400 cost of the CLT stipends, for an annual savings of \$137,600.

COMMENDATION

CLT positions allow SISD to provide computer support to teachers without adding new positions.

Through the train-the-trainer program, teachers learn to use technology from peers with a minimum of expenditure.

FINDING

In 1995-1996, the district hired a consulting firm to develop a five-year technology plan because district staff felt they did not have the expertise to develop such a plan. The resulting plan identified instructional and administrative technology needs and included estimates for the cost of computer labs, wiring, personal computer (PC) workstations, and software.

In interviews with the review team, SISD employees and community members said that they did not have confidence in the technology plan developed by the consulting firm. The plan was viewed as too technical, too difficult to comprehend, and too expensive (at more than \$25 million) to implement. Estimates in the technology plan were the basis for the technology improvement portion of the failed 1996 bond referendum.

Group interviews conducted by the review team and public forum comments show the need for a planning process that reaches out to the schools and the community: "We need a master plan." "District doesn't seem to understand market and/or providers." "This is probably their lowest mark." "Whether or not to buy computers is a Parent Teachers Organization issue every year." "There is no definite plan."

The most recent Five-Year Education Plan, adopted by the board on June 10, 1997, prioritizes improvements in district instructional and administrative technology applications. Major action steps in the plan reflect an attempt to address technology-related planning needs with existing staff. Responsibility for these tasks are scattered across a multitude of entities including the MIS Department, Curriculum and

Instruction, Central Administration, Business and Finance, and various committees. For example, the development of a replacement cycle for instructional and administrative computers is assigned to MIS, the Curriculum and Instruction Division is responsible for the evaluation of instructional software, Central Administration is involved in the development of a computer security system, Business and Finance is responsible for surveying new business systems and performing a cost-benefit analysis, and planning for staff training and community-based literacy services are assigned to committees. No one person or department is responsible for ensuring that the district follows the technology master plan. Moreover, it seems unlikely that the MIS Department can accomplish its assigned responsibilities, many of which are time-intensive, with its limited staff.

The district also does not have procedures in place to ensure that technology funds are allocated according to plan or that purchased systems are compatible. Since 1993, SISD has had a Technology Committee to allocate state funds for instructional technology. Committee membership includes representatives from Curriculum and Instruction, teachers, the high school network administrators, and MIS staff. The committee's focus is technology used in the classroom. A subcommittee addresses issues related to district use of the Internet. The Technology Committee does not plan for software and hardware used for student services and business applications. Instead, this function is performed by department supervisors through the annual budget process and by the MIS Department through programming requests.

While the Technology Committee may be ensuring that instructional technology funds are spent appropriately, there is no central oversight of other technology expenditures. For example, in the past several years, departments such as Transportation and Food Service have used operating funds to purchase separate computer systems without any formal review or oversight. Likewise, the Curriculum and Instruction Division has purchased software that could not be run on existing equipment.

Many larger districts in the Houston area use more formal methods for reviewing districtwide systems purchases and applications to verify compatibility, reduce redundancy, and establish support responsibilities. For example, Katy ISD has a five-year technology plan with expenditure levels by category, such as hardware purchases, and then identifies a position or committee responsible for approving such purchases within that category. At the next level, concrete action steps and timelines are identified with specific dollar allocations.

Formal methods for reviewing districtwide systems purchases may be available through the state's Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs).

Changes in state law in 1995 directed the state's 20 RESCs to make cooperative purchasing services available to school districts. Additionally, funds have been provided to RESCs to provide districts with technical assistance and planning services.

RESC IV in Houston does not have an existing technology purchasing cooperative, but the center can facilitate or direct ground-level technological planning for school districts. RESC staff have served on planning committees before and have the technical expertise to perform planning functions.

Recommendation 69:

Translate the current five-year technology plan into a practical tool and designate responsibility for implementation to the assistant to the Superintendent.

A good master plan for technology and successful implementation will not coalesce unless staff resources are dedicated to the effort. A clear line of accountability for results must be assigned to a specific individual. Technology expenditures should be tied to the plan and overseen for consistency and compatibility.

Overall district technology planning requires participation by a broad base of the district's user community and customers. However, oversight of the district's plan and related expenditures, should be done by an impartial person who is in the superintendent's senior-level cabinet. The technology committee membership could be expanded to provide the breadth of coverage needed for planning while oversight is conducted by the assistant to the Superintendent.

Ensuring that technology priorities and purchases are tightly tied to the district's priorities identified in the Five-Year Education Plan, is key to the successful use of technology. As new business needs, innovative practices and future trends in instruction are identified and embraced by the district, the corresponding adjustments must be reflected in the technology priorities and purchases.

SISD should begin conversations with the Region IV Education Service Center to identify technology planning and information services the RESC could provide. Several technology information-gathering tasks listed in the districts' Five-Year Education Plan could be avoided if the service center has this information on hand.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Superintendent assigns responsibility for facilitating all of the district's technology planning, approval of all technology related expenditures, and application development prioritization to the assistant to the Superintendent.	September 1997
2. All technology-related purchases and prioritization of application development are funneled through the assistant to the Superintendent.	September 1997
3. The assistant to the Superintendent directs staff to contact the Region IV Education Service Center to identify what services are available.	September 1997
4. The assistant to the Superintendent assumes responsibility for coordinating action steps in the Five-Year Education Plan, and directs appropriate district staff to develop timelines and benchmarks for completion of each action step.	November 1997
5. The assistant to the Superintendent makes recommendations to the superintendent on the formation of a broad-based planning committee representing the district's user community and customers, including students and parents. The committee's scope, schedule, and resources to be used also should be detailed.	November 1997
6. The superintendent identifies committee members and invites them to join the committee.	December 1997
7. The committee meets, elects a chair, and is briefed on action steps and timelines currently in place.	January 1998
8. The committee develops a mission statement, goals, and objectives to guide the district's technology planning and implementation.	February-March 1998
9. The committee circulates the mission statement, goals, and objectives to department and school management and holds public forums throughout SISD to obtain feedback.	April 1998
10. The committee incorporates feedback and prepares the final plan outlining mission, goals and objectives.	May 1998
11. The assistant to the Superintendent submits updated action steps based on the mission statement, goals and objectives, identified by the committee, to the board of trustees for approval.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No additional funds are necessary to implement this recommendation.

Chapter 9

Computers and Technology

B. Hardware and Software

CURRENT SITUATION

District business and student services applications run on two Hewlett Packard HP3000 mainframe computers. The Bi-Tech applications software package purchased in 1989 has been customized extensively for the district's needs. This primary application supports the district's main business functions, such as general ledger, budgeting, human resources, and payroll. The district uses PC workstations in the business departments to enter information into the business applications software. Student services applications, including PEIMS reporting required by TEA, are provided by the Carter-Pertaine software package, with comprehensive programming modifications by the Student Services coordinator and a programmer/analyst. Both PC workstations and terminals connect to the student services applications. Tax collection software used by the tax office also runs on the mainframe computers.

The district has used technology in the classroom as an integral part of its curriculum since 1982. As part of SISD's overall educational philosophy, the district has consciously chosen to use computer labs rather than individual student computers to foster the integration of technology into the curriculum. At the elementary level, students are taught keyboarding and problem-solving skills. In middle school, computers are used for instruction in several subjects, and teachers schedule time for their classes in the student labs. At the high school level, some departments have integrated computer applications into their curriculum, with students scheduled for labs. Computer programming and business applications such as graphics, spreadsheet, and advanced word processing are taught in the math and vocational education classes.

FINDING

The elementary computer labs use Apple II Es and Gs purchased between 1985 and 1987. Because of their age and speed, these computers are not able to run new educational software. Also, because of the scarcity of parts for these computers, they are taken out of service when they break, leaving labs short of computers.

In interviews with the review team, middle school teachers said the elementary labs do not prepare the students for the hardware and software used in the secondary schools. Teachers, students, and parents are

frustrated with these computers, voicing numerous complaints about their lack of compatibility with the "real world." Comments from focus groups included: "The computers are ancient. Programs are outdated, blah, and uninteresting compared to what's on the market. There are no CD-ROM capabilities."

High school computer labs also are in need of new computers. According to MIS staff, high school computer labs are used to a greater degree than the elementary labs and require more sophisticated computer systems. MIS staff said that the district plans to purchase new computers for the high school labs and move the high school computers that are replaced into the elementary labs.

While SISD's overall educational philosophy has been to use computer labs rather than placing computers into classrooms, some instructional technology advocates argue that infusing computers directly into the classroom is most effective. It is important for districts to fully understand their instructional technology philosophy and investigate all possible options before investing limited technology funds.

Recommendation 70:

Before upgrading the elementary and high school computer labs, examine all possible alternative configurations and adopt a districtwide vision for instructional technology.

SISD should take a close look at how technology can be used for instruction now and in the 21st century. How the district approaches instructional technology should be a major component of the district's technology plan and purchases should coincide with that plan. Before upgrading computer labs, the district should review and consider best practices, current research on the most effective use of technology for instruction, and new technologies. An alternative to PCs that has recently become available is the network computer. This is a low cost workstation that runs off of a network server. This type of workstation may be ideal for instructional computing and available at a much lower cost than PCs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The Curriculum and Instruction Department gathers input from teachers and students on a vision for use of instructional technology in the district.	September 1997
2. The Curriculum and Instruction Department researches current trends and studies on the use of technology in the classroom.	September - November 1997

3. The Superintendent assigns representatives from the Curriculum and Instruction Department to the district-wide technology planning committee.	December 1997
4. The Curriculum and Instruction Department provides a briefing to the technology planning committee on current trends and research on the effectiveness of instructional technology and the input received from teachers and students.	February 1998
5. The technology planning committee develops a district-wide vision for instructional use of technology and incorporates it into the overall technology plan.	February-March 1998
6. The technology planning committee circulates the draft to department and school management and holds public forums throughout SISD to obtain feedback.	April 1998
7. The committee incorporates feedback and prepares the final plan outlining mission, goals and objectives.	May 1998
8. The assistant to the Superintendent submits updated action steps based on the mission statement, goals and objectives, identified by the committee, to the board of trustees for approval.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

No additional funds are necessary to implement this recommendation.

FINDING

The district selected Microsoft Office as its standard suite of personal computer applications. The minimum requirements for a computer to run Microsoft Office are a 486 processor with eight megabytes of memory for the Windows 95 operating system, and a 486 processor with 16 megabytes of memory for the Windows NT workstation operating system. More than half of the district's computers fail to meet these requirements, but some computers in the middle and high school computer labs do have these capabilities.

More than half of all teachers have no computers or outdated models, such as PCs with 286 processors purchased in the late 1980s. These machines cannot run current software, including the district's chosen office software suite, and cannot be used to upload grades using the electronic gradebook software.

Teachers are required to turn in their grades electronically and have difficulty doing so due to the lack of available PCs and the slow speed of the remaining machines. Teachers have only a small window of time at the

close of the grading period to input grades, and must enter grades before or after school, or via home computers. Teachers become frustrated and are rendered less productive by the lack of computing power. Focus group members commented: "I have heard teachers complain about how long it takes to put grades in because the computers are out of date," and "The office computers are unbelievably slow. It takes a great deal of time to download or print programs."

As many as half of SISD's teachers are regularly forced to use a slow machine. As a result, they usually do not use the gradebook program to calculate averages. Instead, they average the grades manually and enter only the final grades. This means that less information is available on line for tracking student progress. Averaging grades manually also takes teacher time that might otherwise be spent in the classroom and lesson planning.

Recommendation 71:

Designate or create teacher workstations in the instructional computer labs that are accessible to teachers during lunch periods, after school, and on weekends.

Computers in the labs could be accessed by students during regular classroom periods and by teachers as teacher workstations at other times. The district could maximize its limited technology funds by upgrading at least one computer in each elementary lab as a teacher workstation, and designating one computer in each of the middle and high school labs for this purpose. While this addresses the immediate need, in the future the role of the labs may shift, making it necessary for the district to reevaluate its approach.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. MIS develops a cost estimate for obtaining computers for teacher workstations and submits a budget request to the board.	September 1997
2. The board approves the purchase of computers for teacher workstations.	October 1997
3. At least one teacher workstation is established in each computer lab.	November 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Computers that are powerful enough to run Microsoft Office cost approximately \$2,000 per computer. To place one computer in each of the district's 22 elementary labs would cost \$44,000.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Designate or create teacher workstations.	(\$44,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The Bi-Tech business software that runs on the district's HP3000 mainframe was purchased by the district in 1989. Since then, the district has customized the software extensively to meet its needs. When Bi-Tech issues a software upgrade, the district must reestablish all of its customized features.

Bi-Tech has concentrated on research and development for the UNIX version of its software, making only required changes to the HP 3000 version purchased by the district. Thus the district does not expect that added features or functionality will be available to them in the future. SISD's five-year technology plan states that "Although the Bi-Tech software was purchased as a turnkey solution, many of the District's key requirements were not represented in its base functionality. Considerable time and effort have been put into the system to accomplish the functionality it provides today."

The Bi-Tech software is maintained by one staff position; primarily customization requests, report generation, and data extracts. In interviews with the review team, business users expressed a desire for quicker request turnaround, but said that MIS was "understaffed." District staff also said that they make requests only for what is really important, since other requests would not receive priority.

System performance, or response time, is an issue when certain batch programs like the General Ledger are run, but are not of great concern according to the district's business users. They told the review team that they have accepted the situation and arrange their workloads accordingly.

Replacing the Bi-Tech HP 3000 system with a business system that meets SISD's basic needs and is easily upgraded when new versions are released, could allow the district's business users to increase their efficiency. Additionally, the demand for staff resources to continually customize the Bi-Tech HP 3000 software undoubtedly will increase as the number of district's users grows.

The district's Five-Year Technology Plan addresses business systems at a high level, saying that on the surface (converting to a UNIX Based Bi-Tech System) seems to be the most financially attractive option. The

analysis of the UNIX system or an entirely new system called for in the plan is based on which is most financially attractive.

In the districts' Five-Year Education Plan objectives once again address funding issues such as identifying costs and activities associated with purchasing and implementing a system.

What appears to be missing from this approach is a comprehensive assessment of the current and future business requirements of the district. This approach makes an assumption that system upgrades will automatically address the district's needs without first identifying those needs. Simply upgrading assumes a "business as usual" approach.

Recommendation 72:

As part of the five-year planning process, analyze the business needs of the district and develop a plan to fully address those needs.

The district needs to begin by developing a complete list of needs, by looking internally at current operations and externally at future trends and innovative approaches being used in the most progressive districts. The district should then do a comprehensive analysis of the current Bi-Tech System, the UNIX version of Bi-Tech, and other systems before arbitrarily deciding how to address business needs in the context of overall district technology efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The MIS director organizes a project team for business software.	January 1998
2. The project team develops a list of requirements by looking internally and externally at innovative approaches.	February 1998
3. The team solicits information from software vendors and analyzes how well their software matches the list of requirements.	March 1998
4. The team prepares a report and submits it to the board for approval.	May 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Identifying business needs should have no fiscal impact.

Chapter 9

Computers and Technology

C. Networking Environment

CURRENT SITUATION

The district's high-speed wide area network (WAN) connects PC workstations in the schools and the administrative offices. The high schools and the middle schools are connected to the high-speed WAN, but only one of the elementary schools is connected, while 13 of the elementary schools are connected to the low-speed WAN. Advantages to the high-speed WAN include electronic mail, file sharing, and Internet access.

In 1995, SISD leased an HP9000 UNIX computer and installed it as the district's main network server for its high-speed WAN. This computer also provides Internet services including web access and electronic mail. This allows PC users on the WAN to send and receive e-mail in addition to researching information on the Internet.

PCs in the student labs and libraries connect to the WAN. Also, PCs in teacher workrooms and administrative offices connected to the WAN allow teachers to connect to the district's custom electronic gradebook, which downloads student information and calculates and uploads grades at the end of each grading cycle to the student services application on the mainframe.

FINDING

The SISD network design could serve as a model for other school districts or even multisite businesses. The layout and the backbone of the WAN have been well planned and documented. Bandwidth, the speed at which connections are made between sites, has been addressed as part of the district plan to connect all schools and users. The district has chosen T1 lines to make connections between sites. T1 is a data communications technology that provides a 1.54 MB/second connection, approximately 55 times the speed of a typical modem. Wiring closets are well-organized and WAN hardware can be upgraded for network expansion.

The infrastructure in place allows for expansion at the schools or administrative sites with only minor additional expense. Without this foresight, expensive replacement hardware would have been needed.

COMMENDATION

The MIS Department has done an excellent job of specifying network hardware for expanding the infrastructure to include all schools and departments.

FINDING

Thirteen of the 14 elementary schools are not connected to SISD's high-speed WAN. This was the main focus of the Five-Year Technology Plan, but a lack of funding has delayed the project. An incomplete district WAN creates several complications, such as a lack of districtwide connections to electronic mail and file sharing. Moreover, the district lacks a systematic, easy link to the Internet for students and teachers in schools not connected to the high speed WAN.

Additionally, not all SISD school libraries are connected to one another. They have no way to share resources or make their resources available to others. Sharing such resources could eliminate the need for each school to purchase separate resource materials.

According to the MIS department, connecting the remaining SISD schools to the high-speed WAN would cost approximately \$10,000 per school.

Recommendation 73:

Connect all schools to the high-speed WAN.

The district should make it a priority to connect all schools to the high-speed WAN. This connection will provide an immediate payback by allowing schools to communicate via e-mail, share files, and access the Internet.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The network engineer lists all components necessary to extend the network.	September 1997
2. The MIS director solicits donations of equipment from networking and telecommunications vendors.	October 1997
3. The MIS director develops proposal, with associated costs, and submits it for approval.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The following estimated cost for connecting 13 elementary schools to the high-speed WAN includes a \$10,000 connection cost for each school and an additional monthly fee of \$150 per school. Some of these costs could

be offset by securing support from area businesses, national grant programs and the SISD community.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Connect all schools to the high-speed WAN	(\$131,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)

Chapter 9

Computers and Technology

D. Business Partnerships and Community Involvement

FINDING

In TEA's *Long Range Plan for Technology, 1996-2010*, two key technology goals for the future are distance learning and greater access to technology and information by the local community at large. Distance learning is the sharing of information, teaching, and research over a wide area using technology, reducing the need for higher numbers of staff and permitting access to information by a larger number of people.

As part of their professional development plan, the Westfield High School librarians created an Internet website called the Westfield High Library Cyber Branch that provides research sources to both teachers and students. Through the website, librarians customize information to meet the needs of specific classes. Significant time is spent in locating viable and appropriate sites on the Internet.

The library site has received accolades from Internet users: "My congratulations on an excellent site! You have certainly gone the extra mile to offer the best to your students. I am a librarian at a middle school in a small West Virginia town on the Ohio River. We are connected to the Internet and I am in the process of trying to promote the positive side of the `Net to our administration. I plan to use your site as an example of the `good stuff.'" A parent with a daughter at Westfield High School said: "Glad to see that my daughter is attending an outstanding school. Found this site on the Internet by accident. I live in El Paso, Texas. Will let her know of this discovery."

COMMENDATION

The Westfield High School Library Cyber Branch promotes the educational uses of the Internet to both parents and students.

FINDING

A growing trend in educational technology is partnering with businesses and communities on major projects. Businesses recognize the importance of investing in education and offering students the skills and experiences

they need to become productive employees. For example, the software publisher Microsoft works with schools by sponsoring Family Technology Nights, which provide schools with a vehicle to gain community support for their technology plans. Microsoft provides staff to educate parents, teachers, and students on how technology is used in schools; answer questions about computing; and suggest fundraising activities for earning free software.

Some support comes in the form of donations of funds, hardware, cabling, and technical expertise. Other support comes from volunteers who donate time and effort for wiring schools, moving equipment, and project organization.

Another example of partnering is the national NetDay program. NetDay 2000 is a program that encourages parents, students, teachers, business people, and community members to come together to help schools become networked. The program has been successful for Houston ISD, with thousands of miles of wire and hours of volunteer labor donated to help extend the HISD infrastructure to schools not previously connected. Another approach was used by the Radnor, Pennsylvania, school district. Rather than spend an estimated \$100,000 to wire an elementary school, district officials hired a moonlighting technology expert from a neighboring district and paid their own employees overtime to wire the school, saving \$55,000 from the original estimate.

SISD has not taken advantage of the trend of partnering with business and the community. Comments from public forums and interviews show that parents and the community are aware of the need for growth in educational computing and are willing to help: "Computers are as essential as textbooks and chalk. Our community needs to understand this." "We need to improve on this--upgrade, stay as up to date as possible." "Maybe a partnership could be established to get computers donated."

The five-year technology plan recommends infrastructure growth, and yet, the review team saw no evidence that the district has funded it or pursued alternative funding sources. Several options exist for districts who are seeking technology-related funds. For example, in Tyler ISD, the district secured an incentive of \$500,000 from Pepsi when renegotiating vending machines contracts which they designated for technology. They also were awarded grants from Novell, the Technology Infrastructure Fund, and Tyler Junior College Distance Learning. In Corpus Christi ISD the district secured \$2 million for technology from sources such as federal vocational funds; magnet school grants; bond authorizations for electrical upgrades; staff development, data services and food services budgets and other sources such as state technology funds. Additionally, information sources

for technology funds can be found through the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Center for Educational Technology.

Recommendation 74:

Target and solicit support from area businesses, national grant programs, local community leaders, parents, students, and district residents.

MIS and the Board/Community Services Department should reach out to potential business partners for assistance with projects such as hardware procurement, cabling, and infrastructure improvements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The MIS director and executive director for Board/Community Services create a plan to target business and community partners.	November 1997
2. The MIS director, with approval from the board, plans and executes a version of the national NetDay program to tap business and community volunteer resources for help in expanding the WAN to the elementary schools.	January 1998
3. The MIS director establishes relationships with peer districts and solicits information about educational funds and grants that can be tapped by SISD.	March 1998
4. The MIS director prepares grant requests to both government and private foundations.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

A successful series of business and community partnerships would stretch technology budget dollars with donations of labor, products, and services. Each year, the district should set a goal of revenue to be raised through these partnerships. As a beginning point, the review team recommends \$250,000, reaching \$500,000 by the fifth year.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Target business support for technology	\$0	\$250,000	\$300,000	\$400,000	\$500,000

Chapter 10

Food Services

This chapter is organized in the following sections:

- A. Organization and Staffing
- B. Food Service Operations
- C. Facilities

BACKGROUND

The mission of a school food service program is to provide an appealing and nutritionally sound breakfast and lunch to students and to operate on a break-even basis. Several success factors can be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a school food service operation, including a high ratio of meals per labor hour (MPLH), minimization of food cost and waste, maximum participation in breakfast and lunch programs, high nutritional value and variety of meals, minimal wait time for student service, and financial self-sufficiency.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Food Services Department has 20 kitchen facilities and is authorized to employ 236 employees, although 200 to 216 is the norm. The department's annual budget is \$4,358,354. In the 1993-94 and 1994-95 school years, the department experienced an operating loss (**Exhibit 10-7**).

Each school has a Food Services manager that reports to one of two area supervisors. The Wunsche School receives satellite food service, meaning their meals are delivered from another kitchen. The department employs a kitchen maintenance specialist who performs routine repairs of kitchen equipment and facilities.

SISD participates in federally funded U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food service programs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Donated Commodities, and the Food Distribution Program. In addition, SISD uses fees from students and faculty for paid meals and for catering. Food Services uses preprepared frozen and dry convenience and commodities. Students are served on disposable ware (paper plates, plastic utensils, etc.). SISD has adjusted its menus to meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* established by USDA and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Overall percentage of participation in SISD's food program is 52.7 percent--33.8 percent for secondary schools and 71.5 percent for

elementary schools. Total revenue for 1995-96 was \$3,946,100; total revenue for 1996-97 was \$4,755,547 (**Exhibit 10-1**).

Exhibit 10-1
SISD Food Services Revenue Report
1993-94 through 1995-96

Revenue Category	Month 1993-94	Month 1994-95	Month 1995-96	YTD 1993-94	YTD 1994-95		
YTD 1995-96	YTD 1996-97						
Breakfast Sales	\$8,866	\$8,240	\$9,242	\$59,061	\$59,538	\$74,797	\$95,423
Sale of Type A Lunches	\$161,071	\$132,297	\$106,151	\$1,219,823	\$1,218,559	\$1,190,423	\$1,431,469
Pete Saylor	\$566	\$396	\$701	\$4,536	\$4,506	\$9,094	\$10,243
Snack Bar a la carte and other sales	\$159,036	\$101,559	\$101,243	\$1,217,241	\$962,173	\$996,766	\$1,040,015
Sales to Adults	\$18,972	\$14,638	\$12,318	\$148,750	\$137,589	\$136,566	\$162,533
Special Events Food	\$4,939	\$3,863	\$6,568	\$25,816	\$25,303	\$34,128	\$42,668
Federal Reimbursement	\$164,430	\$150,970	\$152,435	\$1,204,102	\$1,313,652	\$1,477,695	\$1,944,347
Misc. Income	\$143	\$672	\$1,128	\$3,279	\$5,823	\$7,336	\$10,670
Subtotal Income	\$517,843	\$412,633	\$389,787	\$3,882,608	\$3,727,144	\$3,926,805	\$4,745,368
Interest earned	\$1,824	\$0	\$2,710	\$11,168	\$18,390	\$19,295	\$10,178
Grand Total	\$519,667	\$412,633	\$392,496	\$3,893,775	\$3,745,534	\$3,946,100	\$4,755,547

Source: Compiled from SISD Food Services (Numbers are rounded up)

A "reimbursable" meal is one offered by the district to qualifying children for free or at a reduced price; the district then receives reimbursement for the meal from the federal government through the government. To qualify for these reimbursements, meals must meet minimum nutrition standards and appropriate nutrient and calorie levels as designated by age group.

In 1995-96, the total number of lunches SISD served was 1,422,891; the total number of breakfasts served was 305,067. In 1996-97 the total

number of lunches SISD served increased to 1,767,485 (24 percent increase); total breakfasts served was 395,038 (29 percent increase). A statistical breakdown of all SISD categories is shown in **Exhibit 10-2**.

Exhibit 10-2
SISD Statistical and Fiscal Report for May
1993-94 through 1996-97

Statistical Category							
Month 1993-94	Month 1994-95	Month 1995-96	YTD 1993-94	YTD 1994-95	YTD 1995-96	YTD 1996-97	
Days in Operation	24	20	18	177	162	162	164
Lunches Served at Full Price	122,600	106,341	85,136	890,752	893,349	824,521	984,060
Reimbursable Lunches Served at Reduced Price	15,422	13,716	14,634	110,705	115,806	141,404	183,190
Reimbursable Lunches Served Free	54,155	49,410	48,169	405,240	417,204	456,966	600,235
Total Lunches Served	192,177	169,467	147,939	1,406,697	1,426,359	1,422,891	1,767,485
Breakfast Served at Full Price	9,587	9,184	9,968	61,018	62,039	77,862	97,032
Breakfast Served Reduced Price	3,534	3,384	4,036	24,554	25,700	32,538	43,040
Breakfast Served Free	27,287	23,982	23,003	191,811	189,202	194,667	254,966
Total Breakfast	40,408	36,550	37,007	277,383	276,941	305,067	395,038

Served							
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Source: SISD Food Services

During a recent compliance review by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) several conditions were found and corrected. TEA's audit covered 35 areas and only four areas in SISD were cited for compliance issues. TEA's representative indicated that SISD is considered a "well-run" food service operation and that TEA used one SISD school as a model in a video it prepared for distribution to other districts in Texas.

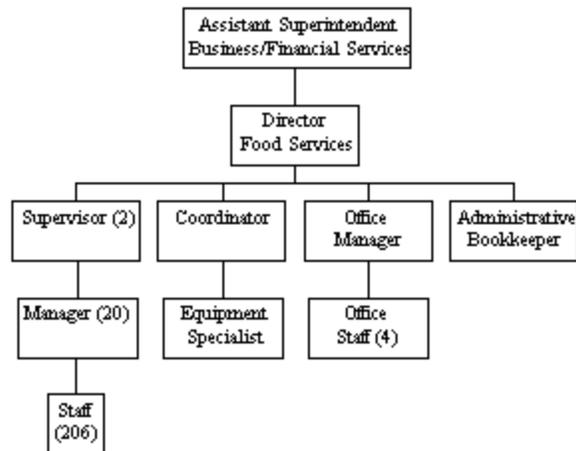
Chapter 10 Food Services

A. Organization and Staffing

CURRENT SITUATION

The present Food Services director has been with SISD for almost two years. During this time, the director has developed a policies and procedure manual and revised many prior practices. The department is organized as shown in **Exhibit 10-3**.

**Exhibit 10-3
SISD Food Service Organization**



FINDING

The Food Services director has a B.S. degree and an M.S. degree in Food and Nutrition and Institutional Management. The department has hired a licensed, registered dietitian, and employs a management staff of highly qualified, experienced food service professionals (**Exhibit 10-4**).

**Exhibit 10-4
SISD Food Services Management Staff Qualifications
1996-97**

Position	Certification	Degree	Major Field
Director (1)	ASFSA Certified Director TSFSA Certification Level	Bachelor of Science Master or	Food & Nutrition Institutional Management

	7*	Science	
Coordinator of Schools (1)	TSFSA Certification	Working towards Associate Degree	
Field Supervisors (2)	TSFSA Certification	Working towards Associate Degree	
Administrative Bookkeeper (1)	Registered Dietitian / RD	Bachelor of Science Degree	Business/Dietetics

*Source: SISD Food Services Department *ASFSA - American School Food Service Administrators; TSFSA - Texas School Food Service Administrators*

Food Services' training program is coordinated by a field supervisor. The training program is offered to new employees, technical and managerial Food Services personnel, and office employees, and complies with all Texas School Food Service Administrators (TSFSA), TEA, and local requirements. Food Services training policies encourage managers to keep their skills current and to pursue college-level classes in the field of Child Nutrition.

Food Services has documented training criteria for each type of employee. In the 1996-97 school year, staff members completed 68 classes worth 16 credit hours to renew or move up a level in the TSFSA certification program.

The Food Services Department has been recognized at the Texas School Food Service annual meeting for increasing breakfast participation; and in its Five-Year Education Plan where surveys from parents, students, and faculty rated the food service A, B-C, and B, respectively.

COMMENDATION

Food Services employs a qualified management staff and uses a well-planned comprehensive training program for its employees.

FINDING

Food Services requires its food service specialists to attend six training sessions each year. Employees also are encouraged to attend state

conferences each year. Some pay their own way to attend. Additionally, one food service specialist from each school is trained once per month for two hours at the food administration office.

Manager trainees are trained several times a week. Managers complete three professional growth courses per semester. Managers take classes from TSFSA/TEA and attend the state convention. Managers are trained at the beginning of the school year and several times during the year. In addition, both managers and manager trainees attend monthly training sessions.

SISD regularly employs four full-time manager trainees. Six such positions are authorized in the budget. Manager trainees are selected from within the department and considered for managerial positions as vacancies become available. Promotions are based on expected retirements and annual turnover.

Recommendation 75:

Reduce the number of budgeted manager trainee positions to three.

Trainee positions should be projected based on a plan and evaluation of current management and anticipated vacancies.

The department should examine alternative management training methods to reduce labor costs within the department, such as a pilot program to train potential candidates within their current work positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director, the two cafeteria supervisors, and two managers develop a pilot manager trainees' program that includes on-the-job training, self-study modules, and alternative training methods.	November 1997
2. The superintendent eliminates three manager trainee positions.	November 1997 - January 1998
3. The supervisor in charge of training tests the manager trainee program with the on-the-job trainees who are candidates for promotion.	January - April 1998
4. The supervisor in charge of training and the Food Services director evaluate the plan and revise as needed.	May 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Manager trainees work an average of seven hours per day for 180 days annually and are paid \$7.27 per hour, including 12 percent benefits annually. Reducing 3 positions results in savings of \$9,160 per trainee.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Reduce three manager trainee positions	\$27,480	\$27,480	\$27,480	\$27,480	\$27,480

FINDING

Individual Food Services managers at each school do not write menus or maintain profit-and-loss statements for their operations. All employee files, attendance records, and time cards are prepared manually and transmitted to the Food Services administrative office. A clerk and manager compile these records and keep them in the main office. Individual managers keep records that are necessary to their operations. The unnecessary duplication and manual transfer of information requires a clerical support position in the Food Services administrative office. Employee time cards, accident reports, and purchasing information also require excessive manual handling and duplicative tasks.

Recommendation 76:

Produce management reports by school and use these reports to eliminate duplicative work, increase accountability and productivity, and reduce clerical staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. Provide profit and loss reports to food service managers and hold them accountable for unprofitable operations by centrally monitoring activities.	October 1997 and Ongoing
2. The Food Services director determines which functions can be managed in the individual facilities to reduce duplication.	October 1997
3. The superintendent eliminates one clerical position.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating one clerical position in Food Services' administrative offices would result in an annual savings of \$20,160 (\$18,000 and benefits of 12 percent).

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Eliminate duplicative work and reduce clerical staff	\$20,160	\$20,160	\$20,160	\$20,160	\$20,160

FINDING

Food Services employs a multicultural workforce and offers English classes to employees who are not English-proficient (**Exhibit 10-5**).

Exhibit 10-5 SISD Food Services Ethnicity Report

SISD Ethnicity Summary As of 4/97	SISD Ethnic Percentages As of 4/97
Female	96%
Male	4%
White	45%
Black	26%
Hispanic	21%
Asian	8%
Other	0.5%

Source: SISD Food Services Department

These English as a Second language (ESL) classes have assisted the department in integrating such employees into its workforce. The ESL classes are a valuable resource to the department that allows its employees to better serve the students. SISD job descriptions do not require that Food Services employees speak English, but job descriptions and other materials have not been provided to employees in languages such as Spanish and Vietnamese.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requires that employers who hire non-English speaking employees provide materials written in their language. SISD does not translate job requirements into foreign languages due to the cost involved.

Focus-group comments from Food Services managers and employees revealed problems in the performance and training of non-English speaking employees. Some comments were: "Jobs don't get done on a

timely basis due to inability to understand the directions." "Some jobs cannot be done because employees do not understand the written directions." "All written information for employees concerning human resource issues has to be explained by managers."

Recommendation 77:

Provide job descriptions and training materials for Food Services employees written in other native languages.

Such materials would help ensure that all employees are apprised of the safety and sanitation requirements of their jobs, and ensure consistent dissemination of information to all employees. It is possible that external sources such as the National Restaurant Association, Texas Restaurant Association, and other agencies may have materials available in other languages and may employ translators for such purposes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The field supervisor in charge of training contacts organizations such as the National Restaurant Association, Texas Restaurant Association, Society for Food Service Management, and the local health department for information on job descriptions and training materials written in other native languages, such as Spanish and Vietnamese.	October 1997
2. The field supervisor investigates options for translation available to SISD, including any appropriate computer software.	October 1997
3. Managers are presented with information for evaluation and possible incorporation into existing job descriptions.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 10

Food Services

B. Food Service Operations

CURRENT SITUATION

The SISD Food Services Department's operating budget for 1996-97 was \$4,358,354. The department has operated at a loss for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years. Losses for 1994-95 were attributed to the construction of the Food Services administrative offices, in-service training center, and test kitchen, and the purchase of an automated cash management system (**Exhibit 10-6**). Prior to these expenditures, the department had been profitable and will return to profitability for 1996-97 and will eventually build a fund balance of \$500,000.

Exhibit 10-6 SISD Profit and Loss

1994-95 through 1996-97

School Year	Profit & Loss
1994-95	<\$229,555>
1995-96	<\$21,088>
1996-97	\$50,000-Projected Profit

Source: SISD Business and Accounting Office

Food Services receives revenues from sales to students and teachers, federal school lunch and breakfast programs, and catering. Meal prices are determined by TEA and the department. Revenues from vending sales goes to each campus activity fund. The federal reimbursable rates for SISD's breakfast and lunch program as well as meal prices for 1996-97 are shown in **Exhibits 10-7** and **10-8**.

Exhibit 10-7 SISD Federal Reimbursable Rates for Breakfast and Lunch 1996-97

	Meal	Amount
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Breakfast	Full	\$0.1975
	Reduced price	\$0.7175
	Free	\$1.0175
	Severe Need- Reduced price	\$0.1950
	Severe Need - Free	\$0.1950
Lunch	Full	\$0.1775
	Reduced price	\$1.4375
	Free	\$1.8375

Source: Texas Education Agency

**Exhibit 10-8
SISD Meal Prices
1996-1997**

Type of Meal	Price
Adult Lunch - Regular	\$1.90
Adult Breakfast	\$0.95
Student Lunch Full Price Secondary	\$1.60
Student Lunch Full Price Elementary	\$1.30
Student Lunch Reduced Price	\$0.40
Student Breakfast Full Price	\$0.85
Student Breakfast Reduced Price	\$0.30

Source: SISD Food Services Department

FINDING

Food purchasing is done through bids developed by SISD's Purchasing Department according to specifications determined by Food Services. Orders are placed by individual managers and forwarded to the Food Services administrative office to be placed by an office clerk. Testing is performed on each product specified. This testing includes taste, cooking procedures, and adherence to specifications. The test kitchen at the Food Services administration is equipped with highly advanced technology and equipment.

SISD receives commodities from the USDA and participates in a cooperative purchasing program with Gulf Coast Cooperative, which helps to reduce costs of storage and delivery. The Gulf Coast Cooperative includes Alvin, Anahuac, Barbara Hill, Clear Creek, College Station, Conroe, Deer Park, Galena Park, La Porte, Liberty, New Caney, Palacios, Pasadena, Spring, and Texas City school districts. The new purchasing program allows the district to order the amounts needed without having to purchase minimum numbered orders. Present warehousing fees and \$35-per-shipment delivery charges will be eliminated.

COMMENDATION

SISD uses innovative methods to lower costs, such as a group purchasing contract for commodities that reduce costs of delivery and storage.

FINDING

The Food Services Department is developing a purchasing, inventory, and bid control system with the Fast Pac company. An inventory control system provides a mechanism for managing food and supplies on hand. An inventory is a continuous record of food and supplies that are purchased, stored, or used.

The Fast Pac program was selected due to its cost, which is lower than comparable programs. The program was implemented in some SISD schools in the 1996-97 school year and will be in all schools by December 1997. The system will integrate with Bi-Tech, the district's central accounting system, and provide information to all school food service managers. The inventory system will allow for accurate ordering and reductions in the storage of unnecessary supplies. Automation of the inventory system will provide for more efficient pricing, forecasting, and record-keeping, and will help generate accurate profit-and-loss statements.

