

Taft Independent School District



LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF AND
MCCONNELL JONES LANIER & MURPHY LLP

JUNE 2011

Taft Independent School District

**Legislative Budget Board Staff and
McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy LLP**

June 2011

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June 30, 2011

Dr. Chad Kelly
Superintendent
Taft Independent School District

Dear Dr. Kelly:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of Taft Independent School District's (ISD) educational, financial, and operational functions.

The report's recommendations will help Taft ISD improve its overall performance as it provides services to students, staff, and community members. The report also highlights model practices and programs provided by Taft ISD.

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged MJLM, LLP to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

The report is available on the LBB website at <http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John O'Brien", written over a horizontal line.

John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc:

Pete Rodriquez

Yolanda Valle

Mary Garrett

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Johnny Carvajal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Taft Independent School District's (ISD's) school performance review notes 19 commendable practices and makes 60 recommendations for improvement. This Executive Summary highlights the district's significant accomplishments and recommendations. A copy of the full report is available at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD has expanded curricular offerings at the upper level and for college readiness with opportunities through articulation agreements with other institutions. This practice affords students opportunities to extend their educational experiences through current program offerings in the district. In school year 2010–11, Taft ISD offered 12 TechPrep programs and 59 Dual Credit Courses. Taft ISD participates in TechPrep articulation options with Coastal Bend College, Del Mar College, and Craft Training Center. The availability of dual credit courses can decrease the cost of college education and provide additional advanced learning opportunities for college-bound students.
- Taft ISD conducts a periodic review of student activity funds to compensate for internal control weaknesses inherent in monitoring and safeguarding such funds. The district's accounts payable clerk performs "surprise" reviews of each school activity fund at least once per semester. During the visit, the clerk uses a review form to record the campus name, the check register range reviewed, and receipt numbers reviewed. The clerk checks each disbursement to determine whether a check request was completed, principal's signature is present, requestor's signature is present, original receipt or invoice is present, and sales tax is paid.
- Taft ISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a robust network infrastructure with wireless connectivity that will adequately support the district's technology needs. The district has received more than \$2.1 million in E-Rate funds over the past five years that it has used to upgrade its network and telecommunications infrastructures to include a 20-megabyte microwave transport between the

district and the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2), 10-gigabyte links between main distribution facilities (MDF) and intermediate distribution facilities (IDF), a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telecommunications system at all of the district's locations, and a network firewall and internet content filtering to keep the network secure and free from unwanted access.

- Taft ISD is working with the Region 2 Child Nutrition Program Specialist in a pilot program to develop and implement stronger management tools in order to improve the program's financial operations. Region 2 is now working to help the district calculate meals per labor hour (MPLH), plan menu pre- and post-costing, and develop a communications program to promote food service activities. The pilot program is being developed over three phases with an anticipated completion date of summer 2011.
- Taft ISD has increased emphasis on managing student discipline in order to promote safety on the school bus through the acquisition of a digital camera system and the creation of bus monitor positions. District administrators recognized that, particularly in the afternoon take home periods, buses were full and it was increasingly difficult for bus drivers to both manage student discipline and drive the bus. These changes are a positive step to increase the safety and orderliness of school bus rides.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANIZATION

Restructure the district's organization to eliminate the assistant superintendent for Personnel position, reduce the number of direct reports to the superintendent to more effectively align key leadership responsibilities, and reduce the total cost of central administration salaries.

Taft ISD's superintendent's span of control is too broad to effectively manage the district's leadership team; and as a result, organizational responsibilities are not properly aligned. Additionally, the district's average central administration salary is higher than the statewide average

and the peer districts used for comparison purposes for this review.

- Currently, the superintendent has 12 direct reports, including his role as the Information Technology director. The superintendent's direct reports include three assistant superintendents, three principals, the maintenance director, the music director, the athletic director, the police chief, and the administrative assistant;
- According to the district job descriptions, the assistant superintendent for Personnel directs and manages the district's personnel functions to ensure quality staffing, oversees legally sound and effective practices in personnel management, and develops or implements human resource programs. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction evaluates and provides leadership for the overall instructional program of the district and is responsible for curriculum and staff development. The assistant superintendent for Business directs and manages the operations of all financial and business affairs of the district including budgeting, accounting, payroll, transportation, and risk management;
- However, all of the responsibilities related to the assistant superintendent for Personnel position are shared with other district staff. Inquiries related to human resources matters were generally split between the three assistant superintendents and the superintendent; and
- Under the proposed organization, the superintendent would have four direct reports—two assistant superintendents, the police chief, and an administrative assistant. The assistant superintendent for Personnel position would be eliminated. The assistant superintendent for Business would become the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Services, assuming responsibility for all key operational functions, including Human Resources (HR), Maintenance, Technology, and Child Nutrition, along with the business/finance areas. Under the revised organizational structure, direct oversight responsibility would be given to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for all principals, the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), Music, Athletics, and Federal Programs. The fiscal impact of this structural realignment would be a savings of \$489,325 over five

years for the salary of the assistant superintendent for Personnel.

Implement the recommended staffing changes throughout the district to operate more efficiently and effectively. In several functional areas, the district is not appropriately staffed based on industry standards or accepted best practices. In addition to the elimination of the assistant superintendent for Personnel position, these recommendations are included in this report:

- Create an HR Generalist position to manage the HR functions in the district. This position will report to the recommended position of assistant superintendent for Business and Support Services;
- Eliminate two of the four library aide positions and create a full-time librarian position;
- Eliminate two child nutrition staff positions to ensure that the program aligns with the MPLH industry standard;
- Create an instructional technology coordinator position to assist the district in effectively implementing technology usage in the classroom; and
- Fill the Information Technology Director position that became vacant in 2010.

PLANNING

Develop a comprehensive document to address all of the district's strategies for academic and operational improvement which is then linked to the budget to assist with governance and accountability. Taft ISD lacks a comprehensive strategic planning instrument to effectively manage the affairs of the district and uses its district improvement plan as a substitute. While the Taft ISD Board of Trustees establishes specific goals and objectives on an annual basis, the district lacks detailed and/or comprehensive planning in several functional areas of the district including:

- a districtwide strategic plan to guide the district in decision-making;
- consistent implementation of the site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees at its campuses;
- a coordinated districtwide plan that includes a system for measuring effectiveness/success in the area of community and parental involvement;

- a long-range facility master plan that incorporates the facilities condition assessment in planning for future construction and renovation;
- a preventive maintenance program for its facilities;
- a strategic plan for the Child Nutrition operations;
- a more effective bus replacement planning procedure to efficiently replace the district's bus fleet; and
- a disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the computer operations facility is rendered inoperable.

Lack of planning leaves the district exposed to unexpected situations and expenditures for which it might not have the resources to address. The implementation of more detailed and comprehensive planning processes districtwide will ensure more effective functioning of the district's financial and operational areas.

TRAINING

Develop a comprehensive training plan and establish professional development requirements for all district staff. Taft ISD's non-instructional personnel lack sufficient professional development and leadership training. Lack of adequate training decreases the ability of district staff to perform their jobs effectively. Training is needed in a number of areas across the district, including:

- Training plans have not been developed for the Maintenance Department;
- The district does not use workers' compensation information to target safety training initiatives;
- The district lacks coordination for technology training and integration in the curriculum;
- Not all staff responsible for the instruction of gifted and talented (G/T) students has completed the six hour G/T update training; and
- The Child Nutrition staff is not participating in on-going training.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Establish separate budget accounts for catering expenditures. Taft ISD's lack of tracking expenditures associated with catering activities appears to be inconsistent with USDA's Child Nutrition Program regulations resulting

in inaccurate operating results. Federal standards and rules state that a school food service authority is permitted to engage in activities that are outside of the scope of the nonprofit school food service; however, the school food authority must ensure that none of the resources from its nonprofit food service subsidize the costs of such activities. The Child Nutrition program provides catering to internal organizations and to the local community as a source of additional income for their operations to supplement some of the operating costs. Although food, salaries, and overhead costs are associated with catering, these cost are not tracked separately from the Child Nutrition program costs. However, the revenues received from catering activities are recorded in a separate budget account. Additionally, the district should cooperate with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) regarding the recommendation of the Legislative Budget Board that TDA conduct an investigation of the Taft ISD Child Nutrition program for any irregularities associated with accounting for catering expenditures.

Improve the budget document so that it communicates district financial information more clearly and concisely on the district's website. Taft ISD does not produce a budget document that communicates the financial allocation details of the district as well as function as an instrument of financial management and control. The district does not publish a user-friendly budget document, as it lacks a discussion of budget goals, priorities, or objectives in the district's budget presentation. No explanatory narratives, charts, or graphs to highlight important information and numerical relationships limit the budget's usefulness as a communications device, policy document, and financial plan. Improving the budget document with charts, written analysis, and executive level summaries would improve the budget's presentation on the district's website.

Strengthen Business Department internal controls over key business processes. Taft ISD's internal controls over certain key business processes are insufficient to ensure that errors or irregularities will not occur or be detected within a reasonable timeframe if they do occur. In small school districts, segregation of duties is more difficult to achieve because there are fewer employees to perform tasks, and employees wear various "hats" and tend to operate in a more informal, personal manner. As a result, the district is exposed to a multitude of risks including unauthorized and inaccurate transactions, misappropriation of funds, and the possibility of fraudulent transactions. Internal controls, such as budget

line-item control, segregation of duties, and cross training should be implemented immediately.

Meet with the City of Taft officials to discuss the operation of the community recreational water park and determine ways to reduce operating deficits. Taft ISD has not effectively managed the provisions of the agreement with the City of Taft (City) regarding the maintenance and operations of the water park, which has resulted in significant annual deficits. The district operates a water park, but has not corresponded with the City to request additional funding or alternatives to avoid average annual losses of about \$60,000. Taft ISD should conduct a cost/benefit analysis annually to analyze the water park expenses as a basis for negotiating with the City to reduce operating deficits. Assuming the district can reduce the loss by approximately 25 percent of the average annual losses, it would save \$15,000 per year.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Implement a structured, focused process to improve academic achievement that is based on test score analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses of student performance, supported by instruction, using an aligned curriculum with specific accountability measures. Taft ISD lacks a systematic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system at all grade levels to ensure improvement in student performance. Campus principals in previous school years developed their own instructional focus and monitoring system, creating inconsistencies in curriculum delivery across the district. Additionally, the district does not have a formal method or process to ensure students are prepared to go to the next grade level. A consistent program for monitoring curriculum implementation for all campuses is critical to ensure that Taft ISD teachers deliver the district curriculum without gaps and redundancies in order to maximize student performance. Without a coordinated system, students may not experience a smooth transition from each grade level as it pertains to meeting curriculum standards.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Taft ISD is located in central San Patricio County, northwest of Corpus Christi, Texas. In the early 1900s Taft was formed where the Southern Pacific Railroad crossed the Coleman-Fulton Pasture Company land. It was named after Charles P. Taft of Cincinnati, the half-brother of President Howard Taft. Initially, all the land around Taft was ranchland but soon was converted to agricultural farmland – mostly cotton.

The first school in Taft was established in the back of a warehouse in 1904, and in 1909 President Taft paid a visit to the town to speak in the newly built assembly hall which doubled as a new school. The Taft ISD was formed in 1921, and the town was finally incorporated as a municipality in 1929.

- The district's student enrollment in school year 2009–10 was 1,143, with a student population of:
 - 85.7% Hispanic
 - 8.1% White
 - 4.4% Native American
 - 1.8% African American
- The district's superintendent is Dr. Chad Kelly. Prior to his appointment as superintendent in May 2007, Dr. Kelly served as the principal of San Marcos High School. Dr. Kelly started his career as a classroom teacher/coach, then assistant principal, then principal; and Taft ISD is his first superintendency position. Dr. Kelly has also served as an adjunct professor at Texas State University.
- Taft ISD had more economically disadvantaged students (88.5%) than the state average (47.2%) in school year 2009–10.
- In school year 2009–10, Taft ISD employed 214 full-time equivalent staff, with 43.2 percent, or 92.4, being teachers.
- Prior to school year 2010–11, Taft ISD had two elementary campuses. The district closed East Elementary campus and currently Woodroe Petty Elementary serves grades Pre-K through 5.
- Taft ISD received an *Academically Acceptable* accountability rating for school year 2009–10 from the Texas Education Agency. During that school year, all of the campuses received an *Academically Acceptable* rating.
- Taft ISD is served by Region 2 located in Corpus Christi.
- The legislators for the district are Senator Judith Zaffirini and Representative Todd Hunter.

SCHOOLS

- Woodroe Petty Elementary (Pre-K–5)
- Taft Junior High School (6–8)
- Taft High School (9–12)
- Taft Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

FINANCIAL DATA

- Total actual expenditures (2009–10): \$12.7 million.
- Fund balance (2009–10): 2.7 percent of 2009–10 actual expenditures.
- Tax Rate (2009–10): \$1.310 (\$1.170 Maintenance and Operations and \$0.140 Interest and Sinking).
- In 2009, Taft ISD’s property wealth per student was \$194,189 with a property wealth per weighted average daily attendance of \$130,616.
- The percentage of total actual expenditures spent on instruction (2009) was 47.9 percent; total actual operating expenditures spent on instruction (2009) was 52.4 percent. The district’s per pupil actual operating expenditure (2009) was \$9,662.

- Instructional expenditure ratio (2009–10 budgeted): 58.2 percent.

The chapters that follow contain a summary of the district’s accomplishments, findings, and numbered recommendations. Detailed explanations for accomplishments and recommendations follow the summary and include fiscal impacts.

Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter’s recommendations and associated savings or costs for school year 2011–12 through 2015–16.

Following the chapters are the appendices that contain the results from the district surveys conducted by the review team.

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

The following table summarizes the fiscal impact of all 60 recommendations in the performance review.

FISCAL IMPACT

	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Gross Savings	\$265,831	\$280,831	\$280,831	\$280,831	\$280,831	\$1,389,155	\$0
Gross Costs	(\$131,670)	(\$131,470)	(\$131,670)	(\$131,470)	(\$131,670)	(\$657,950)	(\$16,200)
TOTAL	\$134,161	\$149,361	\$149,161	\$149,361	\$149,161	\$731,205	(\$16,200)

CHAPTER 1. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Taft Independent School District (ISD) is located in central San Patricio County, northwest of Corpus Christi, Texas. In the early 1900s Taft was formed where the Southern Pacific Railroad crossed the Coleman-Fulton Pasture Company land. It was named after Charles P. Taft of Cincinnati, the half-brother of President Howard Taft. Initially, all the land around Taft was ranchland but soon was converted to agricultural farmland – mostly cotton. The first school in Taft was established in the back of a warehouse in 1904 and in 1909 President Taft paid a visit to the town to speak in the newly built assembly hall which doubled as a new school. Taft ISD was formed in 1921 and the town was finally incorporated as a municipality in 1929.

Taft ISD’s student enrollment for school year 2009–10 was 1,143 students, reflecting a decline in district enrollment from five years ago of over 8 percent. The district serves students primarily from Taft as well as the unincorporated communities surrounding it and 88 percent of its students are economically disadvantaged. In 2009, the City of Taft had a population of 3,244 comprised of 77.8 percent Hispanic, 21.3 percent White, 0.7 percent African-American, and 0.2 percent other races. The estimated median income for a household was \$45,106 compared with \$48,259 statewide, and the estimated per capita income was \$17,945.

Districts’ board of trustees must work collaboratively with each other and the superintendent to form the basis of an effective district leadership team. Taft ISD is governed by a “Team of Eight,” which consists of the seven Board of Trustees (board) members and the superintendent. This team

concept encourages a collaborative effort between the board and the administration to effectively govern the district. All members are elected at-large. Board members are elected to staggered three-year terms. **Exhibit 1-1** shows the board members for school year 2010–11, their position, term information, and occupation. The average years of experience for Taft ISD’s board is about eight years and all of the members either grew up in the district or have children who attended school in the district.

Board meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday of each month. Regular meetings are held at 7 PM in the boardroom of the Taft ISD Administration Building located at 400 College Street. Meetings are open to the public and individuals may speak during the public participation portion of the agenda but each speaker is limited to five minutes. The board will not discuss or make decisions on any issues not posted on the agenda, including public comments. Any group of five or more wishing to address the board must appoint one person to represent the group to the board.

Board policy states that the board president and superintendent determine the agenda items for each meeting. The agenda is reviewed by the board president and superintendent before the regularly scheduled board meeting. The board president, on behalf of the board, can change the agenda as a result of items discussed with the superintendent, key administrative staff, or other board members. The agenda is finalized and posted by noon of the third working day before the board meeting. The superintendent’s administrative assistant compiles the board packets, including all supporting

**EXHIBIT 1-1
TAFT ISD BOARD MEMBERS
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

NAME	TITLE	TERM EXPIRATION	LENGTH OF SERVICE	OCCUPATION
Pedro Rodriguez, Sr.	President	2012	9 years	Mobile Equipment Operator
Mary Garrett	Vice President	2012	6 years	Retired
Yolanda Valle	Secretary	2013	6 years	Retired
Johnny Carvajal	Member	2012	12 years	Refinery Worker
Johnny Carver	Member	2011	13 years	Warehouse Manager
Pete Lopez	Member	2011	6 years	Self-employed
Sylvia Montemayor	Member	2012	7 years	Law firm Field Agent

SOURCE: Taft ISD Administration.

documents, according to the finalized posted agenda. The administrative assistant provides the board packets to board members typically five days before the Tuesday meeting. Prior to the meeting, each board member may contact the superintendent or key administrative staff with questions or clarifications about information in the board packet.

The superintendent plays a key role in effective district leadership. The superintendent is responsible for implementing procedures needed to accomplish district policy. In addition to being the district's chief instructional leader, the superintendent also bears primary responsibility for guiding the day-to-day operations of the district and managing staff.

The superintendent was hired in May 2007 and is the chief executive officer of the district and a key member of the "Team of Eight." The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that district policies established by the board are in place and are appropriately adhered to. Although this is his first superintendent position, he had eight years of school administration experience prior to accepting the position at Taft ISD, including serving as high school principal at Sinton and San Marcos ISDs. In May 2004, he earned his Doctorate in Educational Leadership. More than two-thirds of the district administrative staff, support staff, principals, assistant principals, and teachers surveyed for this review indicated that the superintendent is respected and is an effective instructional leader and business manager. Additionally, the consensus among all board members interviewed indicated that the superintendent does a good job overall managing the district and providing them with the necessary information, as was also reflected in his school year 2009–10 performance evaluation.

In order for district leadership to effectively manage and create a fully functional organization, all stakeholders must have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities. School board members must have a clear understanding of their duties and the superintendent must establish a balance between being the district's instructional leader and directing operational functions. Key administrative staff are charged with implementing the superintendent's directives within federal and state regulations. Campus leaders must manage school faculty, assist in student education by staying abreast of new teaching methods, and handle the administrative and managerial tasks associated with an integrated site-based management structure. Collectively, the district's leadership team must have a good working rapport and be committed to the same purpose and educational goals.

The superintendent meets with the leadership team every other week. The leadership team includes all principals, all directors, and assistant superintendents. The leadership team has the administrative responsibility to ensure the day-to-day operations and academic instruction is carried out in accordance with board directives.