Automated inventory systems in food service departments have been documented to reduce food costs by 5 to 12 percent annually. Food costs for the 1995-96 year in SISD were \$1,584,790. A 5 percent savings could mean approximately \$80,000 in savings per year in SISD.

COMMENDATION

SISD Food Services is developing a computer-generated inventory system that will result in a reduction of food cost by 5 to 12 percent.

FINDING

In 1995-96, SISD implemented the PCS Revenue Control Systems, Inc. (PCS) cash management system that allows for prepayment and accurate tracking of free- and reduced-price meals. Students enter a payment identification number (PIN) at the point of sale. All eligibility status information is kept confidential. Since everyone in the high schools enter a PIN, students eating free or at reduced rates are treated no differently than their classmates who pay for meals. PCS thus allows management to track free- and reduced-price meals while maintaining the confidentiality of students' economic status.

The full implementation of PCS in 1996-97 has contributed to an increase in the number of total lunches and breakfast served by 25 percent over 1995-96. Under PCS, all food items are tracked, including snack bar items. Other factors, such as the addition of all-day kindergarten classes; establishing promotional giveaways on selected school days where elementary students were given trinkets, erasers, and stickers, and the like; and opening the Westfield High School cafeteria also contributed to an increase in meal participation. In 1997-98, the use of credit cards to prepay students' meals is expected to increase participation and lower the incidence of returned checks. Credit card payment will allow parents to extend payment terms out through the school year. Revenues in 1996-97 represent a 20.5 percent increase over 1995-96.

Because of SISD's efforts to increase participation, they were recognized by the Texas School Food Service Association in June 1997 for increasing participation in both the USDA breakfast and lunch programs for the 1996-97 school year.

COMMENDATION

Several SISD initiatives have led to increased meal participation, including a cash management system that ensures confidentiality for all students participating in the free- and reduced-price meal program, credit card payment for student meals, all-day kindergarten classes, and promotional giveaways at elementary schools.

FINDING

While SISD has increased meal participation there are still opportunities that they might explore or expand upon that could bring in additional revenues. According to SISD's Food Services director an increase in participation rates is quite feasible.

Revenue received from federal reimbursements for 1996-97 was \$1,944,347, an increase of 31.5 percent over 1995-96. To qualify a student for free- and reduced-price meals, SISD sends an application home with

each student to be completed and returned by their family. An entire family can qualify with one application regardless of whether they include all names of family members on the application. A student automatically qualifies for free- and reduced-price meals in the next school year for the first 30 days of school, but if the district does not get an application from the students after the first 30 days to re-qualify for a meal program, then the Food Service Manager at each school will discreetly speak to the student and provide them with another application to take home for their family to complete.

Through cooperation with the Texas Department of Human Services school districts can obtain a computerized file of all families in the district's area that are eligible to receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and food stamps. This information can be downloaded into a district's certification program so that students automatically qualify for free- and reduced-price meals. In fact, the entire family gets qualified automatically. This information can be obtained on an ongoing basis in order to maintain the most current eligibility information on a student.

School districts also can automatically send qualifying applications home with each student at the beginning of each school year. Districts have also used promotional aides such as posters and billboards that contain information to encourage families to qualify for federal meal programs. Still, some districts have been more aggressive and have made contact with families.

Another major factor affecting participation is competition from vending machines in SISD schools. While vending machines should include healthy foods as much as possible, they should not compete with meal service. Federal guidelines prohibit vending machine placement in cafeterias, and machines are supposed to be turned off during meal service. However, this is difficult to monitor.

Participation can be increased by offering brand name items, giving away promotionals, organizing special theme days, providing healthy food choices for adults, and offering ethnic foods. Complaints about long lunch lines and hours and the quality and taste of food also may be affecting participation rates at some schools.

Recommendation 78:

Formulate a strategy to increase, monitor, and analyze meal participation rates.

In its goal to increase meal participation, Food Services should establish two objectives:

- Finding ways to get more students to eat;
- Maximizing federal Title I and Title II dollars that follow students who are eligible for free- and reduced-price meals, dollars through Compensatory Education, funds from the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, and increasing paid participation.

SISD should reexamine its process for identifying and certifying all eligible students for free- and reduced-priced meals.

Manufacturers of food products, supplies, and equipment can provide promotional ideas, decorations, and other marketing strategies, designed to encourage more participation in SISD meal service. As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, staggering serving times might also help to get students and faculty to eat in the cafeterias. Individual principals should ensure that all vending machines are turned off during meal service, and that meal times are scheduled that don't discourage participation in meal service. Food Service should survey its customers periodically to gauge participation and comments about its meal service.

Performance measures should be set for individual cafeterias that contain targets for increasing participation. Cafeteria managers could be evaluated on how well their participation rates fair against reasonable performance targets.

In addition, SISD will be able to obtain more earned commodity credits, which are distributed based on number of meals served.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director and managers and the assistant superintendent of Business and Finance discuss strategies and methods for increasing meal participation.	September 1997 and Ongoing
2. The district implements the credit card payment plan option districtwide.	September 1997
3. The Food Services director and managers develop a customer survey to be distributed to students and faculty.	October 1997 and Annually
4. The Food Services director and assistant superintendent for Business and Finance discuss ways to certify more eligible students for federal meal programs.	October 1997 and Annually
5. The Food Services director and managers contact food product manufacturers to request help in providing promotional giveaways and advertising of name brand foods.	October 1997 and Ongoing

6. The Food Services director and managers meet with school principals to discuss ways to improve meal service, including staggered meal service, breakfast programs, and vending machines.	October 1997
7. The Food Services director and assistant superintendent for Business and Finance establish performance measures for achieving participation rate targets at all cafeterias.	January 1998
8. The Food Services director and assistant superintendent for Business and Finance continually work to improve participation by maximizing federal draw-down dollars.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the total revenue for 1996-97 of \$4,755,547 (shown in **Exhibit 10-1**) and projecting a 5 percent increase each year in revenues and participation, SISD could generate an additional \$309,535 in revenues annually if elementary, middle, and high schools achieved more participation in their free- and reduced-price and paid breakfast and paid meal programs. SISD's food costs of 41.6 percent were deducted from this calculation; labor costs were not. Labor cost should remain the same given the lower MPLH statistics that SISD has.

A lower participation rate has a domino effect on additional sources of revenue available to SISD. For example, SISD is eligible to receive \$611.73 per student in state compensatory funds for every child participating in the free- and reduced-price meal program. By increasing participation by 5 percent and bringing in an additional 279 students into the program, SISD could receive an additional \$170,673 in state compensatory funds.

A 5 percent increase in revenues should bring in an additional \$138,862 annually.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Increase, monitor, and analyze meal participation rates	\$309,535	\$309,535	\$309,535	\$309,535	\$309,535

FINDING

Breakfast participation for 1996-97 increased by 24 percent over 1995-96 primarily due to promotional activities, such as a bell ringer and

giveaways, principals' support in providing staffing and assistance during meal hours, qualification of more students for free- and reduced-price meals, and menu changes. Breakfast participation rates are shown in **Exhibit 10-9**.

Exhibit 10-9
SISD Breakfast Participation
Percent by Enrollment
May 1997

Elementary School	Breakfast
Clark	33%
Meyer	28%
Jenkins	27%
Link	27%
Thompson	27%
Salyers	26%
Bammel	21%
Beneke	21%
Hirsch	15%
Oak Creek	15%
Anderson	13%
Smith	13%
Ponderosa	12%
Winship	3%

Source: SISD Food Services Department.

The breakfast program, however, is still not universally supported in SISD schools. Some schools lack the staff needed to monitor students. Yet studies have shown that children who eat breakfast learn better, are less likely to be absent, and have fewer discipline problems than those who do not.

Based upon the experience of the review team, districtwide breakfast programs would result in better nutrition, increased participation, and increased revenue.

Recommendation 79:

Increase participation in breakfast service.

Other school districts, such as Waco and United, have successfully implemented breakfast programs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director meets with principals to outline strategies for increased participation.	October 1997
2. Area supervisors and principals develop a participation form for each individual school.	November 1997
3. Food Services develops an incentive program for schools with the highest participation.	November 1997
4. The Food Services director conducts a pilot project at one elementary school and one secondary school for a "grab and go" breakfast to evaluate increased participation.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Revenue received through the increase in meal participation outlined in Recommendation 78 assumes savings in the implementation of a districtwide breakfast program.

FINDING

SISD menus are planned by the Food Services director and the coordinator. These menus must meet USDA guidelines. The district offers separate menus for elementary and secondary schools. Current SISD menus are based on reimbursable meal, traditional breakfast, and lunch patterns. Examples are shown in **Exhibits 10-10** and **10-11**.

**Exhibit 10-10
School Breakfast Minimum Requirements
1996-1997**

Meal Component	Ages 1-2	Preschool	Grades K-12	Grades 7-12
Milk (Fluid) (As a beverage, on cereal or both)	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	8 ounces	8 ounces
Juice/Fruit/Vegetable: Fruit and/or	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup

vegetable; or full strength fruit juice or vegetable juice				
Select one serving from each of the following components or two from one components:				
Grains/Breads: one of the following or an equivalent combination:				
Whole-grain or enriched bread	1/2 Slice	1/2 Slice	1 Slice	1 Slice
Whole-grain or enriched biscuit, roll, muffin, etc.	1/2 Serving	1/2 Serving	1 Serving	1 Serving
Whole-grain, enriched or fortified cereal	1/4 cup or 1/3 ounce	1/3 cup or 1/2 ounce	3/4 cup or 1 ounce	3/4 cup or 1 ounce
Meat or Meat Alternatives (Plus an additional serving of Grains/Breads)				
Meat, poultry or fish	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Cheese	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Egg (large)	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters	1 Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
Cooked dry beans and peas	2 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.
Nuts and/or seeds (as listed in program guidance)	1/2 ounce	1/2 ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
No more than 1 ounce of nuts and/or seeds may be served in any one meal				

Source: USDA National School Breakfast and Lunch Program

**Exhibit 10-11
Nutrient Requirements
Minimum Requirements - Optional
1996-1997**

Nutrients and Energy Allowances	Preschool	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Grades K-3
Energy Allowance Calories	517	664	825	633
Total Fat (as a percent of actual	1	1	1	1

total food energy)				
Saturated Fat (as a percent of actual total food energy)	2	2	2	2
RDA for Protein (g)	7	10	16	9
RDA for Calcium (mg)	267	286	400	267
RDA for Iron (mg)	3.3	3.5	4.5	3.3
RDA for Vitamin A	150	224	300	200
RDA for Vitamin C (mg)	14	15	18	15

Source: USDA National School Breakfast and Lunch Program

To meet recommended daily allowances (RDA) SISD has adjusted its meals to include 1 percent milk, and the elimination of salt in food preparation and margarine.

The USDA guidelines require the reduction, not elimination, of fat and sodium. Focus groups of parents, students, and faculty had negative comments about the lack of seasoning to vegetables. Focus groups conducted by the survey team highlighted concerns about the nutritional adequacy of SISD food. Secondary students expressed concerns about monotony and a lack of healthy foods. Students complained about pre-cooked hamburgers and the elimination of salad bars. Faculty members stated that they never eat at school because of the lack of freshly prepared foods and healthy choices. Community focus groups also were concerned about the large amount of "fast food" served.

SISD has no mechanism for computerized nutritional analysis. Instead, SISD uses Traditional Menu Patterns, an approved USDA nutrient analysis program but one that does not require the use of software at a school district. USDA and TEA still allow this program to be used, but strongly encourage the use of approved computerized systems. USDA has approved six nutrient analysis software systems.

Recommendation 80:

Purchase and use an approved nutritional analysis computer program to ensure that menus comply with federal guidelines for acceptability, quality, and accuracy.

The PCS Revenue Control System (PCS), which SISD already uses for point-of-sale and cash management, has a nutritional analysis component that has been approved by the USDA. This component could be purchased

and would integrate easily with SISD's current PCS system. The use of an approved nutritional analysis program would assist SISD in developing menus that are appealing and nutritionally sound.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director purchases an approved computerized nutritional analysis program.	February 1998
2. The Food Services director involves students and faculty in approval of menus and looks for ways to balance the mix of fast foods with freshly prepared foods with assistance from the nutritional analysis software.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

SISD could purchase an approved computerized nutritional analysis program from PCS at a cost of \$4,000, including installation.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Purchase computerized nutritional analysis program	(\$4,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

Students and faculty members complained of long lines and long hours of service in elementary cafeterias. Some scheduling extends over two-and-a-half hours, with the youngest children eating last. Elementary students are offered several menu item choices, which also causes delays in the lunch line.

Some of the comments included:

"If I am in the last lunch period, I sometimes don't get the choices I want."

"The time taken to have the children make choices in the classroom interferes with class time."

"The long serving times make the children who eat later wait a long time between breakfast and lunch."

"Children change their minds in line about choices and then the number of items prepared are not accurate."

"Limit the choices for elementary."

Each principal sets meal serving times and decides whether each grade should eat all at one time or at staggered times. In some elementary schools, students choose menu items they want for lunch during the first period of the day, which takes time from the class period.

Federal guidelines require schools to use the "offered" versus "served" basis for reimbursable meal service. A reimbursable lunch should include a minimum of three menu items. An offered meal versus a served meal means "each participating school shall offer its students at least three items...senior high students must select at least two items and may decline a maximum of two menu items...at the discretion of the school food authority, students below the senior high level may also participate in offer versus served." SISD offers more choices (two to three) than is required for elementary students, which can cause delays in the serving times.

SISD schools using staggered meal periods have the highest MPLH. Staggering uses 30-minute time blocks. The Food Services director does not know how many SISD schools stagger meal times, since this is left to the discretion of school principals. However, Winship and Hirsch Elementary Schools bring classes of students into the cafeteria in five to seven minute intervals. The principals in each of these schools set the schedules for meal service that best fit the curriculum needs of students.

Recommendation 81:

Stagger serving times at all schools and consider limiting menu choices in elementary schools.

Care should be given to begin meal services times that best meet the needs of the various age groups.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director and managers write new menus and look for ways to reduce choices for elementary school students.	October 1997
2. The Food Services director meets with principals to determine staggered serving times.	October 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

SISD's food cost for school year 1995-96 was 40.4 percent of total revenue; for 1996-97 the cost was 41.6 percent. The review team counted each food item on SISD menus and determined that SISD was preparing about 15 percent of its recipes from scratch. However, about 85 percent of foods are bought preprepared and prepackaged, a type of food preparation that does not require highly experienced staff. Since the district's switch to preprepared foods, about five years ago, staffing levels have remained constant.

Recipes can be analyzed for actual cost and adjusted according to budget requirements. USDA provides tested recipes that can be used for food preparation. Guidelines from the *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors*, written by Dorothy V. Pannell, adapted by Sarah Sweeney for TEA, May 1993, can be used as the basis for recipe analysis.

Recommendation 82:

Analyze recipes to determine actual cost for food and labor.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. Food Services managers and area supervisors conduct an analysis of recipes using guidelines from <i>Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors</i> .	September 1997
2. The analysis is presented to the Food Services director, and the registered dietitian to be implemented districtwide.	October 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented at no cost to the district. Once implemented and operational, Food Services should determine whether its staffing should be adjusted to reflect changes in food preparation.

FINDING

The review team estimates that labor costs for the 1996-97 school year will equal 45 percent of revenue. This figure includes costs of the management staff in central administration. Staffing, productivity, and labor costs were investigated at 11 cafeterias, through focus group meetings and by examining staffing reports.

The *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors* suggests that labor costs should be kept below 50 percent of the food service budget. This manual also states that the most common way of determining productivity in school food service is the number of MPLH. SISD's MPLHs versus industry norms are shown in **Exhibit 10-12**.

Exhibit 10-12
SISD Food Services Department
Meals Equivalents Per Labor Hour Comparison to Industry Norms
March 1997

School	Average Daily Meal Equivalents *	Meals/Labor Hour *	Recommended Meals/Labor Hour **
Spring HS	1821.04	10.76	21+
Westfield HS	1904.43	11.41	21+
Bammel MS	1143.95	13.41	21+
Wells MS	1151.53	13.45	21+
Dueitt MS	894.58	11.40	21+
Twin Creeks MS	952.05	12.75	21+
Salyers ES	665.63	10.94	19
Bammel ES	545.98	15.53	18
Ponderosa ES	408.93	13.05	18
Winship ES	403.83	13.29	18
Oak Creek ES	497.98	15.46	18
Meyers ES	836.09	15.84	21+
Jenkins ES	982.30	18.79	21+
Hirsch ES	556.30	19.58	18
Anderson ES	796.10	13.06	20
Link ES	771.77	15.47	20
Smith ES	779.49	17.08	20
Beneke ES	795.03	16.31	20
Clark ES	864.37	17.39	21+
Thompson ES	821.74	17.24	21+

** Source: SISD Food Services ** Source: Cost Control Manual for Food Service Directors*

As the use of prepared convenience food increases, labor hours should decrease and productivity should increase. What frequently occurs, however, is that convenience foods are introduced gradually and labor hours do not in fact decrease. The work expands to fill the time available.

As a general rule, convenience food items increase food costs in a food service operation. Thus the Food Services Department must ensure that labor costs are reduced to justify the more costly convenience food items. In other words, as food costs increase, the food service operation must achieve a balance by decreasing labor costs.

In the food service industry, the use of disposable ware also should equate to a decrease in labor hours, since employees will not be washing dishes and dinnerware. A study prepared by Ecolab and Cambro, 1991, concluded that a cover (plate, cup, forks, knives, etc.) of disposable ware costs 18.2 cents per person. A cover costs 9.8 cents in SISD. The gradual use of disposable ware in SISD over the last 8 to 10 years should have resulted in a decrease in labor hours. The *Cost Control Manual for Food Service Directors* estimates that 3.5 labor hours are needed to wash dishes and dinnerware for 300 students.

SISD's schools are older, and the kitchens are not well designed, which may justify higher staffing levels. As noted in this chapter, principals have a great influence on serving times and speed of meal service. To improve MPLH, certain controllable factors such as cashless systems, renovations at key locations, staggering of meal services, limiting menu choices, menu changes, transfer of staffs, work simplification, rewriting of job descriptions, and increasing participation, must be in place.

Based on March 1997 statistics supplied by SISD Food Services, Hirsch Elementary produced 19.58 MPLH; Jenkins Elementary produced 18.79 MPLH. Hirsch is exceeding recommended productivity guidelines and Jenkins elementary is close to achieving the guidelines set out in *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Director*.

Recommendation 83:

Bring meal equivalents per labor hour in line with industry standards.

Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Director recommends the following guidelines for staffing for on-site production (**Exhibit 10-13**).

Exhibit 10-13
Proposed Staffing Guidelines For On-Site Production
Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH) / Total Hours

Number of Equivalents	Conventional System	Conventional System Total Hours	Convenience System MPLH	Convenience System Total Hours
Up to 100	8	9 - 12	9	9 - 11
101 - 150	9	12 - 16	10	11 - 14
151 - 200	10 - 11	16 - 17	12	14 - 16
201 - 250	12	17 - 20	14	16 - 18
251 - 300	13	20 - 22	15	18 - 20
301 - 400	14	22 - 29	16	20 - 25
401 - 500	14	29 - 35	18	25 - 28
501 - 600	15	35 - 40	18	28 - 34
601 - 700	16	40 - 43	19	34 - 37
701 - 800	17	43 - 47	20	37 - 40
800+	18	47+	21+	40+

Source: Cost Control Manual for Food Service Directors

If the factors noted above are controlled, the department should be able to meet these guidelines at all but one to two schools by reducing labor costs or increasing participation, or a combination of both. The elimination of Food Services employees should be done through attrition. However, the turnover rate has exceeded 22 percent in the last two years.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director implements a hiring freeze.	October 1997
2. The Food Services director contacts other school districts who have been successful at improving productivity and labor costs and determines which practices could be adopted at SISD.	November 1997
3. The Food Services director and the management staff develop a plan to reduce labor costs.	November 1997
4. The Food Services director conducts a training session for	January

cafeteria managers on increasing productivity and specific strategies to reduce labor costs.	1998
5. The Food Services director generates productivity/meals per labor hour records each month. These statistics are to be shared with cafeteria managers.	January 1998
6. The Food Services director requires each manager, with the assistance of the supervisor, to develop a plan for each individual school to improve productivity/MPLH. Highest priority will be given to cafeterias with the lowest productivity statistics. Specific MPLH goals with time lines are established for each school.	January 1998
7. The Food Services managers implement the plans.	January - March 1998
8. The Food Services director evaluates the progress of the plans and monitors statistics. Successful plans are to be shared among school cafeterias.	April 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Reducing an average of 18 employees (or one employee for each of the schools exceeding the productivity guidelines) would result in an annual savings of \$152,410 and would bring these schools in line with MPLH standards. These savings were based on 18 employees working 180 days at \$ 6.72 per hour, including benefits, for seven hours per day.

However, it should be noted that increased participation discussed in an earlier recommendation could also achieve the MPLH standard shown here. Therefore, cost savings are not estimated but it is assumed that a minimum of \$152,410, for each school year in productivity savings could be achieved in either case.

FINDING

SISD Food Services has enhanced its nutrition education efforts over the past two years by offering programs such as National School Breakfast and Lunch Week, 5-A-Day, Texas School Breakfast and Lunch Week, printed menus that include nutrition games and information, and a Food Services Department web site.

Within the School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, USDA has implemented the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children. USDA "recognizes the importance of encouraging children to accept meals with reduced fat content. Merely enacting policy will not accomplish change." This is why USDA established *Team Nutrition* to implement "Making Food Choices," a nutrition education, training, and

technical assistance program. The mission of *Team Nutrition* is to improve the health of children by creating innovative public and private partnerships that promote healthy food choices. In 1995, USDA awarded 4.4 million in *Team Nutrition* grants to enable states to expand training and technical assistance activities to local food service personnel. USDA also is working with American Culinary Federation to share recipes and techniques in food service preparation with the school food service community.

Each SISD school has been established as a *Team Nutrition* School. A *Team Nutrition* School is one that follows USDA guidelines, as outlined in the *Federal Register*, for creating a comprehensive, integrated plan to improve school meals. The five guiding principles of *Team Nutrition* are Healthy Children, Customer Appeal, Flexibility, Investing in People, and Building Partnerships.

Site visits to 11 schools revealed that Food Services employees were not implementing nutrition education activities consistently and managers, specifically, did not appear to have a thorough working knowledge of the *Team Nutrition* concept.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has listed 21 objectives in its *Healthy People 2000* that target school-aged children. One of these objectives is to "increase to at least 75 percent the proportion of the nation's schools that provide nutrition education from preschool through 12th grade, preferably as part of a quality school health education."

Recommendation 84:

Implement comprehensive nutrition education plans for students, faculty, and Food Services personnel at each SISD school.

The district should ensure that a comprehensive integrated nutrition education program is implemented in every school. A nutrition education program that involves faculty members can be most beneficial to students and the most efficient way in which to ensure program effectiveness. An organized education plan also helps students to understand the reason for meals with a reduced fat content.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director, representatives of the cafeteria managers, faculty representatives, and student representatives from each school determine the specific nutrition education needs of the SISD students.	October 1997
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2. The Food Services director researches other districts to investigate innovative nutrition education programs, such as those in Browns ville, Crosby, and Portland, Oregon.	October 1997
3. The Food Services director determines which of the nutrition education needs will be met and develops a plan for each school.	December 1997
4. The Food Services managers of each school implement the plan.	February - April 1998
5. The nutrition education plan is evaluated by the Food Services director, managers, faculty representatives and students to determine effectiveness and the need for revisions.	May 1998 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

SISD serves meals to students and faculty on disposable dishes and dinnerware. The waste from disposable ware is not recycled. In the past, Food Services received letters from children in the district concerned about this policy. Food Services considered the possibility of recycling a few years ago, but never implemented a recycling policy.

State law mandates that government entities, including school districts, implement in-house recycling programs, and that at least 40 percent of their solid waste materials be recycled.

Alief ISD has instituted a nationally recognized recycling program. The program collects recyclable material, finances programs through the sale of materials, and serves as an educational example to the students, faculty, and community members. Alief ISD recycles corrugated cardboard, paper, aluminum, milk cartons, wood, plastic, and polystyrene.

Alief ISD received a \$98,000 grant from the Houston-Galveston Area Council to start up its recycling program, is breaking even at the end of two years, and is exploring cooperative efforts with other school districts in their vicinity.

Recommendation 85:

Implement a recycling program for Food Services' solid waste.

SISD either should apply for a grant to establish a recycling program; establish a cooperative agreement with Alief ISD or a community-based organization; or establish its own recycling program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director determines the type and amount of solid waste generated by the department.	January 1998
2. The Food Services director determines if there are other school-based programs in the Houston area in which SISD could participate in a recycling program.	February 1998
3. The Food Services director learns of community-based opportunities for recycling, or investigates the possibility of developing a cooperative program with another district or pursuing a grant.	February 1998
4. Based on the research data collected, the Food Services director makes a report to the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services about the feasibility of a food service recycling program for the 1998-99 year.	March 1998
5. The Food Services' recycling program is implemented districtwide.	August 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of a recycling program cannot be determined until the district decides, based on its research, what sort of program would be most beneficial and cost effective.

FINDING

Vending machines in SISD schools and offices are managed by the individual schools. Commissions go to school activity funds. For the 1995-96 year, vending machines generated \$344,756 for SISD. Revenues varied from school to school, as did contractual agreements with vending machine companies. Based on information from vending companies and a contract negotiated by Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, the estimated gross revenue for a school district of SISD's size would be approximately \$1.4 million.

Virginia's Chesterfield County's food service department took over the entire district's vending program which has formerly operated much like SISD does. Chesterfield County's centralized program provides vending services for 62 sites, including 56 schools, and splits its vending profits 50/50 with the schools. Coca-Cola offered the Madison, Wisconsin school

district a \$100,000 signing bonus and an advanced commission of \$515,000 for entering into a three-year contract, worth an estimated \$1.5 million.

Several school districts in Texas have struck deals with soft drink companies. These districts include Tyler, Houston, Grapevine-Colleyville, Galena Park, Clear Creek, Katy, and Alvin. For example, Tyler ISD signed a 10-year exclusive contract with Pepsi, in which it received a \$500,000 bonus that was earmarked for technology-related projects.

Recommendation 86:

Negotiate an exclusive vendor contract for vending machines.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director meets with the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services for approval to begin the process of negotiating the prime vendor contract for vending machines.	November 1997
2. The Food Services director and the assistant superintendent for Business and Finance seek approval from the superintendent and board to initiate an exclusive binding contract.	November 1997
3. The assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services notifies the principals of plans to negotiate a prime vendor contract.	November 1997
4. The Food Services director works with the Purchasing Department to develop a request for proposal to be distributed to vendors.	November 1997
5. The Food Services director sends a request for proposal to vendors.	December 1997
6. The Food Services director and the director of Purchasing review responses and recommend a vendor.	February 1997
7. Initiate contract for prime vendor.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Commissions received by school districts from vending companies typically total 38 percent of gross revenue, of which 2 percent goes to the food service department in the form of a management fee. Assuming SISD could increase its gross revenues, a 38-percent commission could result in annual revenues to SISD of \$476,000. SISD could increase annual

revenues by \$131,244 each year. SISD could split profits from vending 50/50 with schools.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-01
Negotiate an exclusive vendor contract	\$60,862	\$131,244	\$131,244	\$131,244	\$131,244

FINDING

The review team observed that vending machine items at SISD do not meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and are not in compliance with TEA guidelines because they are for the most part too high in sugar, fat, and sodium. Examples of healthy vending machine foods are yogurt, raisins, fruit, baked chips, low-fat cookies, pretzels, juices, and bottled water.

Recommendation 87:

Balance vending machine food items with nutritious foods and beverages.

Using a single vending contract, SISD could gain better control over the quality of food in the vending machines to ensure greater nutritional value. *Team Nutrition* concepts, applied districtwide, could help increase awareness of healthy food choices.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. SISD's registered dietitian specifies requirements for promoting healthy choices in vending machine negotiations.	November 1997
2. The registered dietitian and the Food Services director specify items to be included in the request for proposal for the prime vending machine contract.	November 1997
3. The Food Services director and the director of Purchasing review responses and recommend a vendor.	March 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is assumed in the previous recommendation.

Chapter 10

Food Services

C. Facilities

FINDING

SISD operates 20 production kitchens. There are two new state-of-the-art kitchen facilities at Westfield High School and Thompson Elementary School. The Westfield food court cafeteria opened in fall 1996. Some of the equipment that was purchased has never been used and the district plans to remove some of it, such as a refrigerated unit used to serve salad items and a self-contained deep fat fryer. Two large processing machines did not come equipped with proper electrical wiring and have not been hooked up. Other schools have food service facilities that are old and use outdated equipment. Many of the schools are at full capacity for freezer space.

Spring High School and the Wunsche School are not in compliance with safety, sanitation, or other regulatory requirements for food service, according to the Harris County Health Department, OSHA, and Texas Department of Health. The Wunsche School is of particular concern because of the special needs of its student clientele. Wunsche School is the only facility with satellite feeding arrangements.

The recent bond election would have funded the renovation of Spring High School. Its facilities are crowded and out of compliance with current building codes and equipment is outdated, which contribute to operational problems for the staff. Renovations would provide opportunities for greater efficiency and a safer working environment for employees.

Food Service's fund balances for years 1994-95 through 1995-96 were used to renovate the Food Services administrative offices, add some additional equipment for the new Westfield cafeteria, and purchase new computers. The fund balance for 1996-97 is approximately \$50,000. These funds could be used for some necessary renovations.

The present system for renovation is completed on an "as needed" basis. The master plan in place for the purchase of capital equipment needs to be updated. Food Services lacks a plan for replacement of equipment that is not categorized as capital. The district has no plan for proposed food service renovations, changes to operations, or projecting needs for the next five years, as part of the five-year renovation plan. An updated renovation plan would allow the district to make cost-effective decisions regarding equipment and renovations.

The review team conducted an operational audit on the Wunsche School, which has special needs due to its alternative education program, and must adhere to specific guidelines concerning food service. The present situation at the Wunsche School is unacceptable. During focus group sessions, students and faculty complained about cold food, wilted salads, and poor service quality. Students commented that they felt like they were penalized because they were in an alternative school. Children with special food service needs, such as pureed diets, are not receiving food prepared under the direction of a certified food service handler. The food service operation at the Wunsche School should be equal to other schools in the district, and should comply with all regulatory agency requirements.

Recommendation 88:

Develop an integrated plan for preventive maintenance, equipment purchase, and renovation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director and the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services should determine facility and equipment status for all food service operations.	October 1997
2. The assistant superintendent seeks the board's approval to hire a kitchen design consultant.	November 1997
3. The Food Services director hires a contractor to replace the vent hood system at Spring High School.	November 1997
4. The Food Services director presents a proposal for hiring a kitchen design consultant to help develop a master facility plan.	November 1997
5. The Food Services director presents the plan for approval from the board to hire a kitchen design consultant.	December 1997
6. The Food Services director implements the recommendations made by the kitchen design consultant, and prepares a proposal for construction/renovation plan for board approval.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of hiring a kitchen design consultant is estimated to be \$35,000 over two years.

Recommendation				
1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02

Develop a maintenance, equipment, and renovation plan	(\$17,500)	(\$17,500)	\$0	\$0	\$0
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FINDING

Observations by the review team of the central warehouse and discussions with the manager of the warehouse and the director of Food Services made it apparent that the present warehouse cooler is underused. The Food Services director has had discussions with vendors concerning conversion of the refrigerator to a freezer. The conversion of the underused refrigerator to a freezer would offer more freezer space and lower costs by reducing the number of deliveries from the vendor. The cost justification of converting the cooler to a freezer should include projected savings from reduced deliveries.

Recommendation 89:

Conduct a cost-benefit analysis before converting the warehouse cooler to a freezer.

Should the decision be made to convert, actual savings and benefits should be tracked and reported to the board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The Food Services director conducts a feasibility study with cost justification to convert the warehouse cooler to a freezer.	November 1997
2. The Food Services director presents results of the study to the superintendent and assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services for approval.	November 1997
3. The superintendent presents the findings of the study to the board.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 11

Transportation

This chapter reviews transportation in the Spring Independent School District (SISD) in four sections:

- A. Policies and Procedures
- B. Bus Fleet Management
- C. Salary and Wage Practices
- D. Maintenance Facilities, Supplies, and Equipment

BACKGROUND

State law authorizes each Texas school district to provide student transportation to and from school and for extracurricular activities such as after-school athletic and academic events.

Under state law, each district qualifies for a state-funded transportation subsidy, called an allotment. Transportation allotments are intended to fund transportation for regular and special education students to and from school and for vocational students to and from remote class sites. Regular students are defined as those students attending regular education classes in neighborhood schools.

Specifically, the regular education transportation allotment provides funding for every student transported to school from two or more miles away. Regular education students who live within two miles must arrange their own transportation.

Districts receive the allotments based on a legislated formula. This formula is based on "linear density," the ratio of the average number of regular students transported daily to the daily number of miles operated. Applying this ratio, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) assigns each school to one of seven school district groups and allocates dollars based on where the district falls in the groupings.

SISD, assigned to group four, receives a reimbursement of \$1.25 per mile for regular education students, \$1.89 for career and technology, or vocational, students, and \$1.08 for special education students (**Exhibit 11-1**).

Exhibit 11-1
SISD Reimbursement for Transportation Programs
1995-96

Program	Rate of Reimbursement Per Mile	Total
Regular	\$1.25	\$633,603
Special	\$1.08	\$335,695
Career and Technology	\$1.89	\$73,782

Total	NA	\$1,043,080
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Source: TEA State Report, 1995-96 NA = Not applicable.

In each district, transportation costs exceeding the state allotment must be funded from local funds. SISD provides transportation to students in program categories including:

- Regular/standard.
- Special education programs.
- Vocational programs
- Hazardous: transportation for students living in areas where walking to school would be hazardous.
- Bilingual.
- English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Tender Loving Care (TLC): pregnant girls attending school one-half day.
- Teen parents.
- Early childhood program.
- Mid-day pre-kindergarten.
- Pre-first-grade transfers.
- Summer school.
- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs.
- Extracurricular activities such as athletics, band, and choir.

Transportation for certain programs, such as the regular/standard, special education, bilingual, and vocational programs, are partially funded by the state. Other programs fully or almost fully funded by the district include extracurricular, after-school activities, and busing for students who live within one-quarter mile of their schools and whose walks to school are judged hazardous.

CURRENT SITUATION

With 188 employees (**Exhibit 11-2**), SISD's Transportation Department schedules and routes 164 buses 12 hours daily in addition to night and weekend student trips. Department staff also maintain the district's vehicle fleet.

The bus system's average daily ridership exceeds 14,000 of the district's nearly 21,000 students. SISD buses deliver students to schools on a three-, four- or five-bell schedule, meaning that the same bus may pick up students attending three or more different schools and then deliver them in time for different school starting times.

The department trains potential driver employees to obtain the Commercial Driver's license. Applicants take written driving tests, mandatory theory classes, and behind-the-wheel training. In addition, applicants must pass criminal and driving background reviews, a physical examination, and tests for illegal drug usage.

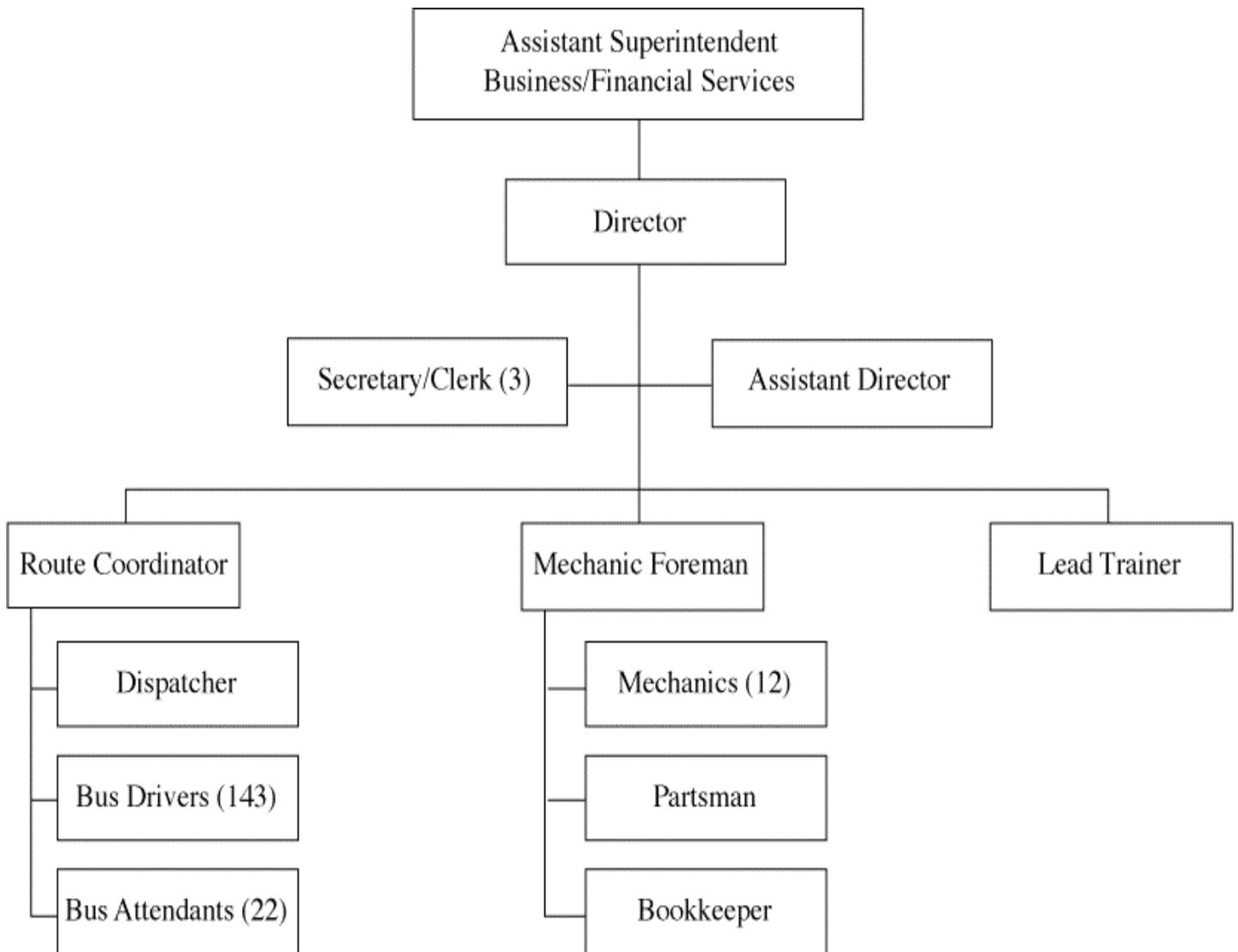
Exhibit 11-2
SISD Transportation Department Staffing
1996-97

Position	Number of Employees
Director	1
Assistant director	1
Mechanic foreman	1
Secretary/clerk	4
Route Coordinator	1
Partsman	1
Mechanic C-13	9
Mechanic C-8	3
Lead Trainer	1
Dispatcher	1
Bus Drivers	143
Bus Attendants	22
Total	188

Source: SISD Transportation Department

Exhibit 11-3 shows the department's organization.

Exhibit 11-3
SISD Transportation Department Organization
1996-97



Source: SISD Transportation Department.

Chapter 11

Transportation

A. Policies and Procedures

FINDING

SISD buses all students who live within two miles of school, a practice not required or fully funded by the state. In fact, the only state funding available for such busing is intended to cover students who live one-quarter of a mile from school and whose walks are considered "hazardous." A hazardous rating could be based on a lack of sidewalks or the presence of railroad tracks and high-speed roads between a student's home and school.

The TEA provides districts a maximum hazardous busing allotment equivalent to 10 percent of the district's allotment for regular student transportation.

SISD's board receives demographic transportation updates about twice a year, but no board committee routinely addresses transportation issues.

In addition, the board operates without a "transportation plan of action," a working document for setting and reaching long-term goals related to service levels, the district's physical plant, vehicle purchase cycles, and other challenges such as growth in student enrollment.

District transportation needs are not included in the district's planning and budgeting cycle. Opportunities may exist for linking transportation directly to a revised strategic planning effort.

Recommendation 90:

The Transportation Department should prepare a five-year plan that evaluates the district's changing transportation needs and sets objectives to meet them.

In addition, the Transportation Department should provide periodic short-term position papers and/or formal briefings concerning its objectives, difficulties, and other relevant data to the administration and board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1 The director of Transportation develops a five-year plan which is	January
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reviewed by the assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services and the superintendent.	1998
2. The board assigns a committee to review transportation issues.	January 1998
3. Transportation is included as an issue in the development of the next update of the Five-Year Education Plan.	April 1998
4. The board committee sets a schedule to review transportation issues.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented at no cost.

FINDING

In 1997, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3249, making the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) responsible for regulating the placement of advertising on public school buses. DPS rules are expected by early 1998, but no legal barrier forbids the placing of advertising on school buses at this time.

Several Texas school districts have explored advertising opportunities. Lake Worth and Grapevine-Colleyville ISDs have sold advertising space on their buses and realized revenues of \$5,000 and \$25,000, respectively.

Northside ISD conducted a cost/benefit analysis in June 1997 that identified potential advertising revenues exceeding \$100,000 per year. Similar revenues may be possible in SISD.

Citing safety concerns, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, National Association for Pupil Transportation, National School Transportation Association, School Transportation Section of the National Safety Council, School Bus Manufacturer Institute, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the National Transportation Safety Board have taken positions opposing school bus advertising.

Recommendation 91:

Consider leasing commercial advertising space on SISD school buses.

Commercial advertising on buses may provide a long-term revenue source. A cost/benefit study should consider relevant DPS regulations; possible safety hazards; and First Amendment issues concerning the

content and subject matter of any advertising. In addition, the district should collect and consider public opinion on the subject, possibly by holding at least one public hearing.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Transportation prepares a working paper detailing DPS's regulations and the possible costs and benefits of advertising.	March 1998
2. The assistant superintendent of Business and Financial Services presents the paper to the board subcommittee. The subcommittee provides policy guidance.	April 1998
3. The board subcommittee presents a draft proposal to the board, which solicits public comment through a public hearing.	May 1998
4. The specifications, policy, and any bid procedure are approved by the board.	June 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on estimates from the Northside ISD, SISD should expect revenues of a similar amount.

Recommendation					
1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	
Lease advertising on buses	0	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

Chapter 11

Transportation

B. Bus Fleet and Management

CURRENT SITUATION

Safety is the bedrock priority of every school district's busing program. Driving a school bus is more demanding than driving an automobile or even a large truck. Extraordinary training is necessary to protect student riders and the general public.

Driving a school bus requires the highest level of Texas driver's license, the commercial driver's license, and also requires many hours of instructor/student driving. State law requires a minimum of 20 hours of instruction, while the U.S. government recommends 40 hours.

FINDING

In 1994, SISD's director of Transportation led the development and implementation of a state cooperative training course offered by the Texas Association for Pupil Transportation and Texas A&M University, called "Train the Trainer."

The five-day course, costing \$400 per participant, follows a detailed manual and provides day and night behind-the-wheel instruction, leading to a range of driving skills not duplicated in most districts.

This course has helped Texas school districts to offer unprecedented, intensive instructor training. By July 1997, 300 instructors had received this training.

COMMENDATION

SISD spearheaded the development of a behind-the-wheel training program that provides specialized training to all Texas school districts.

FINDING

Exhibits 11-4 and 11-5 compare the district's transportation costs with those of nearby school districts.

Exhibit 11-4
SISD and Peer Districts*
Transportation Costs Per Mile for Regular Education Students
1995-96

District	
Regular	
Program	
Galena Park	\$2.57
Katy	\$2.55
Alief	\$2.14
Cypress-Fairbanks	\$2.12
Goose Creek	\$1.94
Spring	\$1.93
Klein	\$1.85
Aldine	\$1.81
Spring Branch	\$1.81
Humble	\$1.57

*Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1995-96. *Peer districts selected by SISD Transportation Department.*

Exhibit 11-5
SISD and Peer School Districts*
Transportation Costs Per Mile for Special Program Students
1995-96

District	
Special	
Programs	
Cypress-Fairbanks	\$2.56
Galena Park	\$2.44
Spring	\$2.36
Alief	\$2.24

Klein	\$2.07
Aldine	\$1.82
Katy	\$1.66
Spring Branch	\$1.70
Humble	\$1.62
Goose Creek	\$1.34

*Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1995-96. *Peer districts selected by SISD Transportation Department.*

SISD's cost of \$1.93 per regular program student is lower than the average cost of \$2.04 among peer districts. The \$2.36 per-student cost for SISD special program students exceeds the peer district average of \$1.94.

Over the years, SISD has bused all its students, exceeding the minimum requirements of state and federal law. During this review, parents and other taxpayers did not appear to be fully aware of the ongoing costs and benefits associated with this program.

In short, the review team found that the district provides almost \$1 million a year in non-required school transportation that is not funded by any outside sources. Reducing or eliminating these transportation commitments could raise concerns about safety, security, educational opportunities, and extracurricular participation. Yet a detailed analysis might be beneficial to the board and greater community.

For instance, "activity" busing--the practice of transporting middle- and high-school students home two hours after school, generally after extracurricular activities--costs SISD about \$100,000 a year. Despite a lack of state funding for such busing, district officials said the program ensures student safety.

Some staff and parents have urged the district to provide "activity" busing at elementary schools, a step that would cost SISD an estimated \$100,000 more a year.

To date, SISD has not enacted formal measures to determine the need or assess the value of additional transportation commitments.

Recommendation 92:

Regularly assess the cost of non-required transportation programs.

Through the current plan update and further meetings with parents, especially those involved with the extracurricular activities and programs, SISD should explore opportunities for cost reduction and inform parents of the cost of providing these transportation services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business/Financial Services identify groups of parents from throughout SISD with children in one or more extracurricular programs.	September 1997
2. In concert with the executive director of Board/Community Services, the director of Transportation sends information to these parents and convenes small group meetings to explore cost issues.	October 1997
3. Information is published in the district's publications that describe each program and its cost to the district.	Fall 1997
4. The board holds two workshop meetings, one at each high school, inviting SISD residents to voice their ideas on this issue. The director of Transportation provides information on the data collected.	January 1998
5. The board takes appropriate action.	February 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the ongoing assessment of program cost reductions.

FINDING

Due to a lack of adequate first-line supervisors, the director of Transportation must conduct about a third of all staff and driver evaluations. The assistant director, route coordinator and shop foreman evaluate the remaining positions.

To ensure safety and employee performance, the drivers and staff need direct supervision and regular formal appraisals of their work. In some districts, a first-line supervisor or driver foreman conducts periodic employee evaluations and ongoing supervision.

While the district employs a foreman who works closely with mechanics, SISD has no foreman positions providing first-line management to drivers. The assistant director shares certain supervisory duties with the director, but generally performs as a foreman by riding buses, and appraising

drivers, an expensive investment that still does not provide the amount of needed day-to-day supervision.

Recommendation 93:

Eliminate the assistant director position and create two foreman positions.

This change would give the department two first-line supervisors who would manage the day-to-day driver operations and free the director to deal with departmental issues.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The director of Transportation recommends elimination of the assistant director position and the creation of the additional foreman positions to the superintendent.	September 1997
2. The superintendent approves changes.	October 1997
3. The director develops a job description for the additional foreman positions and advertises.	November 1997
4. Candidates are interviewed and individuals hired to fill the additional foreman positions.	December 1997

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating the assistant director position (salary \$58,000) and creating first-line foreman positions (a net salary increase of \$15,000) will save the district \$43,000 a year.

Recommendation					
1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	
Position eliminated, two positions added	\$43,000	\$43,000	\$43,000	\$43,000	\$43,000

Chapter 11

Transportation

C. Salary and Wage Practices

BACKGROUND

SISD's mechanics may earn certification to demonstrate their levels of technical capability.

National programs and tests are available for mechanics to achieve greater levels of technical proficiency. Districts benefit because vehicles are out of service less frequently. In addition, districts with certified mechanics are safeguarded in case of potential liability if a vehicle fails to perform properly.

FINDING

While the SISD Transportation Department informally urges mechanics to become certified, SISD lacks a systematic mechanic training program to address technical changes in the industry, and provides no monetary incentive for mechanics to stay up to speed in their craft.

The district reimburses the cost of certification exams, but the tests are demanding and must be taken every three years to maintain certification. SISD mechanics told the review team the lack of a financial incentive reduced their interest in pursuing certification.

A lack of certified mechanics may have negative effects on the district in the form of litigation due to error or accident.

In May 1997, a Houston TV station aired a report questioning the road-worthiness of SISD's bus fleet. The report drew upon SISD safety checklists submitted to DPS. Each month, most districts submit required checklists for each vehicle inspected for state safety certification *after* necessary repairs have been identified and made. Prior to the TV inquiry, however, SISD routinely submitted its checklists *before* repairs were identified and performed--a practice that may have overstated safety problems. This practice was reversed shortly after the TV report.

Compared to other area districts, SISD maintains a low ratio of buses to mechanics (**Exhibit 11-6**). This could be viewed as an indication of efficiency, except for the fact that SISD mechanics must tend to an aging fleet. In many cases, SISD buses require parts that are no longer manufactured. Another difficulty is that most of the buses have gasoline

engines, which have twice as many moving parts as diesel engines, and generally require more day-to-day attention.

Exhibit 11-6
Ratio of Buses to Mechanics
for SISD and Selected School District Fleets

District	Number of Mechanics	Number of Buses	Ratio of Buses to Mechanics
Aldine	18	484	26.8
Alief	9	220	24.0
Fort Bend	13	303	23.3
Katy	13	225	17.3
Klein	12	192	16.0
Spring	12	164	13.6
Humble	11	142	12.9
Cypress-Fairbanks	42	461	11.0
Spring Branch	26	217	8.4

Source: Spring Branch ISD Transportation Program Survey 1997, data provided by the listed district.

Some Houston-area districts offer pay bonuses to mechanics who complete professional certification, off the job, through the nationally recognized National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence. A series of six examinations leads to certification and recertification and requires participating mechanics to stay on the cutting edge of technology.

Recommendation 94:

Provide salary incentives to encourage mechanics to become certified through the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence's vehicle technician certification program.

As an incentive, the district should include completion of the certification and recertification programs as a major component of the district's performance standard pay policy, which gives department directors a way to reward individual employee performance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1. The director of Transportation develops a standard for performance pay. One of the standards should reflect a timeline for certification.	September 1997
2. The standards are approved by the assistant superintendent for Business and Financial Services and superintendent.	October 1997
3. The director of Transportation provides the staff the full standards and testing schedules.	November 1997 - January 1998
4. Attainment of the standards places SISD mechanics in the performance pay schedule.	November 1997-2000

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming district mechanics achieve certification by 1999-2000 upon completion of six required tests, a 50-cent hourly stipend would boost costs by \$1,040 per certified mechanic (50 cents X 2,080 annual work hours). The fiscal note below assumes that two thirds of the district's mechanics will achieve certification by 1999-2000.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Provide stipend for certification	0	(\$5,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)

FINDING

SISD mechanics, with the exception of one long-time employee at the top of the wage scale, are paid about average for district mechanics in the area (**Exhibit 11-7**).

**Exhibit 11-7
Most Skilled Vehicle Mechanic Wages
SISD and Selected School Districts
1996-97**

District	Lowest Pay	Average Pay	Highest Pay
Spring	\$11.00	\$13.75	\$22.27*
Klein	\$14.65	\$17.47	\$20.57
Cypress-Fairbanks	\$13.81	\$17.16	\$19.48
Average	\$11.78	\$14.18	\$18.33

Alief	\$12.96	\$13.38	\$18.08
Aldine	\$10.90	\$12.74	\$17.92
Spring Branch	\$9.74	\$12.24	\$15.24
Katy	\$9.85	\$12.54	\$14.78

(*) Only one employee at this level.

Source: Spring Branch ISD Transportation Program Survey, 1997, Pasadena ISD Wage Survey 1997, and data provided by the listed district.

SISD bus drivers are well compensated compared to drivers in other area districts (**Exhibit 11-8**).

Exhibit 11-8
Driver Wages in Houston-Area School Districts
1996-97

Districts	Lowest Pay	Pay at 10 Years Experience	Highest Pay
Spring	\$9.25	\$12.17	\$17.33
Klein	\$9.00	\$12.50	\$16.00
Spring Branch	\$9.00	\$13.48	\$15.99
Katy	\$10.19	varies	\$14.78
Average	\$9.41	\$11.98	\$14.64
Houston	\$9.13	varies	\$14.47
Cypress-Fairbanks	\$10.11	varies	\$13.89
Humble	\$9.96	\$10.98	\$12.16
Aldine	\$8.93	\$10.79	\$12.50

Source: Spring Branch ISD Transportation Program Survey, 1997, Pasadena ISD; Wage Survey 1997, data provided by the listed districts.

According to district records, 85 percent of SISD's drivers and attendants work 40 or more hours a week—a fact due largely to the district's 12-hour daily bus route scheduling.

Numerous Texas school districts maintain school bell schedules allowing the employment of part-time bus drivers and driver attendants. Different school starting and ending times allow buses to go to more than one

school each morning and afternoon, and drivers are not on the job at mid-day.

Most districts use a two- or three-bell system to stagger bus schedules. SISD, as mentioned above, runs buses on three-, four-, and even five-bell schedules, taking into account after-school "activity" busing. As a result of such frequent runs, SISD drivers accrue many more hours than drivers in districts with fewer bells. In effect, SISD drivers are full-time employees.

District staff said the multiple bell system was developed to enhance transportation services to the community. Other reasons cited included problems with bus driver turnover and a higher rate of accidents attributed to the employment of less-experienced drivers. The multiple bell approach has stabilized the workforce by allowing the hiring of full-time drivers. However, given its higher pay rates and longer daily hours, SISD may be paying a premium for this service.

Recommendation 95:

Study and revise alternative bell schedules using available computer software.

SISD could model school bus schedules and determine an optimum balance of the number of buses, employees, bell schedules, and hours of operation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director contracts with the routing and scheduling software company EDULOG.	October 1997
2. EDULOG provides the study.	November 1997
3. The director provides the board committee the results, with a recommended revision strategy.	December 1997
4. The board adopts a revised schedule, effective fall 1998.	January 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The district's transportation software vendor, EDULOG, provides such computer modeling for \$8,000.

If a two- or three-bell schedule proves to be optimum, moving to part-time employees, fewer routes, more students per bus, and shorter hours of

operation could save \$100,000 per year. The fiscal impact conservatively assumes savings of \$50,000 a year.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Revise bell schedules	(\$8,000)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

Chapter 11

Transportation

D. Maintenance Facilities, Supplies and Equipment

FINDING

In 1996, SISD's Purchasing and Transportation Departments formed an interlocal government cooperative for the purchase and disposal of tires. The cooperative includes Spring, Alvin, Aldine, Cleveland, Crosby, Friendswood, Huffman, Humble, and Katy ISDs. SISD provides administration for the program.

The cooperative has been instrumental in obtaining low prices for bus and truck tires and creating an orderly process for the disposal of used tires. No overhead is associated with the cooperative, and each participating district receives a quantity discount better than the Texas State Purchasing cooperative for many tires.

Participating districts use many truck and bus tires of similar sizes. Quantity purchases through the cooperative have led to discounts on the most common tires. In addition, the cooperative has helped districts establish a market for used tires, which are sold to sand and gravel truckers who depend on retread tires. SISD has received up to \$50 for each used tire sold through the cooperative.

The purchase and disposal of tires saves SISD \$7,000 per year, and total savings to participating districts is \$60,000 per year.

COMMENDATION

The tire cooperative provides an opportunity for districts to purchase tires at a discounted rate and has created a market for the lawful sale and disposal of used bus and truck tires.

FINDING

Most urban and suburban Texas school districts own drive-through brush washes to keep vehicles clean. SISD's 200 vehicles are washed by hand by a mechanic's helper about once monthly. The district has no automated brush wash.

The cost of washing a single bus by hand exceeds \$10 in labor alone. Washing the vehicles once a month costs \$24,000 a year. Automated washing of a bus generally costs \$1 a bus, including labor, water and soap, or \$2,400 a year.

A survey of neighboring school districts yielded no immediate interest in providing bus washing services to SISD. A survey of commercial truck/bus washes resulted in a lowest price of \$0.40 per foot or \$16 per bus, compared to a cost of \$1 per bus.

Recommendation 96:

Purchase or lease-purchase a three-brush automatic vehicle wash.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The directors of Transportation and Purchasing develop specifications for a facility, review the specifications with the assistant superintendent for business/financial services, and present them to the board for approval.	September 1997
2. The bids are advertised.	October 1997
3. The bids are received and reviewed, and a recommendation is made to the board.	January 1998
4. The assistant superintendent for Business/Financial Services recommends the most cost-effective means for financing.	January 1998
5. Construction begins.	March 1998
6. The wash is built and used for washing buses.	May 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated cost of building a washing facility would be about \$100,000. The cost of operating the wash would be approximately \$2,400 per year. Reducing mechanic help time used for bus washing by 2,400 hours at the rate of \$10 per hour would result in annual savings of \$24,000. Net annual savings are \$21,600 (\$24,000 - \$2,400).

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Purchase three-brush vehicle wash	(\$100,000)	\$21,600	\$21,600	\$21,600	\$21,600

FINDING

The Transportation Department purchases more than 100,000 gallons a year of 93 octane premium-grade unleaded gasoline for its gasoline-powered fleet.

Most districts use 87-octane fuel that costs about 10 cents per gallon less on the average. There is no scientific evidence that higher-octane gasoline improves the performance of school buses or other school vehicles.

Recommendation 97:

Substitute 87 octane for 93 octane gasoline.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Transportation authorizes purchase of 87 octane gasoline.	September 1997
2. The 93 octane is mixed with the 87 octane gasoline.	October 1997
3. The district purchases only 87 octane gasoline.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The purchase of regular unleaded gasoline will save the district \$18,800 a year, assuming a 10-cent per gallon price spread between gasoline grades.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Purchase only regular unleaded gasoline	\$18,800	\$18,800	\$18,800	\$18,800	\$18,800

FINDING

The district purchases buses from the accumulation of surplus funds remaining in the transportation budget at the end of the year. The district is relying on 20-year-old buses to provide exacting service on four- and five-bell schedules.

SISD currently has a fleet of 164 buses. To replace these buses on a 15 year cycle would require the district to purchase eleven buses per year. The replacement of buses on a 20 year cycle would mean purchasing 8-9 buses per year. The current practice of purchase 3-4 buses per years assumes a 41 year replacement cycle - a clearly unacceptable cycle on any calculation.

The district buys three to four buses a year at an average cost of \$50,000. The district is not purchasing buses in quantity to avoid a repeat of a purchasing crisis experienced during the 1980s.

The district's Transportation Management Bus Maintenance/Replacement policy states SISD shall "generally follow a plan of replacement of buses when they are no longer suitable for daily use and of retirement of buses when they are no longer suitable for spare buses." The policy also states that buses shall be removed from service based on factors including age, condition, and accumulated mileage.

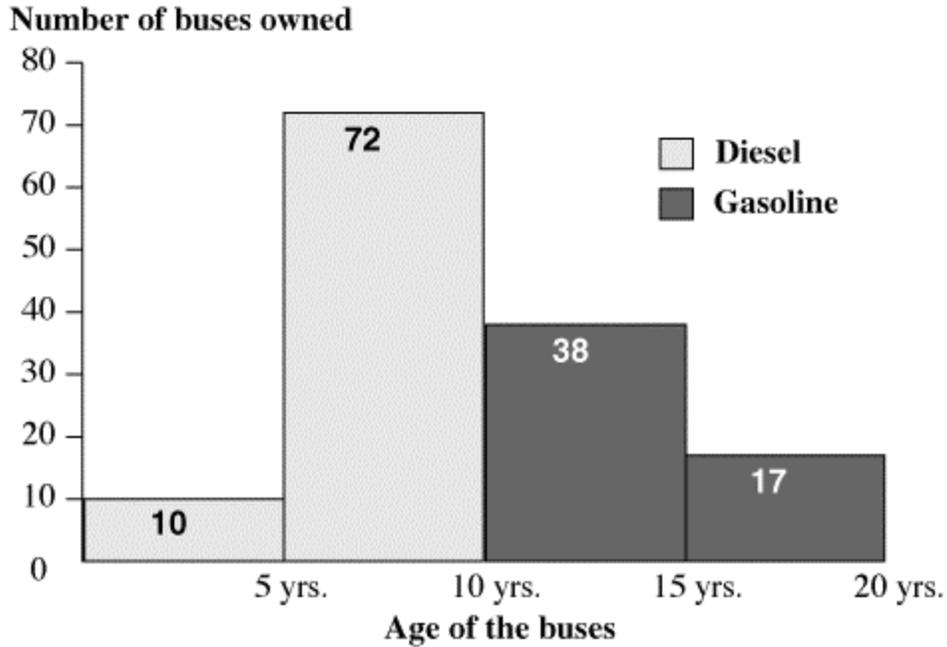
In practice, however, a district official said the policy seems too vague, and has not been followed. In particular, the policy does not spell out timeframes for acquiring vehicles and lacks a directive committing the district to a firm purchasing cycle.

By deferring bus purchases, the district is incurring extraordinary safety risks and escalating maintenance and repair costs. Lease-purchase options allow districts to reduce costs or spread them out over time. Such arrangements may lead to reduced interest rates, because bus vendors are assured of maintaining a customer for the period of the lease/purchase.

Of SISD's fleet of 164 buses, 57 are gasoline-powered, with the remainder being diesel-fueled. The district has not evaluated the safety risks of operating gasoline buses versus diesel buses. According to the Harris County fire marshal, however, gasoline-powered vehicles face a risk of a fire or explosion 200 times greater than that for diesel vehicles.

Because of the fleet's age, the district has held on to an extra inventory of parts worth approximately \$50,000 to support buses that are out of production. **Exhibit 11-9** details the district's dependence on older, high-mileage, gas-powered buses.

**Exhibit 11-9
SISD Gas-Fueled Buses**



SOURCE: SISD Transportation Department, 1997.

SISD also has not evaluated the costs and benefits of gasoline versus diesel-powered buses. According to industry and SISD data, however, a diesel bus averages nine miles per gallon (mpg) versus less than four mpg for a gasoline-powered bus (**Exhibit 11-10**).

**Exhibit 11-10
Cost of Operating a
Gasoline Powered Bus Versus a Diesel Powered Bus**

Comparison Categories	Diesel Bus	
	Gasoline Bus	Diesel Bus
Type of bus	1979 IHC 345 V8	1997 T 444E V8
Miles per gallon	3.8	9.0
Average price of fuel/gallon	66 cents	57 cents
Average miles driven/year	12,000	12,000
Gallons of fuel used/year	3,158	1,333
Total fuel cost/bus/year	\$2,084	\$760
Lifetime fuel cost (20 year life)	\$41,686	\$15,197

Source: Spring Independent School District, 1997.

Thus for each gasoline bus the district uses on a daily basis, the annual fuel cost difference is \$1,325 over and above diesel, or more than \$25,000 per bus over its useful life. In SISD, that useful life has been about 20 years. Other districts replace buses after 15 years, while many commercial bus companies replace buses every seven years.

Thirty-seven gasoline Type I vehicles ran daily routes in SISD during 1996-97. Over 20 years of service, the total lost revenue attributable to these buses due to the difference in fuel costs alone is almost \$1 million.

Moreover, the cost of maintenance for gasoline buses is twice that of diesel buses, or \$1,400 per year per bus (**Exhibit 11-11**).

Exhibit 11-11
Maintenance Cost Comparison of a Gasoline -Powered Bus
versus a Diesel Powered Bus for a 12,000 Mile Service

Maintenance item	Gasoline V-8	Diesel V-8
Spark plugs	\$13.00	N/A
Rotor	\$5.00	N/A
Distributor cap	\$16.00	N/A
Wire kit	\$30.00	N/A
Perlux electrical kit	\$45.30	N/A
Carburetor cleaner	\$2.00	N/A
Replace or rebuild carburetor every 24,000 miles	\$90.00	N/A
Engine degreaser	\$2.30	N/A
DCV valve	\$1.30	N/A
Ignition coil	\$22.40	N/A
Exhaust repair every 24,000 miles	\$450.00	N/A
Labor-tune-up	\$106.00	N/A
Labor-exhaust	\$30.00	N/A

Total	\$813.30	N/A
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Source: Transportation Department, SISD 1997

For each gasoline bus used on a daily basis, approximately \$1,400 in additional costs are realized a year. For the 37 buses in service daily during 1996-97, \$50,800 a year was lost.

As suggested by **Exhibit 11-12**, savings from maintenance and fuel over a 15-year life will almost pay for the \$50,000 purchase price of a new bus.

Exhibit 11-12
Estimated Savings from a 71-Passenger Diesel Bus
Over a Gasoline Powered Bus

Year		
	Maintenance Savings	Fuel Savings
1	\$1,710	\$1,310
2	1,761	1,349
3	1,814	1,399
4	1,869	1,432
5	1,925	1,475
6	1,565	1,519
7	1,505	1,564
8	1,439	1,611
9	1,368	1,660
10	1,292	1,709
11	1,210	1,760
12	1,121	1,813
13	1,027	1,868
14	925	1,924
15	817	1,982
Total	\$21,348	\$22,811

Source: Hemphill Bus Sales Inc., Blue Bird Bus Company

The continued use of gasoline-powered buses on daily routes appears to preclude the purchase of safer and more efficient diesel buses.

Recommendation 98:

Implement and fund a long-term vehicle replacement plan that systematically replaces gasoline-fueled buses with diesel buses.

While improving the district fleet represents a significant investment, as detailed below, the alternative of continuing to patch old buses and pay escalating maintenance and operation costs will likely lead to the same significant costs or more-without the district acquiring the new buses needed to maintain a vital commitment to safely transporting students to school and extracurricular events. By implementing an orderly bus replacement plan, SISD also will no longer have to depend on year-end surplus funds to pay for an inconsistent number of new buses every year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The director of Transportation and the assistant superintendent for Business/Financial Services recommend a long-term vehicle replacement process to immediately replace 37 gas-fueled buses with diesel buses and to initiate an orderly vehicle replacement program beginning in 1998-99.	September 1997
2. The assistant superintendent recommends a budget for the purchase or lease/purchase to replace 37 gasoline buses used on a daily basis as well as a plan for orderly replacement of buses beginning in 1998-99.	October 1997
3. The superintendent presents the replacement plan for board approval.	November 1997
4. Upon board approval, purchases are initiated.	November 1997
5. The district receives and places the 37 diesel buses in service.	April 1998
6. The director of Transportation implements the ongoing replacement plan.	September 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

To replace the 37 gas-fueled buses would cost \$1,850,000 (\$50,000 per bus x 37 buses).

Assuming a 15-year replacement cycle and the purchase of 11 buses per year, the district would need to budget \$550,000 annually for bus

replacements. Currently, about \$225,000 is being used for bus replacements on average each year, suggesting an additional cost of \$325,000 per year. If each bus was able to achieve maintenance and fuel savings of \$3,000 for the first five years (**Exhibit 11-12**) annual savings would equal \$33,000 per year (11 buses x \$3,000). In the second year, savings would rise to \$66,000 since the district would own 22 new buses, and savings would approximate \$99,000 in the third year and \$120,000 in the fourth year when all 37 gasoline buses are eliminated from the fleet.

SISD has annually been adding from one to eight buses a year since 1991-92, or an average replacement rate of about 6 percent. While industry experts would recommend annually replacing 10 percent of a district's fleet, SISD's successful preventive maintenance program allows for a replacement rate of 8 percent a year, or approximately 11 buses a year.

Recommendation	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Fund long-term bus replacement plan	(\$325,000)	(\$325,000)	(\$325,000)	(\$325,000)	(\$325,000)
Fuel and maintenance savings	\$33,000	\$66,000	\$99,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
Net Cost	(\$292,000)	(\$259,000)	(\$226,000)	(\$205,000)	(\$205,000)

Chapter 12

Safety and Security

This chapter discusses SISD's safety and security measures and is organized as follows:

- A. SISD's Police Department
- B. Safety

Chapter 12

Safety and Security

A. SISD's Police Department

BACKGROUND

One of the most critical issues of our day is the need to provide safe and secure school campuses. Children have a fundamental right to be free from harm as they try to learn, and teachers and other school employees deserve to know that they can count on a safe environment as they perform one of the most important jobs in Texas today-preparing our children to build the future.

Over the past decade, urban crime problems such as gangs have spread to many of the nation's schools, both urban and suburban. In the past, school districts relied upon existing law enforcement agencies to provide assistance. Those agencies, however, do not have adequate personnel to effectively patrol city streets in and around schools in major districts, or to provide the level of service needed to safeguard students, employees, and district assets. To address the growing crime problem, many districts have established their own security forces, often using sworn peace officers.

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD's board authorized the establishment of an armed police department on August 21, 1990. The creation of the police department was viewed as a proactive effort to provide a safe learning environment as the Spring area became more urbanized. As of the 1996-97 school year, the SISD Police Department (SPD) consisted of 18 licensed Texas police officers.

SPD employs police officers who are licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education, a state commission that sets hiring and training standards for all police agencies in the state. State laws require that all law enforcement officers be licensed through this commission before they are employed by a police agency. All SISD officers have previous experience with city, sheriff, university, or school district law enforcement agencies and receive a minimum of 40 hours of training annually.

SISD's administration began the establishment of SPD by hiring a chief of police, who in turn developed a police officer job description and a policy manual. Officers were hired after the completion of the manual.

SPD has the following employees (**Exhibit 12-1**).

Exhibit 12-1
Table of Human Resources of SISD Police Department

Rank	Number
Chief	1
Sergeant	1
Police officers	12
Dispatchers	4
Secretary	1

Source: Police 1997 assignment records

The sergeant is a working supervisor who performs police duties and provides supervision as needed and when the police chief is not available. The dispatchers also are licensed officers. New officers are assigned to the dispatcher position so they can learn department policies and procedures before they perform duties involving students, staff, and the general public.

During 1995-96, SPD investigated 558 criminal offenses (**Exhibit 12-2**). The officers also observed 178 violations of the student code of conduct and referred the offenders to campus administration for disciplinary action. No criminal charges were filed in these cases. Most of the criminal offenses occurred at the secondary schools. This can be attributed in part to the higher volume of students and staff at those campuses.

Exhibit 12-2
Location of Criminal Offenses Within SISD
1995-1996

Location	Number of Offenses
High school	297
Middle school	99
Non-campus*	80
Elementary school	56
Athletic facility	26

*Non-campus locations are those not on SISD property, such as traffic citations and incidents involving school buses away from district property.

Source: SISD 1995-1996 police department annual report.

Theft is the most common criminal occurrence, with 118 offenses reported in 1995-96, followed by assault offenses and criminal mischief offenses with 66 offenses and 53 offenses, respectively (**Exhibit 12-3**).

Exhibit 12-3
SISD Criminal Offenses by Type of Offense
1995-96

Type of Offense	Number of Offenses
Theft	118
Assault	66
Criminal mischief	53
Trespassing	46
Disorderly conduct	45
Truancy	43
Alcohol violations	36
Drug violations	34
Disruptions	23
Weapons violations	11
Burglary	9
Arson	3
Other/miscellaneous	71
Total	558

Source: SISD 1995-1996 SPD annual report.

Recent state legislation requires all counties with populations over 125,000 to establish a memorandum of understanding between all school districts and the county juvenile justice system to provide educational services for students who are expelled from their regular schools.

SISD entered into an agreement with Harris County Juvenile Probation Department to provide funding for eight expelled students at a cost of \$8,500 per student. That department contracts with private schools to continue the education of students who are convicted by a juvenile judge,

if the judge makes attendance of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) a condition of the convicted youth's probation. Any funds sent by SISD to the probation department that are not spent on students expelled from SISD will be returned at the end of the school year.

SISD assigned the monitoring and management of the JJAEP to the office of the superintendent.

SPD's stated goal is to insure the safety and well-being of SISD students, staff, and property. This goal is accomplished through a combination of officers assigned to school facilities, officers assigned to specific tasks, and officers who conduct roving patrols of school facilities in police cars.

FINDING

SPD's chief of police is supervised by the executive director of Facility Management/Security. The police chief's office is located in the same building as the executive director's. This location ensures proper management of the department and enhances communications between the department and school administration.

The police chief created, and annually updates, a policy manual that prescribes each officer's duties and directs officer conduct. The police department policy manual is detailed and comprehensive, covering subjects such as expected attendance, on-duty and off-duty personal behavior, use of firearms, and use of force. Many small police departments in Texas do not have adequate written policies and procedural guidelines to direct officers in performing their duties in an ethical manner.

COMMENDATION

SISD's Police Department communicates effectively with district administrators and provides detailed written guidelines and policies for its police officers.

FINDING

SPD's primary duties are to prevent crime and disturbances, protect property, expedite traffic flow, enforce parking regulation, investigate criminal activity, and prosecute criminal behavior. Officers are not assigned to office duties within the schools and they are not assigned to duties such as receptionist. Police department activities do not include the supervision of students and does not include the discipline of students. Professional educators perform and administer discipline, and the police department becomes involved only when behavior has become criminal and needs to be reported to and prosecuted by the criminal justice system.

The Police department has a police officer-activity-documentation system in place that records all of the activities performed each day by the individual officers. This activity is reported to the police dispatcher who records the activity in the police computer program. The officers also maintain a personal written activity log for verification. This reporting allows the department administrator to properly schedule and assign officers and supervise them in the field 24 hours per day with a minimum number of supervisors.

The review team observed eight police officers performing their duties and interviewed them concerning their duties and responsibilities. Officer interviews indicated that the officers are well-trained and knowledgeable. All of the officers spoke highly of the school district and of SPD's supervision.

COMMENDATION

SPD has created the policies needed to insure that police employees devote a majority their time to the effective policing of the school district.

Human Resources

CURRENT SITUATION

Exhibit 12-4 shows how SPD officers are assigned throughout the district.

**Exhibit 12-4
SISD Deployment of Officers
1996-1997**

Position/ Duty	Number of Officers	Campus/ Facility
Chief of Police	1	Headquarters
Dispatchers	4	
Police Patrol	2	Spring High School
Police Patrol	2	Westfield High School
Police Patrol	1	Wunsche School
Truant Officer	1	Mobile Patrol
Courier	1	
Roving Police Patrol	6	

Source: SPD assignment records.

Each high school has two officers assigned to it. One officer patrols inside the building while the other officer is primarily responsible for patrolling the outside of the school, including the parking lot, and for controlling traffic. One officer is assigned to the Wunsche School alternative campus and patrols the school's interior. The officer is assigned to this campus because of the presence of students with behavioral problems.

One officer is responsible for following up on student absenteeism by patrolling areas where truants are found during school hours and working with the parents of children not attending school.

Another officer collects cash from school cafeterias and deposits the funds in the bank. This position was created when a private courier service was found to be more expensive than the use of an in-house police employee.

The remaining six officers provide a 24-hour roving patrol of all school facilities. These officers patrol the middle schools, the elementary schools, other district facilities, and the areas surrounding these facilities. These officers also can be dispatched in response to a major disaster, such as a fire or building collapse. The communications center, which is discussed in detail later in this chapter, has monitoring equipment and 911 access to facilitate such response.

Officers are added to SPD only after a job description is written and reviewed by district administration. No officers are assigned to facilities such as the Administration Building and other facilities with minimal security needs.

Exhibit 12-5 compares SPD with a sample of other departments in the area of officer-to-student ratios.

Exhibit 12-5
Officer to Student Ratios

District	Student Body Size	Officer to Student Ratio
Texarkana	5,500	1:688
Beaumont	20,000	1:1,053
Spring	20,800	1:1,111
Klein	29,000	1:1,318
Spring Branch	32,000	1:1,523

Source: Survey of comparable districts, 1997.

COMMENDATION

SPD has assigned all personnel to law enforcement duties that directly prevent crime, disturbances, traffic hazards, and the loss of property.

FINDING

SPD conducts a cost analysis of law enforcement services needed by the district before deciding to hire and train a new employee. As the following three examples show, this analysis may result in the hiring of part-time employees, the use of volunteers, or the use of full-time employees.

SPD contracts for officers from other police agencies as needed for extracurricular events such as night-time sporting events. This saves the district money by allowing SPD to employ only the number of full-time officers needed to perform normal police duties.

SPD also allows other police officers with necessary skills and training to volunteer their services to SISD. The department currently uses two parents who are experienced Houston Police Department officers to provide drug abuse training to students.

The review team heard concerns in the public forums that the Sheriff's Department and Constable's Office no longer direct traffic for SISD since the district created its own police department. These traffic services, however, were provided by off-duty officers from these departments hired by SISD administration to assist with traffic around schools when school buses were loading students. These officers charged the district an hourly wage with a minimum fee for the daily service. This minimum fee sometimes resulted in wasted salary. The school district now accomplishes the same services with in-house officers, with no cost for unneeded work hours caused by minimum charges.