In addition to district management, community involvement is essential to both the success of a school district and overall quality of life within the community. Effective relationships between a school district and its community take time to develop and should be guided by well-established goals, objectives, and strategies that support the district's overall mission. A well-developed community involvement program is designed so that it addresses the unique characteristics of the school district and the community.

Taft ISD's community involvement functions are handled by several key positions within the district. The superintendent, assistant superintendent for Personnel, and assistant superintendent for Business are instrumental in handling outreach to individuals, business, civic, and education organizations in Taft and surrounding areas. Campus principals, the parent involvement coordinator, and school truancy officers handle school-based parental and community involvement activities.

Effective communication and positive community relations are paramount to the foundation of strong community involvement programs within school districts. Effective communication involves dedicated and consistent use of print and electronic media to disseminate information and invite community groups to partner with the district to strengthen community service while meeting common goals.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD board has a good working relationship and is very supportive of the superintendent.
- Taft ISD's executive leadership is actively involved in local Taft business and civic community organizations, which helps promote positive relations between the community and the school district.

FINDINGS

- The superintendent's span of control is too broad to effectively manage the district's leadership team; and as a result, organizational responsibilities are not properly aligned.

- Taft ISD lacks a comprehensive strategic planning instrument to effectively manage the affairs of the district and uses its district improvement plan as a substitute.
- Taft ISD is not consistently implementing site-based decision-making committees at its campuses.
- Taft ISD's board meeting structure is not conducive to parent and community attendance and participation.
- Taft ISD's efforts to increase parental and community involvement have resulted in very low participation.
- Taft ISD lacks a coordinated districtwide plan that includes a system for measuring effectiveness/success in the area of community and parental involvement.
- Taft ISD lacks a formal method to solicit or recognize businesses for their participation in supporting the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1:** Restructure the district's organization to eliminate the assistant superintendent for Personnel position, reduce the number of direct reports to the superintendent to more effectively align key leadership responsibilities, and reduce the total cost of central administration salaries.
- **Recommendation 2:** Develop a comprehensive document to address all of the district's strategies for academic and operational improvement which is then linked to the budget to assist with governance and accountability.
- **Recommendation 3:** Implement and enforce site-based decision-making practices to address budgeting and district operations.
- **Recommendation 4:** Implement strategies aimed at improving parent/community attendance and participation at board meetings, including budget workshops.
- **Recommendation 5:** Conduct an annual meeting with parents and community members to obtain direct input on ways to increase parental and community participation in Taft ISD.
- **Recommendation 6:** Incorporate a coordinated districtwide community involvement plan with mechanisms for tracking the effectiveness/success of

community and parental involvement beginning with the goals established in the district improvement plan (DIP). The district should also establish performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of community involvement strategies.

- **Recommendation 7:** Consider starting a formal Adopt-A-School program for those businesses and civic organizations that support the district to positively recognize them and to ensure this support is continued.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BOARD RELATIONSHIP AND ROLES

Taft ISD board has a good working relationship and is very supportive of the superintendent. Board members understand that their role is to govern and not manage district operations; they hired the superintendent to perform this function. Board members are pleased with the superintendent's leadership and support his efforts to improve the academic rating of the district. The district's motto is "Our Focus is Children" which governs all decisions made by the board. The board's philosophy of the "Team of Eight" permeates their approach to district governance and administration. Each member of the "team" has a key role, with the superintendent handling the day-to-day operational responsibilities and the board having responsibility for oversight and administrator/teacher support.

Board members diligently maintain their training records by attending conferences and team building workshops. They trust and fully support the superintendent regarding recommendations and management of district activities. The superintendent has an open door policy and encourages board members to meet with him one on one prior to board meetings, or any time during the month, to discuss district matters. As a result of the open communication between the "Team of Eight," monthly board agenda items are generally unanimously approved without further discussion.

Survey responses indicate that board members and staff have a great deal of confidence in the superintendent's ability to manage the district successfully. **Exhibit 1-2** summarizes selected board member and staff survey responses.

Board members recognize that the superintendent's goal is for the district to reach Recognized status and are willing to unequivocally support his efforts. A board that understands its overall fiduciary duty and works well together enhances

**EXHIBIT 1-2
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

FUNCTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Board Member Survey Question: “What do you believe are the top priority functions of a school district Board of Education?”						
Establishing school district policies and direction	7	0%	71%	29%	0%	0%
Advocating the improvement of student success	7	0%	71%	29%	0%	0%
Survey Question: “The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	29%	43%	17%	7%	4%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	80%	0%	0%	20%	0%
Teachers	50	16%	46%	24%	14%	0%
Survey Question: “School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.”						
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%
Survey Question: “The school board has a good image in the community.”						
Teachers	50	16%	56%	24%	2%	2%

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011. Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

the district’s ability to effectively manage, operate, and advance the academic needs of their students. As stated in Taft ISD’s school year 2010–11 DIP, both the board and the superintendent feel that their overall success will be measured by TAFT PRIDE:

Taft ISD will

Attain Recognized status through a

Focus on

TEKS-based curriculum,

Professional Learning Communities,

Rigor in academics,

Individualized and

Data-driven instruction, and

Engaged, nurturing learning environments

The board’s working relationship and full support of the superintendent along with clearly defined roles has helped the district make some gains in the past years where they previously struggled.

BUSINESS AND CIVIC COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Taft ISD’s executive leadership is actively involved in local Taft business and civic community organizations, which helps promote positive relations between the community and the school district. The district’s superintendent, assistant superintendent for Business, and assistant superintendent for Personnel play active leadership roles with organizations such as Taft’s Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and Kiwanis Club. In fact, for the past year, Taft ISD’s superintendent has also functioned as president of the Taft Chamber of Commerce, and in addition the chamber website has a direct link to Taft ISD’s website.

Because Taft ISD is a relatively small school district, it does not have a formal Community Involvement or Public Information Office that might typically be found in a larger school district. With the absence of a formal Community Involvement or Public Information Office, members of the Taft ISD executive leadership team have found creative ways to regularly communicate and participate with these organizations. For example, during the onsite visit, review team members accompanied Taft ISD executive team members to civic meetings where they had speaking roles about a broad range of issues such as innovative academic programs and significant potential budget shortfalls that the district may face in the upcoming school year. Additionally,

during interviews with board members and civic and business groups, review team members were consistently told that Taft ISD’s executive leadership team is very accessible to the community. Taft ISD’s executive leadership has identified effective ways to “reach out to” and engage community stakeholders to increase their awareness regarding issues and/ or accomplishments that impact the district.

DETAILED FINDINGS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE (REC. 1)

The superintendent’s span of control is too broad to effectively manage the district’s leadership team; and as a result, organizational responsibilities are not properly aligned. Additionally, the district’s average central administration salaries are higher than the statewide average and the peer districts used for comparison purposes for this review.

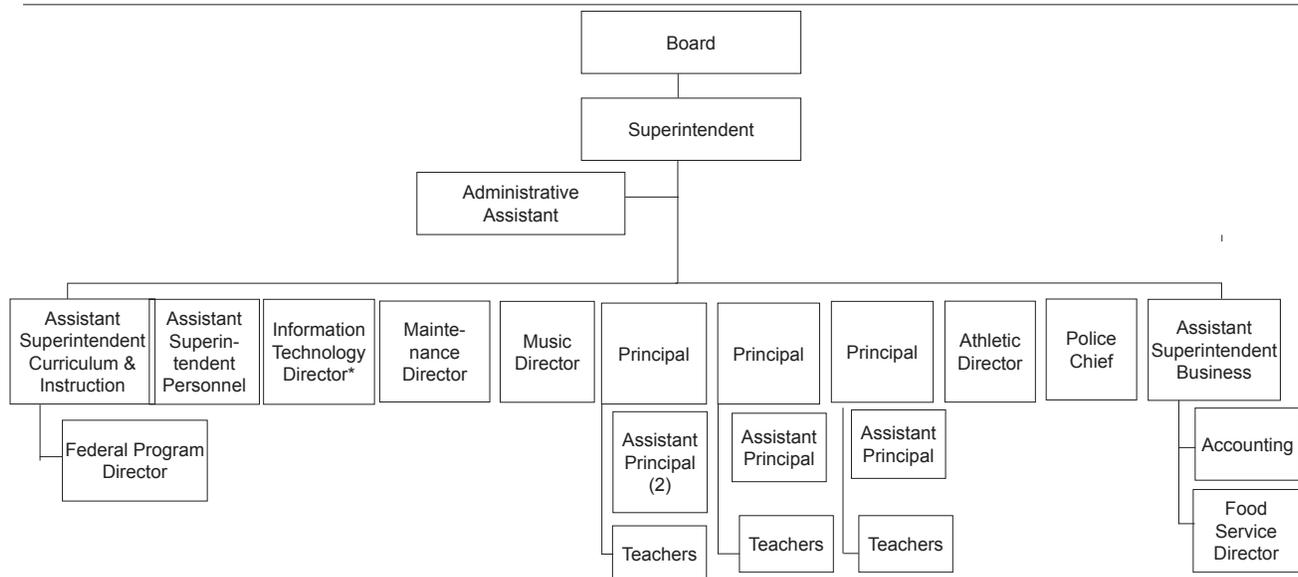
Currently, the superintendent has 12 direct reports, including his role of overseeing the Information Technology functions of the district since the position was vacated in 2010. Daily operational reporting requirements, even for a district Taft ISD’s size, would be significant with this number of direct reports. Proper span of control varies from organization to organization; however, the general “rule of thumb” for an executive is six to eight direct reports.

Exhibit 1-3 presents Taft ISD’s organization for school year 2010–11 as approved by the board in June 2010.

At the time of the onsite review, the district employed three assistant superintendents, who perform various operational and instructional functions according to their stated job descriptions. The assistant superintendent for Personnel directs and manages the district’s personnel functions to ensure quality staffing, to oversee legally sound and effective practices in personnel management, and to develop or implement human resource programs. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction evaluates and provides leadership for the overall instructional program of the district and is responsible for curriculum and staff development. The assistant superintendent for Business directs and manages the operations of all financial and business affairs of the district including budgeting, accounting, payroll, transportation, and risk management.

Although the job descriptions for the three assistant superintendents outline their roles and responsibilities, the review team learned while onsite that all of the responsibilities related to the assistant superintendent for Personnel position are shared with other district staff. Interviews and discussions with district personnel revealed that the assistant superintendent for Personnel was not the primary contact for human resources matters. Instead, inquiries were generally

**EXHIBIT 1-3
TAFT ISD ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**



*The superintendent is currently overseeing the functions of the Information Technology Director position.
SOURCE: Taft ISD Administration.

split between three assistant superintendents and the superintendent.

Furthermore, the job description for the assistant superintendent for Personnel requires the candidate to have three years teaching experience and five years experience in school administration or an equivalent amount of human resources management experience in the private sector. The current incumbent in this position has no prior human resource management experience, making it challenging to effectively manage the responsibilities of this position. Key functions of an effective Human Resource Director include managing organization development, policy development

and documentation, compensation and benefits administration, employee safety, welfare, wellness and health, along with general administration.

Exhibit 1-4 shows the key personnel tasks and staff responsible for the task in Taft ISD. This exhibit shows that none of the key personnel tasks are solely handled by the assistant superintendent for Personnel. In addition, the personnel tasks for training and development for non-instructional staff does not have an assigned staff person (this is discussed in the Human Resources chapter of this report). The assistant superintendent for Personnel is involved only in a little over half of the key personnel tasks of the district.

**EXHIBIT 1-4
TAFT ISD
KEY PERSONNEL TASKS AND STAFF RESPONSIBLE**

PERSONNEL TASK	ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR PERSONNEL	ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS	ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	SUPERINTENDENT	OTHER DISTRICT STAFF
Interpret and recommend personnel policies and regulations for the district.				√	
Screen, evaluate, and recommend applicants for interviews.	√		√		
Assist with preparing and maintaining job documentation and job evaluations.	√		√		√
Assist with administering district compensation and classification structures and benefit administration.		√			√
Administer exempt and nonexempt compensation programs and ensure compliance with federal wage and overtime pay laws.	√	√		√	
Administer and explain benefits to employees, serving as liaison between insurance carriers, accounting staff and employees.		√			
Recommend, develop, and schedule professional development and training courses for non-instructional staff.					
Participate in development and execution of orientation programs and procedures for new employees.	√		√		√
Manage the district's substitute program and conduct orientation sessions.	√				√
Review employee complaints and ensure accurate and timely documentation of concerns or issues.			√	√	√
Ensure accurate personnel files on all active and inactive employees are properly maintained.	√	√			√

SOURCE: Sample HR Director/Generalist, Taft ISD Job Descriptions, and Taft ISD onsite review interviews, February 2011.

One of Taft ISD’s peer districts, Sinton ISD, divides responsibilities and reporting structure under the superintendent’s office by allocating operational and instructional responsibilities between a deputy superintendent and an assistant superintendent for Curriculum/Support Services, while maintaining direct oversight for the principals and athletic director. Other districts divide responsibilities between two assistant superintendents for the following combination of areas: Business Services, Curriculum/Support Services, Human Resources/Student Services, or Support Operations/Special Programs Services.

Taft ISD is spending \$1.1 million in central administration salary and benefit costs for a superintendent, three assistant superintendents, four directors, a police chief, a computer technician, and six support staff. **Exhibit 1-5** shows that on average, the district administration costs are higher than their peer districts and the statewide average. Given the disbursement of personnel tasks as shown in **Exhibit 1-4** and the high central administration salary cost, it is difficult for a district the size of Taft ISD to justify the existence of three assistant superintendents.

Superintendents are responsible for a multitude of functions and results. They need to establish a balance between setting the vision and goals, working with the board, being involved in the community, managing finances, being the instructional leader, and delegating daily activities that accomplish instructional requirements. Narrowing a superintendent’s span of control allows more time to focus on critical district oversight issues.

Taft ISD should restructure the organization to eliminate the assistant superintendent for Personnel position, reduce the number of direct reports to the superintendent to more effectively align key leadership responsibilities, and reduce the total cost of central administration salaries. The district should create an administrative organizational structure that ensures balanced reporting relationships, including the number of employees each manager supervises, while taking into account the skills, management styles, and statutory

responsibilities involved. Proper division of reporting responsibilities is necessary for effective operations and management and ensuring adequate oversight of academic and operational functions. **Exhibit 1-6** presents the proposed Taft ISD organization.

Eliminating the assistant superintendent for Personnel position and implementing this recommendation will allow the superintendent to delegate appropriately, focus on district leadership, and take a more strategic oversight role in the instructional aspects of the district. In the proposed organization, the superintendent would have four direct reports - two assistant superintendents, the police chief, and an administrative assistant. The assistant superintendent for Business would become the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Services, assuming responsibility for all key operational functions, including Human Resources (HR), Maintenance, Technology, and Food Services, along with the business/finance areas. The HR functions will include the tasks currently performed by the assistant superintendent for Personnel. Under the revised organizational structure, direct oversight responsibility would be given to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for all principals, disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), Music, Athletics, and Federal Programs. With this proposed reorganization, district job descriptions should be revised accordingly.

In a district the size of Taft it is important for the superintendent to maintain an appropriate balance between the instructional and operational responsibilities, to impact district improvement overall. The proposed reorganization provides the district with an optimal structure to effectively focus on leadership and operational oversight responsibilities, which provides for overall district improvement.

The superintendent and school principals meet every six weeks to gather information, share ideas, and consider suggestions to improve the academic standings of the district. In interviews conducted with the principals, it was noted that these meetings with the superintendent were well

**EXHIBIT 1-5
TAFT ISD
AVERAGE ADMINISTRATION SALARY
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS AND STATEWIDE AVERAGE**

	TAFT ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD	MULESHOE ISD	SINTON ISD	STATE
Central Administration	\$91,998	\$59,769	\$83,487	\$87,491	\$87,446

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2009–10.

**EXHIBIT 1-6
PROPOSED TAFT ISD ORGANIZATION**



SOURCE: Created by the Review Team, February 2011.

received and greatly appreciated as an improvement tool. These meetings could continue even if the principals did not report directly to the superintendent, particularly if the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction continued to be included. This practice would allow the superintendent to closely monitor progress and consistency

with established instructional goals without increasing his organizational reporting structure. Additionally, the elimination of the assistant superintendent for Personnel position would help bring the district's central administration costs in line with their peers. Under the proposed organizational structure, one assistant superintendent

position would be eliminated and the human resources task would be under the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Services. *(It is recommended in the **Human Resources chapter** of this report that Taft ISD create a Human Resources Generalist position to carry out the human resources task in the district.)* The fiscal impact of this structural realignment would be an annual \$97,864 decrease in personnel costs (assistant superintendent for Personnel salary \$85,099 times a 15 percent benefit rate). The five year salary savings would be \$489,320 (\$97,864 x 5 years). No fiscal impact is assumed for the increased responsibilities assigned to the two assistant superintendents.

STRATEGIC PLAN (REC. 2)

Taft ISD lacks a comprehensive strategic planning instrument to effectively manage the affairs of the district and uses its DIP as a substitute. The DIP, which is revised annually, focuses on instructional goals including student academic achievement, increased community involvement, minimizing incidents, and integrating technology, but does not include budgetary goals as a measurement with the exception of the link to instructional staff considerations.

At the time of the onsite visit, the board had been involved in multiple meetings to determine the spending allocation and oversight of the disbursement of bond funds. Several board members indicated that they had participated in over 90 meetings in the last nine months related to the bond funds. This approach to managing bond election funds is more reactive than strategic, creating the possibility for unintentional mismanagement of funds and operational objectives.

The management of legal expenditures, a component of both operational and financial functions, is an area in the district that appears to lack planning. Taft ISD's legal fees over the last few years have exceeded the district's annual budget amount of \$18,000. Even though district policy authorizes the superintendent as the primary point of contact with the outside legal counsel, legal fees can be difficult to budget since the necessity for such services fluctuates as a result of activities that occur in the daily operational environment. Because Taft ISD does not have in-house counsel, external legal advice is sought to address and ensure compliance with operational rules, mandates, and regulations. Occasionally, legal matters arise which could be governed by provisions within the strategic plan to provide oversight and guidance to district administration before engaging outside legal counsel.

Victoria ISD uses several methods to control legal costs. It obtains legal services proposals every few years to ensure that the costs for its legal services remain competitive. Before using the district's contracted attorney, Victoria ISD first consults with Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) legal services, the cost of which is included in the district's annual membership dues. The superintendent reviews all legal bills prior to payment.

The development of a strategic plan encourages increased focus of operational and financial issues especially as it relates to the use of bond election funds. A strategic plan developed over time provides a district with a solid basis for soliciting future community support related to oversight of funds, building development, and facility upkeep. Comprehensive strategic plans provide a management tool for the board, superintendent, and community and are critical to effective governing of school districts. Sound strategic plans encompass all aspects of district operations including academic, operational, and financial goals. Each goal is tied to resource requirements, student achievement, implementation champions, timelines, action items, performance measures, and fund requirements.

Throughout this report, examples of the district's lack of an all-encompassing planning process are discussed ranging from the absence of a Technology disaster recovery plan to the non-existence of a Facilities Maintenance plan. There is also discussion of the lack of a comprehensive bus replacement plan that could impact the budget if the district had to replace the entire fleet at once. The district is also cited for not having a Child Nutrition strategic plan. Lack of planning in all of these areas could be costly for the district.