COMMENDATION

SPD properly analyzes its law enforcement needs and obtains services in the most cost effective manner.

FINDING

Since 1992, SPD has used an automated records management system to track officer activities, criminal cases, parking permits, parking and moving violations, arrests, vehicle maintenance, officer training, and to support a radio log of detailed time records for all incidents requiring a

police response. The department can use the system to track and compare previous years' activities and crimes.

Using this system, SPD publishes an annual report documenting its activities by type, location, officer, and time. The annual reports facilitates proper staff assignments, while the historical data within the annual reports help district administration make informed decisions about to SPD's resources as its needs increase or change. **Exhibit 12-6** shows police activity for 1995-96.

Exhibit 12-6
SISD Police Department Activity
1995-1996



Chapter 12

Safety and Security

B. Safety

CURRENT SITUATION

SISD has a director of Safety and Compliance who has developed a safety program designed to provide a safe and healthful working and study environment. This director interacts with an employee at each school who has been assigned the duty of safety officer, usually an assistant principal.

SISD also has a training program for staff members, including all bus drivers, that is administered before each new school year. The director of Safety and Compliance works with the police chief, physical and occupational therapists, the director of Special Services, and the director of Transportation to ensure as complete a safety training program as possible.

FINDING

The district has a detailed emergency procedures manual that is updated each summer. This manual instructs district personnel on proper procedures during natural disasters as well as other emergency events. The manual also tells each principal how to conduct emergency drills with students and how often to do so.

The Safety and Compliance office also maintains logs and records documenting emergency drills conducted, training sessions conducted, and the dissemination of mandated information.

SISD has developed a schedule of emergency drills that are practiced on a routine basis, including fire, tornado, and bus evacuation drills.

The director of Safety and Compliance also investigates all employee and student injury accidents. These investigations generally begin before the ambulance leaves the school, in case of serious injury. This allows this office to identify trends and potential hazards in a timely manner.

SISD conducts a comprehensive inspection of each campus annually. Elementary schools are inspected by the director of Safety and Compliance. Middle and high schools are inspected with the district's third-party workers' compensation administrator. Informal inspections also are made no less than monthly by the Safety and Compliance office. The Police, Maintenance, and Operations Departments cooperate to alert

Safety and Compliance of any concerns. The Maintenance Department immediately addresses any work order submitted by the director of Safety and Compliance.

School safety is addressed by the annual safety inspections and the investigation of any incidents that occur. Methods to control the security of school sites near undeveloped property include vegetation-cutting and cooperation with Harris County to report and eliminate neighborhood nuisances.

COMMENDATION

SISD combines the function of maintaining emergency procedures, scheduling practice drills, and investigating injury accidents within one office, allowing for proper safety planning and training.

FINDING

SISD's architect in the Facilities Management/Security Department maintains a list of safety needs that he identifies or that are reported to him by principals, the Police Department, or the director of Safety and Compliance. Items on this list include things such as fencing, additional lighting, and additional locks. For each item, the architect completes a feasibility analysis and determines if the project can be completed with maintenance funds or if it should be included in a future bond proposal. (The 1996 bond proposal included several fencing and lighting projects.)

This practice relies on the initiative of principals or police officers to make reports to the district architect. Several area institutions of higher education offer programs that train police officers in conducting safety and crime prevention studies for schools.

Recommendation 102:

SPD should use trained officers to conduct safety and crime prevention studies of each campus on an annual basis.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The police chief develops an inspection plan for the district that insures that each campus receives a crime prevention and safety inspection from a trained officer on a scheduled basis.	October 1997
2. SISD sends a police officer to training each year for the next three years.	1997-99

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of the additional training can be absorbed within SPD's budget.

Appendix A

Community Comments

This appendix summarizes comments from two community forums held at Spring and Westfield high schools, interviews with key area civic and business representatives, and focus-group meetings with various civic, business, and community organizations. These comments are presented to illustrate community perceptions of the Spring Independent School District (SISD) and do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team.

METHODOLOGY

The community forums were open meetings held from 3:00-5:00 pm and 6:00-8:00 pm at each of the high schools. People were asked to share their comments about SISD by writing on tablets dispersed around the cafeteria in each school. Each tablet represented one of the chapters of this report.

Interviews were held with individuals identified as community leaders, heads of key organizations within SISD (such as PTAs and PTOs), former board members, business leaders, and civic leaders representing various interest groups.

The focus groups were assembled using input from SISD staff regarding key community organizations, and included members of minority organizations and business, religious, and civic groups as well as teachers and students. The focus groups were asked to provide comments on each area represented in this report as well as any general comments on SISD.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Significant findings from this effort include:

- The community generally feels that SISD does a good job in educating its students.
- SISD teachers are perceived to be among the best in the Houston area.
- The Board of Trustees and district administration are perceived as working together toward common goals rather than being at odds with each other.
- The former superintendent is viewed with great respect for having implemented a number of positive, innovative programs.
- Many residents indicated a lack of knowledge about events in the district and at particular schools.

- Some expressed concern regarding the level of minority involvement in the district, particularly in teacher and administrator positions.
- SISD facilities are viewed as old and cramped, especially by students, but the district gets good marks for the maintenance and upkeep.
- SISD is widely viewed as far behind in technology.
- While some parents expressed concern about school safety, most parents and community members feel that students are safe in school and that SISD's security force is effective.
- Some respondents criticized staffing levels in central administration, but just as many praise administrators for quality performance.
- SISD's transportation program is rated very highly within the community, particularly the after-hours activity busing program.

The following sections detail respondents' actual comments by subject area.

District Organization and Management

A review of board minutes shows that only two votes taken by the board (over a certain time frame) were not passed unanimously. If they are hashing out differences behind closed doors, they're meeting illegally. The public needs to know if there are differences of opinion or disagreements on the board. They are not representing the public if there's no difference of opinion. Subcommittee meetings have short minutes and subcommittees meet infrequently--obviously they are a charade.

Administration is top-heavy, in terms of numbers of personnel. There are lots of well-paid administrators.

All those people in the Administration Building--who knows what they do?

Administrative organization is by far the best--excellent.

At Bammel, there are about 1400 students and faculty and staff is about 135; seems high.

Changes in ethnic mix makes the job more interesting. Will be interesting to see if they've been responsive to progressive needs.

Committees have people who do not dissent. A lot of tremendous resources are being untapped.

Discipline problems are dumped in non-traditional (elective) courses.

Do away with E.C. and develop rapport with parents (to enable teachers to discipline children without parent objecting).

Dr. Anderson and Jerry Smith seem very organized and people-oriented. Meetings are run efficiently.

Dr. Anderson comes to the schools and interacts with the students.

Dr. Anderson has been a great asset. He is open and willing to talk to parents; he is available to anyone and he is approachable.

E.C. hurts minority students.

Failure of the bond issue is being used as an excuse for why they can't do things.

Flatten the bureaucratic pyramid; there are a lot of assistant principals in the middle schools and high schools. At the middle school level, there is one for each grade level and at the high school level, there is one for each grade level and for specific areas.

I am concerned about the "fruit basket" turnover at the administrative level. There is going to be a vacuum. The departing administrators need to be replaced with quality people, down to the principal level. We have to have top-drawer people committed to sitting down with radicals of all stripes. The kids will be taken care of if we have good quality teachers.

I have had nothing but good experiences with the principals; they make themselves available; also teachers and assistant superintendents.

I have never run into a school board member in the schools and I am in the schools about twice a week.

I think highly of the district. I work in the city (Houston) but am willing to sacrifice my time by living in Spring for its district.

I wish we had more districts like them. Most districts wouldn't even consider doing some of the things they do in SISD.

I would like to see (teacher) competency testing.

I would like to see board members limit themselves to 2-3 terms. I think it is important to have some new blood on the board--always top-heavy administration.

In my personal dealings with the staff, they have been concerned about the students and their education...they are willing to meet and follow through. I received calls from teachers when they were concerned with progress or my kids were behind and when we were concerned, they were willing to meet.

It seemed to take a lot of paperwork to get my kid into a speech program. I don't know whether that's a legal requirement or just tradition.

It seems to me that the SISD is extremely "top heavy" in terms of administration and management personnel. Is there really need for a multi-thousand dollar publicity budget? The more dollars that can be shifted from administration to teachers and teaching, the better.

[T]eacher recommendation[s should] weigh as heavily as test scores for placement of students in Tier IV. Teachers are not recommending minorities when the test score is borderline.

My sense of the administration is that they talk about parents being involved and they do a lot of things that look like consultation, but try to do things the easiest way, with the least consultation possible. The sense I get is that they think they know what's best and don't really need input--with respect to the tax dollar, the student, all of it. For example, a few years ago, there was a movement toward year-round education and there was inadequate consultation, no supportive educational data, no financial data, just a sense within the administration that it would be a good thing.

On occasion, individuals or groups have aggressively advanced their agendas and have been allowed to disrupt the committee/study team process. In 1993, a particularly vocal group of parents and teachers convinced the superintendent to dissolve a study team investigating block scheduling before the group's work was completed and any decisions were made.

Parents are discouraged from calling the coaches. There is retaliation against staff and kids.

People who were incompetent as teachers get moved into administration with substantial raises. They become Program Coordinators and Curriculum Coordinators.

Provide access to required training locally; reduce expensive trips to national conventions.

Recent interpretations of state mandates at the district level threaten the co-teach classes in science and social studies. The abolition of co-teach

classes in these areas, coupled with a reduction in resource classes, will negatively impact both discipline management and failure rates in these areas.

SISD has a reputation for being a positive, supportive learning environment. This can be taken to the extreme and result in giving the undisciplined student a lot of leeway. There is a tendency not to be supportive enough of teachers (when there is a discipline problem). Maybe students need more tough love; SISD may go too far to keep students in the mainstream.

SISD had done a good job of going through a demographic transition--no gangs, etc. This has taken luck and work. SISD brings people together and gets them to communicate through community groups, PTA/PTO, student clubs, TAAS tutorials, etc.

SISD has done some damage to their reputation with the process to replace Dr. Anderson. It has taken too long and it has been too secretive. There is something wrong [with the fact] that it took a year.

SISD has maintained a familial approach to education in a large metropolitan area. It is still possible to know the principal, administrators, and teachers, although the district is large.

SISD had site-based management before the concept gained popularity. The principals are in charge of instruction in their buildings. Program directors are there to support instruction, write the curriculum guide, and teach the method. They have discussions with principals first; principals have choice because they know the population and the staff. Principals and teachers are given choices. This lets everybody build on and use their strengths.

SISD is a district that cares about students number one, and everybody else after that. They are very interested in helping all kinds of students whatever their needs may be. We (teachers) were always encouraged to identify a student's needs and met them. We were backed; it was a supportive environment. It is like a family. Everybody is included in decision-making.

SISD is a small enough district that site-based management needs to be minimized. We need districtwide policies. For example, if there are uniforms, they should be [used] districtwide.

SISD is easy to work with. They are very flexible; when they confront barriers, they do everything within their power to remove them. They are very good people to work with.

SISD is too ready to tell kids what they can't do academically.

Spring High School is a dumping ground.

State mandates have diverted local funds which might have been used to extend services or to create unique programs to address local needs.

Teachers evaluate themselves; doesn't make too much sense. (Experienced teachers are allowed to do this.)

The 22-member committee for the bond issue was typical of the decision-making process; they met behind closed doors, the meetings were not publicized, and they did not look for community input.

The administration is not aware of minority problems. For example, the principal was told there was only one minority male in Tier IV and he said he wasn't aware of that. Awareness (of minority problems) is needed.

The board has always worked with, instead of against, the administration and the community.

The board supports staff. They give recognition to students and teachers. Students are recognized at board meetings, publicly. Everybody feels they have the freedom to be creative and be themselves.

The board structure is working fine. We are not big enough or compartmentalized enough to justify single-member districts.

The board works for the superintendent, not the other way around. They absolutely control the election process. Most board members are out of touch; they don't have kids in the district. The board is run like a little club.

The district is stable and doing its job; it enjoys general favor in the community. Dr. Anderson has worked hard to be a part of the community. It will be a tough job (to follow him).

The district is top heavy with "educrats." By that I mean administrators who are looking to try new theories, break new ground, be on the cutting edge. I believe that there is an element of the SISD administration who believe that they know best and wish parents would just keep quiet. I think we have more administrators than we need. I also think that even though the outgoing superintendent has done a wonderful job in Spring and will be hard to replace, he is very much overpaid. We have 20,000+ students in SISD and his remuneration is possibly more than the Mayor of Houston.

The district recommended (my child) for Tier IV at one school, but when she transferred, she was not recommended for Tier IV; they (the new school) said they did not have her records.

The procedure for putting children in Extension Center (E.C.) should be modified or revised... [A] disproportionate number of minority children are put in there (E.C.). Maybe E.C. is not being applied equally.

The SISD administration and board show open contempt with anyone who questions their policies.

The superintendent has built a huge administrative bureaucracy. For example, a coaches' total responsibility was two P.E. classes plus football. We've got a jillion teacher's aides.

The superintendent visits every facility and every department within the facility.

There is a cozy relationship with certain contractors--construction contractors.

There is a full-time public relations person doing "spin," but improving education is the best way to get kudos for the district. This position should not be necessary; the money and efforts should be spent on education.

There is a reluctance to provide flexible staffing for different campuses. For example, although there is widespread recognition that campuses with higher minority populations might have different needs, there is a reluctance to allocate different amounts of resources (money, staff, supplies, equipment) to different campuses.

There seems to be too much emphasis on the Five Year Plan! We never seem to know what or where we are today. Planning is good, but we also need to know day to day needs and find ways to meet them on a broader basis--not so many chiefs!

There should be bilingual administration staff. Stop taking aides to translate for staff; they have enough work to do already.

Things have changed a lot with respect to demographics and economic status and SISD does not seem to be willing to accept the change. There is a huge mobility rate; a lot of growth. What worked in the past isn't working today.

Too many administrators. Site-based management inconsistent! Board "taught" that they work for the superintendent, rather than the other way

around. Board actively recruits "replacement" candidates for those leaving board and administration makes sure staff knows who to vote for--they openly break the law.

Too many executive sessions to avoid open meetings. Much time wasted with recognition at board meetings--belongs in school assemblies.

Too much administration! We have too many levels of management. The curriculum directors haven't been in the classroom for a long time. I think many are out of touch.

When my kids were in the Spring schools, I felt I had power as a parent, that parents had the final decision.

Why are there so many people in the supply warehouse on Kuykendahl?

Why have E.C. at all? It is not designed to educate; the kids [in E.C. are] not getting what the rest [get], although they are supposed to.

Why not build the same elementary school repeatedly, rather than go to expense of hiring an architect every time--standardize design. Education is the important thing, not the building.

Educational Service Delivery

[SISD needs] a Black history class.

[SISD needs] a diversity class.

[S]tudents need more study time and less busy time, although that has improved a lot.

A lot of parents don't know about Tier IV.

All district correspondence that goes to parents is in English. Why not in Spanish, too?

An intramural program would be good. Lots of interest on the part of kids, limited opportunities to play. A volunteer organization could run an intramural program.

As a parent of two gifted children (both in Tier IV since grade 3) who have each been in SISD schools since kindergarten, I have no doubt that the quality of education has deteriorated. My children (grades 5 and 8) have simply excelled and are bored. My son, age 13, looks forward to going away to school in the summer in North Carolina where he will be

challenged. While SISD gives appearance of being progressive, looks are deceiving. SISD has no policy to assist gifted children with special academic needs. And in fact shows strong preference to baby sitting. The masses do get as many kids through the system with the least amount of fuss as possible. SISD has a "cookie cutter" approach to education. I have also seen that my children are "taught the TAAS," instead of substantive educational values.

At the elementary school level, the curriculum seems as though it might be lagging a little bit behind.

Because SISD has been highly rated, maybe they haven't gone out of their way to implement the latest technology, the latest teaching skills and technology available.

My kids didn't speak much English at first, but have improved. Teachers are concerned and take care of the kids.

Big brother or big sister type programs are needed. They wouldn't have to be very formal.

By any objective measure, educational achievement has been extremely mediocre.

Class size is manageable, compared to what I've seen in California.

Curriculum guides are rewritten...all the time at the elementary school level. I don't know how current they are, but they certainly are trying.

Duett is becoming a much stronger school.

E.C. needs to be reconsidered; kids love it (and that should not be the case).

Effective programs: The Pyramid program for gifted and talented students; co-teach classes in the four core subjects have been effective in supporting special education students who are being mainstreamed. Co-taught classes reduce the teacher-student ratio in these classes, which allows more personalized attention. Allows the teachers to provide alternate methods of teaching (both oral and written tests).

Excellent bilingual program.

Excellent extracurricular activities; excellent academic programs.

Exemplary programs: Tier IV and support for academically able students, academic booster club at Westfield (recognition of need for recognition of academic performance at all levels, not just the top people), Education Foundation.

Exemplary programs: Tier IV, Spring High School, drug programs, Academic Challenge.

Good foreign language program; open to all kids.

I am constantly dismayed by how much less my kids are taught than I was.

I am supportive of Zero Tolerance and the child care center. The community ought to do all it can to keep kids from getting pregnant, but when it happens, we ought to keep them in school. SISD has been creative, less puritanical than other districts [in this regard].

I compare the education my daughter is receiving with my own, and I like how they teach.

I don't feel there is enough emphasis on technology. Our district brags about how many of our graduates go on to college [but] I have never seen any statistics on how many are successful in college.

I have real mixed feelings about the 4-tier system. I can see an accelerated class for the truly brightest kids. SISD needs to challenge the kids in the lower levels. Some would respond to a challenge, but they are being written off instead.

I like the coop and career development program. For example, the Wyndham Hotel program enables students to experience working in six different areas. We need more of that.

If kids are in ESL or bilingual education, they are considered at-risk even if they make straight As. Why is this?

If you're not at the very top or the very bottom, it is hard to get attention at the middle school level. Rules and expectations seem more clear cut in high school.

My children are receiving, in my opinion, an excellent education! The special Tier 4 program...is an asset to the system--the teachers are exceptional and the curriculum is generous. We feel very fortunate to be in this program.

In the northern United States, there are strong adult education programs; they make use of the facilities in the evening.

Instruction has become more interactive. This helps kids learn acceptance of other people and their differences. The kids know they have the freedom to say what they want and not be ashamed.

Issues to address: need for increased access to occupational/technical education; support for mainstreamed students in science and social studies classes; increased opportunities for talented students to explore their interests through the Special Experiences and Mentor programs; decreased teacher-student ratios on campuses with larger groups of at-risk students and/or highest mobility rates; investigate innovative ways of addressing student needs (flexible scheduling, year-round school, etc.).

Keep bilingual aides in the classroom and not pulled out to translate at the office.

Kids are promoted too easily; I had to get an affidavit to hold my kid back.

My experience has been top drawer. As a parent, I was pleased.

My impression is that reading programs and speech programs are excellent.

My overall impression of SISD is excellent. My son was well prepared [for college].

Need enough material in Spanish to prepare for TAAS.

Need to have bilingual teachers with better preparation.

Ninety-nine percent of the teachers are glad to be there; they are interested in the kids and they like kids (Twin Creeks Middle School and Spring High School).

Preparation for employment is good.

SISD does a good job of what the community expects it to do--train people to go on to higher education. But SISD does a terrible job of preparing people to go to work. The biggest challenge is that 80% of jobs are going to be non-college jobs and we're preparing kids to go to college.

SISD does a lot of things with the students--FFA auction, livestock show; they have fundraisers that go toward school. Recently had a home tour as a fund-raiser for schools. It raised \$13,000.

SISD does particularly well educating extreme ends of the spectrum--educating exceptional students on either end.

The ROPES course teaches confidence in other people. Teachers are trained to take people through the course.

SISD has a wonderful department of curriculum and instruction. They stress the importance of relating what kids are learning to everyday life. This enables comprehension to develop more quickly.

SISD has good academic programs and good extracurricular programs. They encourage parent and student involvement in the educational process.

SISD has had parent review of the sex education curriculum for years; it would be good to expand review to teaching areas--math, science, etc.

SISD has very good quality teachers who know the kids really well; they care about the kids and are good with the kids.

SISD is one of the most active districts in economic development solutions and workforce development issues.

SISD is wonderful; I would not leave this district for anything in the world.

SISD seems to be for the betterment of all children, regardless of economic background or race; they strive to make everyone feel special.

SISD turns out a good product. Gives kids a good foundation; the average kid does as well as top kids from other schools.

Skills training is almost entirely focused on college entrance, while the district's changing population would suggest a need to increase occupational and technical training.

Spring's Special Ed program is good and the Wunsche facility is outstanding. The Tier IV program is very good. My concern is for the average student. The very best teachers in the district teach Tier IV or are promoted to administration--the average students are often left with teachers who are just putting in hours, showing movies, allowing homework to be done in the classroom, etc.

Staff, teachers, and administrators truly care about the students and their instruction and education. They are truly concerned about student needs.

Students need more access to specialized classes. For example, computer-assisted drawing is only offered at the 5th and 6th periods at Wunsche.

The administration treats us [non-English speaking parents] rudely.

The band program wins awards all the time--middle school and high school. The middle school program is very strong. They start building at the 6th grade level and build from the bottom.

The district is exceptionally supportive of Fine Arts (drama, art, speech, debate, music) at the secondary level, truly exceptional. All of the music programs at the middle school and high school campuses are award-winning.

The district needs to learn how to best utilize Hispanic parents. We offer to help, but they ignore us.

The hotel partnership program is good and Wunsche school is outstanding.

The kids rehearse and study for the TAAS test all the time.

The middle/average child who has no special needs or is not exceptional on the high end gets dropped down a crack. As a parent, you have to be paying attention. Sometimes grades aren't the whole story.

The program directors give information and instruction of a better quality than I see at State and some national conferences. Program directors train teachers and teachers do the teaching.

The superintendent and assistant superintendent stay involved and knowledgeable about what's going on in education. Committees study and research things before implementation on a trial basis. If it's good, the program goes districtwide.

There are a number of school organizations that are economically elitist, e.g., cheerleaders and drill team. Uniforms, travel, tennis shoes are expensive. In public schools, this is not right.

There doesn't seem to be as much control over the students at the middle school level. Discipline is lax.

There is a program called Teachers As Counselors; it is almost like group therapy. They have kids talk about things they have no business talking about. They pull them out of classes for it.

There is a very strong principal at Twin Creeks; he backs up the kids and the teachers. Discipline is black and white; there are clear consequences if kids break the rules.

There is too much focus on the TAAS tests.

Tier 4 has developed to being something special. It's an accelerated, but also a broadening and deepening experience. It is really, truly education, not rote learning; (it imparts) thinking skills.

Tier 4 is an exemplary program. It is almost necessary to split kids up when backgrounds are very diverse.

Tier IV is one of the best programs I have ever seen for academically able students. Kids are taught the curriculum two grade levels above. Tier IV often precludes the need for kids to skip grades.

Tier IV kids get all the attention. Teachers are focusing on pushing the Tier IV kids. If they start to slide, they get pushed. There are lower or no expectations for non-Tier IV kids. There is a difference in teacher attitudes. Why can't we have the same commitment across the board.

We are awash in "special programs" at all levels. I realize that everyone wants their special needs met, but somewhere we have to draw the line. I have heard stories of Spanish surname children being put into bilingual classes even though they speak English and against their parents' wishes.

When I moved into the district, SISD was turning out a good product and I relied on SISD graduates for employees. It was A+ at that time. In the first decade, results were good. Now I have to go through about 30 graduates to get someone to pass the same spelling and math test I have been giving for 22 years. This is a problem with all districts, not just SISD. I perceive a problem with home, society, and the "dumbing down" of America.

I would like to see more done for students who aren't going on to higher education. We need more vocational education.

Community Involvement

A lot of kids in this community are capable of anything, but parent[s] won't take time.

Community involvement seems...poor to me. When we go to parent meetings, there are very few minority parents in attendance, even though they represent a large segment of the student population.

Diversity programs needed!

Each campus needs a professional staff member (teacher, counselor, or administrator) the majority of whose responsibilities are focused on bringing the community into the schools and taking students into the community (community service projects field studies, etc.).

Education Foundation needs full-time employees to at least triple fundraising.

Get more Hispanic participation.

Get the people in the Administration out to the community for events other than school events.

I believe that we need more communication with parents in Spanish.

I have always been able to talk with the teachers.

I have always had good access. The process is open.

I seem to be bombarded with paper! Would it not be more efficient and cost effective to consolidate all announcements under one organized announcement? [Perhaps through the] Internet?

I think SISD has been very considerate of the need [for involvement].

I would like to see more done for Hispanic children and their parents.

If you want to have a committee, all you have to do is tell somebody. If someone says they were never told, they were not paying attention.

Invest in a full-time employee for Education Foundation to be in charge of fundraising.

Many of the committees that are involved in studying issues (such as the bond proposal) are composed of persons "hand-picked" by the administration. These committees are not truly representative of our community.

Minorities should not have to fight so hard to get fair treatment.

[T]he superintendent...has lunch and breakfast with a cross section of people. High level of community involvement has enabled the message to get out. He knows all the teachers; he is in the schools everyday. This makes teachers and the community feel good. It gives people a sense of

ownership and they are kept informed. He will meet and walk with anyone anytime.

My impression is that while SISD is pretty good, people who are selected to be involved tend to be of like mind with the current administration. I am not sure naysayers and loyal opposition are included; SISD should be more inclusive.

Notices of school board meetings are posted at the school administration [building] only. You would know about the regular meetings, but you don't know about the special meetings unless you drive to the administration building.

Parental involvement is fantastic (especially at the elementary level). Without the support from our community--there are a lot of purchases our teachers will not receive.

People were not informed [regarding the bond election]. The district could have done a better job. The group supporting the bond election failed to get together. The "anti" people made phone calls. The district did not start pushing (for the bond issue) until the "anti" group started.

SISD has good outreach programs, lots of committees. They help line speakers up (for school programs).

SISD is completely open. They send out lots of letters. At the beginning of the year, a packet is sent out. Schools have weekly newsletters.

SISD is fortunate to have heavy community involvement. The volunteers enable the district to accomplish far more than it would otherwise be able to do. The district stops short of involving the community in its decisions, although the administration goes to great lengths to make it appear that there has been community input.

SISD needs a business liaison to find out concerns and needs of business. This needs to be a board function. There is lots of discord in the business community as a result of the last bond election that needs to be addressed.

SISD works very, very hard at involving the community. That has been on the priority list for a number of years. SISD does a fantastic job of communicating with the community.

The five-year plan is good, but some items in the bond issue are not in the plan. The district hides behind the plan; it is tremendously flawed in a lot of ways.

The administration has been responsive to needs. I feel very comfortable phoning and sharing concerns with school trustees. They are very receptive to input at the board, administration, and staff level.

Most committees are selected by the principals [and] are stacked with people they know will say what they want them to say. There are usually too many district employees and spouses on them.

[I] don't know how the community leaders who get [the *Springboard*] are chosen.

[In] school board meetings...parent involvement is saved for last. They have presentation after presentation, then you have three minutes. They don't comment when you're through. Then they adjourn and nothing comes of it.

There is no debate or discussion at school board meetings. In a three-year review of votes...only on two occasions was there was one dissenting vote.

There should be an Hispanic liaison to help in the community.

There was not enough communication during the last bond election.

They are happy to see you as long as you don't make waves; don't disagree with them in any way, shape, or form.

They try hard to get community input before making decisions. The community is very involved; there are lots of opportunities.

This is overall a wonderful place to be, but it is not perfect and there is a pervading sense that if you don't think it's perfect, you must be an enemy. Many people are reluctant to speak in public about dissatisfaction.

Too many announcements sent home to parents. Consolidate information and only send one announcement.

Use electronic bulletin board and send home notices with kids to publicize board meetings.

[T]he board and administration...tend to be as secretive as possible--for example, [the] \$100 million bond issue [held on] November 23, 1996...could have been held with trustees election [on] 1/12/97, but they wanted the smallest turnout for both to "keep control." Had the elections been combined, the two hand-picked school board candidates would have been defeated.

Want to keep parents out of being involved except as it pertains to fundraising. If you want some say-so in education and how things are taught, you're squashed.

Personnel Management

A lot of the counselors...provide no help with getting people into college.

Administrative salaries too high and [there are] too many administrators.

Benefits office is less accessible, less helpful, and less knowledgeable since the retirement of Ben Keith, 2-3 years ago.

Curriculum coordinators are out of touch; not capable of teaching.

Do administrative staff pay for their insurance like lower-level staff?
Insurance seems high.

Does the district engage in proper hiring practices? While on paper I assume that it goes through all the motions, [I have seen] cronyism and nepotism.

Find a way to keep truly gifted teachers in the classroom, instead of making them administrators so they can make more money.

Hiring should be for the best possible and most qualified teachers. We used to brag about the number of years our teachers had in experience, now I think we're just trying to hire the least experienced to save money. We have the best-paid superintendent and principals, why not the best-paid teachers?

I have noticed that a large percentage of our teachers seem to come from one place--Texas A&M. Surely there are other qualified applicants to fill a broad-based spectrum. Is it a matter of convenience or habit?

I want to see more minority teachers and administrators. It helps students, not just minority students. They would serve as role models.

In general--there are too many highly paid administrators (\$90,000 a year or about) in the administration building. Many of these positions should not be in this salary range. Also, there is too much of a difference between teacher's salaries and administrator's salaries.

Minority candidates are being discouraged.

My only comment here would be to shift as much emphasis away from management and administrative personnel to teachers as possible.

Need higher pay for teachers and workers.

Need more minority security people.

Pay for coaches is excessive.

People who come are overwhelmed with the resources available. SISD has an excellent reputation for keeping employees happy.

Personnel management is excellent.

Salaries are some of the lowest around.

SISD has a good system based on my exposure. Personnel seem happy and content when you talk to them...[which] implies good policies and leadership. Turnover does not seem high.

SISD is doing a lot to diversify the staff.

SISD needs cultural diversity training for teachers and administrators.

Teachers and administrators are used for recruiting and hiring. Everybody's involved, so you have a vested interest and want it to work out for the best. Their number one policy is to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

The administration has gotten substantial regular annual raises; teacher raises are not of the same measure. At Westfield, teachers get a lot less than coaches and principals. Teachers blame site-based management.

The district has a practice of taking someone removed for cause and [moving] them around. A poor principal was moved to Administration, then put at another school.

The district needs to do more to recruit, retain, and hire qualified minorities--Hispanics and Blacks. I am not pleased with the effort being made. SISD needs a person of color in the Personnel Office to recruit and this person has to have authority [to hire]. There is one Black principal. SISD needs more Blacks in leadership positions and more Black teachers to serve as role models. The staff is not changing [to match] the makeup of the district.

There is a small turnover rate and a long list of teacher applicants.

There is an open policy of nepotism to the extreme. If you analyze individual positions, you will find a significant number of people in noncritical jobs.

There is nepotism. SISD employs entire families. Nepotism is rampant--only a small core group gets represented in the administration and board.

We have many wonderfully gifted and dedicated teachers (more than I would expect to find by chance), so I think the recruiting effort is first class and I assume personnel is doing its job in order to retain them.

We need more Black and Hispanic teachers. We need better role models for young minorities.

Would like to see administrative people go back into the classroom every now and then....not an easy class, not Tier IV.

Financial Management

After the bond issue failed, they recarpeted the Administration Building.

An assistant principal has an office in one of the schools that would have been expanded if the bond issue had passed that teachers call the Taj Mahal.

SISD is not much different from other school administrations; SISD is a government agency with a "tax-and-spend" mentality.

Extracurricular activities get way too much at the expense of lots of things. Athletics gets too much. We don't need another band room. Academic needs should be top priority.

I am all for extracurricular activities. But I am opposed to building new softball fields, band halls in extravagant facilities. The principal function of SISD is to provide an excellent education.

I believe we need to include operational costs and routine maintenance in the annual budget, not rely on bond issues to cover these costs. These needs should be anticipated and planned for.

I think the financial management is adequate. I think the policy decisions on which the financial management is based may be flawed.

Dollars are disproportionately spent on administrators, [rather than] teachers and...educational needs.

Probably my biggest concern is the lack of accountability in the financial management of the district. Public input is sought only as a window-dressing, allowing residents to speak, but only at the end of the meetings. When financial items are voted on, it is clear that previous discussions have taken place.

Athletics seem to be put...above academics. I have seen the overcrowded halls and classrooms and feel there needs to be expansion there where it really can be shared by all.

SISD is an expensive district. Property taxes are high.

SISD is not constantly asking you for money; they ask on occasion, but don't pressure. They are sensitive to business.

SISD needs to go to zero-based budgeting; needs to anticipate needs and carry operations and renovation on-budget. We may need to bring in someone with business expertise to look at the district's finances.

Spring's tax exemption is lower than surrounding districts, resulting in a higher tax rate. Funds were included in the bond issue for maintenance and renovation, but these items should be carried on- budget not off-budget.

The approach to budget and financial matters is backward. SISD decides what it wants, then figures out how to get the money.

The budget document is incomprehensible. It is designed to hide information. For example, it would be difficult to find out what was spent on travel. There is no summary information of a useful nature.

They are turning off lights and recycling paper.

I would rather have teachers and administrators well paid so they attract the best. We have to be competitive in compensation. It is ultimately harmful to cut back.

Very highly paid public relations staff. Could probably make do with someone out of college.

Asset and Risk Management

I feel good about [SISD's] use of resources. I am not aware of any problems with risk management.

I know recently an out-of-court settlement was made from a law suit involving Wells Middle School. I don't know the amount, but it was significant. The taxpayers will never know the amount even though it's their money. I'd like to know why the architect or builder was not liable.

Personally I feel that SISD is average in this area [but] there is always room for improvement.

SISD does a poor job of asset management. No planning ahead; they do bond issues instead.

Poor assessment of risk--poor planning, or simply intentional[?]

Purchasing and Warehouse Operations

I have [heard] that [multiple] construction contracts are given to one entity under different names.

Is all the space they have needed?

No gross shortcomings.

Facilities Use and Management

A lot of things could be improved at Bammel Elementary--the playground is like a swamp, the driveway drop-off is too narrow, and the parking lot is not lit.

At Bammel Elementary, we have a lot of portables. They work okay, but there are no bathrooms [in them] and kids have to go a long distance to get to the bathroom.

At Bammel, we want a science lab, but to purchase a portable is expensive and there is not enough space. If we purchase one, we are told it has to be considered temporary; they can't promise us continued use of the space. Ponderosa is being allowed to get a science lab; it will take up space in the building.

Custodial staff...take pride in what they do. This saves a lot of money in the overall picture. Maintenance...keeps things looking good.

Every school is overcrowded.

I am concerned that growth will abate and the need for new schools will abate. The schools included in the last bond issue are probably needed.

I believe the money they save on energy conservation should not be used to spend on whatever the school wants to spend it on. It should go back into the budget as money saved.

I have heard there are safety issues in the shop program--ventilation in shops, fans, saws.

My son's middle school is overcrowded--halls are dangerous.

[Buildings] seem fairly clean; age shows, but kept neat.

SISD has spent maintenance and repair money on other things, then put maintenance and repair items into the bond issue.

The custodial and maintenance people at Bammel and Salyers are good.

The ninth grade wing at Westfield is nice, but they probably went overboard on what they spent on it. It is beautiful, but hard to heat and cool.

The recent bond issue did not address the maintenance needs of the buildings being proposed for construction. This serious error was a major factor in the defeat of the issue. This indicated a serious lack of financial planning expertise on the part of the board.

The Spring High School band hall is...extravagant. We have beautiful schools, but they are overbuilt, resulting in increased maintenance, utilities, renovation, and operating costs.

There is a quick response on maintenance issues.

Under the circumstances, I think everyone (building supervisors, maintenance, etc.) is doing a fine job.

Upkeep is outstanding. Winship was the third or fourth elementary school to be opened (in 1973). You would never know it's as old as it is, because of care and maintenance.

Very good facility maintenance and care.

We do need more elementary schools. We may have to have a bond issue this fall.

We need additional facilities. I wonder if people realize how much the district is growing and how quickly it is growing. As money got tighter and the district got less from the State, SISD did the best it could. If they

have to hold back on facilities, it will be very different for students; there will not be ample provisions for individual attention. Lack of facilities to help develop that (recruiting and retaining quality teachers) takes away from being able to do your best. I am not talking about quality, I am talking about amount.

We need lights and another parking lot at Salyers.

What is wrong with using the buildings year-round? I know--we just can't change our ways!!

Purchasing and Warehouse Services

Are there proper obligations on contractors? (I'm told that SISD indemnifies its contractors, instead of the other way around.)

Like many entities where people spend money that does not belong to them, it is spent too freely on certain items that don't generate [enough] bang for the buck.

Computer Technology

Access to computer technology is not adequate. Labs in middle schools are inadequate to meet the needs of the populations.

An absolute must to continue using and learning computer technology.

Computer technology seems to be [inadequate], especially in the middle and high schools. The recently failed bond issue had budgeted a tremendous amount of dollars to purchasing new computer equipment, but failed to realize that with technology changing as fast as it is, this technology would be obsolete quickly. They should look at leasing computer equipment.

Computers have really helped teachers with record-keeping. Teachers use computers to develop their report cards. However, there are still some areas where computers could help more.

Consider lease versus buy on hardware as many computers are obsolete shortly after purchase.

Don't wire the schools; technology is/will be shortly available to avoid wiring.

My children are both computer literate and our 13-year-old has been writing his own programs in Basic, Pascal, and C++ for the past 2-3 years.

SISD has done zero to assist in this and has helped no other child develop this necessary skill. While the bond issue contained dollars for computers, the equipment would have been outdated in two years and the proposal was primarily to benefit and administration and not the kiddos!

I do think we need to beef up our computer and technology, but not by supporting it with 20-year bonds. The technology is changing so rapidly-- we do not want to be locked into computers that will be outdated before they're even paid for. I think we need to look at lease options.

Introduce computers in kindergarten.

Lease, rather than buy, because of obsolescence. Work out a rollover arrangement with Compaq.

Maybe a partnership could be established to get computers donated.

More computers are needed; three per classroom (minimum), in addition to current labs.

I personally opposed the bond issue because I felt it was not well thought-out (also, I thought SISD tried to sneak it through), but I know that we need to provide computers and training for our students. What we have is woefully inadequate.

The computer system in the bond issue would be out of date in five years; why pay over 20 years as part of a bond issue?

The computers are ancient. Programs are outdated, blah, and uninteresting compared to what's on the market. There are no CD-ROM capabilities.