Taft ISD should develop a comprehensive document to address all of the district's strategies for academic and operational improvement which is then linked to the budget to assist with governance and accountability. The plan should provide goals to guide the district in decision-making.

A strategic plan should be a vital document approved by the board and updated annually. It should also include performance measures which can serve as the basis for assessment of effective district operations. **Exhibit 1-7** provides a sample model of a strategic planning process.

The districtwide, long-range strategic plan should identify academic, operational, and financial goals for all district operations, outside of the current bond project and beyond (at least three to five years). This plan should strategically determine the spending allocation for the recent bond

**EXHIBIT 1-7
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS SAMPLE MODEL**

STEP	PURPOSE
Step 1: Vision Setting	The board, superintendent, and key stakeholders engage in a vision setting process to determine what characteristics the district should have if it operated at the most optimal level.
Step 2: Mission and Goals	The board, superintendent, and key stakeholders identify a mission and associate goals that if accomplished will bring the district closer to fulfilling its vision.
Step 3: Setting Priorities	The board prioritizes the district’s most important goals to serve as the basis of the strategic plan.
Step 4: Identifying Barriers	The board, superintendent, and leadership team use data to identify the key barriers to accomplishing the goals.
Step 5: Identifying Resources	The administration links the budgeting process to the planning process to ensure that district goal priorities are reflected in budget allocation.
Step 6: Strategy	The superintendent, administration, and key stakeholders including parents, business leaders, civic organizations, and community groups develop strategies to accomplish the goals by addressing the identified barriers, creating timelines for completion, assigning accountability, identifying performance measures, and allocating resources.
Step 7: Consensus Building, Review, and Approval	The board, superintendent, and stakeholders build consensus, review the plan for viability, and approve the final document.
Step 8: Implementation and Monitoring	Persons or departments with assigned accountability enact the plan strategies, while monitoring progress against performance measures and use of allocated funds.
Step 9: Evaluation	The district evaluates the success of the plan, which performance measures were met, what goals were fulfilled, and what obstacles prevented success. The superintendent presents findings to the board.

SOURCE: Review Team research on best practices.

elections and should include maintenance on existing facilities. The plan should also serve as a tool used for the operations of the district, allocating resources, and evaluating the superintendent.

The comprehensive strategic planning process should outline the goals and objectives for all of the district’s operations, and include detailed action plans, identify the resources required to accomplish the goals, forecast the dates for completion, indicate person(s) within the district responsible for achieving the goals within an established timeline, and set performance measures for each goal and objective.

At their annual retreat, the board and superintendent should review the strategic plan and discuss what should constitute the academic and operational objectives of the upcoming school year, as well as assess district budgets and accountability goals or strategies. The comprehensive strategic plan combined with the DIP established during the retreat becomes the annual road map for success that the superintendent would be charged to accomplish during the upcoming year.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING (REC. 3)

Taft ISD is not consistently implementing site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees at its campuses. SBDM refers to the level of authority, autonomy, and accountability that school districts grant individual campuses.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §11.251(b) states that the campus-level committee shall be involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The campus-level committee must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs.

TEC specifies many requirements for site-based decision-making including:

- District and campus improvement plans must be developed, reviewed, and revised annually;
- Administrative procedures or policies must clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, and district-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization;

- Systematic communications measures must be put in place to obtain broad-based community, parental, and staff input and to provide information to those persons on the recommendations of the district-level committee; and
- Decision-making committees must be actively involved in establishing administrative procedures.

While Taft ISD has developed the required DIP and campus improvement plans (CIPs) it does not actively and consistently involve its SBDM committees as required by the TEC. However, each SBDM committee is comprised of at least 11 members who represent campus-based professional staff, parents, businesses, and the community. In Taft, one of the SBDM committees is scheduled to meet approximately every six weeks to assist with resume review for open positions or to provide input on the CIP. During the onsite visit, principals were aware of the purpose of the SBDM committees, but admitted that proper use needed to be improved.

Focusing on the budget process, principals receive a copy of the prior year’s budget to initiate their budget review process. However, during the onsite interviews, staff could not thoroughly articulate the budget process and how the SBDM committees were involved. Principals may consult department heads at their campuses to solicit their wish list of budget items for the subsequent year, but did not feel that they had much control to make those changes. Neither community nor staff input is considered at the campus level, but they are encouraged to participate in budget workshops conducted by the board monthly. Final budget decisions are made by the assistant superintendent for Business and the superintendent who then presents a summary of the budget to the board for approval.

San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District (CISD) became the model for how SBDM should work when it dedicated itself to SBDM from the board level down. The San Marcos CISD board recognized the benefits of site-based decision making long before it became a state law requirement and supported its use in the district by each campus. The effectiveness of San Marcos CISD’s site-based decision making was also facilitated by central management’s block allocation of funds to campuses which then made decisions on how to spend those funds. Central management adopted a supportive rather than authoritative role.

The SBDM in Hunt ISD consists of three professional educators (two Hunt ISD teachers and the superintendent), two Hunt business leaders, two parents, and two community members. According to the district’s SBDM committee, all teachers participate in the process by informally discussing issues with teachers who are official members of the committee; parent and community involvement is strong; and all SBDM committee members work together to implement necessary changes. The committee enhances communication between the school district and parents.

The survey results in **Exhibit 1-8** show most constituents believed that these committees are adequately involved, although staff interviewed acknowledged minimal committee involvement or participation in the campus decision-making process.

Taft ISD should effectively implement and enforce SBDM practices to address budgeting and district operations. The district should develop and implement local policies and procedures addressing planning and decision-making at both the district and campus levels, and ensure that training occurs in the SBDM processes for all committee members, as necessary. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**EXHIBIT 1-8
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: “The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	13%	46%	25%	9%	7%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
Teachers	50	10%	72%	16%	2%	0%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

BOARD MEETINGS (REC. 4)

Taft ISD’s board meeting structure is not conducive to parent and community attendance and participation.

Neither board meetings nor budget workshops are well attended by the community even though funding and spending is at a critical crossroads for all districts. Given the lack of effective SBDM and a minimal emphasis on a collaborative budget development process in the district, the community may not realize nor understand the value and importance of their attendance and participation. Taft ISD board meetings are held at the district’s administration building on the third Tuesday of each month. Taft ISD board meetings are generally no longer than one hour, starting at 7:00 pm and occasionally provide a meal for attendees before the meeting. While there is a dedicated board room, seating for the general public is limited to less than 30 people, which would include the district staff that are required to attend and present at each meeting.

During the review team’s onsite interviews, participants almost unanimously indicated that the greatest area of improvement for the district would be in parental involvement, particularly attendance at the board meetings. Most board members felt that parents don’t attend the meetings because they felt that everything was operating smoothly and that board members had been elected to appropriately handle district matters without parental interference. In response to a survey question regarding whether the board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings and whether the board listens to the opinions of others, the majority agreed with the statements, however more than 20 percent surveyed expressed no opinion at all.

However, as observed during the onsite visit and through information obtained during onsite discussions, turnout is extremely low at monthly board meetings. Despite the survey results indicating approval, if parents and community members do not regularly attend board meetings their responses may not accurately reflect the reality of the overall perception regarding board meeting attendance. **Exhibit 1-9** summarizes results to the related survey questions.

At the board meeting the review team attended, there were less than five visitors, including one person who addressed the board during the public comment portion, and there was very little discussion on any of the agenda items with all agenda decisions approved unanimously. According to the superintendent, items raised during the public comment portion of meetings are typically researched and addressed by the superintendent to determine the merit of the item. The superintendent then reports the findings to the board members, which is usually done via a group email, prior to the subsequent board meeting. However, upon review of the subsequent board meeting agenda after the onsite visit, none of the items raised were openly addressed by the board. By not responding openly to public comments and concerns, the board is silently discouraging participation in the governance process. To serve on the board, a member is elected by the community, and as such has an obligation to address public comments and inform the community of any actions taken as a result of the comment or why no action was taken. When individuals feel as though they are not being heard they are less likely to engage in the process. Additionally, if a parent or community member wanted to review or research prior board discussions, it would not be

**EXHIBIT 1-9
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: “The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	18%	44%	29%	3%	6%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%
Teachers and Teacher Assistants	50	10%	42%	48%	0%	0%
Parents	40	15%	44%	33%	5%	3%
Survey Question: “School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	21%	45%	23%	4%	7%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
Teachers and Teacher Assistants	50	10%	44%	40%	6%	0%
Parents	40	23%	54%	20%	0%	3%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

possible as only the most recent copy of the board agenda and minutes are posted to the district's website. Without maintaining historical copies of board minutes and agendas on the district's website, the public lacks access to the relevant information which is challenging to remain informed about ongoing board activities.

State statute and district policy require that board meeting notices be posted timely and properly and that meetings are open to the public. The purpose behind the open meeting requirement is so that the public can be educated and informed about board actions taken on their behalf. When the community in general fails to attend the monthly meeting to receive information critical to district operations and the education of the students, any effort made to encourage participation in the board and the district's decision-making process loses its maximum impact.

Some Taft ISD board members commented that the community is not more involved because they trust the board's decisions. Each of the board members has significant ties to the community and have either grown up in the City of Taft or raised their families there. While Taft has a relatively small population, there still exists division within the community, in part divided by the highway that runs through town. It was suggested that community involvement might increase if the board rotated the location of the meeting to be closer to some of their constituents.

Community participation in board meetings often improves when board meetings are conveniently situated within the various communities throughout a district. Manor ISD increased community involvement by holding scheduled monthly school board meetings at various campus locations throughout its community. Manor ISD realized that the larger geographic size of the district and the smaller size of the District Learning Center, where it held board meetings, might be impeding the community from active involvement in school board meetings.

Marble Falls ISD board and the superintendent conduct at least one board meeting at each of the five school sites in the district. After the meeting is called to order, the school principal takes the board members, district administrators, and audience members on a tour of the school. The tour provides board members an opportunity to visually assess the school's physical condition, classroom conditions, and custodial operations. The entire process demonstrates to the community that the district administration is knowledgeable about school needs.

One tool that exists and is available to help Taft ISD with increasing parents' and the local community's active participation during meetings is to conduct an annual board effectiveness audit. The board effectiveness audit is a free tool offered by the TASB. The audit is designed to be completed by the individual board members and the superintendent before facilitating a group discussion. The audit asks a series of questions regarding planning and governance, oversight, and management. This tool will assist the district in focusing on areas of continuous improvement.

Taft ISD should implement strategies aimed at improving parent/community attendance and participation at board meetings, including budget workshops. Improved attendance and participation begins with enhanced board transparency by openly addressing public concerns and ensuring the community is provided the necessary information to stay informed on board actions and activities. Taft ISD should also identify and empower the appropriate district personnel to encourage more participation at the board meetings. These staff members would routinely interface with the community where they could be ambassadors, even distributing a Welcome to the School Board informational flyer. This flyer should be designed to create excitement and highlight the benefits to attending monthly board meetings. The district should also post its current and prior board minutes and agenda on its website. Finally, the district should explore alternate sites in the community to host board meetings to encourage participation.

There will be no fiscal impact to implement this recommendation as the flyer can be produced in-house and existing district personnel can be used to encourage community involvement and increase board participation by parents.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (REC. 5)

Taft ISD's efforts to increase parental and community involvement have resulted in very low participation. According to Taft ISD school principals, fewer than 10 percent of parents attend most parental involvement activities. For example, the week of the onsite visit both Taft High School and Petty Elementary School held parental involvement activities with approximately 20 parents attending each activity even though dinner was served as an added incentive for parents to come. Taft ISD school principals regularly communicate with parents and plan a variety of activities in the evenings to promote community involvement; yet, most activities are poorly attended.

Monthly, Taft ISD posts a calendar of events for each of its schools on its website to communicate to parents far in advance upcoming campus events. The Taft ISD parent involvement coordinator and school truancy officers also coordinate a variety of activities to get parent support such as free counseling services through outside agencies such as Connections and Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and classes to promote parenting and tutorial skills to help their children in school. These activities typically have low participation as well.

Survey responses in **Exhibit 1-10** from Taft ISD stakeholders show that a large majority strongly agree or agree that the district regularly communicates with parents. Approximately 63 percent of district administration and support staff, 80 percent of principals and assistant principals, 88 percent of teachers, and 73 percent of parents feel that the district regularly communicates with parents.

Conversely, even though Taft ISD parents are regularly communicated with and are encouraged to participate in district and school activities, the volunteer levels are low. Survey responses show that 43 percent of district administration and support staff, 60 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 56 percent of teachers responding to the survey feel that there are insufficient numbers of volunteers.

Education industry leaders acknowledge that low levels of parent and community involvement is an issue in many school districts in the nation. Districts that effectively address this problem establish regular forums for district stakeholders

to exchange ideas on ways to increase participation. Conducting an annual self-evaluation with district administrators (central office and campus administrators), teachers, and community members to determine perceptions of the existing community involvement effectiveness and to identifying opportunities for potential improvement is one method used to identify ways to increase participation. This is accomplished through annual meetings which provide community members with an opportunity to exchange ideas and information about the most effective ways to involve parents in district activities. This type of annual meeting also allows participants the opportunity to share parental or community involvement approaches that have proven to be successful for low-income parents, single parents, and parents with demanding work schedules. Business and community leaders who have a genuine desire to become more involved in the district, but have been unable to identify the most suitable niche for participation, will also benefit from this annual meeting.

Taft ISD should conduct an annual meeting with parents and community members to obtain direct input on ways to increase parental and community participation in Taft ISD. An annual meeting that solely addresses ways to increase parental and community involvement will provide Taft ISD administrators, teachers, principals, parents, and community leaders a forum to exchange ideas and highlight effective community outreach initiatives that have been particularly successful in the district. A summary of the annual meeting proceedings should be documented and distributed to all participants. Meeting summaries should also be provided to

**EXHIBIT 1-10
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: "The district regularly communicates with parents."						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	19%	44%	18%	14%	6%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
Teachers	50	12%	76%	8%	4%	0%
Parents	40	13%	60%	5%	13%	10%
Survey Question: "Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs."						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	7%	26%	25%	25%	18%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	0%	40%	0%	60%	0%
Teachers	50	0%	18%	29%	50%	6%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

existing parental involvement organizations, principals of each campus, and school libraries. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN (REC. 6)

Taft ISD lacks a coordinated districtwide plan that includes a system for measuring effectiveness/success in the area of community and parental involvement. The district lacks a specific parental and community involvement plan to guide programs and initiatives, set priorities, specify strategies, identify personnel responsible, define procedures and expected measurable outcomes, and specify resources needed to ensure accountability. According to the DIP, the district has established a goal for parental and community involvement that states “Taft ISD will promote a strong partnership with parents and community members that results in shared responsibility and commitment for a quality educational system.”

Most Taft ISD community involvement activities are implemented and managed at each campus with little or no coordination among campuses or guidance and monitoring at the district level. Though the district is improving its efforts to involve the community in decision-making processes, there are no mechanisms in place to ensure or measure progress toward that goal. For example, the district does not measure the effectiveness of any of its programs in addressing the needs of the parents against any baseline assessment data.

The success and effectiveness of community involvement activities (such as Parent Teacher Organization support in fundraising and volunteering) may be higher at one campus compared to another. Regardless, the overall level of parent and volunteer commitment and participation at all Taft ISD campuses is relatively low.

While Taft ISD has begun to initiate many school-based parent and community involvement activities, it has done so without an overarching vision, district-level coordination, articulated priorities, timetable, or formal mechanism for planning and organizing its parent and community involvement activities. These activities include:

- Junior High Whippet Awards;
- Junior High 8th Grade Awards Banquet;
- High School Honor Roll Breakfast;
- Parent Workshop–“How to Bully-Proof Your Children;”

- Parent Workshop–“Cool Summer Foods for Family Fun;” and
- Parent/Business Title I Appreciation Information Night.

In developing an effective community involvement plan, an assessment of the effectiveness of its current programs would allow the district to determine where to focus its efforts and which programs are most effective in accomplishing the district’s goals. The elements of an effective performance measurement system include:

- Conduct a baseline needs assessment of community member’s perceptions and opinions on the district;
- Reassess the outcomes one year after initial assessment to discern trends, areas of improvement, and areas of commendation;
- Measure and track the number of volunteer hours per school; and
- Track the number of participants in booster clubs, school board meetings, PTO meetings, PTA meetings, open-house, and school sponsored programs.

An effective plan contains the following components:

- Promote involvement of all segments of the community as partners in the education of students;
 - Provide training for parental involvement in education;
 - Encourage businesses to support employees’ involvement in their children’s education;
 - Provide support to campus PTA/PTO organizations and its mission;
 - Support and provide parameters for site-based community involvement-related SBDM;
 - Include diverse community representation on committees, tasks forces, and advisory boards;
 - Encourage senior citizens and other valued community members to support education, even if they don’t have children in school; and
 - Use volunteer resources to support education.
- Communicate effectively;
 - Establish programs that facilitate two-way communication;

- Involve community members in the schools and district employees in the community;
 - Train staff to improve their public relations role;
 - Leverage technology to continuously improve communication between the district, schools and all community constituencies;
 - Maintain positive, proactive relationships with the media; and
 - Produce effective, economical printed materials (at a minimum an annual report should be produced or similar type of document prepared to apprise community members of district accomplishments and challenges).
- Assess and monitor progress.
 - Establish written goals and a timeframe for implementation;
 - Communicate goals to staff; and
 - Review the plan annually.

Taft ISD should incorporate a coordinated districtwide community involvement plan with mechanisms for tracking the effectiveness/success of community and parental involvement beginning with the goals established in the DIP. A coordinated plan will bring focus and structure to community involvement activities, and is critical for the district as it embarks on expanding its community involvement initiatives.

The district should establish performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of community involvement strategies. These measures will enable Taft ISD to respond quickly to changes in attendance or participation. It will also serve to provide the district with a point of reference for future evaluations of community involvement initiatives.

Ultimately this will allow the district to measure the effectiveness of current community involvement efforts and establish a framework measuring future initiatives. These performance measures can be implemented as a standalone for the purpose of determining effectiveness or as part of a larger community involvement strategic plan.

Members of Taft ISD’s executive leadership team who already focus on community outreach, campus principals, and the parental involvement coordinator in conjunction with the campus volunteers should work closely together on the development of the plan. Once the plan is developed, it should be presented to the board for approval. Implementation of the plan should be executed districtwide. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS (REC. 7)

Taft ISD lacks a formal method to solicit or recognize businesses for their participation in supporting the district. The district obtains positive support from several local businesses inside and outside the Taft community. These businesses have included local restaurants, mechanic shops, and grocery stores.

Community involvement data provided to the review team lacks documentation of volunteer hours and in-kind or monetary contributions received by the district. However, survey responses from Taft ISD stakeholders in **Exhibit 1-11** show that a large percentage strongly agree or agree that the district actively recruits local business and industry as partners to help students and school programs. About 48 percent of district administration and support staff, 80 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 37 percent of teachers feel that the district actively recruits local business and industry as partners to help students and school programs.

**EXHIBIT 1-11
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: “The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	11%	37%	33%	13%	6%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
Teachers	50	2%	35%	49%	12%	2%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

Many school districts have implemented Adopt-A-School programs to enhance business partnerships. These programs foster a better understanding of the community's school system and can strengthen and improve school programs by creating a sense of personal involvement and interaction between the organizations and the schools. Adopt-A-School programs do not necessarily require financial support from the sponsor. In an Adopt-A-School program, individuals from business and civic organizations elect a school to mentor for a specific time period. Mentorship activities can include tutorial time in classrooms, sponsorship or acting as a chaperone for school field trips, or functioning as an additional fund raising (monetary or -in-kind) source for the campus.

Steps to Establish a Successful Adopt-A-School Program follow:

- Specify school level (elementary, junior high, high school) and age of students;
- Identify resources that can be provided (volunteer time, in-kind donations such as computers, books, teacher supplies, monetary contributions, etc.);
- Identify commitment desired (1 week, 1 month, quarterly, etc.);
- Identify a day of the week/time preferred;
- Identify a liaison (principal, teacher, secretary) at school/campus to be point-of-contact;
- Develop an implementation plan for desired effort;
- Recruit volunteers;
- Schedule and conduct an orientation meeting for liaisons and volunteers to become familiar with the school and project;
- Promote the Adopt-A-School program in the community to build excitement;
- Implement activities;
- Evaluate activities/program results (actual volunteer time, in-kind donations, and monetary contributions); and
- Celebrate accomplishments with students, the volunteer group, and school/district leadership.

Taft ISD should consider starting a formal Adopt-A-School program for those businesses and civic organizations that

support the district to positively recognize them and to ensure this support is continued. Businesses from the Taft Chamber of Commerce could initially be solicited. One of the businesses could be invited to spearhead the "Adopt-A-School" program and by accepting the responsibility would be responsible for promoting the initiative between the Taft Chamber members and Taft ISD schools, recruiting additional business partners for schools and soliciting Taft and surrounding community businesses to allow their employees time off to volunteer in the schools. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
1. Restructure the district's organization to eliminate the assistant superintendent for Personnel position, reduce the number of direct reports to the superintendent to more effectively align key leadership responsibilities, and reduce the total cost of central administration salaries.	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$489,320	\$0
2. Develop a comprehensive document to address all of the district's strategies for academic and operational improvement which is then linked to the budget to assist with governance and accountability.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Implement and enforce site-based decision-making practices to address budgeting and district operations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Implement strategies aimed at improving parent/community attendance and participation at board meetings, including budget workshops.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Conduct an annual meeting with parents and community members to obtain direct input on ways to increase parental and community participation in Taft ISD.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Incorporate a coordinated districtwide community involvement plan with mechanisms for tracking the effectiveness/success of community and parental involvement beginning with the goals established in the DIP.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Consider starting a formal Adopt-A-School program for those businesses and civic organizations that support the district to positively recognize them and to ensure this support is continued.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$97,864	\$489,320	\$0

CHAPTER 2. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

To be successful, a school district must use its human and financial resources efficiently and its delivery of curriculum effectively in a well designed and managed process for directing instruction and maintaining curriculum. Districts must also use assessment data to evaluate and monitor programs and provide adequate resources to support programming efforts to meet the needs of the students it serves.

The Taft Independent School District (ISD) is located in San Patricio County, northwest of Corpus Christi, Texas. The city benefits from easy access to the nearby cities and towns with which it shares the Corpus Christi metropolitan area. Regional Education Service Center Region II (Region 2), located in Corpus Christi, provides instructional services to the district such as Curriculum Cooperative, Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC), Career and Technology Education, Gifted Education Cooperative, Leadership Services, Library Cooperative, Math and Science Services, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Cooperative, Regional School Improvement Cooperative, Early Childhood Education Cooperative, Multi-regional purchasing program and Educational Media Cooperative. The peer districts used to benchmark with Taft ISD for this review are Carrizo Springs Consolidated Independent School District (CISD), Muleshoe ISD, Poteet ISD, and Sinton ISD.

Until school year 2010–11, Taft ISD provided instruction to 1,143 students at four campuses: Woodroe Petty Elementary (grades Pre-Kindergarten through 2), East Elementary (grades 3 through 5), Taft Junior High School (grades 6 through 8), and Taft High School (grades 9 through 12). After school year 2009–10, the district closed East Elementary and reconfigured Woodroe Petty Elementary (Petty Elementary) to house grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5. The district also operates a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) located in the portable building directly across from Taft Junior High's tennis courts.

In school year 2009–10, the 1,143 students were 85.7 percent Hispanic, 8.1 percent Anglo, and 1.8 percent African American. Approximately 88.5 percent were economically disadvantaged, and 54.9 percent were at-risk, which is slightly higher than the state average of 47.2 percent, and 2.1 percent were limited English proficient (LEP).

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) annually provides comprehensive information on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) results as well as other demographic, staffing, and financial data to school districts and the public through its Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and its Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). This chapter uses the latest available data.

Exhibit 2-1 shows the organizational chart of Taft ISD's instructional services for school year 2010–11.

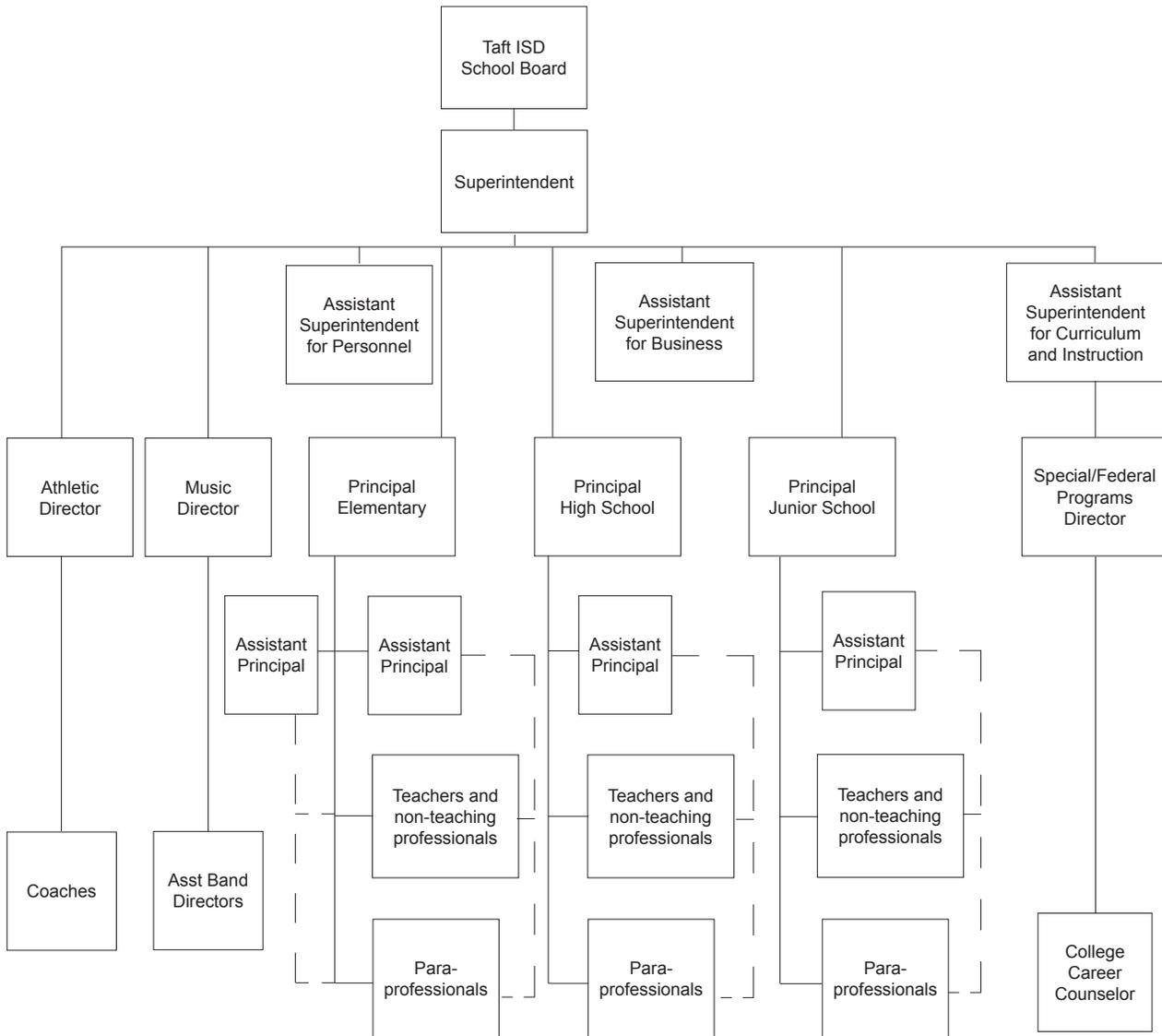
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD has contracted with a grant writer who writes grants for the district to supplement state revenue and impact instruction with the additional funds.
- Taft ISD has expanded curricular offerings at the upper level and college readiness with opportunities through articulation agreements with other institutions.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD lacks a staffing standard for the guidance and counseling program and is not currently staffed with counselor-to-student ratios in accordance with the recommendations of industry standards.
- Taft ISD lacks a clearly defined Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that outlines the program's expectations and ensures coordination among the district's counseling staff.
- The district lacks a local board policy which supports the use of the adopted curriculum management system.
- Taft ISD lacks a systematic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system at all grade levels to ensure improvement in student performance.
- Taft ISD teachers are not effectively using differentiated instructional strategies in the general education classrooms to meet the instructional needs of all students.

**EXHIBIT 2-1
TAFT ISD INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–2011**



SOURCE: Taft ISD superintendent.

- Taft ISD lacks differentiated and supporting activities that teachers can use to provide challenging and rigorous curriculum to gifted and talented students.
- Taft ISD’s DAEP lacks an effective instructional delivery plan for students assigned to the program and lacks a consistent transition process from alternative programs back to the regular classroom.

- Taft ISD’s library staffing practices are not consistent with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 8:** Conduct a guidance and counseling needs assessment to determine an appropriate number of counselors needed on each campus based on student enrollment.

- **Recommendation 9:** Create a Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that establishes the program’s expectations and includes a requirement for coordination with the district’s counselors.
- **Recommendation 10:** Adopt a board policy that provides direction for the management of curriculum to establish processes, procedures, and timelines for curriculum review, development, and implementation.
- **Recommendation 11:** Implement a structured, focused process to improve academic achievement that is based on test score analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses of student performance, supported by instruction using an aligned curriculum with specific accountability measures.
- **Recommendation 12:** Design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to meet the instructional needs of all students.
- **Recommendation 13:** Develop a curriculum for gifted and talented (G/T) students at all grade levels which includes differentiated objectives and supporting activities that teachers can use to provide challenging and rigorous curriculum to G/T students. Ensure that all staff responsible for the instruction of G/T students has completed the six hour G/T update training.
- **Recommendation 14:** Analyze the design and performance of the DAEP and modify it to meet or exceed statutory requirements to ensure program components meet the educational and behavioral needs of the students.
- **Recommendation 15:** Create one certified librarian position and eliminate two librarian aides to align

more closely with TSLAC staffing standards and with peer districts.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GRANT AWARDS

Taft ISD has contracted with a grant writer who writes grants for the district to supplement state revenue and impact instruction with the additional funds. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction coordinates the writing and submission of grant proposals with the grant writer. All school districts are eligible to apply for federal, state, and private sector grants. Taft ISD received \$50,000 in grant funds in school year 2009–10 and \$325,000 in grant funding for school year 2010–11.

The grant writer researches grant opportunities for the district on an ongoing basis. Part of this research is based on teacher, school administrator, or district-level requests related to specific needs. Additionally, the grant writer communicates with counterparts either through the Region 2 or surrounding districts to determine needs. These communications allow the grant writer to gather ideas on funding opportunities for Taft ISD. The fiscal agent for the Dropout Recovery Grant is Calallen ISD. **Exhibit 2-2** summarizes grants received.

The Investment Capital Grant provided students from the Junior High an opportunity to participate in the Craft Training Center where they were offered pipefitting, welding, and electrical courses. The grant allowed students to participate in a summer program. The summer program allowed students to explore a variety of career choices and requirements to pursue that career choice.

The Algebra Readiness Grant is a comprehensive professional development program in mathematics to improve the quality of mathematics instruction in algebra and algebra readiness in grades 4–9 to enhance student achievement in algebra. Teachers become teacher-leaders in their schools by mentoring, coaching, and model teaching. These activities

**EXHIBIT 2-2
TAFT ISD GRANT FUNDS**

GRANT TITLE	GRANT USE	2009–10	2010–11
Investment Capital Fund	Academic support to address skill gaps for students who are struggling	\$50,000	
Algebra Readiness	Increase the preparedness of middle school students to meet standards in Algebra I		\$200,000
Dropout Recovery	Identify and recruit students who have already dropped out and enable them to earn a high school diploma or complete an alternative path to college		\$125,000

SOURCE: Taft ISD assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

are designed to be sustained, intensive, classroom focused and aligned with standards and math curriculum.

The Dropout Recovery Program, which will be based out of Calallen, is being offered in conjunction with the Odem-Edroy and Taft ISDs. Currently 60 students are enrolled in the program and 30 students have graduated. The district has recruited previous Taft High School dropout students that have not completed their high school credits and/or passed their TAKS Exit level testing. Each student receives money for each measure they meet. Measures are determined by fulfilling credits to advance to the next grade level and passing their TAKS testing. The additional funds are an asset in providing materials, staff development, and student support to build capacity for many of the programs already in place.

ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

Taft ISD has expanded curricular offerings at the upper level and college readiness with opportunities through articulation agreements with other institutions. This practice affords students opportunities to extend their educational experiences through current program offerings in the district. In school year 2010–11, Taft ISD offered 12 TechPrep programs and 59 Dual Credit Courses. Taft ISD participates in TechPrep articulation options with Coastal Bend College, Del Mar College and Craft Training Center. The availability of dual credit courses can decrease the cost of college education and provide additional advanced learning opportunities for college-bound students.

Dual credit and TechPrep programs provide opportunities for students to fulfill high school graduation requirements and complete college credits simultaneously. Dual credit courses are college-level academic or technical courses taken by high school students at the high school campus or a college campus for which the student receives high school credit and college credit simultaneously. Taft ISD has entered into articulation agreements with colleges for specific courses offered in high school that align with courses in college in areas such as hospitality, culinary arts, criminal justice, computer science technology, accounting, office administration, health occupations, and emergency medical services. Students receive high school credit upon course completion and college credit upon enrollment at the college.

TechPrep is a program that leads students toward associate or baccalaureate degree programs and helps students prepare for high skill, high wage jobs. TechPrep offers two kinds of programs which are local and statewide. Local articulation is for credit to a specific community college, and statewide

articulation is a program that provides college credit for technical courses taken in high school to students who continue technical programs at any community college. Students who successfully complete courses listed for statewide articulation at any public secondary school in Texas may present their transcripts to any public two-year associate degree-granting institution in the state that offers the corresponding college course(s).

DETAILED FINDINGS

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING STAFFING AND SERVICES (REC. 8)

Taft ISD lacks a staffing standard for the guidance and counseling program and is not currently staffed with counselor-to-student ratios in accordance with the recommendations of industry standards. Counselor-to-student ratios at individual schools vary from 1.5 counselors per 281 students at the high school to 1 counselor per 593 students at Petty Elementary.

Counselors provide both individual and group counseling. The counselors are also involved in class scheduling, Section 504 identification, Gifted and Talented identification and testing, and English as a Second Language administrative documentation. All counselors are involved in a district career fair for students. They further complete grade reporting every six weeks to monitor at-risk students and contact parents by phone or in person.

The district has a board policy for a comprehensive guidance and counseling program stating the following:

“The District’s guidance and counseling services shall be designed primarily to provide ongoing assistance to enhance the educational development of all students and shall be included in and monitored through the District and campus planning process.

The services may assist individuals or groups in: improving academic achievement, school attendance, school attitudes, developing self-confidence, healthy interpersonal relationships, life satisfaction, and obtaining information to assist in choosing a potential career.

Guidance services shall be coordinated with the regular instructional program so that they contribute to a unified education program. Guidance services shall operate with central coordination and shall be a cooperative project of the entire professional staff. Teachers shall use opportunities in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, and in contact with parents to achieve guidance objectives. Qualified

counselors shall supervise the standardized testing program and provide personal, academic, and career guidance to students who need such services.”

The effectiveness of a district’s guidance and counseling program is directly related to the counselor-to-student ratio within the program. Counselor-to-student ratios are determined, in part, by the characteristics of the students being served and should be sufficiently low to meet the identified needs of students and the school community. The number of students who have intense needs for responsive services, such as the emotionally/economically disadvantaged, high mobility, and prone to dropping out of school, dictates lower ratios. Ratio recommendations are wide-ranging. According to the Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 33.002 (b), a district should employ one counselor per 500 elementary students. However, there is no recommendation in state statute for all other grade levels. The Texas School Counselor Association (TSCA), the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP), the Texas Elementary Principals, and the Supervisors Association (TEPSA) all recommend a counselor-to-student ratio of 1:350.

Exhibit 2-3 shows the counselor staffing and enrollment for Taft ISD, as of February 2011. At the time of the onsite visit, the district employed four counselors to serve 1,117 students (this represents the number of students enrolled at the time of the onsite visit.) Petty Elementary was assigned one counselor, Taft Junior High was assigned 1.5 counselors, and Taft High School was assigned 1.5 counselors. The additional 0.5 counselor at the junior high and high school is to provide college and career awareness. The district has not used staffing formulas or an assessment of staffing needs to make assignments.

**EXHIBIT 2-3
TAFT ISD
SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSIGNMENTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

SCHOOL	STUDENT ENROLLMENT*	NUMBER OF COUNSELORS ASSIGNED	GRADES SERVED
Petty Elementary	593	1.0	Pre-K–5
Taft Junior High	243	1.5	6–8
Taft High School	281	1.5	9–12
District Total	1,117	4.0	

*Taft ISD student enrollment data as of February 15, 2011.
SOURCE: Taft ISD superintendent and assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

TEC Section 33.005 establishes the roles and responsibilities of public school counselors and defines the scope of guidance and counseling programs. It requires all school counselors to work with school faculty and staff, students, parents and the community to plan, implement, and evaluate a developmental guidance and counseling program. In response to the legislation, TEA developed, and revised in 2004, *A Model Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools: A Guide for Program Development Pre-K-12th Grade*. The guide recommends that counselors divide their time among four program components including:

- **Guidance Curriculum:** Planned lessons covering self-confidence, development, motivation to achieve, decision-making and problem-solving skills, and responsible behavior;
- **Responsive Services:** Interventions on behalf of students whose immediate personal concerns or problems put their continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
- **Individual Planning:** Guidance for students as they plan, monitor, and manage their own educational, career, and personal-social development; and
- **System Support:** Services and management activities that indirectly benefit students through the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the development of students.

The high student-to-counselor ratio at the elementary campus limits the services that can be provided to students. TEA recommends that elementary counselors spend 65 to 85 percent of their time helping students develop basic skills such as self-confidence, motivation to achieve, problem-solving skills, responsible behavior, and intervening on behalf of those students whose immediate personal concerns or problems place their continued development at risk.