We could use a parent computer facilitation class (nighttime).

Food Service

Coke and candy machines in middle schools are foolish. I've been told that the schools need the dollars, yet fail to see the detrimental effect of sugar and caffeine on our kiddos.

I like the fact that they have modernized [food service], e.g., food boutiques at Westfield High School.

{SISD food service is a] junk food jungle; [it] used to be nutritious. The hot food is not very good. The last two weeks of school and before Thanksgiving and Christmas, the meals take a dive; it's like they're cleaning out the refrigerator. SISD may need to look at privatization.

Kids have options--good selection.

Privatize the cafeteria.

Seems adequate at the elementary level--although too fatty. Too much junk food at middle school and vending machines. Candy and caffeinated drinks when there is a BIG behavior problem!?

The food leaves a lot to be desired. The menu always has been a great concern for the past ten years. It is not as healthy...as it could be. The menu is not balanced and it is not appealing. They are not necessarily using all of the food groups. There is the same menu across the district.

The food seems to be high in fat and calories; but they have salads. My kids don't complain. My child eats the food (at Westfield).

Way better than average.

Transportation

Although I am not familiar with the transportation system throughout the district, it seems to me to be cost-ineffective to bus students who live only a few blocks from the schools.

Always reliable.

At Westfield, they have transfer kids--7 to 12 year olds--on the same bus as high school kids from Wunsche School. Wunsche kids need their own bus.

Bus drivers are especially courteous; they have good driving records; and make sure someone's home [before dropping off the child].

Excellent bus drives--courteous, considerate.

I would be more than happy to go back to the two-mile rule.

I would give transportation the highest rating. They pick up in every block in every subdivision.

Need more extensive background checks for drivers. Checks should be [performed] through the Sheriff's Department and Houston Police Department. [SISD] misses information doing it through Dataflow.

Some kids have a circuitous trip; middle school, elementary, and high school kids are on the bus together. It is unsafe for little kids to be around buses pulling up and they shouldn't be with the street-wise kids.

The bus system...leaves a lot to be desired! The buses seem overcrowded and always in a hurry!

The driver for Bammel Elementary (Bus 631) is wonderful.

The North Hill driver is good; the kids love him.

The pre-kindergarten driver for Bammel Elementary is very good too; he spends a lot of time explaining things to kids--safety lessons.

There is a good bus driver for Salyers; he is on time and very punctual. He lets kids out in front of their houses when it is raining.

They could pay the drivers more; they have a lot of responsibility.

We could probably decrease the radius [of the transportation service area].

Safety and Security

At Bammel Middle School, my son left after a bad incident and no one seemed to know he was gone.

At the elementary schools, they keep pretty good track of the kids.

At the high school level, we have SISD officers on duty. They seem quite efficient.

Discipline in the classrooms is a problem. The schools are baby-sitting.

Zero tolerance seems to stem many problems. A good idea.

My only concern is that the SISD police officers seem to be disrespectful of students and are teaching students to fear and distrust police.

I am concerned that just about anyone can walk in any door (particularly at the elementary).

I feel a little bit uncomfortable about how aware teachers are of bullying by larger kids.

I think the district is really concerned and doing [its] best.

I think there are significant problems in SISD, such as with gangs, which the administration is afraid to discuss and deal with in a direct manner. Instead, they tell us uniforms will stop "class disruption."

I have two children attending schools in this district. Stories of fights, drugs, guns, knives are a daily occurrence. Discipline is poor and the punishment for severe offenses is light. What has happened to students in the past 15 years? Students used to fear the principal and were afraid to get into trouble--now they seem to dare authority to try to make them behave. Many of our friends have taken their children out of the public school system and placed them into private schools simply for fear of their safety.

Security is very good. The police keep a high profile; they are incredibly effective.

SISD does as much for us as they possibly can. They have upgraded as the district has grown and become more urbanized; they have made adjustments such as locking gates on parking lots and building fences.

Subcontract police services to sheriff's department.

The middle school disciplinary atmosphere is degraded. Tough kids rule the hallways. (My daughter has been slammed into lockers and her purse was thrown on the roof.) Teachers won't discipline them because the administration doesn't stand behind them because they are afraid of what parents will do.

The police department does a good job; they have good leadership and they are involved in the community (e.g., crime awareness program with the Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce).

The police department has been a deterrent. The fact that older kids see an officer on campus every day serves as a deterrent. The police department enhances parents' and staff's comfort level; no big deal has been made about it.

The police force is great, but I don't what know that their responsibilities are. They are never in the buildings and virtually never on the campus.

There are discipline problems at the middle school level. There are fights in the hallways; there is never a teacher standing in the hallway between classes. We need more teacher visibility.

[A]t Bammel Middle School, sixth graders have been violent with each other and placed teachers in unsafe situations. The district needs to address this problem and correct the problem.

There is a growing discipline problem; the number of kids referred for adjudication has increased 100%.

We need a fence at Salyers.

When the bell rings in middle school, it would be nice to see a few teachers walk out into the halls to watch the kids. We'd have far less problems than we have. The school board says we don't have safety problems, we have perception problems. They say we don't have problems with gangs. I think they need to spend some time in the schools.

Appendix B

Student Comments

This appendix presents comments from focus groups of student leaders, Link Elementary students, and Wells Middle School students.

A. STUDENT LEADER FOCUS GROUPS

The review team convened a group of high school and middle school class officers and student organization leaders identified by SISD to discuss the district's strengths and weaknesses.

Summary of Results

Significant areas of consensus in the student leader meeting included the following:

- SISD has good honors programs.
- SISD has good special programs and a good variety of student activities.
- On-level, special education, and alternative education classes are not sufficiently challenging.
- Schools are overcrowded and facilities for special programs are inadequate.
- The district places too much emphasis on football at the expense of other sports.
- Bathrooms are dirty and in need of improvement.
- The curriculum is good, but needs to be updated.
- Computer technology is inadequate.
- Discipline is uneven.
- Uniforms are a good idea, but any uniform scheme should allow for some variety.
- Sports facilities should be improved, especially storage areas for equipment.
- Fine arts facilities are crowded.

Educational Service Delivery

Counselors help with planning ahead for the future.

Good club sponsors.

Good club variety.

Good curriculum at both high schools.

Good electives.

Good honors programs and teachers.

Good support from booster organizations.

Good teachers.

High performance on state tests.

I feel that African-American males are targeted to be placed in the Special Education or below-level classes.

Need equal monetary distribution in sports.

Need improvements in special education; get students caught up to the rest of the school.

Need more academically challenging classes at Wunsche for smart kids.

Need more challenging on-level classes (middle school and high school).

[SISD] administration...play[s] favorites. They focus on problems such as [the] dress code rather than academic improvement.

Physical Education (P.E.) shouldn't be required.

Promote all athletics, not just football.

SISD needs to offer same classes at alternative schools as are offered at the other schools.

Teachers discourage you from taking too many honors classes.

The curriculum is adequate, but...needs updating.

We need new textbooks and updated materials and lessons.

The quality of teachers could be improved.

The Westfield High School band needs to be cut back; too much money being spent and too much pressure on the members.

There needs to be more funding for Fine Arts.

We need longer passing periods. Only four minutes are allotted for getting from lunch to the next period; sometimes you have to run because of the long distance to your next classroom and there is not time to go to the bathroom.

District Organization and Management

[Students should be allowed] more than seven tardies!!

The administration is responsive; they follow through on student ideas.

The dress code is too strict.

Uniforms are needed. People won't feel excluded or left out if everyone's [dressed] the same.

Safety and Security

Cameras and visitor badges are good [ideas].

Discipline is unequally applied.

Good enforcement procedures.

Each sport should have a separate locker room [to] separate the athletes from people taking P.E.

Stealing is a problem.

Focus is too much on who's illegally parking, instead of who's car is getting broken into.

Middle school safety improvements are needed.

Need more discipline on (school) buses.

Need restructured parking lots; regulated lanes of direction. Don't let people cut in lines--too much room for accidents--crazy drivers are reckless and expect people to move. It takes forever to get out of parking lot because there is no order!!!

Parking lot security is a problem at Westfield.

Side doors should be locked from the outside [at Spring High School].

[N]eed...safety improvements at the middle schools; teachers can't do anything when a fight breaks out. There is one cop (on duty)--sometimes.

Too much emphasis on small infractions.

Traffic management is a problem at Westfield. They have started putting assistant principals out to direct traffic.

Facilities Use and Maintenance

Dirty bathrooms and bathrooms without doors on the stalls are a problem.

Fine Arts facilities are inadequate, too small.

Good facilities overall.

Improve facilities for sports (no shared locker rooms for athletics).

Lunch lines are too hot (bad air circulation).

Need better climate control; it's always too hot or too cold.

Need to be more environmentally safe; get rid of Styrofoam and get low-flush toilets.

Overcrowded hallways--need bigger lockers.

Remodeling helps out at Westfield High School.

Special programs need more room (Fine Arts, etc.).

Spring High School needs a softball field.

Spring High School needs more exits out of parking lots!!!

The freshmen lockers at Spring High School are especially small.

The Westfield parking lot is bad.

There is no softball field for girls.

We have good and honest custodians and maintenance personnel.

Westfield High School needs an auditorium.

Personnel Management

We have good teachers [who] like teaching.

Teachers need to be secretly evaluated; when they know they are going to be evaluated they behave differently. Some teachers put students down.

Need student evaluations of student teachers.

Teachers need better salaries.

Need more experienced teachers.

Complaints from students about teachers should be acknowledged.

Teachers need to listen to students more!!

Food Service

Good variety.

As good as can be expected from school.

If someone doesn't want the milk that is included in the price of the meal, then a certain amount should be deducted. (Some people don't like milk and have to pay even when they go and buy another type of drink.)

In the baked potato line, baked potato, salad, soup, and a roll, including milk, is only \$2.00. But if you want only a potato and a roll or some other combo, it is still \$2.00. (Something is wrong with this!!) We need individual prices!

Purchasing and Warehouse Services

The condition of books is poor and the number of desks allocated per classroom is a problem. Some classrooms have more desks than they need, while others have less than they need.

Need new supplies (desks, etc.).

Books are falling apart.

Computer Technology

More and better computers are needed [at Spring High School].

We need more Internet access.

Need more computer classes/computer education.

Good number of computers, but they are way behind considering the speed at which technology is advancing today.

Transportation

Too many high school buses.

[I see] no need to rent buses (for special events) when we have so many.

Renting buses is probably due to regular bus drivers not wanting to work overtime. Probably should offer bus drivers overtime pay (to drive for special events).

All buses need seat belts.

Financial Management

Dollars should be more evenly distributed.

Miscellaneous

Good spirit!!!

B. LINK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL FOCUS GROUP (Grades 4 and 5)

Q. What Do You Like About Your Class Subjects?

That my teacher helps me [and] reexplains anything I don't understand.

The teachers make [my work] easier by making it fun.

I like that the teachers help me if I need any help.

My teachers...make learning very fun and interesting for me.

They help me when I don't understand something.

They are not boring; they are sometimes fun. I like math.

The teachers make it fun to learn something new.

In science, we do experiments.

I like to learn about the human body.

I like looking in the microscope.

I like doing reports on animals.

Q. What Do You Like about Your School?

[T]he teachers...are understanding and loving and they make learning fun for me.

All the teachers are nice.

The things I like about this school are the teachers and the activities that we have.

Chances to be in Link Council!!

Most of my friends go to this school!!

We have Fun Friday and we get extra recess if we pass TAAS.

Good, funny, nice teachers.

There are a lot of contests, rewards, and after school activity.

The teachers are very helpful. We make a lot of friends.

The clubs and groups like TAC, Link Council, and more.

I like when we have different reading themes each year.

The teachers are fun. They give us candy when we are on task.

The teachers are the very best. And all of the other people that work at the school.

They give us candy when we pass the TAAS practice test.

They serve us good food.

The teachers help us with difficult work.

Doing experiments in class.

Reading stories and playing outside.

We get to read outside sometimes.

The principal gives out silver cards and gold cards and stuff like that.

I like having lunch, then recess, instead of lunch and recess together in just 30 minutes.

I like all the subjects.

How they let us eat with our old teachers.

I like the meetings of Link Council.

Teachers let us do homework in class when we finish with class assignments.

Q. If you were the principal, what would you change about your school?

School lunches!

Kind of food for lunch!!

Make rude people nice people!!

Shorten school day!!

No make-up days.

Detention only for the people that are really mean.

That people that get in trouble a lot get sent away.

I would get better lunch food.

I would have extra choices of food for lunch.

I would change the air conditioning units because the air it puts out is cold sometimes and it's hot and it distracts me while I'm doing my work.

I would make better food from the cafeteria.

I would not change anything about our school except for the food.

Lower lunch prices.

More field trips.

Build the school bigger.

Make a pool.

Have better computers with Internet access.

Have lockers.

If I was the school principal, I would put coke machines in the cafeteria.

I would change the attitudes on the cafeteria ladies' faces.

I would change teachers so kids can have one teacher for the whole year.

I would also change some of the rules like we should not go outside after lunch.

Las senoras de la cafeteria nas den comida afuera.

No dress code!

No uniforms!

Write about anything else that is important to you.

My teachers!!

I don't like it when teachers try to be funny--making fun of other people. Just because you're in Tier 4, they don't like you.

I don't like it when teachers think something about a group of students and are only basing it on one student. And teachers pick favorites.

I don't like it when teachers pick favorites and aren't fair to the other students and give their favorites more privileges/attention/chances.

I don't like when people dislike other people because they are the teacher's pet.

I don't like kids that make fun of other kids.

The school has many groups and after school clubs. These groups and clubs help many kids and me a lot and they are fun to be in.

I like all of the clubs and groups.

The teachers make us think the subjects are fun. The teachers encourage us to pass.

We should have nachos more often.

I think we should have metal detectors so if anyone brings a weapon we will know.

Nice teachers are important to me because there are a lot of nice teachers like Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Betts, Mrs. Gunn, Mrs. McBroom, Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Sumlin.

C. WELLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT FOCUS GROUP (Grades 6 to 8)

Q. What is your overall perception of SISD?

I like it. It teaches you a lot.

[T]he teachers really help students understand what they're learning.

Q. What does the district do well?

Cooking breakfast food.

Provide transportation.

After school activities.

Help with subjects.

Q. What needs improvement at SISD?

The food, the teachers' attitude, larger lockers (7 & 8), longer time between periods, punishments.

School lunches, the harsh punishments.

More activities more often.

Food, teachers' attitudes.

Nothing.

Q. Is the administration receptive?

Yes, they talk about what we need.

No, they don't understand us.

Q. Are principals receptive?

Yes.

No, because they don't want to listen or [are] too busy disciplining others.

They talk about your problems.

Q. Are teachers receptive?

No, because all they care about are the grades.

Yes, they help us by asking questions.

Yes, because they help you learn.

Yes, because they teach different lessons and help with homework.

Q. When you have a concern, is there an easy way to get it before the relevant party?

No, you basically have to take it into your own hands.

Yes, they do and they like to help you.

Q. Do you have any concerns regarding SISD or your school?

Restroom doors broken.

Sometimes the teachers and principals could be more understanding.

Q. How could communication be improved?

The teachers could listen, instead of always telling us what we do. We could help them see things from our perspective.

Appendix C

Spring Independent School District Five-Year Plan Survey

Interpreting the Chart Essay Using Question One

This guide is designed to assist the reader to interpret the chart essay findings for each question in the survey. The guide uses Question 1 (page 1) to illustrate the five essential elements of a chart essay.

1. Issue addressed in the survey question:

Parent Report Card on Mathematics

2. Actual question asked in the survey:

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

3. Sampling plan used in the survey:

Column 1: Findings for all parent in the sample.

Column 2: Findings for parents asked to respond in terms of an elementary school student.

Column 3: Findings for parents asked to respond in terms of a middle school student.

Column 4: Findings for parents asked to respond in terms of a high school student.

4. Actual response options and statistics:

Response Options	Corresponding Statistics
A	58.4%
B	26.7%
C	5.8%
D	2.9%
FAIL	0.4%
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.8%
	100.0%

All statistics are given as percents. Each column will add to 100%. Modal (most frequent) response is bolded.

5. Trend Statements:

These statements summarize the statistical findings in narrative form. For example, the trend statement for Question 1 (page 1) summarizes the findings for the entire sample. It indicates the percent of parents who gave high marks (defined as grades of A or B) to the Mathematics Program report card.

Appendix C

Parent Survey Results

Part I

Question 1

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	58.4	66	54.8	49.3
B	26.7	21.4	27.4	34.8
C	5.8	4.5	8.1	5.8
D	2.9	1.8	1.6	5.8
FAIL	0.4	0	0	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.8	6.3	8.1	2.9

Trends:

- A majority (58.4%) of all parents surveyed placed A's on the Mathematics Program report card. An additional 26.7% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most parents sampled (58.4% plus 26.7% or 85.1%) gave *high marks* to the Mathematics Program.

Parental Report Card on Science Program

Question 2

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SCIENCE PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SCIENCE PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %

A	44.2	48.7	37.8	42.8
B	35	27.5	47.5	35.7
C	6.3	6.4	3.3	8.6
D	0.8	1.8	0	0
FAIL	0.4	0	1.6	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	13.3	15.6	9.8	12.9

Trends:

- Nearly half (44.2%) of all parents polled placed A's on the Science Program report card. An additional 35% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most parents sampled (44.2% plus 35% or 79.2%) gave **high marks** to the Science Program.

Parental Report Card on English/Language Arts Program

Question 3

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the ENGLISH OR LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the ENGLISH OR LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	51	58.4	38.7	49.4
B	31.1	27.4	40.3	29
C	8.6	8	8.1	10.1
D	1.6	0.9	3.2	1.4
FAIL	1.6	0.9	0	4.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	6.1	4.4	9.7	5.8

Trends:

- More than half (51 %) of all parents surveyed placed A's on the English or Language Arts Program report card. An additional 31.1% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most

parents sampled(51% plus 31.1% or 82.1%)gave **high marks** to the English or Language Arts Program.

- *Elementary school* (58.4%) and *high school* (49.4%) were more likely to give A's to the English/Language Arts Program while *middle school* parents were most likely to give B's (40.3%).

Parental Report Card on Computer Instruction Program

Question 4

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the COMPUTER INSTRUCTION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the COMPUTER INSTRUCTION PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	35	31.3	43.4	34.3
B	26.3	24.8	24.5	30
C	13.2	12.4	13.2	14.3
D	1.8	3.8	0	0
FAIL	1.8	2.9	0	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	21.9	24.8	18.9	20

Trends:

- More than a third(35%) of all parents surveyed placed A's on the Computer Instruction Program report card. An additional 26.3% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most parents sampled (35% plus 26.3% or 61.3%) gave **high marks** to the Computer Instruction Program.

Parental Report Card on Social Studies Program

Question 5

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	43.4	46	46	37.1
B	34.3	36	31.1	34.3
C	9.9	8.1	9.8	12.9
D	2.1	2.7	1.6	1.4
FAIL	0.8	0	0	2.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	9.5	7.2	11.5	11.4

Trends:

- Better than four out of ten parents polled (43.4%) placed A's on the Social Studies Program report card. An additional 34.3% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, a large majority of parents sampled (34.3% plus 43.4% or 77.7%) gave **high marks** to the Social Studies Program.

Parental Report Card on Fine Arts Program

Question 6

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FINE ARTS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. (Fine Arts includes Art, Music, Band, Dance and Drama). What grade would you give the FINE ARTS PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	54.5	57.7	42.6	59.9
B	24	24.3	24.6	22.9
C	7.9	6.3	14.8	4.3
D	1.2	2.7	0	0
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	12.4	9	18	12.9

Trends:

- More than half (54.5%) of parents surveyed placed A's on the Fine Arts Program report card. An additional 24% of parents placed B's

on the same report card. Hence, most parents sampled (54.5% plus 24% or 78.5%) gave *high marks* to the Fine Arts Program.

Parental Report Card on Physical Education Program

Question 7

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	50.1	50.5	59.6	41.5
B	24.3	26.2	29.8	17.1
C	10.4	8.7	3.5	18.6
D	3.9	4.9	0	5.7
FAIL	1.3	1.	1.8	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	10	8.7	5.3	15.7

Trends:

- Half of the parents surveyed(50.1%)placed A's on the Physical Education Program report card. An additional 24.3% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, a majority of parents sampled (50.1% plus 24.3 % or 74.4%) gave *high marks* to the Physical Education Program.

Parental Report Card on Business Education Program

Question 8

Students are often given the grades A, B., C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
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A	29	N/A	N/A	29
B	18.8	N/A	N/A	18.8
C	5.8	N/A	N/A	5.8
D	0	N/A	N/A	0
FAIL	0	N/A	N/A	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	46.4	N/A	N/A	46.4

Trends:

- More than half (53.6%) of the parents asked to rate the Business Education Program provided letter grades. Almost all of these parents placed A's or B's on the report card.
- Almost half (46.4%) of parents asked to rate the program chose the *don't know/ opinion* option rather than a letter grade for the SISD report card on the Business Education Program.

Parental Report Card on Vocational Education Program

Question 9

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	32.9	N/A	N/A	32.9
B	8.6	N/A	N/A	8.6
C	10	N/A	N/A	10
D	1.4	N/A	N/A	1.4
FAIL	0	N/A	N/A	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	47.1	N/A	N/A	47.1

Trends:

- Slightly more than half (52.9%) of the parents asked to rate the Vocational Education Program provided letter grades. Most parents who rated this program placed A's or B's on the report card.
- Slightly less than half (47.1%) of parents asked to rate the program chose the *don't know/opinion* option rather than a letter grade for the SISD report card on Vocational Education.

Parental Report Card on Foreign Language Program

Question 10

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	34.2	N/A	N/A	34.2
B	30	N/A	N/A	30
C	12.9	N/A	N/A	12.9
D	0	N/A	N/A	0
FAIL	0	N/A	N/A	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	22.9	N/A	N/A	22.9

Trends:

- A majority(77.1%)of the parents asked to rate the Foreign Language Program provided letter grades. Most parents who rated this program placed A's or B's on the report card.

Parental Report Card on Guidance and Counseling Services

Question 11

Students are often given the grades A, B., C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	39.1	44.9	31.1	37.2
B	29.6	22	36.1	35.7
C	8.8	4.6	11.5	12.9
D	2.5	2.8	4.9	0
FAIL	2.9	0.9	1.6	7.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	17.1	24.8	14.8	7.1

Trends:

- Almost four out of ten parents surveyed(39.1%) placed A's on the Guidance and Counseling Services report card. An additional 29.6% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, a majority of parents sampled (39.1% plus 29.6% or 68.7%) gave *high marks* to Guidance and Counseling Services.

Parental Report Card on Tutoring Services

Question 12

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TUTORING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TUTORING SERVICES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	31.5	28.3	36.1	32.9
B	24.1	18.2	32.8	25.7
C	5.4	2.7	9.8	5.7
D	2.1	1.8	1.6	2.9
FAIL	2.5	4.5	0	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	34.4	44.5	19.7	31.4

Trends:

- More than half (65.6%) of the parents surveyed provided grades for Tutoring Services. Most parents who rated this program gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to Tutoring Services.

- Slightly more than three out of ten (34.4%) of parents asked to grade this program chose the *don't know/ opinion* option rather than a letter grade for the SISD report card on Tutoring Services.

Parental Report Card on Honors/Above Grade Classes

Question 13

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the HONORS OR ABOVE GRADE CLASSES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the HONORS OR ABOVE GRADE CLASSES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	46.2	39.3	54.8	49.3
B	18.6	17.8	19.4	19.4
C	1.3	2.8	0	0
D	0.4	0	1.6	0
FAIL	0.4	0.9	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	33.1	39.2	24.2	31.3

Trends:

- Two-thirds of parents polled (66.9%) provided grades for Honors or Above Grade Classes. Most parents who graded this program gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to Honors or Above Grade Classes.
- One-third of the parents(33.1%)asked to grade this program chose the *don't know/no opinion* option rather than a letter grade for the SISD report card on Honors or Above Grade Classes.

Parental Report Card on Library Services

Question 14

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to no the quality of their work. Suppose the LIBRARY SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the LIBRARY SERVICES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	59.7	76.2	51.7	39.7
B	22.2	15.9	30.6	25
C	2.5	3.5	0	2.9
D	0.4	0	0	1.5
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	15.2	4.4	17.7	30.9

Trends:

- Almost six out of ten parents surveyed (59.7%) placed A's on the Library Services report card. An additional 22.2% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, a large majority of parents sampled (59.7% plus 22.2% or 81.9%) gave **high marks** to Library Services.
- A much larger proportion of *elementary* parents (76.2%) gave A's to the Library Program than did *middle school* (51.7%) or *high school* (39.7%) parents.

Parental Report Card on Extracurricular Activities

Question 15

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	47.8	31.6	64.6	59.5
B	24.4	25.2	25.8	21.7
C	5.8	7.2	3.2	5.8
D	2.1	3.6	0	1.4
FAIL	2.1	3.6	1.6	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	17.8	28.8	4.8	11.6

Trends:

- Nearly three out of four (47.8% plus 24.4% or 72.2%) parents sampled placed *high marks* (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card for Extracurricular Activities.

Parental Report Card on Food Services

Question 16

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FOOD SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the FOOD SERVICES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	40.7	42	40.3	38.6
B	32.5	32.5	27.4	37.1
C	9.3	8.8	11.3	8.6
D	5.3	5.3	6.5	4.3
FAIL	3.7	4.4	0	5.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	8.5	7	14.5	5.7

Trends:

- About three out of four (40.7% plus 32.5% or 73.2%) parents surveyed placed *high marks* (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card for Food Services.

Parental Report Card on Nursing Services

Question 17

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the NURSING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the NURSING SERVICES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	55.6	63.6	56.4	41.5
B	21.2	20.4	19.4	24.3

C	6.5	8	6.5	4.3
D	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.4
FAIL	1.2	0	3.2	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	14.3	7.1	12.9	27.1

Trends:

- More than half of the parents surveyed (55.6%) placed A's on the Nursing Services report card. An additional 21.2% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, a large majority of parents sampled (55.6% plus 21.2% or 76.8%) gave **high marks** to Nursing Services.

Parental Report Card on Transportation Services

Question 18

Students are often given the grades A, B., C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TRANSPORTATION SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TRANSPORTATION SERVICES in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	63.8	73.7	50.8	58.7
B	20	13.2	31.1	21.4
C	6.5	6.1	6.6	7.1
D	2	2.6	1.6	1.4
FAIL	1.6	1.8	3.3	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	6.1	2.6	6.6	11.4

Trends:

- More than six out of ten parents surveyed (63.8%) placed A's on the Transportation Services report card. An additional 20% of parents placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most parents sampled (63.8% plus 20% or 83.8%) gave **high marks** to Transportation Services.

Parental Report Card on Teachers

Question 19

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TEACHERS in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TEACHERS in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	59.4	73.6	54.8	40
B	32.9	23.7	33.9	47.2
C	4.9	0.9	8.1	8.6
D	0.4	0	0	1.4
FAIL	0.4	0	0	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	2	1.8	3.2	1.4

Trends:

- Most (59.4% plus 32.9% or 92.3%) parents sampled assigned *high marks* (grades of A or B) to teachers. Parents gave *high marks* to teachers at each level: Elementary School (97.3%), Middle School (88.7%), and High School (87.2%).

Parental Report Card on Principals

Question 20

Students are often given the grades A., B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the PRINCIPALS in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the PRINCIPALS in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	65.3	64.9	67.2	64.3
B	20.4	21.1	21.3	18.6
C	4.1	3.5	3.3	5.7
D	0.8	0.9	1.6	0

FAIL	0.4	0	0	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	9	9.6	6.6	10

Trends:

- A large majority (65.3% plus 20.4 or 85.7%) of all parents polled assigned **high marks** (grades of A or B) to principals. Parents gave **high marks** to principals at each level: Elementary School (86%), Middle School (88.5%), and High School (82.9%).

Parental Report Card on Assistant Principals

Question 21

Students are often given the grades A,, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	58.5	56.6	57.5	62.5
B	18.5	18.6	18	18.8
C	2.1	0.9	4.9	1.4
D	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.4
FAIL	0.8	0	1.6	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	18.9	23	16.4	14.5

Trends:

- A majority (58.5% plus 18.5% or 77%) of all parents polled assigned **high marks** (grades of A or B) to assistant principals. Parents gave **high marks** to assistant principals at each level: Elementary School (75.2%), Middle School (75.2%), and High School (81.3%).

Parental Report Card on the Office Staff

Question 22

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the OFFICE STAFF in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the OFFICE STAFF?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	67	75.4	60.6	58.6
B	20.8	18.4	27.9	18.6
C	4.5	1.8	3.3	10
D	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.4
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	6.1	2.6	6.6	11.4

Trends:

- A large majority of parents (67% plus 20.8% or 87.8%) polled placed *high marks* (grades of A or B) on the Office Staffs report card.

Parental Report Card on SISD

Question 23

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SCHOOL DISTRICT?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	57	61.1	54.8	52.1
B	30.9	26.5	33.9	35.2
C	9.3	8.8	9.7	9.9
D	0.8	0.9	0	1.4
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2	2.7	1.6	1.4

Trends:

- A large majority of parents polled (57% plus 30.9% or 87.9%) placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the report card for the Spring Independent School District.

Needs of Physically Handicapped Students

Question 24

How well do you believe the needs of PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED students are met in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met., not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	13.8	20.4	8.1	8.5
Adequately Met	20	15	25.8	22.5
Poorly Met	1.6	0.9	1.6	2.8
Not Met At All	0.4	0.9	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	64.2	62.8	64.5	66.2

Trends:

- About one-third of the parents surveyed (13.8% plus 20% or 33.8%) believe that the needs of physically handicapped students are **adequately met or fully met**. An additional 64.2% offered **don't know/no opinion** responses.

Appendix C

Parent Survey Results

Part II

Needs of Slower Learning Students

Question 25

How well do you believe the needs of **SLOWER LEARNING** students are met in **YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met., not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	19.6	25.7	16.1	12.9
Adequately Met	28.6	31.9	22.6	28.6
Poorly Met	9.8	8	8.1	14.3
Not Met At All	0.8	0	1.6	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	41.2	34.4	51.6	42.8

Trends:

- Almost one-half of the parents in the survey (19.6% plus 28.6% or 48.2%) believed that the needs of slower learning students are *adequately met* or *fully met*. An additional 41.4% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs of Academically Advanced Students

Question 26

How well do you believe the needs of **ACADEMICALLY ADVANCED** students are met in **YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	30.3	33	24.2	31.4

Adequately Met	34.1	31.3	38.7	34.3
Poorly Met	1.2	2.7	0	0
Not Met At All	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	33.2	32.1	35.5	32.9

Trends:

- More than six out of ten parents surveyed (30.3% plus 34.1% or 64.4%) believe that the needs of academically advanced students are *adequately met* or *fully met*. An additional 33.2% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- *Elementary* parents surveyed (33%) were more likely than *middle school* (24.2%) or *high school* parents (31.4%) to see the needs of academically advanced students as being *fully met*.

Needs of Average Student

Question 27

How well do you believe the needs of AVERAGE students are met in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	27	36.6	19.4	18.6
Adequately Met	57.1	48.2	62.9	65.7
Poorly Met	5.3	3.6	4.8	8.6
Not Met At All	0.4	0	0	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.2	11.6	12.9	5.7

Trends:

- Over four out of five (84. 1%) parents in the sample believe that the needs of average students are either *adequately met* (57. 1%) or *fully met* (27%).

Needs of Non-College Bound Student

Question 28

How well do you believe the needs of NON-COLLEGE BOUND students are met in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	8.7	N/A	N/A	8.7
Adequately Met	33.3	N/A	N/A	
Poorly Met	17.4	N/A	N/A	17.4
Not Met At All	4.3	N/A	N/A	4.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	36.3	N/A	N/A	36.3

Trends:

- Over four out of ten (42%) parents sampled believe that the needs of non-college bound students are either *adequately met* (33.3%) *fully met* (8.7%). An additional 36.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs of Students At Risk of Dropping Out of School

Question 29

How well do you believe the needs of STUDENTS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL are met in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	15.5	22.8	8.1	10.1
Adequately Met	21.2	21.1	25.8	17.4
Poorly Met	9	1.8	9.7	20.3
Not Met At All	1.6	0	0	5.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	52.7	54.3	56.4	46.4

Trends:

- Almost four out of ten (36.7%) parents sampled believe that the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school are either

adequately met (21.2%) *fully met* (15.5%). An additional 52.7% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs of Learning Disabled Students in Inclusion Classrooms

Question 30

How well do you believe the needs of LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS are met in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	12.2	11.5	12.9	12.7
Adequately Met	28	30.1	25.8	26.8
Poorly Met	14.2	11.5	12.9	19.7
Not Met At All	2.8	1.8	3.2	4.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	42.8	45.1	45.2	36.6

Trends:

- About four out of ten (40.2%) parents in the sample believe that the needs of learning disabled students in inclusion classrooms are either *adequately met* (28%) *fully met* (12.2%). An additional 42.8% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs of Regular Students in Inclusion Classrooms

Question 31

How well do you believe the needs of REGULAR STUDENTS IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS are met in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	21.1	27.2	14.5	16.9
Adequately Met	42.5	39.5	48.4	42.2
Poorly Met	9.7	10.5	9.7	8.5

Not Met At All	3.6	3.5	3.2	4.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	23.1	19.3	24.2	28.2

Trends:

- A majority (63.6%) of parents sampled believe that the needs of regular students in inclusion classrooms are either *adequately met* (42.5 %) *fully met* (21.1%).

Elaboration of Parental Views on School Strengths

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Teachers (79 responses)				
Quality Teachers	58	30	17	11
Caring/Concerned Teachers	21	18	0	3
Academic Programs (70 responses)				
Curriculum	45	23	6	16
High Academic Standards	11	6	1	4
Tier 4/Above Grade	8	2	4	2
Grouping/Class Organization	6	2	2	2
Effective Learning Environments (64 responses)				
Overall Good School	30	15	6	9
Campus/Office Staff	20	13	2	5
Individual Attention	8	6	1	1
Support/Concern	6	5	1	0
Parent/Teacher Cooperation (54 responses)				
Home/School Communication	32	13	13	6
Parent Involvement	18	9	2	7
Solving Problems Together	4	3	0	1
Administration (43 responses)				
Good Principals	20	10	7	3
School Safety/Security	15	2	5	8

Effective Administration	8	3	3	2
Extracurricular Activities (29 responses)				
Programs in General	19	2	5	12
Specific Activities	10	2	4	4
Facilities (18 responses)				
Quality of Facilities	10	6	2	2
School Size/Location	8	4	2	2
Discipline (8 responses)				
Effective Rules	5	2	2	1
Discipline in General	3	1	1	1

Parental Views on School Strengths

Question 32

In your opinion, in what way is YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL particularly good?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Teachers	79	48	17	14
Academic Programs	70	33	13	24
Effective Learning Environment	64	39	10	15
Parent/Teacher Cooperation	54	25	15	14
Administration	43	15	15	13
Extracurricular Activities	29	4	9	16
Facilities	18	10	4	4
Discipline	8	3	3	2
Other Strengths	6	5	0	1

Trends.

- Almost all (97.5%) parents sampled identified at least one way in which their child's school is particularly good. Of the 371 parent responses, almost two-thirds of these responses identified *teachers* (N=79), *academic programs* (N=70) or *effective learning environments* (N=64) as school strengths. An elaboration of strengths identified by parents is given on the preceding page.

Parental Views on Academic Challenge

Question 33

Are you satisfied with the degree to which YOUR CHILD is challenged academically: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	80.2	86	75.8	74.7
No	16.6	9.6	22.6	22.5
Don't Know/ No Opinion	3.2	4.4	1.6	2.8

Trends:

- Over four out of five parents polled (80.2%) *are satisfied* with the degree to which SISD students are challenged academically.

Transition from Elementary to Middle School

Question 34

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from ELEMENTARY to MIDDLE SCHOOL are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Excellent	25.7	18.4	32.3	31.9
Adequate	33.9	28.1	45.1	33.3
Poor	6.1	5.3	8.1	5.8

Don't Know/No Opinion	34.3	48.2	14.5	29
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Trends:

- Six out of ten parents surveyed (25.7% plus 33.9% or 59.6%) believe that the student transition from elementary to middle school is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 34.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Transition from Middle to High School

Question 35

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from MIDDLE to HIGH SCHOOL are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Excellent	15	8	13.8	26.5
Adequate	34.5	21	31	57.3
Poor	4	0	10.3	4.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	46.5	71	44.9	11.8

Trends:

- Nearly one-half of the parents surveyed(15% plus 34.5% or 49.5%) believe that the student transition from middle to high school is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 46.5% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Transition from High School to College

Question 36

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from HIGH SCHOOL to COLLEGE are: excellent, adequate, poor don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Excellent	9.3	8.2	7.8	12.1
Adequate	14	6.1	15.7	24.2
Poor	5.6	5.1	3.9	7.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	71.1	80.6	72.6	56.1

Trends:

- About one-fourth of the parents in the sample (9.3% plus 14% or 23.3%) believe that the student transition from high school to college is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 71.1% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Transition from High School to Work

Question 37

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from HIGH SCHOOL to WORK are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Excellent	5.6	5.1	2	9.2
Adequate	18.8	17.3	20	20
Poor	6.6	2	4	15.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	69	75.6	74	55.4

Trends:

- About one-fourth of the parents in the sample (5.6% plus 18.8% or 24.4%) believe that the student transition from high school to work is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 69% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Parental Views on Problems in the Schools

Question 38

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in Spring ISD must deal?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
School Safety/Security	85	30	29	26
Discipline	77	31	27	19
Drugs/Alcohol	73	24	23	26
Administrative Issues	69	37	10	22
Improving the Quality of Instructional Services	64	30	11	23
Changing Student Population/Overcrowding	53	25	12	16
Parent Involvement/Family Issues	52	27	9	16
Student Needs	30	20	2	8
Hiring/Keeping Quality Teachers	16	3	3	10
Other Problems	7	3	1	3

Trends:

- Almost all parents polled (95.9%) identified at least one problem. Of the 526 parent responses, nearly half (44.7%) of these responses identified *Drugs/Alcohol* (N=73), *Discipline* (N=77) and *School Safety/Security* (N=85) as problems in the schools. An elaboration of the problems identified by parents is given on the next two pages.