The amount of time allocated to each program component is dependent on the developmental and special needs of the students. However, TEA does recommend a range of time that should be allocated to each component. Interviews with counselors provided some insight into how Taft ISD counselors were spending their time. **Exhibit 2-4** indicates the percentage of time recommended for each of the four components at the elementary, junior high school, and high school campuses and an estimate of time spent in each of the four program components by Taft ISD counselors. The allocation of time at the junior high and high school is more

**EXHIBIT 2-4
TAFT ISD
DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE CURRICULUM PROGRAM TIME DISTRIBUTION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

TYPE OF SERVICE	ELEMENTARY		JUNIOR HIGH		HIGH SCHOOL	
	TEA	TAFT ISD	TEA	TAFT ISD	TEA	TAFT ISD
Guidance Curriculum	35–45%	Grades Pre-K–5 5%	35–40%	25%	15–25%	15%
Responsive Services	30–40%	Grades Pre-K–5 25%	30–40%	35%	25–35%	30%
Individual Planning	5–10%	Grades Pre-K–5 20%	15–25%	20%	25–35%	30%
System Support	10–15%	Grades Pre-K–5 50%	10–15%	20%	15–20%	25%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, *A Model Comprehension, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools: A Guide for Program Development Pre-K–12th Grades* (Revised 2004); Taft ISD counselors, February 2011.

closely aligned to the time allocations recommended by TEA. The most significant variation from the TEA recommendations occurred at the elementary level, with the distribution of time spent in System Support and Guidance Curriculum.

The district should conduct a guidance and counseling needs assessment to determine an appropriate number of counselors needed on each campus based on student enrollment. TEA’s *A Model Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools: A Guide for Program Development Pre-K–12th Grades* should be used as the basis for development of the needs assessment and any necessary revisions to staffing, job schedules, or responsibilities. Input from students, district personnel, and the community should be given priority consideration in any program redesign.

Based on current findings and using industry-staffing recommendations, the elementary school needs an additional 0.5 counselor to align with industry standards. The district should develop a staffing plan to allocate an appropriate number of counselors based on student enrollment and reduce the number of students that the elementary counselor serves. Taft ISD should optimize the current counseling staff so it more equally distributes the number of students to counselor. The reassignment of the junior high counselor to part-time elementary counselor would more align the students per counselor ratio with industry-staffing standards. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction should direct the process. There is no fiscal impact to the district for this recommendation.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING STAFFING AND SERVICES (REC. 9)

Taft ISD lacks a clearly defined Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that outlines the program’s

expectations and ensures coordination among the district’s counseling staff. The district employs four counselors for three campuses. According to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, there are 1.5 counselors at the junior high and high schools and one counselor at the elementary campus. Counselors do not have testing responsibilities; however, their duties vary widely from campus to campus.

Interviews with counselors indicate that there is no formal coordination among the counselors. In addition, there is no evidence of a written Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program as required by TEC Section 33.005 which states that a school counselor shall work with the school faculty and staff, students, parents, and the community to plan, implement, and evaluate a developmental guidance and counseling program.

Taft ISD does not have a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program to meet the student needs at all three campuses. There was no evidence of a district guidance program related to improving student success by focusing on academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy, social/personal, and career developmental guidance and counseling core components which should be implemented in the counselor’s Pre-K–12 services. These core components include:

- guidance curriculum;
- responsive services;
- individual planning; and
- system support.

The core components of a guidance program require the counselor to ensure the procedures for record keeping and needs assessment activities exist. One key area a counselor’s

focus includes is student academic success in the classroom. Without a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, the district’s students fail to benefit from guidance, counseling programming, and information for improving opportunities for success.

Exhibits 2-5 and **2-6** show that the parents and students who responded to the review team survey have a fairly positive perception of the district’s counseling services. **Exhibit 2-5** shows that only 2.6 percent of parents disagree/strongly disagree that the district has an effective career counseling program, 7.5 percent disagree/strongly disagree that the district has an effective college counseling program, and 17.5 percent do not believe the district has an effective parent and student counseling program. As shown in **Exhibit 2-5**, 30 to 20 percent of the respondents had no opinion about the counseling program.

Similarly, **Exhibit 2-6** shows that 17.3 percent of students in high school disagree/strongly disagree that the district has an effective career counseling program and 19.3 disagree/strongly disagree that the district has effective college counseling. In addition, 27.2 and 25.8 percent have no opinion about the programs, respectively.

In addition to the needs of all students in today’s school, the changing academic requirements and the graduation plan options make it essential that students and parents be knowledgeable about the details of each graduation plan, courses required for each plan, and what each plan means to

college entry. Specifically, students and parents, in collaboration with counselors, should fully understand the course requirements for the Distinguished, Recommended, and Minimum graduation plans. These plans will determine class rank and higher education opportunities following high school graduation. For students to be prepared for post high school experiences the student, parent, and counselor collaboration needs to begin in elementary school, with the clear purpose of designing an individual education plan to maximize post secondary opportunities for students. It is essential that each school district have a consistent process for counseling students and parents as they progress through elementary, junior high, and high school. The district counselors provided a career fair in school year 2010–11 to inform parents and students of the opportunities for higher education but neglected to discuss academic requirements and graduation plans. This type of venue could be a chance for all counselors to collaborate with each other and help parents understand the rigorous requirements of high school and a post secondary education.

The importance of a comprehensive counseling program is reflected in a statement in the Texas Counseling Association’s position paper Professional School Counselors:

“Counselors are the critical link in reducing dropout rates, improving academic performance and increasing participation in postsecondary school.” Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun found that students “attending high schools that offered fully implemented Comprehensive Developmental Guidance

**EXHIBIT 2-5
PARENT SURVEY: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

SURVEY QUESTION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
District has an effective career counseling program.	15.4%	48.7%	33.3%	2.6%	0.0%
District has an effective college counseling program.	20.0%	45.0%	27.5%	5.0%	2.5%
District has an effective counseling program for parents of students.	20.0%	45.0%	17.5%	15.0%	2.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 2-6
STUDENT SURVEY: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

SURVEY QUESTION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
District has an effective career counseling program.	10.9%	44.6%	27.2%	15.2%	2.1%
District has an effective college counseling program.	16.1%	38.7%	25.8%	16.1%	3.2%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

and Programs received higher grades, reported that career and college information was readily available, indicated school was preparing them well for life and felt their campus was safe and orderly, (Journal of Counseling and Development, 75, 292-302).”

The district should create a Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that establishes the program’s expectations and includes a requirement for coordination with the district’s counselors.

TEA has created a model entitled *A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools: A Guide for Program Development Pre-K–12 Grades*. The model program may be downloaded from the TEA website (www.tea.state.tx) for no charge. Among other sections, the model guide includes a scope and sequence for a guidance curriculum and a process for implementation and the evaluation of the implemented program. Under the direction of the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, the counselors should develop a plan to transform the district’s guidance program from a services-based model to a results-based comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program for all students. Taft ISD should use the district counselors and other stakeholders to develop guidance curriculum, including a scope and sequence for all grades addressing the needs of all students. The counselors should document time and efforts expended while implementing model counseling activities outlined by TEA and provide regular reports to the superintendent. The model program should be made available to all counselors and administrators in the form of a written plan for Taft ISD and placed on the website for transparency for students and parents.

LOCAL CURRICULUM SYSTEM AND DOCUMENTS (REC. 10)

The district lacks a local board policy which supports the use of the adopted curriculum management system.

A curriculum management system establishes the guidelines and procedures for how the curriculum is to be designed, delivered, monitored, and evaluated. It provides a process for making revisions to meet the changing needs of the students as well as being responsive to state and federal guidelines affecting the curriculum. An effective curriculum management system interfaces with other district planning documents such as district and campus improvement plans, the technology plan, long-range strategic plans, and budget efforts.

School boards make school governance and management possible by adopting policies that set the goals, assign authority, and establish controls. Comprehensive board policies provide focus and clarity to the school district’s organization for the day-to-day implementation of educational programs. Policies provide the parameters for decision-making by the district staff. It is through policy that standards are established for design and delivery of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Once adopted, policies are the means by which educators are accountable to the public. Taft ISD policies, as with most districts in the state, are developed under contract with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). Any policy designated as (LEGAL) is TASB generated to comply with the various legal sources of authority defining local district governance. Local policies developed by or for the district to reflect decisions of the local board are designated as (LOCAL). Taft ISD’s policies are available online on the district website.

The district has six policies that reference curriculum development or design, but no policy that establishes a curriculum management system. The district’s policies referencing curriculum development or design include:

- EGA (LEGAL) Curriculum Development: Innovative and Magnet Programs
- EHA (LEGAL) Curriculum Design: Basic Instructional Program
- EHAB (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Elementary)
- EHAC (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary)
- EHAD (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Elective Instruction
- EHB (LEGAL) Curriculum Design: Special Programs

Four additional Taft ISD policies, BQ (LEGAL) and BQ (LOCAL) *Planning and Decision-Making Process* and EFA (LEGAL) and EFA (LOCAL) *Instructional Resources: Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption* refer to the curriculum but do not reference management. Out of ten Taft ISD policies referencing curriculum, only two BQ (LOCAL) *Planning and Decision-Making Process* and EFA (LOCAL) *Instructional Resources: Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption* have been developed to reflect local board decisions.

The state-developed curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) establish and clarify the degree of proficiency expected of students at each grade level, helping teachers understand what is to be taught and tested in order to align with TAKS, the statewide assessment program. Well-written curriculum guides are what teachers use to ensure that students reach the proficiency levels established by TEKS. Curriculum guides also provide additional resources for teachers including student objectives, assessment methods, prerequisite skills, instructional materials and resources, and instructional strategies as well as describing suggested approaches for delivering content in the classroom.

Taft ISD's existing policies only define the curriculum, not curriculum management. The district lacks policies that include statements that:

- Outline the curriculum process;
- Require written documents in all subject areas and courses;
- Establish exceptions regarding coordination of curriculum, instructional materials, assessment programs, provide staff training; and
- Establish a direct link between the budget development process and curricular priorities.

Many districts, such as Cedar Hill ISD, Calallen ISD and La Vega ISD include well-written board policies on curriculum management in their policy manuals. An EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development policy is one that establishes common standards for what is being taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated.

The district should adopt a board policy that provides direction for the management of curriculum to establish processes, procedures, and timelines for curriculum review, development, and implementation. District staff should develop a three to four year curriculum management plan that focuses on student achievement and erase the achievement gaps of all subpopulations. The district should seek assistance from other districts to obtain copies of local curriculum management policies and work with TASB to formulate and adopt a policy that meets its needs. The district should then consider which elements of the policies are relevant and adopt a policy to meet the district's local needs. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction should direct the process. There should be no fiscal impact to the district.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE (REC. 11)

Taft ISD lacks a systematic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system at all grade levels to ensure improvement in student performance.

Taft ISD purchased the CSCAPE curriculum from Region 2 in school year 2005–06 in an effort to improve student performance, provide teachers with new instructional tools and support, and provide consistency in teaching TAKS objectives. CSCAPE, developed by Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC) and a team of content experts, is described as “a comprehensive, customized, user friendly curriculum system built on the most current research-based practices in the field, focused on impacting instructional practices which includes three key components operating seamlessly together: curriculum and assessment, professional development, and innovative technology.”

The key components of the CSCAPE curriculum are:

- A K–12 systemic model in the four core content areas;
- Common language, structure, and process for curriculum delivery;
- Aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- Clarified and specified TEKS and TAKS expectations assembled in a vertical alignment format to eliminate multiple interpretations;
- Customizable instructional plans that allow district resources to be integrated into the system;
- Lessons in both English and Spanish; and
- Customized systemic curriculum model components including:
 - Vertical alignment documents;
 - Instructional focus documents (scope and sequence);
 - Online model instructional units (concepts-based) and instructional plans (research-based);
 - Year-at-a-glance planning tool;
 - Integrated unit assessments which mirror TAKS; and
 - Full benchmark assessments.

Key components of professional development include:

- Leadership professional development;
- Onsite modeling of instructional and web-casting;
- Modeling of research-based, best practice lessons, strategies, and interventions;
- Technical assistance; and
- Ongoing support by content area specialists in a variety of delivery modes.

An additional tool complementary to the CSCOPE curriculum (curriculum system) that is provided to teachers is Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC). Under contract with an external vendor, Regional Education Service Center Region VII developed DMAC, a bank of over 29,500 assessment items for grades K–12 in English/language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

A teacher does not have to wait for the results of the benchmark tests provided with the curriculum system to monitor student mastery of the objectives. Instead, a teacher can access questions from the DMAC using a link on the Taft ISD website at any time throughout the school year to measure how students are mastering various objectives. The questions come in varying degrees of difficulty and complexity for use for individual student needs.

In school year 2005–06, implementation of the curriculum in Taft ISD was voluntary and the degree of implementation varied from campus to campus. The principals said the overall reaction of teachers to the curriculum system has been positive. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction said that starting in school year 2009–10 the implementation of the curriculum system was deemed non-negotiable at all grade levels.

Based on interviews with the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Taft ISD principals, in previous years, campus principals developed their own instructional focus and monitoring system, thereby creating inconsistencies in curriculum delivery across the district. There was no plan for, nor position in, central administration to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the district's newly adopted curriculum, thus no formal instruction monitoring method existed at either the district or campus level. Since school year 2009–10, principals have been using common methods to monitor curriculum implementation and instructional delivery, including

classroom walk-throughs and observations, lesson plan reviews, meetings with department heads, and analysis of district and state assessments. Benchmark testing was established in Taft ISD to access student progress in mastering the curriculum twice a year. The degree of implementation of the curriculum system and benchmark tests to measure student mastery of objectives is more consistent across campuses and grade levels; however, the district has not developed a system to measure teachers' adherence to the curriculum through benchmark results.

Another issue identified that affects the consistent delivery of instruction and can impede student performance was the lack of a formal method or process to ensure students are prepared to go to the next grade level. While vertical teaming occurs informally at all grade levels, it occurs because principals contact each other to arrange opportunities, or teachers contact their counterparts at other schools. All the principals said during interviews that they make time for teachers to address vertical alignment, but no formal process is in place to ensure this occurs. Due to the lack of curriculum alignment and constancy of purpose as a system in the past, Taft ISD campuses operated as separate and independent entities that functioned more like "separate islands of schools" instead of a cohesive school system. The result is that overall student performance has been below the state and regional averages on TAKS tests from spring 2009 to spring 2010, and shows inconsistencies from year-to-year by grade level and subject.

A consistent program for monitoring curriculum implementation for all campuses is critical to ensure that Taft ISD teachers deliver the district curriculum without gaps and redundancies in order to maximize student performance. Without a coordinated system, students may not experience a smooth transition from grade level as it pertains to meeting curriculum standards.

While some grade levels in some subject areas showed increases in student performance from spring 2009 to spring 2010, student performance in Taft ISD remains low when compared to the state and the peer districts, especially when examining elementary performance. Although the district "Missed AYP" due to low performance in Reading and Mathematics, Science continues to be an area of concern. The continued discrepancy between campus scores, state, and regional scores is evidence that the district lacked a process to reach state achievement expectations. The state uses TAKS to measure statewide proficiency in reading at grades 3–9, in writing at grades 4 and 7, in English Language

Arts at grades 10 and 11, mathematics at grades 3-11, in science in grades 5, 10 and 11, and social studies at grades 8, 10 and 11. In addition, in school year 2009–10, the state classified all Taft ISD’s schools as “*Academically Acceptable*.”

State accountability refers to the district and campus rating assigned by the 2010 state accountability system. Districts and campuses are evaluated on performance on the TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), Completion Rate, and Annual Dropout Rate. Possible ratings are *Exemplary*, *Recognized*, *Academically Acceptable*, and *Academically Unacceptable*.

The *Academically Acceptable* standard varies by subject, while the *Recognized* and *Exemplary* standards remain the same for all subjects:

- *Exemplary*: At least 90 percent of students tested passing every subject;
- *Recognized*: At least 80 percent of students passing every subject;
- *Academically Acceptable: Varies by Subject*:
 - Mathematics - 60 percent of the students passing;
 - Reading/ELA - 70 percent of the students passing;
 - Science - 55 percent of students passing;
 - Social Studies - 70 percent of students passing; and
 - Writing - 70 percent of student passing.

Exhibit 2-7 shows Taft ISD’s accountability ratings from the 2007–08 to 2009–10 AEIS reports.

Using the 2009–10 AEIS report data, **Exhibits 2-8** through **2-10** show assessments of the academic scores of students in Taft ISD taking TAKS tests. **Exhibit 2-8** shows the percentage of students in grades 3–5 passing TAKS as compared with peer districts, the region, and the state. Taft ISD students scored second lowest in grade 3 reading and lowest in grades

4 and grade 5 reading among the peer districts, the state, and the region.

Mathematics scores as shown in **Exhibit 2-8** show Taft ISD students scored lowest in grades 3–5 among the peer districts, the region, and the state. Taft ISD students scored lowest in grade 4 writing and in grade 5 science among the peer districts, the region, and the state.

Exhibit 2-9 shows the percentage of students in grades 6–8 passing TAKS in Taft ISD as compared with peer districts, the region, and the state. Taft ISD students scored third highest in grade 6 reading, second highest in grade 7 reading, and tied for fourth highest in grade 8 reading among the peer districts but lower than the region and the state in grades 6–7 reading. Grade 8 reading was above the region but slightly below the state.

Mathematics scores show that Taft ISD students tied for lowest at grade 6 and scored second to lowest at grade 7 and grade 8 scored lowest among the peer districts. Taft ISD students scored lower than the state in grades 6–8 mathematics but higher than the region in grade 8.

Grade 7 writing scores tied for the highest among the peer districts and were higher than the region, and the state. Science scores in grade 8 were third highest among the peer districts but lower than the region and the state. Social studies scores in grade 8 were third highest among the peer districts and lower than the region and the state.

Exhibit 2-10 shows the percentage of students in grades 9–11 passing TAKS in Taft ISD as compared with the peer districts, the region and the state. Taft ISD students tied for second highest at grade 9, lowest at grade 10, and third highest at grade 11 for reading among the peer districts. Grade 9 reading tied with the region and the state but grades 10–11 were lower than the region and the state.

Grade 9 scores in mathematics were third highest and grades 10–11 were second to lowest among the peer districts. Taft

**EXHIBIT 2-7
TAFT ISD
ACCOUNTABILITY RATINGS**

SCHOOL	2007–08 AEIS RATING	2008–09 AEIS RATING	2009–10 AEIS RATING
Petty Elementary	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable
East Elementary	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable
Taft Junior High	Academically Acceptable	Academically Unacceptable	Academically Acceptable
Taft High School	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2007–08 to 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 2-8
TAFT ISD
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS GRADES 3–5
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE

GRADE 3	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	88	89				82
Muleshoe ISD	93	85				83
Poteet ISD	91	94				88
Sinton ISD	82	72				67
Taft ISD	86	58				54
Region 2	90	82				80
State	92	87				84
GRADE 4	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	79	83	90			70
Muleshoe ISD	79	74	89			59
Poteet ISD	81	85	87			71
Sinton ISD	74	75	86			59
Taft ISD	55	49	75			40
Region 2	84	86	91			75
State	86	89	92			79
GRADE 5	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	84	89		80		74
Muleshoe ISD	94	95		90		86
Poteet ISD	92	85		82		76
Sinton ISD	89	84		84		77
Taft ISD	74	69		57		55
Region 2	84	82		85		71
State	86	86		88		76

NOTE: Blank cells indicate that the TAKS is not administered at these grade levels/subject areas.
 SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division and AEIS 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 2-9
TAFT ISD
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS GRADES 6–8
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE

GRADE 6	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	73	72				62
Muleshoe ISD	86	93				83
Poteet ISD	79	81				69
Sinton ISD	84	86				79
Taft ISD	80	72				63
Region 2	84	76				71
State	86	83				77

EXHIBIT 2-9 (CONTINUED)**TAFT ISD****PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS GRADES 6–8
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE**

GRADE 7	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	64	56	86			50
Muleshoe ISD	88	86	97			78
Poteet ISD	66	71	81			55
Sinton ISD	76	67	91			58
Taft ISD	77	64	97			57
Region 2	83	74	94			67
State	86	82	95			75
GRADE 8	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	92	82		66	90	62
Muleshoe ISD	90	93		73	97	70
Poteet ISD	94	87		57	75	51
Sinton ISD	91	83		64	90	60
Taft ISD	90	75		65	86	58
Region 2	88	73		70	92	60
State	91	81		78	95	70

NOTE: Blank cells indicate that the TAKS is not administered at these grade levels/subject areas.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division and AEIS 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 2-10**TAFT ISD****PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS GRADES 9–11
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE**

GRADE 9	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	89	50				51
Muleshoe ISD	92	70				69
Poteet ISD	90	42				41
Sinton ISD	93	67				65
Taft ISD	92	59				60
Region 2	92	63				62
State	92	72				71
GRADE 10	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	87	66		60	85	53
Muleshoe ISD	88	78		61	84	53
Poteet ISD	96	61		58	100	48
Sinton ISD	92	76		68	92	62
Taft ISD	84	62		56	91	47
Region 2	90	71		69	91	59
State	91	75		75	93	66

EXHIBIT 2-10 (CONTINUED)
TAFT ISD
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS GRADES 9–11
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE

GRADE 11	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Carrizo Springs CISD	85	74		77	94	66
Muleshoe ISD	87	87		81	89	77
Poteet ISD	95	79		83	94	70
Sinton ISD	97	91		94	97	89
Taft ISD	91	78		78	100	69
Region 2	93	87		90	97	80
State	93	89		92	98	83

NOTE: Blank cells indicate that the TAKS is not administered at these grade levels/subject areas.
 SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division and AEIS 2009–10.

ISD students scored lower than the region and the state in grades 9–11 mathematics.

Grade 10 science was lowest and grade 11 was second lowest compared with the peer districts and below the region and the state. Grade 10 was third highest and grade 11 was the highest in social studies among the peer districts. Grade 10 tied the region in social studies but was lower than the state. Grade 11 scored the highest among the peer districts, the region, and the state in social studies.

Exhibit 2-11 shows a comparison of the state and federal accountability standards by indicator. Under the accountability provisions in the NCLB Act, all public school campuses,

school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Districts, campuses, and the state are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools.) TEA allocates Title I funds based on the number of economically disadvantaged students in the district. Eligibility for free and reduced price lunch is typically used to determine eligibility for Title I programs, however, districts select students to receive services on the basis of specific educational needs, not economic status.

EXHIBIT 2-11
COMPARISON OF STATE AND FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY BY INDICATOR

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY (STANDARD PROCEDURES)		AYP
TAKS AND TAKS (ACCOMMODATED)		
	Reading/ELA*	<i>Exemplary 90%/Recognized 80%/Acceptable 70%</i>
	Mathematics*	<i>Exemplary 90%/Recognized 80%/Acceptable 60%</i>
Subjects and Standards	Writing	<i>Exemplary 90%/Recognized 80%/Acceptable 70%</i>
	Social Studies	<i>Exemplary 90%/Recognized 80%/Acceptable 70%</i>
	Science	<i>Exemplary 90%/Recognized 80%/Acceptable 55%</i>
	<i>All values rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	
	<i>* Includes cumulative pass rate for grades 5 and 8 in reading and mathematics.</i>	
Grades	3–11 (English); 3–5 (Spanish)	3–8 and 10 (English); 3–5 (Spanish)
	All Students	All Students
Student Groups	African American	African American
	Hispanic	Hispanic
	White	White
	Economically Disadvantaged	Economically Disadvantaged
		Special Education
	Limited English Proficient (LEP)	

SOURCE: AYP Guide 2009–10, Appendix C.

The 2010 AYP data shows that all Taft ISD campuses “*Met AYP*.” Districts must have a minimum of 50 students in each disaggregated category in order for the sub group to count. When sub group members from each campus are added together, the district is accountable for that sub group. Therefore, the district did not meet AYP.

If a district or campus receives Title I, Part A funds and does not meet AYP standard for the same measure for two consecutive years, that district or campus is subject to certain Title I School Improvement requirements, such as offering school choice and supplemental education services. Title I districts and campuses that do not meet AYP for any indicator (Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Graduation, or Attendance) for two consecutive years are subject to Stage 1 School Improvement requirements the following school year. Stage 1 designates the first year of Title I School Improvement. Each additional year Title I districts and campuses do not meet AYP for any indicator, the requirements increase in stages. Title I districts and campuses are no longer subject to Title I School Improvement when they meet the AYP standard for two consecutive years for all indicators. If a campus fails to meet AYP for two consecutive years, the campus is subject to school improvement Stage 1 requirements, which include amending their school improvement plan to address the deficit area and notifying parents of the school’s improvement status. The district must offer school choice and provide transportation. Every year that a school does not make AYP, it will move to the next, more corrective school improvement stage. During Stage 2 of the improvement process, the campus must also offer supplemental educational services to students.

The 2010 AYP data shows that four campuses, Petty Elementary, East Elementary, Taft Junior High and Taft High School, met AYP (**Exhibit 2-12**). Taft Junior High’s campus rating of *Unacceptable* was due to the school year 2008–09 Grade 8 science scores. An *Acceptable* rating would require Grade 8 science scores to be 50 percent passing and the campus score was 42 percent passing. Science TAKS is only given at grades 5, 8, 10 and 11.

The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is available to assist with implementation concerns and district staff indicates that campus administrators are supporting the implementation of the curriculum management system. However, some teachers are not implementing it in a systematic way (either horizontally or vertically). District administrators expect that science, math, English/Language Arts, and social studies teachers use the

**EXHIBIT 2-12
TAFT ISD
ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS RATINGS
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

CAMPUS	AYP RATING
Petty Elementary	<i>Meets AYP</i>
East Elementary	<i>Meets AYP</i>
Taft Junior High	<i>Meets AYP</i>
Taft High School	<i>Meets AYP</i>
District	<i>Missed AYP</i>

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Office of Accountability and Data Quality.

curriculum management system. The district expects teachers to follow the scope and sequence with fidelity; however, some teachers use their professional judgment especially at the elementary level in choosing either the district’s curriculum system concept-based lessons and/or materials developed locally. Documented walkthroughs demonstrate that the curriculum system is delivered by some teachers and shows the administration’s effort to encourage and enforce consistent implementation. In addition, teachers who did not follow the curriculum received verbal and written directives. Interviews with campus administrators and teachers indicate that they are clear about district expectations with regard to the curriculum.

While district administrators are knowledgeable and helpful to campus teachers, they are unable to monitor all teachers especially at the elementary level for full implementation of the curriculum system. In addition, the district and campus plans do not include implementation procedures, resources, timelines, and evaluation techniques to ensure successful implementation of the management system.

The developers of CSCOPE state that “having CSCOPE is not enough. The most valuable impact of the curriculum management system will be in the ongoing curriculum and instruction, discussions around vertical alignment, instructional focus, lesson planning, and pedagogy.” The developers further state that to “support implementation of this detailed curriculum, districts must have processes and personnel in place to ensure that there is sustained monitoring of the curriculum and its implementation.”

Regional Education Service Center XIII has created a multi-step process to support implementation, shown in **Exhibit 2-13** that can be revised as a Taft ISD checklist or used as a monitoring template of the implementation process, next steps, timelines, resources, and formative evaluation for

**EXHIBIT 2-13
SAMPLE CSCOPE IMPLEMENTATION RUBRIC CHECKLIST**

<input type="checkbox"/> Administrators consistently gather implementation data from walk-through observations as well as department/grade level meetings. Professional development is planned based on data.	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrators inconsistently gather implementation data from walk-through observations as well as department/grade level meetings. Professional development may be planned based on data.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through may or may not occur. There is no plan for use of implementation data. Feedback may be given, and training may occur though they are not based on a needs analysis supported by data.
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show consistently engaging instruction is occurring in at least 90% of campus classrooms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show consistently engaging instruction is occurring in at least 80-89% of campus classrooms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show consistently engaging instruction is occurring in less than 80% of campus classrooms.
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show that in 90% of classrooms, teachers consistently use higher order questioning strategies, and that students are asking such questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show that in 80-89% of classrooms, teachers consistently use higher order questioning strategies, and that students are asking such questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show that in less than 80% of classrooms, teachers consistently use higher order questioning strategies, and that students are asking such questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show that in 90% of classrooms, teachers are effectively and consistently using collaborative learning strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show that in 80-89% of classrooms, teachers are effectively and consistently using collaborative learning strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-through and other data show that in less than 80% of classrooms, teachers are effectively and consistently using collaborative learning strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 90% of teachers consistently use high quality rubrics with students before, during, and after students engage in assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some teachers consistently use high quality rubrics with students before, during, and after students engage in assignments. Most teachers do not.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rubrics are not used with intentionality.
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 90% of teachers post Performance Indicators and/or Guiding Questions. Both teachers and students refer to these during instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some teachers post Performance Indicators and/or Guiding Questions. In other classrooms, these are not posted. Teachers and students sometimes refer to these during instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Performance Indicators and Guiding Questions, if posted in classrooms, are not referred to during instruction.

SOURCE: Regional Education Service Center XIII, 2009.

principals and the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

The district should implement a structured, focused process to improve academic achievement that is based on test score analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses of student performance, supported by instruction using an aligned curriculum with specific accountability measures. Taft ISD should clarify roles and responsibilities of all administrators and teachers for periodic reports to improve internal accountability.

The district should develop procedures to ensure that teachers are using the district curriculum to design lessons. Districtwide benchmark assessments should be developed and used to gauge student progress on a regular basis, such as every six weeks. The timeline for benchmark assessments is non-negotiable, so in effect drives adherence to the curriculum reflected in the benchmark assessments. Teachers and their department can also create mini-benchmark assessments to be given to students every three weeks. Student data is reviewed and analyzed based upon the results; teachers should adjust instruction and provide instructional support

to students that are having difficulty in learning the prescribed curriculum objectives in order to further inform tutoring for individual students. Principals should monitor the instructional process and use the student performance data as the basis for providing support for teachers and students. This continuous improvement process requires constant monitoring and adjusting of classroom and campus level activities to ensure students have the support necessary to improve their academic performance. Since benchmarking, data analysis, and adjusting instruction based upon results is central to overall improvement, the district should use the DMAC bank of questions and develop district-level assessments.

Taft ISD should develop and monitor a comprehensive curriculum management plan that includes administrative regulations to direct curriculum delivery and management across the district. Once a plan is developed, it will provide the framework for formal implementation and evaluation of curriculum documents to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment throughout the system. Taft ISD should focus on developing this plan in an effort to have a cohesive, aligned instructional program, and increase student performance across the district.

Components of the plan should include:

- Development of a consistent set of methods to monitor curriculum implementation districtwide. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and campus principals should develop a set of implementation procedures that will serve as a guide for all schools. The principals should submit periodic reports to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction on the status of implementation and any issues associated with implementation.
- Implementation of a formal vertical teaming for all grade levels. Specific times should be established for all grade levels to interact. Information on individual students should be prepared to identify not only performance, but also the success of any programs used to address achievement gaps.
- Assessment of TAKS results on a districtwide basis in addition to each school, the identification of districtwide trends, and a staff development plan addressing these trends.

The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction should direct this process of coordinating the management of the curriculum implementation and conducting continuous monitoring of the system.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION (REC. 12)

Taft ISD teachers are not effectively using differentiated instructional strategies in the general education classrooms to meet the instructional needs of all students. As a result, the district has experienced high referrals of special education students for discretionary DAEP and in-school suspension (ISS) placements.

While the district is working toward improving academic performance, the school has failed to adequately provide differentiated instructional opportunities. Neither the faculty at the elementary or secondary level has received sufficient staff development specific to the differentiation of instruction for diverse learners.

Students come to the classroom with various needs of readiness to learn, interests, and learning styles. A differentiated instruction model can improve the overall instruction for all students. A differentiated classroom offers a variety of learning options to tap into different readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles of students. In a differentiated classroom, the teacher uses a variety of techniques, including the following: ways for students to explore curriculum content, sense making activities through which students can come to understand information and ideas, and options through which students can demonstrate what they have learned.

Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades by Carol Tomlinson (1999) suggests that teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning style. They can differentiate content, process, products, and the learning environment using the following techniques:

To differentiate content:

- incorporate reading materials at varying readability levels;
- audiotape text materials;
- vary spelling or vocabulary lists by readiness levels of students;
- present ideas through both auditory and visual means;
- use reading buddies; and

- meet with small groups to re-teach an idea or skill for struggling learners, or to extend the thinking or skills of advanced learners.

To differentiate process:

- use tiered activities;
- provide interest centers;
- have students develop personal agendas;
- offer manipulatives or other hands-on supports; and
- vary the length of time a student may take to complete a task in order to provide additional support for a struggling learner or to encourage an advanced learner to pursue a topic in greater depth.

To differentiate products:

- give students options of how to express knowledge of required learning;
- use rubrics that match and extend students' varied skills levels;
- allow students to work alone or in small groups on their products; and
- encourage students to create their own product assignments as long as the assignments contain required elements.

To differentiate the learning environment:

- provide places in the room for students to work quietly and without distraction, as well as places for small group work;
- include materials that reflect a variety of cultures and home settings;
- establish clear guidelines for independent work that matches individual needs;
- develop routines that allow students to get help when teachers are busy with other students and cannot help them immediately; and
- help students understand that some learners need to be physically active to learn, while others do better quietly.

The district does have a tool to assess how teachers perform in the classroom. The campuses use a Walk-Through Form for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Among other things, the tool assesses whether teachers vary teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students.

Exhibit 2-14 shows student enrollment and staffing in special education by school.

**EXHIBIT 2-14
TAFT ISD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

SCHOOL	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF AIDES
Petty Elementary	60	4	7
Taft Junior High	29	3	4
Taft High School	51	3	3
TOTAL	140	10	14

SOURCE: Taft ISD Special/Federal Programs director.

Exhibit 2-15 compares Taft ISD with its peer districts with regard to student enrollment and expenditures for special education with San Patricio Cooperative members. The district exceeds both its peer group and the San Patricio Cooperative in the percentage of enrollment for special education.

**EXHIBIT 2-15
TAFT ISD AND SAN PATRICIO COOPERATIVE DISTRICTS
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND EXPENDITURES**

DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT		EXPENDITURE	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT
Odem ISD	127	11.2	\$1,092	15.8
Sinton ISD	215	10.2	\$1,010	14.4
Taft ISD	147	12.9	\$949	13.4

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2009–10.

Taft ISD has a higher percentage of students enrolled and a lower percentage of expenditures than any school district in the San Patricio Cooperative.

Exhibit 2-16 compares Taft ISD with peer districts and Region 2 in student enrollment and expenditures for special education. With the exception of Sinton ISD, Taft ISD exceeds its peer group in percentage of expenditures for special education.

**EXHIBIT 2-16
TAFT ISD/PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND EXPENDITURES**

DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT		EXPENDITURE	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT
Carrizo Springs CISD	221	9.2	\$1,726,452	9.8
Muleshoe ISD	160	11.1	\$1,252,280	12.4
Poteet ISD	136	7.7	\$1,038,500	10.2
Sinton ISD	215	10.2	\$2,177,342	14.4
Taft ISD	147	12.9	\$1,144,243	13.4
Region 2	10,498	10.1	\$105,516,200	15.9
State	435,040	9.0	\$4,800,227,933	15.7

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2009–10.

Using the 2005–06 to 2009–10 AEIS reports, **Exhibit 2-17** shows expenditures for special education increased by 19.3 percent during this time period. The number of students served decreased by 36.9 percent and the per-student expenditure increased from \$641 to \$949, or 48 percent during the five-year span. Taft ISD’s assistant superintendent for Business said the increase was a result of the Shoreline Residential Facility closing and expenditures from the San Patricio Cooperative. The district does not plan to participate in the San Patricio Cooperative in school year 2011–12 and

will assume the responsibilities of the Special Education program within Taft ISD.

Through its Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS), Taft ISD is not making adequate progress to provide for special education students in achieving grade level functioning in Special Education TAKS/TAKS Accommodated Passing Rate Mathematics, Special Education Discretionary DAEP Placements, and Special Education Placements to ISS. The PBMAS is designed to assist school districts in their efforts to improve local performance in Bilingual/English as a Second Language Programs, Career and Technical Education, Special Education, and some Title I programs. It reflects critical areas of student performance, program effectiveness, and data integrity. In special education, it rates districts on 18 performance indicators and those indicators are examined to determine required levels of intervention. Based on the ratings, TEA establishes Levels of Performance Concern in each selected area.

Taft ISD’s Level of Performance Concern was assessed as “High” in school year 2009–10 PBMAS. **Exhibit 2-18** shows Taft ISD ratings on the PBMAS on the performance indicators in which the district rating exceeded the state rate.

Calallen ISD uses a web-based program to monitor curriculum use. Research related to effective curriculum implementation and student performance is available through the Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (TxASCD) and the Association of

**EXHIBIT 2-17
TAFT ISD
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ACTUAL EXPENDITURES**

CATEGORY	2004–05 ACTUAL	2005–06 ACTUAL	2006–07 ACTUAL	2007–08 ACTUAL	2008–09 ACTUAL	PERCENT CHANGE
Special Education Expenditures	\$958,830	\$1,104,161	\$1,087,542	\$1,370,506	\$1,144,243	19.3%
Special Education Students Served	233	226	207	161	147	(36.9)%
Special Education Expenditure Per Student	\$641	\$794	\$784	\$1,003	\$949	48.0%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2005–06 to 2009–10.

**EXHIBIT 2-18
TAFT ISD
SPECIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

INDICATORS	STATE RATE	DISTRICT RATE OR DIFFERENCE	INDICATOR PERFORMANCE LEVEL
Special Education TAKS/TAKS (Accommodated) Mathematics	60.0	37.3	3
Special Education Discretionary DAEP Placements	1.0	5.6	3
Special Education Discretionary Placements to ISS	10.0	109.0	3

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency PBMAS, 2010.

Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Program support, vertical and horizontal alignment, and articulation of curriculum are some of the research areas on which TxASCD and ASCD provide information at the web site <http://www.txascd.org/> and related links, which also outline professional development and best practices.

The district should design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to meet the instructional needs of all students. Taft ISD should continue to provide additional staff development to teachers on how to differentiate instruction in the general education classroom.

The process should include ongoing required professional development to ensure that all teachers learn diagnostic techniques which assist in identifying specific student weaknesses in the core areas, using at a minimum, district benchmark tests, and curriculum system assessments. In addition, the professional development should provide supplemental training on CSCOPE and provide training for differentiation techniques. The process should include the identification and implementation of group interventions for students before school, during school, after school, and extended year. Tools for differentiated instruction are available to teachers, but are not being used consistently. District training on use of the tools should be redirected to ensure teachers understand how the tools support differentiation and how to use them to do so. By incorporating differentiated instruction in the general education curriculum, Taft ISD will better meet the individual needs, abilities, and interests of its students, which should result in a decreased number of discipline referrals. There is no fiscal

impact to the district for this recommendation; staff development funds should be redirected to address this issue. The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in tandem with the Director of Special Education should direct the process.