Elaboration of Parental Views on Problems in the Schools

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
School Safety/Security (85 responses)				
Gangs	56	17	21	18
Violence	14	5	6	3
Crime	6	2	1	3
Security on Campus	6	5	0	1

Weapons	3	1	1	1
<i>Discipline</i> (77 responses)				
Discipline in General	33	12	12	9
Lack of Respect for Teachers	24	8	9	7
Inappropriate Discipline Actions or Policies	13	5	5	3
Teachers Lack Authority to Discipline	7	6	1	0
<i>Drugs/Alcohol</i> (73 responses)				
Drugs	67	23	22	22
Alcohol	6	1	1	4
<i>Administrative Issues</i> (69 responses)				
Financial Support/Use of Finances	14	4	3	7
Dress Code	11	6	1	4
School Lunch Program	9	9	0	0
School Prayer/Religion	7	4	0	3
Student Attendance Concerns	6	1	2	3
Traffic/Transportation	6	4	1	1
Facilities	6	3	0	3
Ability Grouping Concerns	5	3	2	0
Other Administrative Concerns	5	3	1	1

Elaboration of Parental Views on Problems in the Schools

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Improving the Quality of Instructional Services</i> (64 responses)				
Specific Curricular Changes	14	7	1	6
Academic Standards	7	3	1	3
TAAS/Test Scores	7	3	2	2
Student Motivation	7	2	2	3

Tutoring/Extra Help	7	7	0	0
Extracurricular Activities	7	3	2	2
Instructional Resources	6	0	3	3
Computer Instruction	5	3	0	2
Homework	4	2	0	2
<i>Changing Student Population/Overcrowding</i> (53 responses)				
Overcrowded Classrooms/Schools	23	11	6	6
Educating a Culturally Diverse Population	14	6	2	6
Racism/Discrimination Concerns	13	7	2	4
Rapid Growth	3	1	2	0
<i>Parent Involvement/Family Issues</i> (52 responses)				
Uninterested and Uninvolved Parents	20	9	4	7
Impact of Home Situation on School Performance	17	13	2	2
Need for Improved Home-School Communication	15	5	3	7
<i>Student Needs</i> (30 responses)				
Helping Disabled/Handicapped Students	9	7	0	2
Helping Students with Adjustment Problems	8	4	1	3
Peer Pressure Among Students	5	3	1	1
Drug Prevention Programs	4	2	0	2
Helping Economically Disadvantaged Students	4	4	0	0
<i>Hiring/Keeping Quality Teachers</i> (16 responses)				
Ensuring Teacher Competence	11	2	3	6
Low Teacher Pay	5	1	0	4

Parental Views on Ability Grouping

Question 39

Many children in Spring IDS schools are grouped by ability for instruction. Do you want YOUR CHILD grouped by ability: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	76.7	80.7	70	76.1
No	15.5	11.4	18.3	19.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	7.8	7.9	11.7	4.2

Trends:

- A majority of parents (76.7%) in the sample want their children grouped by ability. The preference for grouping by ability exists for *elementary school* students (80.7%), *middle school* students (70%) and *high school* students (76.1%).

Parental Views on Discipline

Question 40

Do you feel the discipline in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL is: too strict, not strict enough, just about right, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Too Strict	6.1	1.8	14.5	5.6
Not Strict Enough	14.6	9.7	14.5	22.5
Just About Right	65.9	70.8	59.7	63.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	13.4	17.7	11.3	8.5

Trends:

- Almost two-thirds of the parents polled (65.9%) feel that discipline in Spring schools is *just about right*.
- Slightly more than one in ten parents (13.4%) offered *don't know/no opinion* on discipline in Spring schools.

Parental Views on Safety in the Schools

Question 41

Are students and teachers in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL safe: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	79	84.9	80.6	68.2
No	10.7	7.1	11.3	15.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.3	8	8.1	15.9

Trends:

- Almost four out of five (79%) parents sampled believe that SISD schools are safe. An additional 10.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Parental Views on Use of Drugs and/or Alcohol in this Community

Question 42

Would you say the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children in this community is: no problem, a minor problem, a major problem, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	6.5	12.3	0	2.9
A Minor Problem	35	34.2	38.7	32.9
A Major Problem	37	26.3	43.6	48.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	21.5	27.2	17.7	15.7

Trends:

- More than one-third (37%) of all parents polled believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children in this community is a *major problem*. An additional 21.5% of parents in the sample chose the *don't know/no opinion* option.
- Parents whose *high school* or *middle school* child was referenced in the survey were most likely to view the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children in this community as a *major problem*.

Parental Views on Use of Drugs and/or Alcohol in School

Appendix C

Parent Survey Results

Part III

Question 43

Would you say that the use of drugs and/or alcoholic drinks in the building or on the grounds of YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL is: no problem, a minor problem, a major problem, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	45.7	70.9	29	20
A Minor Problem	19.2	3.5	37.1	28.6
A Major Problem	11	4.4	14.5	18.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	24.1	21.2	19.4	32.8

Trends:

- Almost one-half of the parents surveyed (45.7%) believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds is **not a problem**. An additional 24.1% of parents in the sample chose the **don't know/no opinion** option.
- The balance of parents sampled (30.2%) view the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds as a **major** (11%) or a **minor** (19.2%) problem.

Parental Views on Drug and Alcohol Problems

Question 44

Which of the two problems - DRUGS or ALCOHOLIC DRINKS - is the larger problem?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Drugs	50.5	50	68	36.2
alcoholic Drinks				

29	25	12	48.3	
Don't Know/No Opinion	20.5	25	20	15.5

Trends:

- Eight out of ten parents surveyed (50.5% plus 29% or 79.5%) had a definite opinion regarding which of the two problems - **drugs or alcoholic drinks** - was the larger problem for SISD students.
- Parents whose *elementary or middle school* child was referenced in the survey were more likely to designate **drugs** as the larger problem.
- Parents whose *high school* child was referenced in the survey were more likely to designate **alcoholic drinks** as the larger problem.

Parental Views on Student Hostility and Disrespect

Question 45

Would you say that hostility and disrespect among students in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL is: a major problem, a minor problem, no problem, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Major Problem	13.4	3.5	16.1	26.8
Minor Problem	40.5	36	50	39.4
No Problem	25.5	40.3	9.7	15.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	20.6	20.2	24.2	18.3

Trends:

- Parents whose *elementary school* child was referenced in the survey were most likely to say that hostility and disrespect among students is **no problem** in their child's school.
- Parents whose *middle school or high school* child was referenced in the survey were most likely to say that hostility and disrespect among students is a **minor problem** in their child's school.

Parental Views on Additional or Expanded Services

Question 46

I will read you a list of **THREE ADDITIONAL OR EXPANDED SERVICES**. Please identify the **TWO MOST IMPORTANT** entries in this list.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Elementary School Foreign Language	72	72	70.5	73.5
Elementary School Activity Buses	46.1	43	49.2	48.5
Elementary Schools Field Trips	80.2	82.5	80.3	78

Trends:

- When asked to choose two of three *additional or expanded services* parents would like to see provided in the Spring Independent School District, those sampled were most likely to choose *Elementary School Field Trips* (80.2%) and *Elementary School Foreign Language* (72%).

Parental Views on Additional or Expanded Services

Question 47

I will read you a list of **FIVE ADDITIONAL OR EXPANDED SERVICES**. Please identify the **TWO MOST IMPORTANT** entries in this list.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Expanded Middle School Recreational Sports	29.3	29.1	36.1	24
High School Recreational Sports	13.8	5.5	14.8	27
Instrumental Music String Program	29.3	33.6	21.3	29.4
Expanded Middle School Foreign Language Program	55.6	59.1	57.4	49

Expanded Extracurricular Activities Other Than Athletics	71.5	72.7	70.5	71
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Trends:

- When asked to choose two of five *additional or expanded services* parents would like to see provided in the Spring Independent School District, those sampled were most likely to choose ***Expanded Extracurricular Activities other than Athletics*** (71.5%) and ***Expanded Middle School Foreign Language Program*** (55.6%).

Parental Views on School/Business Partnerships

Question 48

Do you believe Spring Independent School District efforts to create school/business partnerships are of: great importance, some importance, little importance, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Great Importance	51.6	49.1	52.5	55.2
Some Importance	23	23.7	26.2	18.8
Little Importance	3.3	4.4	3.3	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	22.1	22.8	18	24.6

Trends:

- More than half (51.6%) of parents surveyed believe that SISD efforts to create school/business partnerships are of ***great importance***.

Parental Views on Teacher Pay and Benefits

Question 49

Would you FAVOR or OPPOSE raising Spring Independent School District teacher pay and benefits?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Favor	75.2	75.2	71	78.9
Oppose	4.9	4.4	4.8	5.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	19.9	20.4	24.2	15.5

Trends:

- A majority (75.2%) of parents in the *sample favor* raising Spring Independent School District teacher pay and benefits.

Parental Views on Excellence in Teaching

Question 50

Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE extra pay for excellence in teaching?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Favor	82.6	78.9	83.8	87.3
Oppose	6.1	7.9	6.5	2.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	11.3	13.2	9.7	9.9

Trends:

- A large majority (82.6%) of parents surveyed *favor* extra pay for excellence in teaching.

Parental Views on Academic Progress

Question 51

Are you satisfied with the ways YOUR CHILD'S academic progress is measured: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	86.2	91.2	85.5	80
No	8.5	4.4	9.7	14.3

Don't Know/No Opinion	4.9	4.4	4.8	5.7
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Trends:

- A large majority (86.6%) of parents surveyed are *satisfied* with the way their child's academic progress is measured.

Parental Views on Tier 4 Program

Question 52

Spring Independent School District supports the Tier 4 program which allows academically advanced students in grades 3 to 9 to take classes advanced by two years in English and Mathematics. Do you approve, disapprove, or have no opinion about continuing this program?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	84.5	85.1	79.1	88.5
Disapprove	6.1	6.1	4.8	7.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	9.4	8.8	16.1	4.3

Trends.

- A large majority (84.5%) of parents surveyed *approve* continuing the Tier 4 program which allows academically advanced students in grades 3 to 9 to take classes advanced by two years in English and Mathematics.

Parental Views on Teaching About Different Cultures

Question 53

Are you satisfied with the approach used to teach about different cultures in YOUR Child's SCHOOL: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	60	64.9	61.3	50.7
No	12.1	11.4	11.3	14.1

Don't Know/No Opinion	27.9	23.7	27.4	35.2
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Trends:

- A majority (60%) of parents surveyed are *satisfied* with the approach used to teach about different cultures in their child's school.

Parental Views on Parent Education

Question 54

Are you satisfied with the efforts at PARENT EDUCATION made at YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	74.8	85	67.7	64.8
	10.2	6.2	9.7	16.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	15	8.8	22.6	18.3

Trends:

- A majority (74.8%) of parents surveyed are *satisfied* with the efforts at Parent Education made at their child's school.

Parental Views on Their Influence on School

Question 55

Do parents have enough say about what happens in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	63.9	69.9	61.3	56.4
No	15.4	12.4	16.1	19.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	20.7	17.7	22.6	23.9

Trends:

- Almost two-thirds of parents (63.9%) sampled believe that they *have enough say* about what happens in their child's school.
- Parents who were asked to respond for *elementary school* children (69.9%) were more likely than either parents responding for *middle school* children (61.3%) or *high school* children (56.4%) to believe that they have enough say about what happens in their child's school.

Parental Views on Being Welcomed in School

Question 56

Do you feel welcomed at YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	96.4	99.1	96.8	91.6
No	1.6	0.9	0	4.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	2	0	3.2	4.2

Trends:

- More than nine out of ten parents sampled (96.4%) indicate they feel *welcomed* in the SISD schools.

Parental Participation in School Activities

Question 57

Do you participate in school activities: very often, often, seldom, never?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Very Often	18.4	15.8	24.6	17.4
Often	41.9	50.9	39.4	29
Seldom	34	30.7	31.1	42
Never	5.7	2.6	4.9	11.6

Trends:

- Three out of five (60.3%) parents surveyed reported they participate *often* (41.9%) or *very often* (18.4%) in school activities.
- One-third of all parents surveyed (34%) indicate that they *seldom* participate in school activities.

Length of Residence in the District

Question 58

We would like to know how long you have resided in the Spring independent School District

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
One to Three Years	33.9	49.1	22.6	19.7
Four to Six Years	22.7	34.2	16.1	9.9
Seven to Ten Years	21.5	15.8	35.5	18.3
Over Ten Years	21.9	0.9	25.8	52.1

Trends:

- Less than half of the parents surveyed (43.4%) have resided in the district for *at least seven years*. More than half of the parents surveyed (33.9% plus 22.7% or 56.6%) have resided in the Spring Independent School District *fewer than seven years*.

Parental Views on School Information

Question 59

Are you satisfied with how well YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL keeps you informed: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	85.7	92.1	86.9	74
No	13.9	7.9	13.1	24.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.4	0	0	1.4

Trends:

- A large majority of parents surveyed (85.7%) are *satisfied* with how well the Spring Independent School District keeps them informed.

Parental Views on Lengthening the School Day

Question 60

A common proposal for increasing the time for instruction in school is **LENGTHENING THE SCHOOL DAY**. Do you **APPROVE**, **DISAPPROVE**, or **HAVE NO OPINION** about this proposal.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	38	37.7	37.1	39.1
Disapprove	51.4	52.7	53.2	47.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.6	9.6	9.7	13

Trends:

- Slightly more than half (51.4%) of all parents in the sample *disapprove lengthening the school day* as a means to increase the time for instruction in SISD schools.

Parental Views on Block Schedules

Many schools in the state and nation use **BLOCK SCHEDULES** to increase the number of courses available to high school and middle school students. There are four aspects to **BLOCK SCHEDULES** that make them different from traditional schedules. In **BLOCK SCHEDULED PLANS**, students typically:

- take at least one more course during the school year
- spend more time per period in each class
- attend fewer periods for each course
- spend less total time in each course.

Question 61

Do you APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, or HAVE NO OPINION about changing to BLOCK SCHEDULES?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	43.4	37.2	52.5	45.6
Disapprove	19.8	17.7	18	25
Don't Know/No Opinion	36.8	45.1	29.5	29.4

Trends:

- More than four out of ten parents (43.4%) sampled *approve* changing to block schedules. An additional 36.8% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Parental Views on Student Grooming Code

Question 62

Are you satisfied that the Spring Independent School District Student Grooming Code is appropriate: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	82.9	86.9	80.7	78.6
No	13.4	9.6	17.7	15.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	3.7	3.5	1.6	5.7

Trends:

- A large majority of parents surveyed (82.9%) are *satisfied* that the Spring Independent School District Student Grooming Code is appropriate.

Parental Views on Standardized Dress

Question 63

Many schools have adopted or are considering adopting STANDARDIZED DRESS. In these schools, students are required to wear clothing selected from three or four standard items such as the

same style and color shirt., slacks, shorts or skirts. Would you favor some form of standardized dress in YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	70	71.9	63.3	72.5
No	24.7	21.1	30	26.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.3	7	6.7	1.4

Trends:

- A majority (70%) of parents surveyed favor some form of standardized dress in their child's school.

Parental Views on Transportation for After School Activities

Question 64

Spring Independent School District provides transportation for middle and high school students participating in AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES. Would you favor continuing this practice: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	98.4	99.1	96.8	98.6
No	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.4	0	1.6	0

Trends:

- Almost all (98.4%) parents surveyed *favor* continuing the practice of providing school district transportation for middle and high school students participating in after school activities.

Parental Views on School Building Conditions

Question 65

Think for a moment about the overall conditions of YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL BUILDING. These conditions include such things as

construction, maintenance, safety and physical appearance. Are you satisfied with these conditions: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes (Satisfied)				
84.8	86.5	82.2	84.1	
No (Not Satisfied)				
10.7	10.8	11.3	10.1	
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.5	2.7	6.5	5.8

Trends:

- A large majority of parents sampled (84.8%) are *satisfied* with the overall conditions in their child's school building.

Parental Views on Building Additional Schools

Questions 66

Suppose the school district said if needed to BUILD ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS to relieve crowding at current schools. Would you approve, disapprove, or don't know/have no opinion about a proposal to build additional schools?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	91	92.1	93.5	86.7
Disapprove	4.1	2.6	4.9	5.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.9	5.3	1.6	7.4

Trends:

- More than nine out of ten parents polled (91%) *approve* building additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools.

Parental Views on Raising Taxes

Question 67

Suppose the Spring Independent School District said they needed

more money. As you feel at this time.. would you support raising taxes: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	91	92.2	93.5	86.7
Disapprove	4.1	2.6	4.9	5.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.9	5.3	1.6	7.4

Trends:

- Almost half of all parents surveyed (49.4%) felt they **would** vote to raise school taxes if the district said they needed more money.
- An additional 20.4% of parents in the sample indicated that they **didn't know or had no opinion** on whether they would vote to raise taxes if the district said they needed more money.

Parental Recommendations for Five-Year Plan

Question 68

The school district is working on a revised educational plan for the next five years. What do you think are the THREE most important things on which they should work?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Curriculum Issues	195	100	41	54
Administrative Issues	189	76	48	65
Teaching Excellence	75	22	23	30
Student Needs	73	33	20	20
Home School Relations	29	15	5	9
Extracurricular Activities	21	8	8	5
Discipline	18	8	7	3
Guidance/Counseling	12	7	2	3

Trends:

- Almost all (97%) parents sampled identified at least one recommendation for the five-year plan. Of the 61.2% parent

recommendations, a majority (62.7%) of these recommendations identified either *curriculum issues* (N=195) or *administrative issues* (N=189) as important areas to be addressed in the revised educational plan. An elaboration of parent recommendations is given on the next two pages.

Elaboration of Parental Recommendations for Five-Year Plan

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Curriculum Issues</i> (195 responses)				
Academic Areas	121	71	25	25
Computers	40	24	10	6
Foreign Language	25	13	8	4
Reading Language Arts	19	12	4	3
Math/Science	12	7	0	5
Fine Arts	9	6	2	1
Basic Skills (General)	8	6	0	2
Other Areas	8	3	1	4
Programs/Instructional Issues	41	15	9	17
Curriculum Decisions	21	7	3	11
Homework/Study Skills	9	4	3	2
Instructional Procedures	7	2	2	3
Field Trips	4	2	1	1
Academic Excellence	33	14	7	12
<i>Administrative Issues</i> (1 89 responses)				
School Safety/Security)	32	19	5	8
Buildings/Facilities	27	5	11	11
Drugs/Alcohol Concerns	23	5	10	8
Dress Code	21	11	6	4
Cultural Diversity	14	6	2	6
Cafeteria/Food Service	13	7	1	5
Overcrowding Concerns	12	5	3	4
Transportation	9	6	2	1
Gang Activity	9	1	2	6
Year-Round Schools	6	2	1	3

Financial Concerns	6	5	1	0
Length of School Day	5	2	2	1
Reduce Administration	4	1	2	1
Alternative School Requests	3	0	0	3
Other Administrative Issues	3	0	0	3
Miscellaneous Policies	2	1	0	1

Elaboration of Parental Recommendations for Five-Year Plan

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Teaching Excellence</i> (75 responses)				
Quality Teachers	21	7	5	9
Teacher Pay	18	5	8	5
Other Suggestions	15	3	2	10
Smaller Class Size	11	3	4	4
More Teacher Influence on Decisions	10	4	4	2
<i>Student Needs</i> (73 responses)				
Different Ability Level Needs	25	14	5	6
Serving Slower Learners	13	7	2	4
Serving Advanced Learners	10	5	3	2
Serving Average Learners	2	2	0	0
Tutoring Services	18	6	5	7
Teacher/Student Relationships	15	6	5	4
Student Social Needs	10	4	4	2
Dropout Prevention	5	2	1	2
<i>Home/School Relations</i> (29 responses)				
Parent Involvement	18	10	3	5
Home/School Communications	11	5	2	4
<i>Extracurricular Activities</i> (21 responses)				

responses)				
Activities/Policies	15	5	6	4
Athletics	6	3	2	1
<i>Discipline</i> (18 responses)				
Discipline Concerns	12	5	5	2
Policy/Procedures	6	3	2	1
<i>Guidance/Counseling</i> (12 responses)				
Academic/Career Planning	5	2	1	2
Personal Problem Counseling	4	4	0	0
Counseling Services	3	1	1	1

Spring Independent School District Report Card*

	Grade Given By:		
	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
<i>Subjects</i>			
Mathematics	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A
English/Language Arts	A	A	B
Social Studies	A	B	A
Fine Arts	A	A	A
Physical Education	A	A	A
Business Education	A	B	B
Vocational Education	A	B	B
Foreign Language	A	B	B
Computer Instruction	A	B	A
<i>Services</i>			
Guidance and Counseling	A	A	A
Tutoring	A	B	B
Honors/Above Grade Classes	A	A	A

Library	A	A	A
Extracurricular	A	A	A
Food Services	A	B	B
Nursing Services	A	A	A
Transportation	A	A	B
<i>Staff</i>			
Teachers	A	A	B
Principals	A	A	A
Assistant Principals	A	A	A
Office Staff	A	A	A
<i>District</i>			
Spring Independent School District	A	A	A

*Represents most frequent response of respondents giving a grade in the parent, teacher and student surveys.

Appendix C

Teacher Survey Results

Part I

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	50.7	58.2	51.7	35.9
B	36.0	33.6	41.1	35.9
C	8.7	7.4	5.4	14.1
D	2.1	0	0	7.8
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.5	0.8	1.8	6.3

Trends:

- About half of all teachers surveyed (50.7%) placed A's on the Mathematics Program report card. An additional 36.0% of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers sampled (50.7% plus 36.0% or 86.7%) gave **high marks** to the Mathematics Program.
- *Elementary school* (58.2%) and *middle school* (51.7%) teachers were more likely to give A's to the Mathematics Program, while *high school* teachers were more likely to give either A's (35.9%) or B's (35.9%).

Teacher Report Card on Science Program

Question 2

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SCIENCE PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SCIENCE PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
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A	47.3	40.2	63.1	46.8
B	39.1	43.5	35.1	34.4
C	9.5	13.9	0	9.4
D	0.8	0	0	3.1
FAIL	0.4	0.8	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	1.6	1.8	6.3

Trends:

- Nearly five out of ten teachers surveyed (47.3%) placed A's on the Science Program report card. An additional 39.1 % of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers sampled (47.3% plus 39.1 % or 86.4%) gave **high marks** to the Science Program.
- *Middle school* teachers(63.1%)and *high school* teachers(46.8%)were more likely to give A's to the Science Program, while *elementary school* teachers (43.5%) were more likely to give B's.

Teacher Report Card on English/Language Arts Program

Question 3

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	50.3	57.4	48.1	38.4
B	37.4	36.1	42.9	35.4
C	8.6	5.7	5.4	16.9
D	1.2	0	1.8	3.1
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.5	0.8	1.8	6.2

Trends:

- Over half of the teachers surveyed (50.3%) placed A's on the Reading Program report card. An additional 37.4% of teachers in the sample placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers surveyed (50.3% plus 37.4% or 87.7%) gave *high marks* to the Reading Program.

Teacher Report Card on Computer Instruction Program

Question 4

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the COMPUTER INSTRUCTION in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the COMPUTER INSTRUCTION In YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	24.9	15.6	30.9	37.5
B	29.0	27.0	25.5	35.9
C	27.4	32.0	32.8	14.1
D	7.5	13.1	3.6	0
FAIL	7.1	10.7	3.6	3.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.1	1.6	3.6	9.4

Trends:

- Almost all teachers surveyed (95.9%) provided letter grades for the Instructional Computer Program. A majority of teachers (53.9%) who rated this program area gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to the Instructional Computer Program.
- *High school* teachers (37.5%) were the most likely group to place A's on the Computer Instruction Program report card. *Elementary school* teachers (15.6%) were the least likely group to choose this same option.

Teacher Report Card on Social Studies Program

Question 5

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	36.1	28.7	49.1	39.0
B	46.5	53.3	40.0	39.0
C	12.0	13.9	5.5	14.1
D	2.5	2.5	3.6	1.6
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	1.6	1.8	6.3

- Slightly more than one-third of all teachers surveyed (36.1 %) placed A's on the Social Studies Program report card. An additional 46.5% of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers sampled (36.1% plus 46.5% or 82.6%) gave *high marks* to the Social Studies Program.
- *Middle school* teachers (49.1 %) were most likely to give A's to the Social Studies Program, while *elementary school* teachers (53.3%) were most likely to give B's. High school teachers were equally likely to give either A's (39.%) or B's (39%)

Teacher Report Card on Fine Arts Program

Question 6

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FINE ARTS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. (Fine Arts includes Art,, Music, Band , Dance and Drama). What grade would you give the FINE ARTS PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	56.9	50.1	75.9	53.9
B	28.2	31.1	18.5	30.8
C	10.0	15.6	3.7	4.6
D	0.8	0.8	0	1.5
FAIL	1.2	1.6	0	1.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	0.80	1.9	7.7

Trends:

- Over half of the teachers sampled (56.9%) placed A's on the Fine Arts Program report card. An additional 28.2% placed B's on the same report card. Hence, a large majority of teachers (56.9% plus 28.2% or 85.1%) surveyed gave *high marks* to the Fine Arts Program.

Teacher Report Card on Physical Education Program

Question 7

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	53.5	62.4	52.8	7.1
B	35.6	30.3	43.6	38.7
C	8.4	5.7	1.8	19.4
D	0.4	0	0	1.6
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.1	1.6	1.8	3.2

Trends:

- More than half (53.5%) of all teachers surveyed placed A's on the Physical Education Program report card. An additional 35.6% of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, about four out of five teachers sampled (53.5 % plus 35.6% or 89.1 %) gave *high marks* to the Physical Education Program.
- *Elementary school* (62.4%) and *middle school* teachers (52.8%) were more likely to give A's to the Physical Education Program, while *high school* teachers (38.7%) were more likely to give B's.

Teacher Report Card on Business Education Program

Question 8

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade

would you give the **BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM** in **YOUR SCHOOL?**

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	39.1	N/A	N/A	39.1
B	40.6	N/A	N/A	40.6
C	12.5	N/A	N/A	12.5
D	0	N/A	N/A	0
FAIL	0	N/A	N/A	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	7.8	N/A	N/A	7.8

Trends:

- A large majority of high school teachers (92.2%) asked to rate the Business Education Program provided letter grades. Almost all of these teachers placed A's or B's on the report card.

Teacher Report Card on Vocational Education Program

Question 9

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	34.4	N/A	N/A	34.4
B	35.8	N/A	N/A	35.8
C	15.6	N/A	N/A	15.6
D	6.3	N/A	N/A	6.3
FAIL	1.6	N/A	N/A	1.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	6.3	N/A	N/A	6.3

Trends:

A large majority of high school teachers (93.7%) asked to rate the Vocational Education program provided letter grades. More than seven out of ten teachers (70.2%) placed A's or B's on the report card.

Teacher Report Card on Foreign Language Program

Question 10

Students are often given the grades A., B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	38.5	N/A	N/A	38.5
B	44.6	N/A	N/A	44.6
C	3.1	N/A	N/A	3.1
D	1.5	N/A	N/A	1.5
FAIL	0	N/A	N/A	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	12.3	N/A	N/A	12.3

Trends:

- A majority of high school teachers (87.7%) asked to rate, the Foreign Language Program provided letter grades. Almost all of these teachers placed A's or B's on the report card.

Teacher Report Card on Guidance and Counseling Services

Question 11

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	49.3	54.1	63.2	24.5
B	34.2	33.0	29.8	41.5

C	11.0	8.3	7	20.8
D	2.3	3.7	0	1.9
FAIL	1.4	0.9	0	3.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.8	0	0	7.5

Trends:

- Almost half of the teachers surveyed (49.3%) placed A's on the Guidance and Counseling Services report card. An additional 34.2% of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers sampled (49.3% plus 34.2% or 83.5%) gave **high marks** to the Guidance and Counseling Services.
- *Elementary school* (54.1%) and *middle school* (63.2%) teachers were more likely to give A's to Guidance and Counseling Services, while *high school* teachers were more likely to give B's (41.5%)

Teacher Report Card on Tutoring Services

Question 12

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TUTORING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TUTORING SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	36.4	29.3	59.6	29.9
B	38.9	47.1	28.1	32.7
C	14.2	13.0	7.0	22.4
D	4.0	3.3	1.8	7.5
FAIL	0.8	0.8	0	1.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.7	6.5	3.5	6.0

Trends:

- More than nine out of ten teachers surveyed (94.3%) provided grades for Tutoring Services. Most teachers who rated this area gave **high marks** (grades of A or B) to Tutoring Services.

- *Middle school* teachers were most likely to give A's for Tutoring Services. *Elementary school* (47.1%) and high school teachers were most likely to give B's.

Teacher Report Card on Honors/Above Grade Classes

Question 13

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the HONORS OR ABOVE GRADE CLASSES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the HONORS OR ABOVE GRADE CLASSES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	60.3	66.7	48.3	58.9
B	30.9	26.8	43.1	27.9
C	3.2	1.6	5.2	4.4
D	0	0	0	0
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.6	4.9	3.4	8.8

Trends:

- A majority of teachers surveyed (60.3%) placed A's on the Honors/Above Grade Classes report card. An additional 30.9% of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers sampled (60.3% plus 30.9% or 91.2%) gave *high marks* to Honors/Above Grade Classes.

Teacher Report Card on Library Services

Question 14

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the LIBRARY SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the LIBRARY SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	65.3	65.0	60.4	70.1

B	21.8	20.3	34.5	13.4
C	8.1	10.6	3.4	7.5
D	2.4	3.3	0	3.0
FAIL	0.4	0.8	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.0	0	1.7	6.0

Trends:

- Almost all teachers surveyed (98%) placed letter grades on the Library Services report card. Most teachers who rated this service gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to Library Services, with a majority (65.3%) giving it an A.

Teacher Report Card on Extracurricular Activities

Question 15

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES in this district were graded in the same way. Extracurricular activities include school band, sports, dramatics, and the school paper. What grade would you give the EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	59.8	50.0	72.4	66.2
B	27.9	29.7	25.9	26.5
C	3.7	5.1	1.7	2.9
D	0	0	0	0
FAIL	0.4	0.8	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	8.2	14.4	0	4.4

Trends:

- A majority of teachers in the sample (91.8%) placed letter grades on the Extracurricular Activities report card. Most teachers (87.7%) gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to Extracurricular Activities.

Teacher Report Card on Food Services

Question 16

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FOOD SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the FOOD SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	32.9	35.0	31.2	30.9
B	37.8	37.3	29.3	45.5
C	17.3	19.5	24.1	7.4
D	7.2	4.1	10.3	10.3
FAIL	2	3.3	1.7	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.8	0.8	3.4	5.9

Trends:

- Almost three-fourths of the teachers sampled (70.7%) placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card for Food Services.
- *Elementary school (37.3%) and high school (45.5%)* teachers were more likely to give a B to the Food Service Program, while *middle school* teachers (31.2%) were more likely to give an A.

Teacher Report Card on Nursing Services

Question 17

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the NURSING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the NURSING SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	61.5	67.4	67.3	45.5
B	27.3	24.4	27.6	32.4
C	6.8	4.1	3.4	14.7
D	2.0	3.3	0	1.5
FAIL	0.4	0.8	0	0

Don't Know/No Opinion	2.0	0	1.7	5.9
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Trends:

- More than three out of five teachers surveyed (61.5%) placed A's on the Nursing Services report card. An additional 27.3% of teachers placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most teachers sampled (61.5% plus 27.3% or 88.8%) gave **high marks** to Nursing Services.

Teacher Report Card on Transportation Services

Question 18

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TRANSPORTATION SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TRANSPORTATION SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	63.7	62.8	64.2	64.8
B	27.3	28.1	25	27.9
C	5.3	6.6	5.4	2.9
D	0.8	0	3.6	0
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	2.5	1.8	4.4

Trends:

- Most (63.7% plus 27.3% or 91%) teachers sampled assigned **high marks** (grades of A or B) to the SISD report card on Transportation Services. A letter grade of A was the most likely grade entered on the report card by *elementary school* (62.8%), *middle school* (64.2%) and *high school* (64.8%) teachers.

Teacher Report Card on Teachers

Question 19

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TEACHERS in this district were

graded in the same way. What grade would you give the **TEACHERS** in **YOUR SCHOOL**?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	66.0	73.2	69.0	50.1
B	30.8	24.4	29.3	43.9
C	2.0	2.4	1.7	1.5
D	0.4	0	0	1.5
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.8	0	0	3.0

Trends:

- Almost all teachers in the sample (66% plus 30.8% or 96.8%) placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card on Teachers.

Teacher Report Card on Principals

Question 20

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the PRINCIPALS in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the PRINCIPALS in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	64.6	69.1	62.1	58.5
B	23.2	22	27.6	21.5
C	7.3	6.5	8.6	7.7
D	3.3	2.4	1.7	6.2
FAIL	1.2	0	0	4.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.4	0	0	1.5

Trends:

Almost all teachers surveyed (64.6% plus 23.2% or 87.8%) gave **high marks** (grades of A or B) to the principals in their school.

Teacher Report Card on Assistant Principals

Question 21

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	64.9	74.6	64.9	47
B	27.8	23.8	31.6	31.8
C	5.3	0.8	3.5	15.2
D	1.6	0.8	0	4.5
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.4	0	0	1.5

Trends:

- Almost all teachers surveyed (64.9% plus 27.8% or 92.7%) gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to the assistant principals in their school.

Teacher Report Card on Office Staff

Question 22

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the OFFICE STAFF in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the OFFICE STAFF in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	80.4	86.9	82.8	66.6
B	16.3	11.5	13.8	27.3
C	3.3	1.6	3.4	6.1
D	0	0	0	0
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	0	0	0	0

Trends:

- Almost all teachers surveyed (80.4% plus 16.3% or 96.7%) gave **high marks** to the office staff in their school.

Teacher Report Card on Spring ISD

Question 23

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SCHOOL DISTRICT?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	62.6	69.7	63.8	48.5
B	33.7	25.4	36.2	47
C	3.7	4.9	0	4.5
D	0	0	0	0
FAIL	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	0	0	0	0

Trends:

- Most teachers in the sample (62.6% plus 33.7% or 96.3%) placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the report card for the Spring Independent School District.

Physically Handicapped Student Needs

Question 24

How well do you believe the needs of PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED students are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	45.6	45.8	55.2	36.8
Adequately Met	39.4	38.3	32.8	47.0
Poorly Met	2.4	1.7	1.7	4.4

Not Met At All	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	12.6	14.2	10.3	11.8

Trends:

- Most of the teachers surveyed (45.6% plus 39.4% or 85%) believe that the needs of handicapped students in their school are ***adequately met*** or ***fully met***.
- *Elementary school* teachers (45.8%) were most likely to believe that the needs of handicapped students are ***fully met***.
- *Middle school* teachers were most likely to believe that the needs of handicapped students are ***fully met*** (55.2%).
- *High school* teachers (47%) were most likely to believe that the needs of handicapped students are ***adequately met***.

Appendix C

Teacher Survey Results

Part II

Slower Learning Student Needs

Question 25

How well do you believe the needs of **SLOWER LEARNING** students are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	24.3	25.8	28.1	18.2
Adequately Met	43.6	50.9	35.0	37.9
Poorly Met	28.0	20.8	31.6	37.9
Not Met At All	2.5	0.8	3.5	4.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.5

Trends:

- More than two-thirds of the teachers sampled (24.3% plus 43.6% or 67.9%) believe that the needs of slower learning students in their school are **fully met** (24.3%) or **adequately met** (43.6%).
- *Elementary school* (50.9%) and *middle school* (35.0%) teachers are most likely to believe that the needs of slower learning students in their school are **adequately met**. High school teachers are most likely to believe that needs of slower learning students are either **adequately met** (37.9% or **poorly met** (37.9%).

Academically Advanced Student Needs

Question 26

How well do you believe the needs of **ACADEMICALLY ADVANCED** students are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	53.0	55.3	50.8	50.7

Adequately Met	40.0	39.7	40.4	40.3
Poorly Met	4.1	2.5	5.3	6.0
Not Met At All	0	0	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	2.5	3.5	3.0

Trends:

- Almost all teachers in the survey (53% plus 40% or 93%) believe that the needs of academically advanced students in their school *are fully met* (53%) or *adequately met* (40%).

Average Student Needs

Question 27

How well do you believe the needs of AVERAGE students are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	27.2	34.2	19.3	21.2
Adequately Met	50.5	57.5	49.1	39.5
Poorly Met	16.9	5.8	22.8	31.8
Not Met At All	2.1	0	3.5	4.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	3.3	2.5	5.3	3.0

Trends:

- Most teachers surveyed (27.2% plus 50.5% or 77.7%) believe that the needs of average students in their school *are fully met* (27.2%) or *adequately met* (50.5%).

Needs of Non-College Bound Students

Question 28

How well do you believe the needs of NON-COLLEGE BOUND students are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	7.4	N/A	N/A	7.4
Adequately Met	41.2	N/A	N/A	41.2
Poorly Met	47.0	N/A	N/A	47.0
Not Met At All	1.5	N/A	N/A	1.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	N/A	N/A	2.9

Trends:

- High school teachers (47%) are most likely to believe that the needs of non-college bound students in their school are *poorly met*.

Needs Of Students At Risk of Dropping Out of School

Question 29

How well do you believe the needs of STUDENTS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	21.5	32	10.3	11.9
Adequately Met	45.8	41.8	51.8	47.8
Poorly Met	20.6	9.0	27.6	35.8
Not Met At All	0.8	0.8	0	1.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	11.3	16.4	10.3	3.0

Trends:

- Almost half of the teachers (45.8%) surveyed believe that the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school are *adequately met* in their school. An additional 11.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs Of Learning Disabled Students in Inclusion Classroom

Question 30

How well do you believe the needs of LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	14.5	18.9	8.9	11.1
Adequately Met	46.9	45.8	48.3	47.6
Poorly Met	27.4	22.1	32.1	33.3
Not Met At All	3.3	2.5	3.6	4.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	7.9	10.7	7.1	3.2

Trends:

- Almost half of the teachers (46.9%) surveyed believe that the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school are *adequately met* in their school. An additional 7.9% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs Of Regular Students in Inclusion Classroom

Question 31

How well do you believe the needs of REGULAR STUDENTS IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	14.8	19.5	5.4	14.1
Adequately Met	46.1	55.3	39.3	34.4
Poorly Met	28.0	16.3	39.3	40.6
Not Met At All	5.3	1.6	10.7	7.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.8	7.3	5.3	3.1

Trends:

- *Elementary school* teachers (55.3%) were most likely to believe that the needs of regular students in inclusion classrooms are *adequately met*.