GIFTED AND TALENTED (G/T) EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND TRAINING (REC. 13)

Taft ISD lacks differentiated and supporting activities that teachers can use to provide challenging and rigorous curriculum to G/T students. All staff responsible for the instruction of G/T students must complete the six hour G/T update as required by TEC Section 89.2. Not all teachers who provide instruction to G/T students have completed the required six hour annual professional development update.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-19** Taft ISD has the second highest percentage of students participating in G/T education compared to peer districts and is slightly below the state and higher than the regional averages.

Exhibit 2-20 shows the number of students enrolled in the G/T program and the percentage of total student population as reported on AEIS for 2005–06 to 2009–10. The number of identified students exceeded the standard of 5 percent of the total school population for the last four years. TEC Section 42.156 states that not more than five percent of a district’s students in average daily attendance are eligible for funding.

Taft ISD’s G/T plan was updated in 2010 and at the time of the onsite visit, the plan had not been approved by the board. Taft ISD defines a gifted and talented student as, “one who

**EXHIBIT 2-19
TAFT ISD
GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURES
COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS/REGION/STATE**

DISTRICT	STUDENTS		TEACHERS		ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	
	G/T	PERCENT OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT	G/T	PERCENT OF TOTAL TEACHERS	G/T	PERCENT OF TOTAL ACTUAL EXPENDITURES
Carrizo Springs CISD	178	7.4	12.1	7.6	\$241,869	1.4
Muleshoe ISD	63	4.4	0.1	0.1	\$29,459	0.3
Poteet ISD	113	6.4	0.0	0.0	\$50,313	0.5
Sinton ISD	164	7.8	1.7	1.1	\$380,306	2.5
Taft ISD	86	7.5	1.3	1.4	\$62,491	0.7
Region 2	6,086	5.9	59.1	0.8	\$6,025,421	0.9
State	367,873	7.6	6,744.5	2.0	\$418,034,678	1.4

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 2-20
TAFT ISD
GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

CATEGORY	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
Number of Gifted and Talented	83	96	98	86	86
Percent of Student Population	6.0	6.9	7.2	7.1	7.5

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2005–06 to 2009–10.

performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.” Taft ISD’s G/T Plan states that programs for G/T students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four core academic areas, arts, leadership and creativity. Also, gifted and talented students may work together as a group, work with other students and work independently during the school day, as well as, the entire school year. When possible and deemed appropriate, the district shall provide out-of-school options relevant to the student’s area of strength. The plan also delineates the following points:

- Flexible pacing is employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills;
- Local board policies enable students to participate in dual/concurrent enrollment, credit by examination, distinguished achievement program, pre-advanced placement and advanced placement courses;
- Annual evaluation activities are conducted by surveying families, students and program staff for the purpose of continued program development; and
- An advisory group of community members, parents of gifted students, school staff, and gifted and talented education staff meet regularly to review and recommend program polices and procedures to the district.

Taft ISD’s plan briefly addresses the five components included in the state plan for the education of gifted students: assessment, program design, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and family and community involvement. Taft ISD does not include each of the performance measures listed in the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, and it does not indicate assignment of accountability for the appropriate implementation of these measures to a specific position in Taft ISD.

Districts are accountable for services as described in the “in compliance” column of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* where performance measures are included for five aspects of G/T service design. These standards reflect actions required in state law and/or State Board of Education rule. However, some districts, in collaboration with the communities they serve, will provide more comprehensive services. To offer some guidance to those districts or campuses, standards for “recommended” and “exemplary” performance are included in the plan and provide viable targets that local district educators seeking excellence, both for their district and for their students, strive to attain. **Exhibit 2-21** shows examples of all three levels of performance. In all cases, those activities in the “recommended” column include and build on those actions described in the “in compliance” column. In turn, “exemplary” standards build on those that merit a “recommended” designation.

Issues noted during interviews were the following:

- Taft ISD lacks curriculum and supporting G/T documents that address the academic needs of G/T students;
- There is no central coordination of the coursework offered and each grade level implements what it deems most appropriate;
- The district relies on content teachers to differentiate curriculum and extend the learning for G/T students, but teachers and principals expressed concerns with the regular education teachers not having enough time to differentiate the curriculum for G/T students; and
- Not all teachers who provide instruction for G/T students have completed the required training to achieve the six hour update.

According to Chapter 89.2 of the TEC, teachers who provide instruction that are part of the program for G/T students must have a minimum of 30 clock hours of staff development and a six hour update. The district’s plan complies with the

**EXHIBIT 2-21
TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE**

SECTION	IN COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDED	EXEMPLARY
Student Assessment	Written policies on student identification for gifted/talented services are approved by the district board of trustees and disseminated to all parents.	Nomination/referral procedures for assessment of gifted/talented students are communicated to families in a language and form that the families understand or a translator or interpreter is provided.	Board approved policies are reviewed at least once every three years and modified as needed.
	Provisions for ongoing identification of students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in each area of giftedness served by the district are included in board approved policy.	Assessment opportunities for gifted/talented identification are made available to students at least once a year at the elementary grades and once a semester at the secondary level.	The identification process for gifted/talented services is ongoing, and assessment of students occurs at any time the need arises.
Service Design	Identified gifted/talented students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the day as well as the entire school year. Parents are informed of these options.	Information concerning special opportunities (contests, academic recognition, summer camps, community programs, volunteer opportunities, etc.) is available and disseminated to parents and community members.	Services for gift/talented students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas, arts, leadership, and creativity.
	Student assessment and services are in compliance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students.	Annual evaluation activities are conducted for the purpose of continued service development.	Ongoing formative and summative evaluation strategies, based on quantitative and qualitative data, are reviewed by the school board and used for substantive program improvement and development.
Curriculum and Instruction	An array of appropriately challenging learning experiences in each of the four (4) foundation curricular areas is provided for gifted/talented students in grades K–12 and parents are informed of the opportunities.	Opportunities are provided for students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines through guided and independent research.	Curriculum options in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas; leadership; and specific academic fields are provided for gifted/talented students.
	Opportunities are provided to accelerate in areas of students strengths.	Flexible pacing is employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills.	Scheduling modifications are implemented in order to meet the needs of individual students.
Professional Development	Teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the district's defined gifted/talented services receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional development in gifted/talented education that is related to state teacher education standards.	All staff receives an orientation to the district's gifted/talented identification processes and gifted/talented services provided by the district or campus, along with training on the nature and needs of gifted/talented.	Mentors and others who offer specialized instruction for gifted/talented students are provided training to increase their understanding of the nature and needs of these students and the district goals for the students, including the state goals for gifted/talented students.
Family-Community Involvement	Written policies are developed on gifted/talented student identification, approved by the local board of trustees and disseminated to parents.	Input from family and community representatives on gifted/talented identification and assessment procedures is invited annually.	Information is shared and meetings are held annually requesting parent and community recommendations regarding students who may need gifted/talented services.

SOURCE: Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, revised 2009.

state requirement for teachers that provide instruction and services to G/T students to receive 30 hours of staff development to include nature and needs of G/T students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students.

The lack of specific curriculum objectives with differentiated activities that are developed and are easily accessible for teachers to implement, as well as the lack of a coordinated K–12 program and some teachers not completing their six hour certification, has led to Taft ISD’s inability to ensure that the needs of the G/T students are met in the classroom.

The district should develop a curriculum for G/T students at all grade levels which includes differentiated objectives and supporting activities that teachers can use to provide challenging and rigorous curriculum to G/T students. At the elementary level, the curriculum should be developed based around a theme or concept using the district’s curriculum management system as the basis for differentiation of lessons. The curriculum management system does not have G/T lessons, but trained G/T teachers could extend the lessons using their personal lesson developer. At the secondary level, there should be a G/T curricula for all of the Pre-AP and AP courses.

The district should require all core subject staff responsible for the instruction of G/T students to complete a six hour update. The Texas State Plan for G/T students requires districts to present evidence that it offers G/T students a curriculum that moves faster and is more complex than the regular curriculum. The State’s plan refers to this as differentiation and challenges districts to address the curriculum offered to G/T students and “assure an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with the abilities of G/T students and emphasize content in the four core academic subjects.”

All core K–12 teachers who provide instruction for G/T students should receive a six hour update to meet the state requirements. Region 2 can provide the resources to accomplish this training during the summer months. Region 2 Advanced Academics Contracted Services assists districts with the development of effective Advanced Academic programs, including G/T resources. Services provided to member districts include: technical assistance with needs assessments, long-range planning, curriculum development and alignment, and integration of the program across campuses, staff development, including state mandated training such as a 30-hour G/T certification, six hour G/T

updates, and six hour training for administrators and counselors. There should be no additional cost for the six hour update since the district is a member of the G/T cooperative with Region 2.

The assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction should assemble a team of G/T trained and certified teachers, counselors, and administrators to create a strategic G/T curriculum plan to provide a road map for G/T curriculum development. Upon completion of the strategic G/T curriculum plan, Taft ISD should provide a stipend to a team of teachers at each grade level, K–12, to create differentiated lessons for each of the four core academic subjects at each grade level and submit them to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to integrate into the district’s curriculum system documents.

The fiscal impact is based on the following:

- For school years 2011–12 to 2015–16: Develop one unit of study for the elementary grades K–5 that has different levels of difficulty. This curriculum writing would require six teachers working with the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for three days at \$206 per day (average daily rate) for a total of \$3,708 (six teachers x \$206 per day x three days).
- For school years 2011–12 to 2015–16: Develop differentiated lessons for grades 6–12 that will be implemented in the Pre-AP and AP courses. This curriculum writing would require seven teachers working with the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for three days at \$206 per day (average daily rate) for a total of \$4,326 (seven teachers x \$206 per day x three days).

The fiscal impact assumes no additional cost for the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

This curriculum development should take place during the summer so that the teachers will not be out of their regular classroom during the school year.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (REC. 14)

Taft ISD’s DAEP lacks an effective instructional delivery plan for students assigned to the program and lacks a consistent transition process from alternative programs back to the regular classroom. Taft ISD does not ensure that students placed at the DAEP stay current with their regular assignments for courses from teachers at their home

campuses. The teachers are to send assignments to the DAEP teacher who is responsible for ensuring the assignments get to the students. However, it may take several days for the students to get assignments from some of the regular classroom teachers.

In interviews with district staff there was an indication that the DAEP program has many issues including a need for instructional improvement and an adequate method that ensures a transition of assignments from home campus to students in DAEP. The delivery of educational services to DAEP students has been inconsistent. One of the curricular delivery systems used by the DAEP is A+, an online instructional program aligned with TAKS and includes an assessment of the students' strengths and deficiencies based on state and district standards. There are four computers in the classroom and only one is currently working. Students assigned to the DAEP use state-adopted textbooks and assignments provided by the sending teachers to complete their coursework.

Staff interviews indicated that there is little or no coordination between the regular classroom teachers and the DAEP teacher. DAEP students often come to the program without regular classroom assignments. DAEP teachers are then required to work with students without a designated academic plan for each student. On many occasions, however, the assignments were not sent to the student in as much as two weeks, resulting in delays in the completion of assignments and students getting behind academically.

The duration of a student's placement in the DAEP shall be determined by the principal or principal's designee. The duration of placement at the DAEP refers to a specific number of days of successful attendance in the DAEP. Students are in control of the factors (i.e. attendance, grades, and behavior) that may extend their length of placement at the DAEP. Students placed in the DAEP earn their way back to their home campus following the completion of all of the following requirements:

- Successful attendance for assigned number of days;
- Passing grades (minimum of 70 or grading standards written in the student's I.E.P.) in all courses; and
- Achieving highest level on the Behavior Point Sheet.

The duration of placement at the DAEP will be extended for a minimum of five days if a student does not meet the requirements to earn their way back to the home campus. If a student is still assigned to the DAEP at the end of the

school year, their placement for the next year will be determined by the Board of Trustees or designee.

The district's DAEP is designed to provide students with an opportunity to continue their studies while fulfilling disciplinary requirements in lieu of being suspended for rule infractions. The intent of the DAEP is to provide a supervised educational setting for students in grades 7–12 who violate the student code of conduct or commit serious or illegal acts as described in Chapter 37 of the TEC. Students may also be removed from class and placed in DAEP by the principals or assistant principals for conduct outside of school and off school property. The student may be placed in the DAEP when it is reasonably believed the student's presence in the regular classroom or at the home campus presents a danger of physical harm to the students or other individuals.

In its handbook of expectations, Taft ISD clearly states that an educational plan in the core subjects of English/Language Arts, math, science, and social studies will be taught. Individual tutoring with emphasis on acceleration of reading, writing and math skills will be stressed. Students' teachers will be asked to visit their students in DAEP, sign in, and assist students during their conference period. Also, Taft ISD shall arrange for age appropriate counseling on an emergency basis. The district is responsible for regular counseling that emphasizes effective decision-making, self responsibility, and character development. However, there are no behavioral programs to foster self-discipline and some of the regular teachers do not come out to the DAEP during their conference period on a regular basis as stated in district policy. Taft ISD's DAEP does not provide social services, drug counseling, anger management, or character development programs typically found in disciplinary education programs. There is no plan or program for reintegrating students into home campus and classes when they return from DAEP. Without a strong behavioral intervention component, students return to the DAEP over multiple years.

Exhibit 2-22 shows discipline actions that resulted in ISS, out of school suspension (OSS), and DAEP placements for Taft ISD students in the school year 2009–10. The data is grouped by student ethnicity, gender, as well as student designation including special education, economically disadvantaged, and at-risk. Special education students are those identified as having a disability or special need as defined by federal law and are, therefore, eligible to receive special education services. Economically disadvantaged students are those identified as eligible for free or reduced

EXHIBIT 2-22
TAFT ISD
COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10

STUDENT GROUP	ALL STUDENTS	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE	FEMALE	MALE	SPECIAL ED	ECO DIS	AT RISK
Total Students	1268	23	1086	54	105	614	654	174	1089	676
ISS Actions	935	16	888	0	31	357	578	242	854	798
ISS Students	239	*	222	0	*	90	149	56	210	189
ISS Percent	18.85%	*	20.44%	0	*	14.66%	22.78%	32.18%	19.28%	27.96%
OSS Actions	190	*	183	0	*	67	123	82	166	170
OSS Students	64	*	*	0	*	30	34	25	54	54
OSS Percent	5.05%	*	*	0	*	4.89%	5.20%	14.37%	4.96%	7.99%
DAEP Actions	48	*	*	0	*	19	29	20	43	41
DAEP Students	35	*	*	0	*	15	20	14	30	28
DAEP Percent	2.76%	*	*	0	*	2.44%	3.06%	8.05%	2.75%	4.14%
Expulsion Actions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expulsion Students	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expulsion Percent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

lunches and or for other public assistance. An at-risk student is identified as being at risk of dropping out of school and includes each student who is under 21 years of age who:

- is in prekindergarten, kindergarten, grade 1, 2, or 3 and did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or assessment instrument administered during the current school year;
- was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years;
- has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with TEC Section 37.006 during the preceding or current school year; or
- has been expelled in accordance with TEC Section 37.007 during the preceding or current school year.

Exhibit 2-22 also shows that some groups of students are over-represented in ISS, OSS, and DAEP assignments. For instance, of all students, 18.85 percent were assigned to ISS, 5.05 percent to OSS, and 2.76 percent to DAEP. However,

32.18 percent of special education students were assigned to ISS, 14.37 percent to OSS, and 8.05 percent to DAEP.

The TEC Section 21.451 states that districts may include conflict resolution and discipline strategies, including classroom management, as part of their staff development.

Districts that have an effective DAEP participate in classroom management staff development programs. Some of these programs provide information related to having a systematic guide for classroom teachers who want to improve their current classroom management plans. Other programs, such as the Texas Behavior Support initiative, are designed to enhance positive behavior interventions for all students, especially students with disabilities. Positive discipline strategies focus on increasing desirable behaviors through encouragement instead of decreasing undesirable behaviors through punishment.

Taft ISD should analyze the design and performance of the DAEP and modify it to meet or exceed statutory requirements to ensure program components meet the educational and behavioral needs of the students. The district should begin

with clear objectives and provide appropriate resources to support the new design. The program should include the components needed to meet the student's educational and behavioral needs such as behavioral modification programs.

In an effort to connect the home campus with the DAEP, the district should adopt a classroom management policy that requires all teachers to attend classroom behavior management training that emphasizes positive discipline strategies. It should also use discipline referral data to schedule follow-up training if necessary. In addition, the home campus counselors should remain committed to the needs of their assigned students, and assist with development of the DAEP program to ensure the structure reinforces self-discipline through a system of rewards and consequences, and entails a transition plan for integrating students back into their home campuses. The counselors should hold sessions at least to identify problem-solving techniques for the following: stress management, preventing conflicts, violence, making decisions and choices, drug abuse, and anger management. Topics should be selected to address the offenses that caused the students to be placed at the alternative center.

The district should be committed to keeping the DAEP students current with assignments, tests, and projects in their regular education classes. A student's regular classroom teacher should share lesson plans and assignments with the DAEP instructor to ensure that students in DAEP are working on identical assignments as if they had remained in the regular education setting. The DAEP teacher should meet with the regular teachers of their students each week to gather coursework and to determine expectations for that week. The student's work should be monitored to ensure they are staying at the same pace as their regular classes resulting in successful transitions back to their home schools.

The DAEP design should include performance measures with a plan for collecting and analyzing the application of discipline and the success of related strategies. There should also be a regular monitoring by the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and periodic reports to the board. The district can implement these recommendations with current resources.

LIBRARY STAFFING AND SERVICES (REC. 15)

Taft ISD's library staffing practices are not consistent with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) standards. The district has four aides to oversee the district's libraries. The School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas requires that librarians be certified;

however, non-certified librarians staff all three of the district's school libraries. According to TSLAC, Taft ISD is below the Acceptable standard by three certified librarian positions and over two paraprofessional positions.

The TSLAC is directed to develop voluntary school library standards in TEC Section 33.021. The goal is to align the School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas with additional provisions of the TEC, the Administrative Code, and national standards for school library programs, and to provide a current tool for evaluating and improving school library programs. According to TEC Section 33.021, "A school district shall consider the standards in developing, implementing, or expanding library services" according to the TSLAC, "School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas originated in the ongoing effort to support effective schools, results-oriented education, and accountability. These aims are at the forefront of the school librarianship." The revised School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas is based on research that shows a correlation between school library resources and services and greater student achievement.

The TSLAC criteria classify libraries into four categories: Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, and Below Standard. The TSLAC public school library staffing standards are based on schools' average daily attendance (ADA). **Exhibit 2-23** provides TSLAC standards for professional and non-professional staff.

Exhibit 2-24 shows Taft ISD's student enrollment for school year 2010–11 for each campus and the number of professional and paraprofessional library staff, and compares these statistics to the TSLAC Acceptable standards. None of the schools have certified librarians. Overall, Taft ISD is below the Acceptable standard by three certified librarian positions and over two paraprofessional positions according to TSLAC on all campuses.