- *Middle school* teachers were most likely to believe that the needs of regular students in inclusion classrooms are either *adequately met* (39.3%) or *poorly met* (39.3%).
- *High school* teachers(40.6%)were most likely to believe that the needs of regular school students in inclusion classrooms are *poorly met*.

Elaboration of Teachers Views on School Strengths

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Effective Learning Environment (60 responses)</i>				
Caring/Collegial Environment	100	60	13	27
Excellent Campus Support Staff	20	8	4	8
Teacher Autonomy	20	11	2	7
Cultural Diversity	17	3	7	7
General Students	3	1	2	0
<i>Teachers (136 responses)</i>				
Team Spirit/Teachers Sharing Ideas	53	30	16	7
Caring/Concerned Teachers	31	18	7	6
High Quality Teachers	27	14	4	9
Dedicated/Hard Working Teachers	25	15	5	5
<i>Administrative (124 response)</i>				
Administrative Support for Teachers	46	22	12	12
Effective Administrators	37	16	12	9
Good Principals	25	15	3	7
Discipline Policies and Practices	16	7	8	1
<i>Instructional Programs and Practices (70 responses)</i>				
Academic Standards	23	7	5	11
Meeting Individual Student Needs	21	11	6	4

Specific Programs and Procedures	15	11	3	1
Materials and Resources	11	9	0	2
<i>Parent/Teacher Cooperative (33 responses)</i>				
Parent Involvement/Support	24	20	3	1
Home/School Communication	9	9	0	0
<i>Extracurricular Activities (9 responses)</i>				
Wide Variety of Activities	8	2	3	3
Activity Bus	1	0	1	0
<i>Other Strengths (12 responses)</i>				
Clean Schools	8	2	1	5
Facilities and Equipment	1	0	1	0

Teacher Views on School Strengths

Question 32

In your opinion, in what way is YOUR SCHOOL particularly good?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Effective Learning Environment	160	83	28	49
Teachers	136	77	32	27
Administration	124	60	35	29
Academic Programs	70	38	14	18
Parent/Teacher Cooperation	33	29	3	1
Extracurricular Activities	9	2	4	3
Other Strengths	12	3	2	7

Trends:

- Almost all (99%) teachers sampled identified at least one way in which their school is particularly good. Of the 544 teacher responses, more than three out of four (77.2%) responses identified **Teachers** (N= 1 36), **Effective Learning Environment** (N= 1 60)

or *Administration* (N=124) as school strengths. An elaboration of strengths identified by teachers is given on the preceding page.

Teacher Views on Academic Challenge

Question 33

Are you satisfied with the degree to which YOUR STUDENTS are challenged academically.- yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	69.2	81.8	50.0	63.2
No	26.3	11.6	46.6	35.3
Don't Know/ No Opinion	4.5	6.6	3.4	1.5

Trends:

- A majority of the teachers in the sample (69.2%) believe that students are challenged academically.

Transition from Elementary to Middle School

Question 34

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from ELEMENTARY to MIDDLE SCHOOL are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
t	19.8	19.7	35.1	7.4
e	40.9	46.7	47.4	25
r	6.5	6.6	7.0	5.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	32.8	27.0	10.5	61.7

Trends:

- *Elementary school* (46.7%) and *middle school* (47.4%) teachers were most likely to say that the transition procedures from

elementary to middle school are *adequate*, while high school (61.7%) teachers were most likely to give *don't know/no opinion* responses for the same question.

Transition from Middle to High School

Question 35

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from MIDDLE to HIGH SCHOOL are: excellent, adequate, poor don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
t	8.1	8.2	6.9	8.8
e	40.3	28.7	58.6	45.6
r	14.1	2.5	15.5	33.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	37.5	60.6	19.0	11.8

Trends:

- Slightly less than half of all teachers surveyed(8.1% plus 40.3% or 48.4%)believe that the student transition from middle school to high school is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 37.5% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- *High school* (45.6%) and *middle school* (58.6%) teachers are more likely to view these procedures as *adequate*. *Elementary teachers* (60.6%) are most likely to respond *don't know* or *no opinion*.

Transition from High School to College

Question 36

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from HIGH SCHOOL to COLLEGE are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
t	8.9	8.2	5.2	13.2
e	36.2	27.0	32.8	55.9

r	6.9	4.9	6.9	10.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	48.0	59.9	55.1	20.6

Trends:

- Almost half of all teachers in the sample (8.9% plus 36.2% or 45.1%) believe that the student transition from high school to college is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 48% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- Almost 70% of *high school* teachers were more likely to evaluate these procedures as *excellent* (13.2%) or *adequate* (55.9%).
- A majority of *elementary school* (59.9%) and *middle school* (55.1%) teachers offered a *don't know/no opinion* response.

Transition from High School to Work

Question 37

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from HIGH SCHOOL to WORK are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
t	3.6	5.0	1.7	2.9
e	33.3	20.7	31	57.4
r	10.9	5.0	13.8	19.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	52.2	69.3	53.5	20.6

Trends:

- Slightly more than one-third of all teachers in the sample (3.6% plus 33.3% or 36.9%) believe that the student transition from high school to work is either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 52.2% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- Over 60% of *high school* teachers were most likely to evaluate these procedures as *excellent* (2.9%) or *adequate* (57.4%).
- A majority of *elementary school* (69.3%) and *middle school* (53.5%) teachers offered a *don't know/no opinion* response.

Teacher Views on Problems in the Schools

Question 38

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in Spring ISD must deal?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Improving the Quality of Instruction	125	75	27	23
Discipline	124	47	35	42
Parental Involvement/Family Issues	96	58	23	15
Changing Student Population/Overcrowding	96	40	19	37
Student Needs	62	20	16	26
Administrative Issues	55	26	7	22
Societal Concerns	43	18	13	12
Hiring/Keeping Quality Teachers	34	17	10	7
School Safety/Security	32	15	4	13
Drugs/Alcohol	15	7	3	5

Trends:

- Almost all (99%) teachers sampled identified at least two problems. Of the 682 teacher responses, almost two-thirds (64.7%) identified *Improving The Quality Of Instruction (N=125)*, *Discipline (N=124)*, *Parent Involvement/Family Issues (N=96)* and *Student Needs (N=96)* as problems in the schools. The remaining 241 teacher responses (35.3%) are contained in six additional problem categories. An elaboration of the problems identified by teachers is given on the next two pages.

Elaboration of Teacher Views on Problems in the Schools

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Improving the Quality of Instruction (125) responses				
Computer Technology Needs				

27	18	3	6
Maintaining Academic Standards			
19	11	3	5
Lack of Basic Skills			
17	9	7	1
Lack of Instructional Materials			
12	9	0	3
Inclusion/Special Education Issues			
9	7	1	1
More Time for Teaching			
9	4	3	2
Number/Quality of Staff			
7	3	2	2
Poor Quality Curriculum			
5	2	2	1
Meeting Needs for Slower Learners			
5	5	0	0
Grading Policies			
3	1	1	1
Bilingual Program			
3	3	0	0
TAAS Pressure			
3	2	1	0
Other Program issues			
6	1	4	1
Discipline (124 responses)			
Student Disrespect for Others			
62	27	12	23
Discipline in General			

41	16	12	13
Discipline Action/Policies			
14	4	7	3
Inconsistent Discipline			
7	0	4	3
Parent Involvement/Family Issues (96 responses)			
Uninvolved Parents			
33	21	7	5
Lack of Parent Support for Teachers			
27	15	6	6
Impact of Home Situation on School Performance			
13	10	3	0
Lack of Parent Respect for Teachers			
9	5	1	3
Parent Interference in School Affairs			
8	2	5	1
Need for Better Parenting Skills			
6	5	1	0
Changing Student Population/Overcrowding (96 responses)			
Educating a Culturally Diverse Population			
30	12	7	11
Overcrowded Schools			
30	15	4	11
Large Class Size			
25	9	5	11
Transient Student Population			
11	4	3	4

Student Needs (62 responses)				
Lack of Motivation to Learn	44	14	11	19
Lack of Alternative Programs	6	1	2	3
Helping Students with Adjustment Problems	4	1	1	2
Lack of Responsibility	4	2	1	1
Needs of At Risk Students	4	2	1	1
	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Administrative Issues (55 responses)				
Financial concerns	10	3	6	1
Facilities	9	5	3	1
Administrative Support of Teachers	7	3	1	3
Need for Better Public Relations	7	7	0	0
Too Many Administrative Positions	5	1	0	4
Attendance/Tardiness	5	2	0	3
Dress Code Issues	4	1	2	1
State Laws and State Mandates	3	0	0	3
Other Administrative Concerns	5	4	0	1
Societal Concerns (43 responses)				
Families in Crisis	23	12	5	6
Economically Disadvantaged	10	3	6	1
Race Issues	5	2	1	2
Other Social Issues	5	1	1	3
Hiring/Keeping Quality Teachers (34 responses)				
Too Many Teacher Paperwork	12	8	4	0
Teacher Morale and Stress	9	3	2	4
Low Teacher Pay	6	2	4	0
Teacher Professional Development	3	2	0	1

Need for Teacher Aides	3	2	0	1
Keeping Quality Teachers	1	0	0	1
School Safety/Security (32 responses)				
Gangs	16	10	2	4
Violence & Grime	10	2	2	6
Maintaining Safe School Environment	6	3	0	3
Drugs/Alcohol (15 responses)				
Drugs	11	6	2	3
Drugs/Alcohol	4	1	1	2

Teacher Views on Ability Grouping

Question 39

Many children in Spring ISD schools are grouped by ability for instruction. Do you want YOUR STUDENTS grouped by ability: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	66.2	50.0	77.6	85.3
No	29.4	44.3	20.7	10.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.4	5.7	1.7	4.4

Trends:

- Almost two-thirds of the teachers in the sample (66.2%) want their students *grouped by ability* for instruction.

Teacher Views on Discipline

Question 40

Do you feel the discipline in YOUR SCHOOL is: too strict, not strict enough, just about right don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Too Strict	0	0	0	0

Not Strict Enough	46.1	34.7	52.6	61.2
Just About Right	52.3	62.8	47.4	37.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.5	0	0	1.5

Trends:

- *Elementary school* teachers (62.8%) are most likely to feel that discipline in their school is *just about right*.
- *Middle school* teachers (52.6%) and *high school* teachers (61.2) are most likely to feel that discipline in their school is ***not strict enough***.

Teacher Views on Student Safety in the Schools

Question 41

Are students in YOUR SCHOOL safe: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	87.5	97.6	82.7	73.5
No	9.3	0.8	12.1	22.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	3.2	1.6	5.2	4.4

Trends:

- A large majority (87.5%) of teachers sampled believe that students in their school are *safe*.
- An additional 3.2% offered ***don't know/no opinion*** responses.

Teacher Views on Teacher Safety in the Schools

Question 42

Are teachers in YOUR SCHOOL safe: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	83.9	92.6	81.1	70.5
No	11.3	3.3	15.5	22.1

Don't Know/No Opinion	4.8	4.1	3.4	7.4
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Trends:

- More than four out of **five** (83.9%) teachers sampled believe that teachers in their school are *safe*. An additional 4.8% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- *Elementary school* teachers (92.6%) are more likely than *high school* teachers (70.5%) or *middle school* teachers (81.1%) to believe that teachers in their school are *safe*.

Teacher Views on Use of Drugs and/or Alcohol in this Community

Question 43

Would you say the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children in this community is: no problem, a minor problem, a major problem, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	5.2	10.6	0	0
A Minor Problem	35.3	33.3	53.4	23.5
A Major Problem	43.0	28.5	41.4	70.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	16.5	27.6	5.2	5.9

Trends:

- Slightly more than four out of ten (43%) teachers polled believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children in this community is a *major problem*. An additional 16.5% of teachers in the sample chose the *don't know/no opinion* option.
- *High school* teachers (70.5%) are more likely than *elementary school* teachers (28.5%) or *middle school* teachers (**41.4%**) to believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children in this community is a *major problem*.

Appendix C

Teacher Survey Results

Part III

Teacher Views on Use of Drugs and/or Alcohol in School

Question 44

Would you say that the use of drugs and/or alcoholic drinks in the building or on the grounds of YOUR SCHOOL is: no problem, a minor problem, a major problem, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	52.4	87.0	24.6	13.2
A Minor Problem	30.6	7.3	49.0	57.3
A Major Problem	6.5	0	1.8	22.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.5	5.7	24.6	7.4

- More than one-half of the teachers surveyed (52.4%) believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds **is no problem**. An additional 10.5% of teachers in the sample chose the **don't know/no opinion** option.
- Teachers in *elementary schools* (87%) are most likely to believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds **is no problem**.
- Teachers in *middle schools* (49%) and *high schools* (57.3%) are most likely to believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds **is a minor problem**.

Teacher Views on Drug and Alcohol Problems

Question 45

Which of the two problems - DRUGS or ALCOHOLIC DRINKS - is the larger problem?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	30.3	15.6	50.9	30.3
FAIL	38.9	48.0	20.0	44.0

Don't Know/No Opinion	30.8	36.4	29.1	25.7
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Trends:

- Almost seven out of ten teachers surveyed (30.3% plus 38.9% or 69.2%) had a definite opinion regarding which of the two problems - ***drugs or alcoholic drinks*** - was the larger problem for SISD students. An additional 30.8% of teachers offered a ***don't know/no opinion*** response.
- *Elementary school* teachers (48%) and *high school* teachers (44%) were most likely to designate ***alcoholic drinks*** as the larger problem.
- *Middle school* teachers (50.9%) were most likely to designate ***drugs*** as the larger problem.

Teacher Views on Student Hostility and Disrespect

Question 46

Would you say that hostility and disrespect among students in YOUR SCHOOL is: a major problem, a minor problem, no problem, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	41.8	26.0	48.3	64.7
A Minor Problem	49.4	57.8	50.0	33.8
A Major Problem	8.0	15.4	1.7	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.8	0.8	0	1.5

Trends:

- Almost half of the teachers (49.4%) indicated that hostility and disrespect among students in their school was a ***minor problem***. An additional 41.8% say hostility and disrespect is a ***major problem***. Hence, most teachers (49.4% plus 41.8% or 91.2%) believe that hostility and disrespect among students ***is a problem*** in the schools.

Teacher Views on Additional or Expanded Services

Question 47

I will read you a list of **THREE ADDITIONAL OR EXPANDED SERVICES**. Please identify the **TWO MOST IMPORTANT ENTRIES** in this list.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Elementary School Foreign Language				
68.6	58.2	75.0	83.1	
Elementary School Activity Buses				
44.8	43.5	46.2	46.0	
Elementary Schools Field Trips				
83.3	94.3	76.9	69.2	

Trends:

- When asked to choose two of three *additional or expanded services* they would like to see provided in the Spring Independent School District, teachers sampled were most likely to choose ***Elementary School Field Trips***.
- *Elementary school* (94.3%) and *middle school* (76.9%) teachers most often chose ***Elementary School Field Trips***.
- *High school* teachers (83.1 %) most often chose ***Elementary School Foreign Language***.

Teacher Views on Additional or Expanded Services

Question 48

I will read you a list of **FIVE ADDITIONAL OR EXPANDED SERVICES**. Please identify the **TWO MOST IMPORTANT ENTRIES** in this list.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Expanded Middle School Recreational Sports	27.5	28.7	33.9	19.7
High School Recreational Sports	23.4	17.2	10.7	45.5

Instrumental Music String Program	33.6	36.1	32.2	30.3
Expanded Middle School Foreign Language Program	50.8	40.2	71.4	53.1
Expanded Extracurricular Activities Other Than Athletics	62.3	76.2	50.0	46.7

Trends:

- When asked to choose *additional or expanded services* they would like to see provided in the Spring Independent School District, *high school and middle school* teachers sampled were most likely to choose *Expanded Middle School Foreign Language Program*.
- Given the same list, *elementary school* teachers were most likely to choose *Expanded Extracurricular Activities Other Than Athletics*.

Teacher Views on School/Business Partnerships

Question 49

Do you believe Spring Independent School District efforts to create school/business partnerships are of- great importance, some importance, little importance, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Great Importance	67.8	67.8	71.9	64
Some Importance	21.8	19.5	15.8	31.3
Little Importance	0.8	0	0	3.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	9.6	12.7	12.3	1.6

Trends:

- Almost seven out of ten teachers surveyed (67.8%) believe that SISD efforts to create school/business partnerships are of *great importance*.

Teacher Views on Teacher Pay and Benefits

Question 50

Would you favor or oppose raising Spring Independent District teacher pay and benefits: favor, oppose, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
r	98.0	98.4	100	95.6
e	0.4	0.8	0	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.6	0.8	0	4.4

Trends:

Almost all teachers (98%) **favor** raising SISD teacher pay and benefits.

Teacher Views on Excellence in Teaching

Question 51

Do you favor or oppose extra pay for excellence in teaching: favor, oppose, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
r	81.4	79.3	82.7	83.8
e	8.9	8.3	12.1	7.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	9.7	12.4	5.2	8.8

Trends:

- A large majority (81.4%) of teachers surveyed **favor** extra pay for excellence in teaching.

Teacher Views on Academic Progress

Question 52

Are you satisfied with the ways your students academic progress is measured.- yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	74.2	69.4	77.6	80.0
No	21.3	24.8	20.7	15.4

Don't Know/No Opinion	4.5	5.8	1.7	4.6
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Trends:

- A majority of teachers (74.2%) surveyed *are satisfied* with the ways their student's academic progress is measured.

Teacher Views on Tier 4 Program

Question 53

Spring ISD supports the Tier 4 program which allows academically advanced students in grades 3 to 9 to take classes advanced by two years in English and mathematics. Do you APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, or Have No Opinion about continuing this program?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
e	86.1	88.4	86.2	81.9
e	8.2	6.6	5.2	13.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	5.7	5.0	8.6	4.5

Trends:

- A large majority (86.1 %) of teachers surveyed *approve* continuing the Tier 4 program.

Teacher Views on Teaching About Different Cultures

Question 54

Are you satisfied with the approach used to teach about different cultures in your school: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	65.7	71.3	65.5	55.9
No	14.1	14.8	12.1	14.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	20.2	13.9	2.4	29.4

Trends:

- Almost two-thirds (65.7%) of the teachers sampled *are satisfied* with the approach used to teach about different cultures in their school. An additional 20.2% gave *don't know/no opinion* responses for the same question.

Teacher Views on Parent Education

Question 55

Are you satisfied with the efforts at parent education made at your school: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	61.9	75.2	53.5	45.6
No	14.2	7.4	22.4	19.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	23.9	17.4	24.1	35.3

Trends:

- Better than three out of five (61.9%) teachers surveyed *are satisfied* with the efforts at parent education made at their school. An additional 23.9% gave *don't know/no opinion* responses for the same question.

Teacher Views on Parental Influence on Schools

Question 56

Do parents have enough say about what happens in your school: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	85.1	84.4	91.2	80.9
No	3.2	4.1	1.8	2.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	11.7	11.5	7	16.2

Trends:

- A large majority (85.1 %) of teachers believe that parents *have enough say* about what happens in their school.

Teacher Views on Parents Being Welcomed in School

Question 57

Do you believe parents feel welcomed at your school: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	89.1	92.6	87.9	83.8
No	3.2	3.3	5.2	1.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	7.7	4.1	6.9	14.7

Trends:

- Most teachers (89.1%) in the sample believe that parents **feel welcomed** in their school.

Teacher Views on Parental Participation in School Activities

Question 58

Do parents in your school participate in school activities: very often, often, seldom, never?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Very Often	26.9	34.7	21.4	16.9
n	47.0	43.0	53.6	49.2
m	24.4	21.5	23.2	30.8
r	1.7	0.8	1.8	3.1

Trends:

- Almost three-fourths of the teachers surveyed (73.9%) reported that parents participate ***often*** (47%) or ***very often*** (26.9%) in school activities.
- About one-quarter of all teachers surveyed (24.4%) indicate that parents ***seldom*** participate in school activities.

Years of Teaching Experience in the District

Question 59

We would like to know how long you have taught in the Spring Independent School District.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
One to Three Years	37.7	37.5	48.3	28.8
Four to Six Years	15.2	14.2	17.2	15.2
Seven to Ten Years	16.0	17.5	15.5	13.6
Eleven to Fifteen Years	17.6	20.0	6.9	22.7
Over Fifteen Years	13.5	10.8	12.1	19.7

Trends:

- More than six out of ten teachers in the survey (62.3%) have **four or more years** teaching experience in the Spring Independent School District. Over three out of ten of these experienced teachers (31.1% of the entire sample) have **eleven or more years** of teaching experience in SISD schools.

Teacher Views on School Information

Question 60

Are you satisfied with how well YOUR SCHOOL keeps parents yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	89.8	97.5	86	79.2
No	6.5	2.5	10.5	10.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	3.7	0	3.5	10.4

Trends:

- Almost nine out of ten teachers surveyed (89.8%) **are satisfied** with how well the Spring Independent School District keeps parents informed.

Teacher Views on Lengthening the School Day

Question 61

A common proposal for increasing the time for instruction in school is lengthening the school day. Do you approve, disapprove, or have no opinion about this proposal?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
e	15	14.8	12.3	17.9
e	80.9	83.6	85.9	71.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.1	1.6	1.8	10.4

Trends:

- About eight out of ten teachers (80.9%) surveyed *disapprove lengthening the school day* as a means to increase the time for instruction in SISD schools.

Teacher Views on Block Schedules

Many schools in the state and nation use BLOCK SCHEDULES to increase the number of courses available to high school and middle school students. There are four aspects to BLOCK SCHEDULES that make them different for traditional schedules. In BLOCK SCHEDULED PLANS, students typically:

- take at least one more course during the school year
- spend more time per period in each class
- attend fewer periods for each course
- spend less total time in each course.

Question 62

Do you APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, or HAVE NO OPINION about changing to block schedules?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
e	49.0	41.2	55.2	57.8
e	22.4	12.6	37.9	26.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	28.6	46.2	6.9	15.6

Trends:

- *Middle school* teachers (55.2%) and *high school* teachers (57.8%) are most likely to *approve* changing to block schedules.

- *Elementary school* teachers (46.2%) are most likely to have *no opinion* about changing to block schedules.

Teacher Views on Student Grooming Code

Question 63

Are you satisfied that the Spring Independent School District student grooming code is appropriate: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	81.9	92.7	67.3	75.0
No	16.9	5.7	31	25.0
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.2	1.6	1.7	0

Trends:

- A large majority (81.9%) of teachers sampled *are satisfied* that the SISD grooming code is appropriate.

Teacher Views on Standardized Dress

Question 64

Many schools have adopted standardized dress. In these schools, students are required to wear clothing selected from three or four standard items such as the same style and color shirt, stacks, shorts or skirts. Would you favor some form of standardized dress in your school: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	80.9	74.5	89.5	85.0
No	8.9	10.7	7.0	7.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.2	14.8	3.5	7.5

Trends:

- A large majority (80.9%) of teachers polled **favor** some form of standardized dress in their school.

Teacher Views on Transportation for After School Activities

Question 65

Spring ISD provides transportation for middle and high school students participating in after school activities. Would you favor continuing this practice: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	96.4	93.5	98.2	100
No	1.2	1.6	1.8	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.4	4.9	0	0

Trends:

- Almost all (96.4%) teachers **favor** continuing to provide school district transportation for middle and high school students participating in after school activities.

Teacher Views on School Building Conditions

Question 66

Think for a moment about the overall conditions of your school building. These conditions include such things as construction, maintenance, safety and physical appearance. Are you satisfied with these conditions: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes (Satisfied)	63.2	59.7	63.8	69.2
No (Not Satisfied)	33.9	37.8	32.8	27.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	2.5	3.4	2.9

Trends:

- Almost two-thirds of the teachers sampled (63.2%) are **satisfied** with the overall conditions in their school building. An additional 33.9% are *not satisfied* with the overall conditions in their school building.

Teacher Views on Building Additional Schools

Question 67

Suppose the school district said it needed to build additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools. Would you approve, disapprove, or have not opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	98.4	100	98.2	95.5
No	0.4	0	0	1.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.2	0	1.8	3.0

Trends:

- Almost all (98.4%) teachers would *approve* the need to build additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools.

Teacher Views on Raising Taxes

Question 68

Suppose the school district said it needed more money. As you feel at this time, would you support raising taxes: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	62.4	68.0	48.3	64.2
No	19.4	15.6	31.0	16.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	18.2	16.4	20.7	19.4

Trends:

- Better than three out of five teachers (62.4%) would *support raising taxes* if the school district said it needed more money.

Teacher Views Teacher Evaluation

Question 69

Are you satisfied that the way in which you are evaluated helps you to improve instruction: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	62.2	77.5	55.2	41.2

No	27.2	15.0	27.6	48.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.6	7.5	17.2	10.3

Trends:

- Slightly more than three out of five teachers (62.2%) surveyed are *satisfied* that the way in which they are evaluated helps them to improve instruction.

Teacher Recommendations for Five-Year Plan

Question 70

The school district is working on a revised educational plan for the next five years. What do you think are the three most important things on which they should work?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Curriculum Issues	266	134	63	69
Administrative Issues	102	43	23	36
Student Needs	89	35	21	33
Teacher Excellence	87	44	16	27
Discipline	56	20	10	26
Parent Involvement/Family Issues	41	26	5	10
Extracurricular Activities	16	9	3	4

Trends:

- Almost all (99%) of the teachers sampled identified at least one recommendation for the five-year plan. Of the 657 teacher recommendations, over half (56%) of these recommendations identified either *curriculum issues* (N=266) or *administrative issues* (N=102). An elaboration of teacher recommendations is given on the following two pages.

Elaboration of Teacher Recommendations for the Five Year Plan

	All	Elementary	Middle	High
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	Schools #	#	#	#
<i>Curriculum Issues</i> (195 responses)				
Academic Areas	158	83	39	36
Computer Education	69	39	18	12
Reading Language Arts	24	16	5	3
Vocational Education	20	2	5	13
Mathematics	13	8	3	2
Foreign Language	11	6	1	4
Basic Skills (General)	8	2	5	1
Bilingual Education	5	5	0	0
Other Areas	2	0	1	1
Small Class Size	29	12	13	4
Academic Excellence	17	5	3	9
Instructional Procedures	14	5	3	6
Block Scheduling	12	0	3	9
More Field Trips	8	7	1	0
Curriculum Organization	8	6	0	2
TAAS Concerns	8	8	0	0
Expanded Program Offerings	6	2	1	3
Need for Reading Specialist	4	4	0	0
Tier 4	2	2	0	0
<i>Administrative Issues</i> (102 responses)				
Buildings/Facilities	17	8	3	6
Build New Schools	11	4	6	1
Drugs/Alcohol Concerns	10	7	1	2
Dress Code Issues	10	3	3	4
Relieve Overcrowding	9	6	2	1

Gang Influences	8	4	0	4
School Safety/Security	8	1	3	4
Attendance	4	2	0	2
Scheduling	4	2	1	1
Administrator Involvement in Classrooms	3	0	1	2
Personnel Concerns	3	0	1	2
	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Improve Public Relations	2	2	0	0
Site-Based Management	2	1	0	1
Other Administrative Issues	11	3	2	6
Student Needs (89 responses)				
Different Ability Level Needs	41	21	8	12
Serving Slower Learners	19	12	3	4
Serving Average Learners	11	4	3	4
Serving Advanced Learners	5	2	1	2
Serving All Students	6	3	1	2
Student Motivation/Responsibility				
13	2	5	6	
Serving At Risk Students	13	4	1	8
Student Respect for Others	8	1	2	5
Inclusion Concerns	6	2	3	1
Tutoring Services	4	2	1	1
Needs of Changing Student Population	4	3	1	0
Teacher Excellence (87 responses)				
Teacher Workshops/Professional Development				
22	12	3	7	
Teacher Incentives	16	7	3	6

Teacher Pay	15	7	2	6
More Class Materials	11	7	2	2
More Teacher Planning Time	6	3	2	1
Hiring/Keeping Excellent Teachers	6	3	1	2
Discipline (56 responses)				
Policy/Procedures	37	14	7	16
Discipline Concerns	19	6	3	10
Parental Involvement/Family Issues (41 responses)				
Uninvolved Parents	18	12	3	3
Need for Parent Education Programs				
10	4	2	4	
School/Community Relationships	5	4	0	1
Help Families in Crisis	5	4	0	1
School/Home Communications	3	2	0	1
Extracurricular Activities (16 responses)				
Activity Programs	10	4	3	3
Other Suggestions	6	5	0	1

Appendix C

Student Survey Results

Part I

Question 1

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the MATHEMATICS PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	45.9	67.4	50.8	29.4
B	37	26.2	36	44.1
C	9.4	4.3	8.5	13.1
D	4.2	0.7	2.8	7.3
FAIL	2.8	0.7	1.9	4.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.7	0.7	0	1.2

Trends:

- Almost one-half (45.9%) of all students polled placed A's on the Mathematics Program report card. An additional 37% placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students polled (45.9% plus 37% or 82.9%) gave **high marks** to the Mathematics Program.
- *Elementary school* (67.4%) and *middle school* (50.8%) students were more likely to give A's to the Mathematics Program, while *high school* students were more likely to give B's (44.1%).

Student Report Card on Science Program

Question 2

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SCIENCE PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SCIENCE PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	50.8	63.1	52.6	42.1
B	30.4	27	26.8	35.5
C	11.5	8.5	11.5	13.2
D	3.9	0.7	4.3	5.4
FAIL	2.7	0.7	4.8	2.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.7	0	0	1.7

Trends:

- More than one-half (50.8%) of all students polled placed A's on the Science Program report card. An additional 30.4% of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (50.8% plus 30.4% or 81.2%) gave *high marks* to the Science Program.

Student Report Card on English/Language Arts Program

Question 3

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the ENGLISH OR LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the ENGLISH OR LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	41.6	57.5	35.5	37.8
B	42.4	36.9	46.0	42.3
C	10.5	3.5	11.4	13.8
D	2.5	0.7	2.8	3.3
FAIL	2.7	1.4	4.3	2.0
Don't Know/No Opinion	01	0.3	0	0

Trends:

- More than 4 out of 10 (41.6%) of all students surveyed placed A's on the English/Language Arts Program report card. An additional 42.4% of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (41.6% plus 42.4% or 84%) gave **high marks** to the English/Language Arts Program.
- *High school* (42.3%) and *middle school* (46.0%) students were more likely to give B's to the English/Language Arts Program, while *elementary school* (57.5%) students were more likely to give A's.

Student Report Card on Computer Instruction

Question 4

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the COMPUTER INSTRUCTION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the COMPUTER INSTRUCTION PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	40.5	56.1	42.6	29.7
B	33.3	26.2	32.1	38.5
C	12.1	8.5	12.0	14.2
D	4.1	0.7	2.8	3.8
FAIL	3.9	0.7	6.2	3.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	6.1	6.4	1.4	10.0

Trends:

- More than 4 out of 10 (40.5%) of all students surveyed placed A's on the Computer Instruction Program report card. An additional 33.3% of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (40.5% plus 33.3% or 73.8%) gave **high marks** to the Computer Instruction Program.
- *Elementary school* (56.1%) and *middle school* (42.6%) students were more likely to give A's to the Computer Instruction Program, while *high school* (38.5%) students were more likely to give B's.

Student Report Card on Social Studies Program

Question 5

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	38.5	46.5	40.0	32.7
B	36.1	36.4	34.8	37.1
C	15.3	14.3	11.9	18.8
D	5.4	2.1	7.1	5.7
FAIL	3.7	0	6.2	3.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.0	0.7	0	2.0

Trends:

- Better than one-third of students polled (38.5%) placed A's on the Social Studies Program report card. An additional 36.1 % of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (38.5% plus 36.1 % or 74.6%) gave **high marks** to the Social Studies Program.
- *Elementary school* (46.5 %) and *middle school* students (40 %) were more likely to give A's to the Social Studies Program, while *high school* students (37.1 %) were more likely to give B's.

Student Report Card on Fine Arts Program

Question 6

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FINE ARTS PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. (Fine Arts includes Art, Music,

Band, Dance and Drama). What grade would you give the FINE ARTS PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	61.3	73.8	63.6	52.2
B	25.8	19.1	23.2	32.0
C	7.1	5.0	7.1	8.3
D	1.9	1.4	2.4	1.7
FAIL	2.0	0.7	2.8	2.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	1.9	0	0.9	3.7

Trends:

- More than 6 out of 10 students (61.3%) surveyed placed A's on the Fine Arts Program report card. An additional 25.8% of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (61.3% plus 25.8% or 87.1%) gave **high marks** to the Fine Arts Program.

Student Report Card on Physical Education Program

Question 7

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	53.0	67.4	55.5	42.4
B	26.9	22.0	29.2	27.8
C	10.7	6.4	10.5	13.3
D	2.9	2.8	1.4	4.1
FAIL	4.1	1.4	2.9	6.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.4	0	0.5	5.8

Trends:

- More than one-half of the students surveyed (53.0%) placed A's on the Physical Education Program report card. An additional 26.9% of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (53.0% plus 26.9% or 79.9%) gave **high marks** to the Physical Education Program.

Student Report Card on Business Education Program

Question 8

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	26.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
B	41.0	N/A	N/A	41.0
C	14.2	N/A	N/A	14.2
D	2.5	N/A	N/A	2.5
FAIL	1.7	N/A	N/A	1.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	14.2	N/A	N/A	14.2

Trends:

- A large Majority (85.8%) of the high school students asked to rate the Business Education Program provided letter grades.
- High school students (41%) who rated the Business Education program were most likely to place a B grade on this report card.

Student Report Card on Vocational Education Program

Question 9

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	30.5	N/A	N/A	30.5
B	41.0	N/A	N/A	41.0
C	9.6	N/A	N/A	9.6
D	3.8	N/A	N/A	3.8
FAIL	2.1	N/A	N/A	2.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	13.0	N/A	N/A	13.0

Trends:

- A majority (87%) of high school students asked to rate the Vocational Education Program provided letter grades.
- *High school* students (41 %) who rated the Vocational Education Program were most likely to place a B grade on this report card.

Student Report Card on Foreign Language Program

Question 10

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to the quality of their work. Suppose the FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	31.7	N/A	N/A	31.7
B	36.2	N/A	N/A	36.2
C	18.1	N/A	N/A	18.1
D	5.8	N/A	N/A	5.8

FAIL	4.5	N/A	N/A	4.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	3.7	N/A	N/A	3.7

Trends:

- Almost all high school students (96.3%) asked to rate the Foreign Language Program provided letter grades.
- *High school* students (31.7% plus 36.2% or 67.9%) who rated the Foreign Language Program gave it *high marks* (grades of A or B).

Student Report Card on Guidance and Counseling Services

Question 11

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	43.2	62.2	48.0	27.4
B	37	25.7	34.0	46.5
C	9.7	2.1	9.7	14.3
D	4.3	2.1	4.4	5.7
FAIL	3.5	3.6	1.5	5.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.3	4.3	2.4	0.9

Trends:

- More than four out of ten (43.2%) students surveyed placed A's on the Guidance and Counseling Program report card. An additional 37% placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students polled (43.2% plus 37% or 80.2%) gave *high marks* to the guidance Program report card.
- *Elementary school* students (62.2%) and *middle school* students (48.0%) were most likely to give A's to the Guidance and

Counseling Program, while *high school* students were most likely to give B's (46.5%)

Student Report Card on Tutoring Services

Question 12

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TUTORING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TUTORING SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	35.8	53.6	39.0	22.9
B	38.7	29.3	39.4	43.5
C	14.0	7.1	13.5	18.4
D	5.6	2.9	4.3	8.2
FAIL	3.0	5.7	1.4	2.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.9	1.4	2.4	4.1

Trends:

- Most students surveyed (97.1%) provided grades for Tutoring Services. Most students (74.5%) who rated this program gave *high marks* (grades of A or B) to Tutoring Services.
- *Elementary school* students (53.6%) were most likely to give Tutoring Services a letter grade of A.
- *Middle school* students (39.4%) and *high school* students (43.5%) were most likely to give Tutoring Services a letter grade of B.

Student Report Card on Honors/Above Grade Classes

Question 13

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the HONORS OR ABOVE GRADE

CLASSES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the HONORS OR ABOVE GRADE CLASSES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	57.7	76.4	52.9	51.4
B	29.1	19.9	33.0	30.7
C	6.1	1.5	9.0	6.1
D	2.2	1.5	1.4	3.3
FAIL	1.2	0	0.9	2.0
Don't Know/No Opinion	3.7	0.7	2.8	6.1

Trends:

- A majority (57.7%) of all students surveyed placed A's on the Honors/Above Grade Classes report card. An additional 29.1 % of students sampled placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (57.7% plus 29.1% or 86.8%) gave *high marks* to Honors/Above Grade Classes

Student Report Card on Library Services

Question 14

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the LIBRARY SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the LIBRARY SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	48.5	61.7	44.5	44.2
B	37.6	28.4	39.0	41.6
C	9.3	7.1	11.3	9.0
D	2.3	2.1	2.8	2.0
FAIL	1.8	0.7	1.9	2.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.5	0	0.5	0.8

Trends:

- Almost one-half of the students surveyed (48.5%) placed A's on the Library Services report card. An additional 37.6% of students placed B's on the same report card. Hence, most students sampled (48.5% plus 37.6% or 86.1%) gave **high marks** to Library Services.

Student Report Card on Extracurricular Activities

Question 15

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES in this district were graded in the same way. Extracurricular activities include school band, sports, dramatics, and the school paper. What grade would you give the EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	63.6	64.3	70.2	57.8
B	25.5	23.6	23.2	28.6
C	6.6	7.1	4.3	8.3
D	1.2	2.1	0.9	0.8
FAIL	2.4	2.9	0.9	3.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.7	0	0.5	1.2

Trends:

- Nearly 9 out of 10 (63.6% plus 25.5% or 89.1%) students sampled place **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card for Extracurricular Activities.

Student Report Card on Food Services

Question 16

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the FOOD SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the FOOD SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	26.9	31.2	33.7	18.4
B	34.7	34.0	37.6	32.7
C	20.2	19.9	14.6	25.3
D	7.2	2.8	6.1	10.6
FAIL	10.5	12.1	7.5	12.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.5	0	0.5	0.8

Trends

- Students in the sample (34.7%) were most likely to place a grade of B on the SISD Food Services report card. An additional 20.2% of students placed a grade of C on this report card.
- *Elementary school* students (34%) were most likely to give Food Services a grade of B.
- *Middle school* students (37.6%) and *high school* students (32.7%) were also most likely to give Food Services a grade of B.

Student Report Card on Nursing Services

Question 17

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the NURSING SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the NURSING SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	41.5	66.0	29.9	37.4
B	34.6	26.0	38.8	35.8
C	12.4	4.3	16.6	13.6

D	3.2	1.4	5.2	2.5
FAIL	5.9	2.1	7.6	6.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.4	0	1.9	4.1

Trends:

- More than three-fourths of all students surveyed (41.5% plus 34.6% or 76.1%) placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card for Nursing Services.
- *Elementary school* students (92.2%) were the most likely group of students to assign grades of A or B to the SISD report card for Nursing Services.
- *Middle school* students (68.7%) were the least likely group to give these grades.

Student Report Card on Transportation Services

Question 18

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TRANSPORTATION SERVICES in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TRANSPORTATION SERVICES in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	30.4	31.7	31.9	28.3
B	37.3	39.6	30.5	41.8
C	12.9	12.9	11.7	13.9
D	7.0	8.6	8.0	5.3
FAIL	10.4	5.8	17.4	7.0
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.0	1.4	0.5	3.7

Trends:

- A majority of the students surveyed (30.4% plus 37.3% or 67.7%) placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the SISD report card for Transportation Services.

- *Middle school* students (31.9%) were most likely to give transportation services a grade of A, while *elementary school* students (39.6%) and *high school* students (41.8%) were most likely to give a grade of B.

Student Report Card on Teachers

Question 19

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the TEACHERS in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the TEACHERS in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	35.2	64.5	31.5	21.6
B	48.0	31.2	47.9	57.7
C	11.5	4.3	13.1	11.8
D	4.0	0	4.2	6.1
FAIL	2.0	0	3.3	2.0
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.3	0	0	0.8

Trends:

- Most students surveyed (35.2% plus 48% or 83.2%) assigned **high marks** (grades of A or B) to the teachers in their school.
- *Elementary school* students (64.5%) were most likely to place a grade of A on the teacher report card, while *middle school* students (47.9%) and *high school* students (57.7%) were most likely to place a grade of B on the teacher report card.

Student Report Card on Principals

Question 20

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the

quality of their work. Suppose the **PRINCIPALS** in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the **PRINCIPALS** in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	54.5	82.4	42.2	49.0
B	26.4	10.6	27.7	34.3
C	9.3	3.5	16.0	6.9
D	4.0	2.8	4.7	4.1
FAIL	5.0	0.7	8.9	4.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.8	0	0.5	1.6

Trends:

- More than 8 out of 10 students polled (54.5% plus 26.4% or 80.9%) assigned **high marks** (grades of A or B) to the principals in their school. High marks were given at each level: *elementary school* students (93%), *middle school* students (69.9%), and *high school* students (83.3%).

Student Report Card on Assistant Principals

Question 21

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the **ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS** in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the **ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS** in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	44.6	71.7	37.9	34.7
B	33.6	22.0	37.6	36.7
C	14.0	3.5	16.0	18.4
D	3.5	2.1	3.3	4.5
FAIL	3.8	0.7	4.7	4.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.5	0	0.5	0.8

Trends:

- A large majority of students polled (44.6% plus 33.6% or 78.2%) assigned **high marks** (grades of A or B) to the assistant principals in their school. High marks were given at each level: *elementary school* students (93.7%), *middle school* students (75.5%), and *high school* students (71.4%).

Student Report Card on Office Staff

Question 22

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the OFFICE STAFF in this district were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the OFFICE STAFF in YOUR SCHOOL?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	47.0	68.1	44.9	36.7
B	35.8	26.2	36.3	40.8
C	11.5	5.0	13.2	13.9
D	2.7	0	3.3	3.7
FAIL	2.2	0.7	0.9	4.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	0.8	0	1.4	0.8

Trends:

- A large majority of students(47% plus 35.8% or 82.8%)polled placed **high marks** (grades of A or B) on the Office Staff s report card. High marks were given at each level *elementary school* students (94.3%), *middle school* students (81.2%) and *high school* students (77.5%).

Student Report Card on SISD

Question 23

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the SCHOOL DISTRICT?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
A	40.1	60.3	39.0	29.5
B	38.7	28.4	40.3	43.1
C	11.4	7.1	8.5	16.4
D	2.8	1.4	2.8	3.7
FAIL	5.0	2.8	5.2	6.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	2.0	0	4.2	1.2

Trends:

- Almost 8 out of 10 students polled (40.1% plus 38.7% or 78.8%) placed *high marks* (grades of A or B) on the report card for the Spring Independent School District.
- *Elementary school* students (88.7%) were the most likely group to assign grades of A or B to this district. *High school* students (72.6%) and *middle school* students (79.3%) were less likely to give these grades.

Needs of Physically Handicapped Students

Question 24

How well do you believe the needs of PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED students are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	23.1	34.1	18.7	20.7
Adequately Met	40.3	29.8	41.1	45.4
Poorly Met	6.9	8.5	7.2	5.8
Not Met At All	2.7	3.5	3.3	1.7

Don't Know/No Opinion	27.0	24.1	29.7	26.4
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Trends:

- Slightly less than two-thirds of the students surveyed(23.1% plus 40.3% or 63.4%) believe that the needs of handicapped students are *adequately met* or *fully met*. An additional 27% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- *Elementary school* students(34.1%)are more likely to believe these needs are fully met, while *middle school* students(41.1%)and *high school* students(45.4%)are more likely to report these needs are *adequately met*.

Needs of Slower Learning Students

Question 25

How well do you believe the needs of SLOWER LEARNING students are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	24.4	35.0	25.7	17.2
Adequately Met	33.4	27.9	35.0	35.1
Poorly Met	22.2	21.4	19.4	25.1
Not Met At All	5.5	4.3	6.8	5.0
Don't Know/No Opinion	14.5	11.4	13.1	17.6

Trends:

- Almost three out of five students in the survey (24.4% plus 33.4% or 57.8%) believed that the needs of slower learning students are *adequately met* or *fully met*. An additional 14.5% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.
- *Elementary school* students (35%) are most likely to report that these needs are *fully met*. *Middle school students*(35%),and *high school* students(35.1%)are most likely to believe these needs are *adequately met*.

Needs of Academically Advanced Students

Question 26

How well do you believe the needs of **ACADEMICALLY ADVANCED students are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?**

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	49.4	68.6	47.5	39.8
Adequately Met	32.7	20.7	33.7	38.9
Poorly Met	5.6	1.4	6.3	7.5
Not Met At All	0.9	0.7	1.9	0
Don't Know/No Opinion	11.4	8.6	10.6	13.8

Trends:

- Most students surveyed(49.4% plus 32.7% or 82.1%)believe that the needs of academically advanced students are *adequately met* or *fully met*. An additional 11.4% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs of Average Students

Question 27

How well do you believe the needs of **AVERAGE students are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?**

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	43.0	63.8	45.6	28.5
Adequately Met	40.7	27.0	40.8	48.5
Poorly Met	9.7	4.3	6.8	15.5

Not Met At All	2.0	1.4	1.0	3.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	4.6	3.5	5.8	4.2

Trends:

- Over 8 out of 10 (83.7%) students in the sample believe that the needs of average students are either *adequately met* (40.7%) or *fully met* (43%).
- *Elementary school* students (63.8%) and *middle school* students (45.6%) were more likely to see the needs of average students as being *fully met*, while *high school* students (48.5%) were more likely to see those needs as being *adequately met*.

SISD

Student Survey Results

Part II

Needs of Non-College Bound Students

Question 28

How well do you believe the needs of **NON-COLLEGE BOUND** students are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	10.2	N/A	N/A	10.2
Adequately Met	35.7	N/A	N/A	35.7
Poorly Met	18.9	N/A	N/A	18.9
Not Met At All	8.6	N/A	N/A	8.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	26.6	N/A	N/A	26.6

Trends:

- High school students (35.7%) surveyed are most likely to believe that the needs of non-college bound students are *adequately met*.

Needs Of Students At Risk of Dropping Out of School

Question 29

How well do you believe the needs of **STUDENTS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL** are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %

Fully Met	13.3	22.0	13.6	8.1
Adequately Met	20.5	19.9	22.5	19.1
Poorly Met	27.6	19.9	25.8	33.3
Not Met At All	15.3	16.2	12.7	17.1
Don't Know/No Opinion	23.3	22.0	25.4	22.4

Trends:

- About one-third of students surveyed (13.3% plus 20.5% or 33.8%) believe that the needs of at risk students are *adequately* or *fully met*. An additional 23.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs Of Learning Disabled Students in Inclusion Classroom

Question 30

How well do you believe the needs of LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS are met in YOUR SCHOOL: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	15.3	27.7	16.1	7.1
Adequately Met	33.5	32.6	32.7	35.0
Poorly Met	18.5	12.1	17.1	23.5
Not Met At All	4.4	3.5	4.7	4.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	28.3	24.1	29.4	29.8

Trends:

- About one-third of all students in the survey (33.5%) believe that the needs of learning disabled students in inclusion classrooms are *adequately met*. An additional 28.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Needs of Regular Students in Inclusion Classrooms

Question 31

How well do you believe the needs of **REGULAR STUDENTS IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS** are met in **YOUR SCHOOL**: fully met, adequately met, poorly met, not met at all, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Fully Met	24.4	45.4	24.1	12.3
Adequately Met	44.4	37.6	41.0	51.2
Poorly Met	13.4	5.7	16.0	15.7
Not Met At All	2.5	0	1.9	4.7
Don't Know/No Opinion	15.3	11.3	17.0	16.1

Trends:

- *Elementary school* students (45.4%) were most likely to believe that the needs of regular students in inclusion classrooms were **fully met**, while *middle school* students (41 %) and *high school* students (51.2%) were most likely to believe the needs of these students were **adequately met**.

Elaboration of Student Views on School Strengths

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Academic Programs (210 responses)</i>				
Instructional Programs and Services	86	25	18	42
Physical Education	17	12	4	1
Computers	13	9	4	0
Mathematics	11	10	0	0
Music	10	8	1	1
Science	8	5	3	0
Art	8	4	4	0

Social Studies	4	4	0	0
Language Arts	3	3	0	0
Theater Arts	3	0	2	1
Typing	2	0	2	0
Other Academic Areas	8	1	3	4
Academic Standards	85	25	18	42
Wide Variety of Courses/Electives	39	4	8	27
<i>Teachers (191 responses)</i>				
Quality Teachers	125	38	39	48
Nice/Caring/Helpful Teachers	66	25	25	16
<i>Facilities/Services (178 responses)</i>				
Food	83	20	56	7
Overall Quality of Facilities	47	16	7	24
Clean Schools	30	6	6	18
Playgrounds	11	11	0	0
Lockers	7	0	7	0
<i>Effective Learning Environments (163 responses)</i>				
Fun Experiences	46	40	5	1
Overall Good Schools	30	6	8	16
Student Friends	28	5	14	9
Nice People/Staff	13	5	1	7
Library	12	6	6	0
Great Counselors	10	2	5	3
School Spirit	9	0	1	8
Cultural Diversity	9	0	1	8
Supportive Parents/Volunteers	6	3	0	3
<i>Extracurricular Activities (147 responses)</i>				
Sports/Athletics	69	1	32	36
Wide Variety of Activities	61	7	23	31

Band Programs	12	0	7	5
Choir Programs	5	0	3	2
<i>Positive Social Climate (113 responses)</i>				
Effective Discipline Rules	46	16	17	13
Violence Free Schools	25	5	4	16
Campus Safety/Security	23	3	3	17
Dress Code	11	2	7	2
Drug Free Schools	3	2	1	0
Other Positive Indicators	5	3	1	1
<i>Administration (124 responses)</i>				
Good Principals	18	4	3	11
Effective Administrators	14	1	5	8

Student Views on School Strengths

Question 32

In your opinion, in what way is YOUR SCHOOL particularly good?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Academic Programs	210	85	49	76
Teachers	191	63	64	64
Facilities/Services	178	53	76	49
Effective Learning Environment	163	67	41	55
Extracurricular Activities	147	8	65	74
Positive Social Climate	113	31	33	49
Administration	32	5	8	19

Trends:

- Almost all (96%) students sampled identified at least one way in which their school is particularly good. Of the 1,034 student responses, more than half of the se responses identified *Academic Programs* (N=210), *Teachers* (N= 191) and *Facilities/Services* (N=178) as school strengths. An elaboration of strengths identified by students is given on the preceding page.

Student Views on Academic Challenge

Question 33

Are you satisfied with the degree to which YOU are challenged academically: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	71.1	76.6	69.9	69.0
No	19.4	17.7	19.3	20.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	9.5	5.7	10.8	10.6

Trends:

- More than two-thirds of the students sampled (71.1%) are *satisfied* with the degree to which they are challenged academically.

Transition from Elementary to Middle School

Question 34

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from ELEMENTARY to MIDDLE SCHOOL are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Excellent	23.4	N/A	29.9	18.0

Adequate	48.0	NA	46.4	49.0
Poor	10.7	N/A	10.0	11.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	17.9	N/A	13.7	21.6

Trends:

- Almost three-fourths (23.4% plus 48% or 71.4%) of the *middle school* and *high school* students asked to describe the efforts the Spring Independent School district has made to improve the transition from elementary to middle school believe that these transition efforts are either *excellent* or *adequate*. An additional 17.9% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Transition from Middle to High School

Question 35

Spring Independent School District has made efforts to improve student transitions. Would you say the transition procedures from MIDDLE to HIGH SCHOOL are: excellent, adequate, poor, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Excellent	15.9	N/A	N/A	15.9
Adequate	50.7	NA	N/A	50.7
Poor	21.6	N/A	N/A	21.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	11.8	N/A	N/A	11.8

Trends:

- About two-thirds(15.9% plus 50.7% or 66.6%)of the high school students asked to describe the efforts the Spring Independent School district has made to improve the transition from middle to high school believe that these transition efforts are either *excellent* or *adequate*.

Student Views on Problems in the Schools

Question 36

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in Spring ISD must deal?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Discipline	725	240	261	224
School Safety/Security	185	31	69	85
Administrative Issues	134	30	38	66
Drugs/Alcohol	123	10	45	68
Changing Student Population/Overcrowding	80	3	16	61
Teachers & Teaching Issues	61	9	18	34
Curriculum Issues	60	11	15	34
Student Needs	47	11	7	29
Extracurricular Activities	17	1	7	9
Home/School Issues	9	2	1	6

Trends:

- Almost all (97%) students sampled identified at least one problem they believed was the biggest problem to be dealt with in the Spring Independent School district. Of the 1,441 student responses, more than half of these responses identified ***Discipline*** (N=725) as the biggest problem to be addressed. An elaboration of problems identified by students is given on the next two pages.

Elaboration of Student Views on Problems in the Schools

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Discipline (725 responses)</i>				
Poor Conduct/Misbehavior	296	123	92	81
Poor Conduct in General	96	28	35	33
Disrespect Toward Teachers	56	23	17	16

Students Using Bad Language	42	21	16	5
Disrespect in General	37	13	10	14
Disrespect Toward Other Students	14	2	6	6
Unkind To Other Students	11	8	0	3
Littering	7	3	3	1
Recess Concerns	7	7	0	0
Student Noise/Yelling	4	3	1	0
Running in the Halls	4	3	1	0
Throwing Things	3	0	0	3
Cheating/Copying	4	3	0	1
Fighting	212	86	86	40
Dress Code	118	10	56	52
Dress Code in General	92	4	44	44
Dress Code Violations	26	6	12	8
Discipline Rules and Policies	99	21	27	51
Smoking	23	5	6	12
Rules Are Too Strict	22	5	5	12
Inconsistent Discipline Procedures	21	5	6	10
Truancy	14	2	5	7
Rules Not Strict Enough	12	3	3	6
Tardy Policy Concerns	7	1	2	4
<i>School Safety/Security (185 responses)</i>				
Negative Community Influences	153	19	57	77
Gangs	80	6	36	38
Weapons	35	12	13	10
Violence	35	1	8	26
Crime	3	0	0	3
Stealing	17	6	8	3
Campus Safety/Security	10	3	3	4

Vandalism	5	3	1	1
<i>Administrative Issues (134 responses)</i>				
Food Services	37	12	12	13
Quality and Variety of Food	17	6	1	10
Cafeteria Services in General	9	4	5	0
Food Line Too Long	6	0	3	3
Price of Food	5	2	3	0
School Scheduling	30	3	9	18
Lunch Period Too Short	16	0	4	12
	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Need More Time Between Classes	9	0	3	6
Other Scheduling Concerns	5	3	2	0
School Buildings/Facilities	27	11	8	8
Restroom Concerns	10	3	6	1
Better Playgrounds	6	6	0	0
Remodel/Build New Schools	6	2	0	4
Lockers	5	0	2	3
Transportation Services	17	3	2	12
Lack of Funds	14	1	3	10
Other Administrative Issues	7	0	3	4
More Student Rights/Freedom	2	0	1	1
<i>Drugs/Alcohol (123 responses)</i>				
Drugs	101	10	41	50
Drugs and Alcohol	18	0	3	15
Alcohol	4	0	1	3
<i>Changing Student Population/Overcrowding (80 responses)</i>				
Racism	35	0	11	24
Overcrowding/Space Limitations	28	1	4	23

Too Many Students	10	0	1	9
Need for Educating All Cultures	7	2	0	5
<i>Teachers and Teaching Issues (61 responses)</i>				
Ineffective Teaching	24	0	5	19
Teacher Attitude Toward Students	14	2	6	6
Need For More Teachers	7	2	1	4
Lack of Teacher Sensitivity	7	3	2	2
Low Teacher Pay	5	2	1	2
Teachers Showing Favoritism	4	0	3	1
<i>Curriculum Issues (60 responses)</i>				
Too Much Homework	11	5	5	1
Variety of Class Offerings	11	0	0	11
Failure Rates	10	0	1	9
Grades	7	0	3	4
Academic Standards	5	0	2	3
Standardized Test Scores	5	0	1	3
Failure To Do Homework	4	1	3	0
Other Curriculum Concerns	7	5	0	2
<i>Student Needs (47 responses)</i>				
Lack of Motivation to Learn	16	3	3	10
Student Dropout Prevention	10	0	0	10
Listen More to Student Suggestions	6	2	2	2
Needs Of Handicapped Students	4	1	1	2
Need to Involve All Students	4	1	1	2
Health Concerns	4	4	0	0
Teen Pregnancy	3	0	0	3
<i>Extracurricular Activities (17 responses)</i>				
General Interest/Concerns	14	1	7	6
Need To Involve Students More	3	0	0	3

<i>Home/School Issues (9 responses)</i>				
Parental Involvement/Cooperation	5	0	0	5
Family Problems	4	2	1	1

Student Views on Ability Grouping

Question 37

Many children in Spring ISD schools are grouped by ability for instruction. Do you want to be GROUPED BY ABILITY: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	59.0	62.2	57.5	58.4
No	25.8	27.1	25.4	25.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	15.2	10.7	17.1	16.3

Trends:

- A majority of the students sampled (59%) indicated that they wish to be grouped by ability for instruction.

Student Views on Discipline

Question 38

Do you feel the discipline in YOUR SCHOOL is: too strict, not strict enough, just about right, don't know/no opinion?

	All School %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Too Strict	30.2	9.2	38.2	35.7
Not Strict Enough	6.3	4.3	4.3	9.0
Just About Right	53.4	80.1	47.4	43.0

Don't Know/No Opinion	10.1	6.4	10.1	12.3
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Trends:

- More than one-half (53.4%) of all students surveyed believed that discipline in their school is *just about right*.

Student Views on Safety in the Schools

Question 39

Are students in YOUR SCHOOL safe: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	55.2	75.9	42.3	54.4
No	24.3	13.5	33.3	22.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	20.5	10.6	24.4	22.8

Trends:

- A majority (55.2%) of students sampled believe that SISD schools *are safe*. An additional 20.5% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Student Views on Use of Drugs and/or Alcohol in this Community

Question 40

Would you say the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among children IN THIS COMMUNITY is: no problem, a minor problem, a major problem, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	11.1	15.1	11.8	8.2
A Minor Problem	31.4	33.8	35.5	26.5

A Major Problem	49.6	39.6	45.1	59.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	7.9	11.5	7.6	6.1

Trends:

- Almost one-half (49.6%) of all students polled say the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks among students in the community is a **major problem**. An additional 7.9% offered **don't know/no opinion** responses.

Student Views on Use of Drugs and/or Alcohol in School

Question 41

Would you say that the use of drugs and/or alcoholic drinks in the building or on the grounds of YOUR SCHOOL is: no problem, a minor problem, a major problem, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
No Problem	28.8	44.3	27.4	21.2
A Minor Problem	35.6	16.4	38.7	44.1
A Major Problem	23.5	25.0	22.6	23.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	12.1	14.3	11.3	11.4

Trends:

- More than one-third of the students surveyed (35.6%) believe that the use of drugs or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds is a **minor problem**. An additional 12.1 % of students in the sample chose the **no problem** response.
- Over 4 out of 10 *elementary school* students (44.3%) see the use of drugs and/or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds as **no problem**. *Middle school* (38.7%) and *high school* (44.1%) students are more likely to view the use of drugs and/or alcoholic drinks in school buildings or on school grounds as a **minor problem**.

Student Views on Drug and Alcohol Problems

Question 42

Which of the two problems - DRUGS or ALCOHOL DRINKS - is the larger problem?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Drugs	56.5	56.0	67.6	47.2
Alcohol	24.7	26.6	15.4	31.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	18.8	17.4	17	21

Trends:

- A majority (56.5%) of students in the sample designated *drugs* as the larger problem.

Appendix C

Student Survey Results

Part III

Student Views on Student Hostility and Disrespect

Question 43

Would you say that hostility and disrespect among students in YOUR SCHOOL is: a major problem, a minor problem, no problem, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Major Problem	34.2	28.4	41.5	31.4
Minor Problem	46.2	45.4	39.5	52.3
No Problem	9.4	14.9	9.0	6.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	10.2	11.3	10.0	9.8

Trends:

- Almost one-half of the students in the sample (46.2%) indicated that hostility and disrespect among students in their school was a *minor problem*. An additional 34.2% of students in the sample indicated that hostility and disrespect among students in their school was a *major problem*.

Student Views on Additional or Expanded Services

Question 44

I will read you a list of THREE ADDITIONAL OR EXPANDED SERVICES. Please identify the TWO MOST IMPORTANT ENTRIES in this list.

	All Schools	Elementary	Middle	High

	%	%	%	%
Elementary School Foreign Language	64.9	61.0	56.9	74.1
Elementary School Activity Buses	48.9	56.7	55.0	39.1
Elementary School Field Trips	84.2	82.3	85.8	84.0

Trends:

- When asked to choose two of three additional or expanded services they would like to see provided in the Spring Independent School district, all three students groups were most likely to choose *Elementary School Field Trips*. A second most likely choice was *Elementary School Foreign Language*.

Student Views on Additional or Expanded Services

Question 45

I will read you a list of FIVE ADDITIONAL OR EXPANDED SERVICES. Please identify the TWO MOST IMPORTANT ENTRIES in this list.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Expanded Middle School Recreational Sports	41.1	46.8	58.5	22.4
High School Recreational Sports	33.7	28.4	22.7	46.5
Instrumental Music String Program	20.0	32.6	18.9	13.7
Expanded Middle School Foreign Language Program	45.3	37.6	40.1	54.4
Expanded Extracurricular Activities Other Than Athletics	58.6	54.6	58.5	61.0

Trends:

- When asked to choose two of five additional or expanded services they would like to see provided in the Spring Independent School district, the most likely "choice" was *Expanded Extracurricular Activities Other than Athletics*. Additional specific priorities for the three students groups are given in the last three columns of the data table. For example, notice the first priority for middle school students is a tie between the first and last entry in the five choices.

Student Views on School/Business Partnerships

Question 46

Do you believe Spring Independent School District efforts to create school/business partnerships are of: great importance, some importance, little importance, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Great Importance	36.7	45.4	25.2	41.7
Some Importance	27.8	22.7	32.4	26.7
Little Importance	7.9	7.8	11.0	5.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	27.6	24.1	31.4	26.3

Trends:

- A majority of students (72.4%) offered opinions about the efforts to create school/business partnerships.
- *Elementary school* students (45.4%) and *high school* students (41.7%) were most likely to believe that efforts to create school/business partnerships are of *great importance*, while *middle school* students were most likely to believe these efforts were of *some importance*.

Student Views on Teacher Pay and Benefits

Question 47

Would you favor or oppose raising Spring Independent School

District teacher pay and benefits: Favor, Oppose, or Don't/No Opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Favor	55.5	61.4	49.8	57.0
Oppose	14.0	9.3	20.1	11.5
Don't Know/No Opinion	30.5	29.3	30.1	31.5

Trends:

- A majority (55.5%) of students surveyed *favor* raising SISD teacher pay and benefits.

Student Views on Excellence in Teaching

Question 48

Do you favor or oppose extra pay for excellence in teaching: favor, oppose, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Favor	58.8	58.8	52.9	63.8
Oppose	23.7	27.7	32.2	14.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	17.5	13.5	14.9	22.0

Trends:

- A majority (58.8%) of students surveyed *favor* extra pay for excellence in teaching.

Student Views on Academic Progress

Question 49

Are you satisfied with the ways YOUR academic progress measured: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	53.9	58.2	56.6	49.1
No	26.9	17.0	24.5	34.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	19.2	24.8	18.9	16.3

Trends:

- A majority (53.9%) of students are *satisfied* with the ways their academic progress is measured.

Student Views on Tier 4 Program

Question 50

Spring ISD supports the Tier 4 program which allows academically advanced students in grades 3 to 9 to take classes advanced by two years in English and mathematics. Do you APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, or Have No Opinion about continuing this program?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	68.6	73.0	60.2	73.5
Disapprove	13.1	12.8	15.2	11.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	18.3	14.2	24.6	15.1

Trends:

- More than two-thirds (68.6%) of students polled *approve* continuing the Tier 4 Program.

Student Views on Teaching About Different Cultures

Question 51

Are you satisfied with the approach used to teach about different cultures in YOUR SCHOOL: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	60.2	80.8	69.4	40.6
No	21.5	12.1	9.1	37.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	18.3	7.1	21.5	22.0

Trends:

- About three out of five (60.2%) students are *satisfied* with the approved used to teach about different cultures in their school. An additional 18.3% offered *don't know/no opinion* responses.

Student Views on Parent Education

Question 52

Are you satisfied with the efforts at parent education made at YOUR SCHOOL: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	39.3	48.2	36.6	36.6
No	17	12.1	21.1	16.3
Don't Know/No Opinion	43.7	39.7	42.3	47.1

Trends:

- Almost half of the students (43.7%) offered *don't know/no opinion* responses to the question about satisfaction with the efforts at parent education made at their school. In two out of three student groups, the *don't know/no opinion* responses was the most likely response.

Student Views on Student Influence on Schools

Question 53

Do students have enough say about what happens in YOUR

SCHOOL: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

Trends:

- *Elementary school* students (54.6%) are most likely to indicate that students **have enough say** about what happens in their school.
- *Middle school* students(54.8%)and *high school* students(61.1%)are most likely to indicate that students **do not have enough say** about what happens in their school.

Student Views on Parents Being Welcomed in School

Question 54

Do your parents feel welcomed at YOUR SCHOOL: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	61.2	75.1	54.4	58.9
No	9.5	4.3	9.9	12.2
Don't Know/No Opinion	29.3	20.6	35.7	28.9

Trends:

- More than 6 out of 10 students surveyed (61.2%) believe their parents feel **welcomed** at their school. An additional 29.3% chose the **don't know/no opinion** option.

Student Views on Parental Participation in School Activities

Question 55

Do your parents participate in school activities: very often, often, seldom, never?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Very Often	16.1	22.7	17.0	11.5

Often	26.0	34.1	23.1	23.8
Seldom	33.9	33.3	32.1	36.0
Never	24.0	9.9	27.8	28.7

Trends:

- *Elementary school* students (34.1%) are most likely to indicate that their parents ***often participate*** in school activities.
- *Middle school* students (32.1%) and *high school* students (36%) are most likely to indicate that their parents ***seldom participate*** in school activities.

Length of Residence in the District

Question 56

We would like to know how long you have resided in the Spring Independent School District.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
One to Three Years	29.4	33.4	30.9	25.8
Four to Six Years	23.8	39.7	21.7	16.4
Seven to Ten Years	29.1	24.8	34.3	27.1
Eleven to Fifteen Years	13.7	2.1	12.6	21.3
Over Fifteen Years	4.0	0	0.5	9.4

Trends:

- A majority of all students in the sample (70.6%) have resided in the Spring Independent School District ***more than three years***.

Student Views on School Information

Question 57

Are you satisfied with how well YOUR SCHOOL keeps your parents informed: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	66.7	79.4	58.2	66.9
No	19.9	12.1	25.4	19.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	13.4	8.5	16.4	13.5

Trends:

- About two-thirds of students sampled (66.7%) *are satisfied* with how well their school keeps their parents informed.

Student Views on Lengthening the School Day

Question 58

A common proposal for increasing the time for instruction in school is lengthening the school day. Do you approve, disapprove, or have no opinion about this proposal?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	7.0	13.5	6.1	4.1
Disapprove	84.5	71.6	89.7	87.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	8.5	14.9	4.2	8.5

Trends:

- More than 8 out of 10 students (84.5%) *disapproved lengthening the school day* as a means to increase the time for instruction in SISD schools.

Students Views On Block Scheduling

Many schools in the state and nation use BLOCK SCHEDULES to increase the number of courses available to high school and middle school students. There are four aspects to BLOCK SCHEDULES that make them

different from traditional schedules. In BLOCK SCHEDULED PLANS, students typically:

- take at least one more course during the school year
- spend more time per period in each class.
- attend fewer periods for each course
- spend less total time in each course.

Question 59

Do you APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, or HAVE NO OPINION about changing to BLOCK SCHEDULES?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Approve	56.0	N/A	48.5	62.1
Disapprove	28.9	N/A	30.8	27.4
Don't Know/No Opinion	15.1	N/A	20.7	10.5

Trends:

- A majority (56%) of middle school and high school students sampled ***approve*** changing to block schedules. An additional 15.1 % gave the ***don't know/no opinion*** response.

Student Views on Student Grooming Code

Question 60

Are you satisfied that the Spring Independent School District student grooming code is appropriate: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	40.5	66.0	26.2	38.2
No	50.6	27.6	61.0	54.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	8.9	6.4	12.8	6.9

Trends:

- *Elementary school* students (66%) are most likely to believe that the Spring ISD grooming code *is appropriate*.
- *Middle school* students (61 %) and *high school* students (54.9%) are most likely to believe that the Spring ISD grooming code *is not appropriate*.

Student Views on Standardized Dress

Question 61

Many schools have adopted standardized dress. In these schools, students are required to wear clothing selected from three or four standard items such as the same style and color shirt, slacks, shorts or skirts. Would you favor some form of standardized dress in your school: yes, no, don't know/no opinion.

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	14.9	16.3	10.3	18
No	78.2	75.9	82.7	75.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	6.9	7.8	7.0	6.1

Trends:

- Almost four out of five (78.2%) students sampled *do not favor* some form of standardized dress in their school.

Student Views on Transportation for After School Activities

Question 62

Spring ISD provides transportation for middle and high school students participating in after school activities. Would you favor continuing this practice: yes, no, don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes	88.8	87.3	85.9	92.2

No	3.0	3.5	2.8	2.9
Don't Know/No Opinion	8.2	9.2	11.3	4.9

Trends:

- A large majority (88.8%) of students in the sample *favor* continuing the practice of having Spring ISD provide transportation for middle and high school students participating in after school activities.

Student Views on School Building Conditions

Question 63

Think for a moment about the overall conditions of your school building. These conditions include such things as construction, maintenance, safety and physical appearance. Are you satisfied with these conditions: yes, no, or don't know/no opinion?

	All Schools %	Elementary %	Middle %	High %
Yes (Satisfied)	64.4	77.4	52.9	66.8
No (Not Satisfied)	22	11.3	27.1	23.8
Don't Know/No Opinion	13.6	11.3	20.0	9.4

Trends:

- Almost two-thirds (64.4%) of the students surveyed *are satisfied* with the overall conditions of their school building.

Student Views on Building Additional Schools

Question 64

Suppose the school district said it needed to build additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools. Would you approve, disapprove, or have no opinion?

Trends:

- Better than three out of five (62.7%) students would **approve** the need to build additional schools to relieve crowding at current schools.

Student Recommendations for Five-Year Plan

Question 65

The school district is working on a revised educational plan for the next five years. What do you think are the three most important things on which they should work?

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
Curriculum Issues	410	118	124	168
Discipline	208	40	70	98
School Buildings/Facilities	176	60	63	53
Administrative Issues	149	20	70	59
Food Service	140	38	53	49
Extracurricular Activities	135	40	40	55
Student Needs	74	3	22	49
Teacher Excellence	89	10	33	46
School Safety/Security	65	11	15	39
Guidance/Counseling Services	26	1	3	22
Other Recommendations	27	6	6	16

Trends:

- Almost all (99%) of the students sampled identified at least one recommendation for the five-year plan. Of the 1,500 recommendations, the most frequent recommendation (27.3%) offered by students dealt with **Curriculum Issues** (N--410). An elaboration of student recommendations is given on the following two pages.

Elaboration of Student Recommendations for Five-Year Plan

	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Curriculum Issues</i> (410 responses)				
Program/Instructional Issues	195	50	67	78
Field Trips	36	15	12	9
More Course Choice	27	5	3	19
Improving Classes	20	3	9	8
Homework	20	6	13	1
Helping Student to Learn	20	3	6	11
Instructional Materials	15	8	2	5
More Electives	11	0	10	1
Make Classes Easier	10	1	3	6
Grading	6	3	0	3
Test Concerns	6	3	1	2
Tier 4 Concerns	6	1	2	3
More Time To Get Work Done	4	1	1	2
F.F.A.	3	0	2	1
Other Instructional Concerns	11	1	3	7
Academic Areas	170	63	44	63
Computers	38	18	9	11
Foreign Language	20	4	3	13
Physical Education	15	1	12	2
Science	14	7	3	4
Mathematics	18	6	4	8
Social Studies	14	2	7	5
Music	13	8	1	4
Reading	5	4	1	0
Drama	5	3	2	0
D.A.R.E.	4	4	0	0
Sex Education	3	0	0	3

English	3	0	1	2
Fine Arts	3	3	0	0
Art	3	2	0	1
Other Specific Areas	12	1	1	10
Academic Excellence	45	5	13	27
<i>Discipline</i> (208 responses)				
Dress Code	111	8	46	57
General Rules and Concerns	26	10	6	10
Less Strict Discipline	24	2	6	16
Reducing Fighting	21	13	4	4
More Respectful Students	10	5	4	1
Stricter Discipline	7	1	1	5
E.C. Concerns	6	0	1	5
Tardies	3	1	2	0
	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>School Buildings/Facilities</i> (176 responses)				
Athletic Facilities	27	12	10	5
Need Bigger Buildings	25	8	11	6
Playgrounds	17	15	2	0
Restroom Concerns	17	8	6	3
Lockers	13	2	9	2
Improve Building Appearance	12	1	6	5
Build More Schools	11	1	3	7
Relieve Overcrowding in Schools	10	0	2	8
Fewer Students In Classroom	9	1	3	5
Bigger Classrooms	8	2	5	1
Build New Cafeteria	5	3	1	1
Parking Lots	3	0	0	3

Bigger Library	2	1	1	0
Desks	2	1	1	0
Other Facilities Concerns	15	5	3	7
<i>Administrative Issues</i> (149 responses)				
Daily/Yearly Schedule	46	4	39	3
Block Scheduling	38	0	2	36
Time Between Classes	23	0	15	8
Recess	16	11	5	0
Longer Time in Class/School	15	4	7	4
Other Administrative Issues	11	1	2	8
<i>Food Services</i> (140 responses)				
Better Food	62	25	29	8
Longer Lunches	35	4	11	20
More Variety of Food	9	3	2	4
Lower Food Prices	9	2	6	1
Open-Campus For Lunch	9	0	0	9
Shorter Lunch Lines	5	0	2	3
More Healthful Foods	4	0	1	3
More Vending Machines	4	3	1	0
Other Food Service Concerns	3	1	1	1
<i>Extracurricular Issues</i> (135 responses)				
Sports/Athletics	60	9	24	27
More Extracurricular Activities	42	12	11	19
More Fun Activities/Events	26	16	4	6
More Student Involvement	7	3	1	3
<i>Student Needs</i> (74 responses)				
Different Ability Level Needs	20	0	5	15
Serving Advanced Learners	10	0	3	7
Serving Slow Learners	5	0	1	4

Serving Average Learners	5	0	1	4
Tutoring	20	1	7	12
More Student Input in Decisions	13	1	5	7
Dropout Prevention	10	1	1	8
Inclusion Concerns	6	0	0	6
Needs of Disabled Students	5	0	4	1
	All Schools #	Elementary #	Middle #	High #
<i>Teaching Excellence</i> (89 responses)				
Improve Quality Teachers	43	3	12	28
Need for More Teachers	23	4	12	7
Improve Teacher Attitudes	12	3	4	5
Higher Teacher Pay/More Rewards	9	0	5	4
More Teacher Involvement With Students				
<i>School Safety/Security</i> (65 responses)				
Drugs and Alcohol	26	2	5	19
Safety in General	26	7	9	10
Violence/Gangs	13	2	1	10
<i>Guidance/Counseling Services</i> (26 responses)				
More Career Oriented Classes	12	0	2	10
Counseling	9	1	1	7
Transition to College Programs	5	0	0	5
<i>Other Recommendations</i> (27 responses)				
Transportation/Bus Concerns	10	4	4	2
More Parent Involvement	6	2	0	4
Religion/Prayer in Schools	3	0	1	2
Cultural Awareness	8	0	0	8

Spring Independent School District Report Card

	Grade Given By:		
	Parents	Teachers	Students
Subjects			
Mathematics	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A
English/Language Arts			
A	A	B	
Social Studies	A	B	A
Fine Arts	A	A	A
Physical Education	A	A	A
Business Education	A	B	B
Vocational Education	A	B	B
Foreign Language	A	B	B
Computer Instruction	A	B	A
Services			
Guidance and Counseling	A	A	A
Tutoring	A	B	B
Honors/Above Grade Classes			
A	A	A	
Library	A	A	A
Extracurricular	A	A	A
Food Services	A	B	B
Nursing Services	A	A	A
Transportation	A	A	B
Staff			
Teachers	A	A	B
Principals	A	A	A

Assistant Principals	A	A	A	
Office Staff	A	A	A	
District				
Spring Independent School District	A	A	A	

*Represents most frequent response of respondents giving a grade in the parent, teacher and student surveys.