Exhibit 2-25 shows the number of students enrolled in each peer district with the number of library staffing positions during school year 2010–11. The number of certified librarians in each district exceeds the number of certified librarians in Taft ISD.

Taft ISD should create one certified librarian position and eliminate two library aides to align more closely with TSLAC staffing standards and with peer districts.

**EXHIBIT 2-23
TSLAC LIBRARY STAFFING STANDARDS**

STAFF	STANDARDS			
	EXEMPLARY	RECOGNIZED	ACCEPTABLE	BELOW STANDARD
Professional Staff	At least:	At least:	At least:	
0–500 ADA	1.5 Certified Librarians	1.0 Certified Librarian	1.0 Certified Librarian	Less than 1 Certified Librarian
501–1,000 ADA	2.0 Certified Librarians	1.5 Certified Librarians	1.0 Certified Librarians	Less than 1.0 Certified Librarians
1,001–2,000 ADA	3.0 Certified Librarians	2.0 Certified Librarians	1.0 Certified Librarians	Less than 1.0 Certified Librarians
2,001 + ADA	3.0 Certified Librarians + 1.0 Certified Librarian for each 700 students	2.0 Certified Librarians + 1.0 Certified Librarian for each 1,000 students	2.0 Certified Librarians	Less than 2.0 Certified Librarians
Paraprofessional Staff	At least:	At least:	At least:	
0–500 ADA	1.5 Paraprofessionals	1.0 Paraprofessionals	0.5 Paraprofessionals	Less than 0.5 Paraprofessionals
501–1,000 ADA	2.0 Paraprofessionals	1.5 Paraprofessionals	1.0 Paraprofessionals	Less than 1.0 Paraprofessionals
1,001–2,000 ADA	3.0 Paraprofessionals	2.0 Paraprofessionals	1.5 Paraprofessionals	Less than 1.5 Paraprofessionals
2,001 + ADA	3.0 Paraprofessionals + 1.0 Paraprofessional for each 700 students	2.0 Paraprofessionals + 1.0 Paraprofessional for each 1,000 students	2.0 Paraprofessionals	Less than 2.0 Paraprofessionals

SOURCE: Texas State Library and Archives Commission, School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2005.

**EXHIBIT 2-24
TAFT ISD
ENROLLMENT, NUMBER OF LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY AIDES
TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARD BY CAMPUS
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

CAMPUS	ENROLLMENT	ADA**	LIBRARIANS	TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	OVER/(UNDER)	PARAPROFESSIONAL LIBRARY AIDES	TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	OVER/(UNDER)
Petty Elementary	593	548	0 Certified Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	(1.0 librarian)	2 aides	At least 1.0 aide	1 aide over
Taft Junior High School	243	228	0 Certified Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	(1.0 librarian)	1 aide	At least .5 aide	.5 aide over
Taft High School	281	256	0 Certified Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	(1.0 Librarian)	1 aide	At least .5 aide	.5 aide over
TOTAL	1,117	1,038	0 Certified	At least 3 certified librarians	(3 librarians under)	4 aides	2 aides	2 aides over

**Average Daily Attendance.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Enrollment as of February 15, 2011; Texas State Library and Archives Commission, School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2005; and Taft ISD assistant superintendent for Business.

**EXHIBIT 2-25
TAFT ISD AND PEER DISTRICT ENROLLMENT AND LIBRARY STAFFING**

SCHOOL*	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF LIBRARIANS	NUMBER OF AIDES
Carrizo Springs CISD	2,394	1	2
Muleshoe ISD	1,437	1	3
Sinton ISD	2,108	2	3
Taft ISD	1,143	0	4

*Data for Poteet ISD was not available.
SOURCE: Peer District Surveys, February 2011 and Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2009–10.

The fiscal impact is based on the salary of a librarian for school year 2010–11, which is \$38,600. When including 15 percent benefits or \$5,790 (\$38,600 x .15), the total certified librarian position is \$44,390. The annual salary for two library aides with benefits is \$36,028. The district currently spends \$72,056 for four librarian aides. The cost of creating

one certified librarian position and retaining two librarian aides would cost the district (\$44,390 + 36,028 = \$80,418). The cost to the district would be an additional \$8,362 beginning school year 2011–12, with a five-year cost to the district of \$41,810.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
8. Conduct a guidance and counseling needs assessment to determine an appropriate number of counselors needed on each campus based on student enrollment.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
9. Create a Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that establishes the program’s expectations and includes a requirement for coordination with the district’s counselors.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10. Adopt a board policy that provides direction for the management of curriculum to establish processes, procedures, and timelines for curriculum review, development, and implementation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
11. Implement a structured, focused process to improve academic achievement that is based on test score analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses of student performance, supported by instruction using an aligned curriculum with specific accountability measures.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
12. Design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to meet the instructional needs of all students.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13. Develop a curriculum for G/T students at all grade levels which includes differentiated objectives and supporting activities that teachers can use to provide challenging and rigorous curriculum to G/T students. Ensure that all staff responsible for the instruction of G/T students has completed the six hour G/T update training.	(\$8,034)	(\$8,034)	(\$8,034)	(\$8,034)	(\$8,034)	(\$40,170)	\$0
14. Analyze the design and performance of the DAEP and modify it to meet or exceed statutory requirements to ensure program components meet the educational and behavioral needs of the students.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15. Create one certified librarian position and eliminate two librarian aides to align more closely with TSLAC staffing standards and with peer districts.	(\$8,362)	(\$8,362)	(\$8,362)	(\$8,362)	(\$8,362)	(\$41,810)	\$0
TOTALS	(\$16,396)	(\$16,396)	(\$16,396)	(\$16,396)	(\$16,396)	(\$81,980)	\$0

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The largest operating expenses incurred by school districts are personnel costs. On average, a school district's payroll cost is 75 to 85 percent of its annual operating budget. Since 2006, Taft Independent School District's (ISD) payroll costs have been between 75 percent and 79 percent of the district's total general fund expenditures.

Taft ISD employed 217 individuals for a total budgeted salary and benefits of \$8.3 million in school year 2010–11. In school year 2009–10, payroll costs represented 79 percent of Taft ISD's operating costs for all funds. In comparison, the average payroll cost for districts in Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) is 76 percent of operating costs, while the state payroll cost as a percent of operating expenditures was 79 percent in 2010.

Competitive salaries and benefits attract and retain qualified and competent staff. Managing payroll costs effectively and efficiently provides districts with the flexibility to distribute funds to necessary instructional and operational programs. An effective compensation system accomplishes the following:

- Provides external competitiveness and equity;
- Is understandable to and accepted by employees; and
- Is affordable to the employer.

Oversight for the district's personnel matters is assigned to the assistant superintendent for Personnel. According to the district's job description, the assistant superintendent for Personnel has the responsibility to direct and manage the district's personnel functions to ensure quality staffing and legally sound and effective practices in personnel management. This position also interprets and recommends personnel policies and regulations for the district, directs the Migrant and Parental Involvement (PI) programs, and assists with communications between the superintendent, school board, staff, parents and the community.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Taft ISD is using the resources provided by Region 2 for human resources services to enhance operations and supplement expertise.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD's human resources (HR) function is disjointed, which has resulted in human resources activities not being effectively managed.
- Taft ISD's non-instructional personnel lack sufficient professional development and leadership training.
- Taft ISD personnel file information and maintenance is decentralized and, as a result, lacks the structure, security and confidentiality required for personnel documents.
- Taft ISD relies heavily on the use of substitute teachers in the classroom and lacks a formal tracking system to schedule and track their usage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 16:** Create an HR generalist position to more effectively coordinate HR functions across the district. An independent, objective evaluation of current department personnel should be performed to determine if skills are sufficient to effectively manage the district's human resources requirements.
- **Recommendation 17:** Develop a comprehensive training plan and establish professional development requirements for all district staff.
- **Recommendation 18:** Centralize the management of all personnel records into one location and establish a formal file organization system that includes tracking mechanisms to ensure that records are updated in a timely manner and are complete. Additionally, a formal file check-out system should be developed and implemented.
- **Recommendation 19:** Develop a process to effectively manage the use of substitutes in the classroom. Additionally, substitute teachers should be centrally disbursed and a tracking system should be established to monitor the usage of substitute teachers.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER RESOURCES

Taft ISD is using the resources provided by Region 2 for human resources services to enhance operations and supplement expertise. Region 2 is located in Corpus Christi approximately 30 minutes from Taft. In addition to providing professional development training, CSCOPE assistance (instructional curriculum information system), and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) support, the district has recently contracted with Region 2 to use their Coastal Bend Application Tracking Consortium at an annual subscription cost of \$1,760. Participation in this consortium allows prospective applicants to conveniently access a Taft ISD employment application through a link on the district’s website, even though the Region 2 server is the repository for the consortium information. The assistant superintendent for Personnel can then screen applicants and archive applications before sending them to the respective hiring manager or principal. Online applications reduce the district’s carbon footprint and enhance the efficiency of the hiring process.

DETAILED FINDINGS

HUMAN RESOURCE FUNCTION AND DEPARTMENT (REC. 16)

Taft ISD’s HR function is disjointed, which has resulted in human resources activities not being effectively managed.

Primary responsibility for Taft ISD’s human resources functions reside within the Personnel Department (Personnel) which is managed by the assistant superintendent for Personnel. Most of Taft ISD HR processes are paper driven and are handled by staff outside of Personnel. Typically HR management functions include establishing compensation structures, conducting staffing analysis,

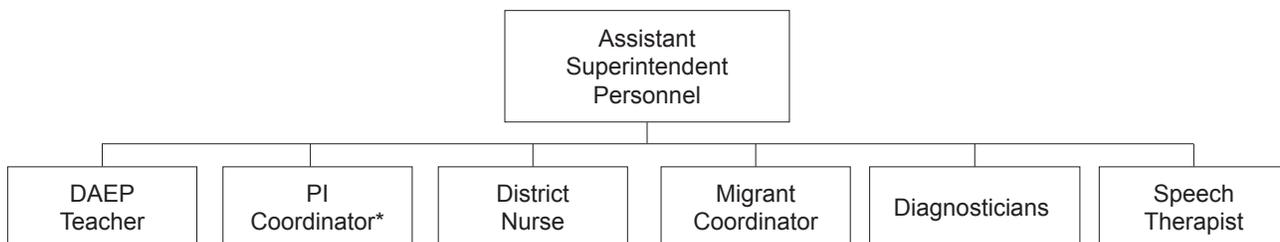
recruiting, hiring, salary and benefits administration, performance evaluations, and employee development. The compensation structures, salary comparisons, and benefits administration functions are handled by the assistant superintendent for Business. Performance evaluations for certified staff are either initiated through the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) or prepared manually on each of the campuses, and then the assistant superintendent for Personnel is responsible for collection of the completed evaluations. The assistant superintendent for Personnel serves in an administrative role in this process instead of being the driver for the district’s evaluation system which should include providing overall guidance and organizational metrics to the process. To further assist with HR functions the district has engaged the assistance of Region 2 resources to automate and collect candidate resumes and conduct professional development training.

In addition to some HR tasks being managed outside of Personnel, several other positions without HR functionality or experience and that do not actually report to the assistant superintendent for Personnel on an operational basis, are reflected on the Personnel Department’s organization chart.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the organizational reporting responsibilities under the assistant superintendent for Personnel. **Exhibit 3-2** describes the positions in the Personnel Department’s Organization and their operational reporting structure versus budgeted distribution.

Effective management of personnel is critical to the success of the school district. A school district must have qualified and talented employees to facilitate and support the educational development of students. Since costs related to personnel typically constitute the largest district expenditure, it is important the district has efficient and effective personnel policies, processes, and practices in place. Taft ISD develops

**EXHIBIT 3-1
TAFT ISD PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**



*The assistant superintendent for Personnel serves as the Parental Involvement Coordinator.
SOURCE: Taft ISD.

**EXHIBIT 3-2
TAFT ISD
PERSONNEL STAFFING**

POSITION	PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITY	OPERATIONALLY REPORTS TO	DEPARTMENT BUDGETED
Secretary	Personnel file maintenance	Superintendent	Superintendent
DAEP Teacher	None	Campus Principals	Curriculum & Instruction
District Nurse	None	Campus Principals	Curriculum & Instruction
Diagnosticians	None	Campus Principals	Curriculum & Instruction
Speech Therapist	None	Campus Principals	Curriculum & Instruction
Parental Involvement Coordinator*	None	Assistant Superintendent for Personnel	Curriculum & Instruction
Migrant Coordinator	None	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction	Curriculum & Instruction

*This position is actually being performed by the assistant superintendent for Personnel.

SOURCE: TAFT ISD Personnel Organization Chart and Taft ISD budget, as of February 2011.

its salary schedules by researching local school district's compensation structures. This process is performed by the assistant superintendent for Business with some assistance from the assistant superintendent for Personnel. Comparative salary surveys are then reviewed by the superintendent to determine if pay increases for staff should be recommended to the board. Any revision to the salary schedules are approved by the board prior to going into effect.

Furthermore, an effective personnel department processes all district employees throughout the employee life-cycle: hiring, retention, promotions, transfer, and termination. Personnel staff performs tasks in a manner that ensures the efficient management of human resources data entry, insurance benefit program, training programs, employee recruiting and retention, and personnel policy enforcement. According to the training records provided, current Taft ISD Personnel Department staff received most of their training through Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) or Region 2, but did not focus on any of the critical functional HR areas, except personnel file management.

Districts with effective HR functions have, at a minimum, an HR generalist to advise administrators in all HR practices, to provide information to employees about regulations and policies, and to provide general support for all HR functions. Additionally, the HR generalist provides the district with support for a wide variety of activities including recruiting, professional development and administration of benefits.

Exhibit 3-3 lists the purpose, required knowledge and skills, and primary responsibilities for an HR generalist.

Taft ISD should create an HR generalist position to more effectively coordinate HR functions across the district. *In the District Management and Community Involvement chapter of this report, the review team recommends that the district eliminate the assistant superintendent for Personnel position to decrease the direct reports to the superintendent and the total cost of central administration salaries. This recommendation includes a reorganization to include only two assistant superintendents with HR functions under the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Services.* Creating an HR generalist position will help to coordinate the HR functions under the recommended reorganization. An independent, objective evaluation of current personnel should be performed to determine if skills are sufficient to effectively manage the district's HR requirements. Furthermore, while an HR certification is not required to perform all the necessary tasks and functions, it is preferred that at least one person in the department have a background or training in HR and remains current on all the industry changing regulations and procedures.

Taft ISD should continue using the Region 2 HR services and consider other relevant outsourcing opportunities that will allow the district to effectively manage the broad tasks associated with the HR function. To ensure HR staff is fully competent and qualified to perform the job functions, prospective staff may be required to take routine courses in compensation, recruitment, training and development, and performance appraisal. Although maintenance of job descriptions is currently outsourced to Region 2 on a two to three year cycle, the HR generalist should also have responsibility for systematically reviewing descriptions in the

**EXHIBIT 3-3
PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT
HR GENERALIST QUALIFICATIONS AND TASKS**

PURPOSE	REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES
To facilitate the efficient operation of the district's human resources functions and ensure quality staffing and legally sound human resources practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong level of influence and negotiation skills. • Knowledge of wage and salary and benefit regulations. • Knowledge of school district employment law and hearing procedures. • Knowledge of school district organization and operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret and recommend personnel policies and regulations for the district. • Recruit staff. • Screen, evaluate, and recommend applicants for interviews. • Assist with preparing and maintaining job documentation, job evaluation, and district compensation and classification structures. • Administer exempt and nonexempt compensation programs and ensure compliance with federal wage and overtime pay laws. • Administer and explain benefits to employees, serving as liaison between insurance carriers, accounting staff and employees. • Recommend, develop, and schedule professional development and training courses for non-academic staff. • Participate in development and execution of orientation programs and procedures for new employees. • Manage the district's substitute program and conduct orientation sessions. • Review employee complaints and ensure accurate and timely documentation of concerns or issues. • Ensure accurate personnel files on all active and inactive employees are properly maintained. • Ensure that the employee handbook and personnel directory are created, updated and distributed annually. • Keep informed of and comply with all state and district policies and regulations.

SOURCE: Sample job descriptions for similar positions and Taft ISD Job Description for the assistant superintendent for Personnel.

interim to ensure they accurately reflect the functions being performed.

Professional training for this position, particularly basic HR competencies and basic financial management, should be required and monitored to validate that the appropriate knowledge and skill set exists to ensure that critical tasks are performed in complete compliance with all regulations and policies.

The Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) offers a Certified Texas School Business Specialist designation that could be earned by district HR personnel. Certification status is effective for three years as long as the annual continuing education requirement is met. The certification cost for one staff person, as a TASBO member, would be a one-time cost of \$1,020 (\$40 certification application fee plus the seven required certification courses at \$140 each (\$980)). Additional seminars and workshops annually would

be \$480 (two webinars/two times per year at \$60 each and two workshops/two times per year at \$180 each). Total TASBO training cost would be \$1,500 during the initial certification year, then \$480 each year thereafter to maintain the certification. This fiscal impact assumes that one of the district's five individual TASBO memberships will be designated for this position.

The HR generalist should also join the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA). This organization provides professional growth and networking opportunities to public school human resources administrators and support staff. Additionally, membership in TASPA gives members the opportunity to attend statewide conferences or regional workshops focused on relevant HR topics. The ability to network with other HR professionals by attending a regional or national seminar is a significant advantage of staying current on changing employment environments. Annual

membership dues are \$85 and early conference registration plus travel to Austin would be \$731 for a total TASPAs training cost of \$816.

The total fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation would be a one-time cost of \$1,020 to obtain the HR certification and an annual cost of \$54,196 (\$52,900 HR generalist salary and benefits plus \$1,296 for ongoing training) for a total of \$270,980 for five years. The details are summarized in **Exhibit 3-4**.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (REC. 17)

Taft ISD’s non-instructional personnel lack sufficient professional development and leadership training.

The district has a professional development plan that emphasizes training at the campus level to ensure staff are current on the latest effective teaching techniques and academic curriculum, including CSCOPE. However, leadership development training is lacking throughout the district. For example, principals lack proper training to understand how crucial their role as campus administrators is to the overall leadership, organization, and management of the district. Other district staff also do not receive periodic training to ensure they have the necessary skills and competencies to effectively perform their job responsibilities.

The current assistant superintendent for Personnel is responsible for developing training options for all staff, but acknowledged that district training is scheduled by the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and is only designed for instructional personnel.

Board policy DMA (LEGAL) states, “Staff development shall be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee.” This policy reiterates the importance placed on instructional staff development, but does not directly address professional development for other district employees.

Taft ISD uses a Staff Development Needs Assessment survey to annually prioritize staff training. This survey tool focuses on the academic needs of the district’s campus staff, including classroom management and technology, but does not provide an option for leadership development nor solicits the opinion of non-instructional personnel.

Two of the three Taft ISD campus principals have been in their current position two years or less. Therefore, it is necessary to provide the appropriate training in order for them to effectively perform their duties. During a review of the training records provided for the principals, only a couple of courses focused on leadership or campus management while the remaining training extensively covered curriculum based subject matters. To be effective campus leaders, not just educational managers, principals must receive specific training targeted to developing their business and organizational management skills.

The professional development plan provided by the district emphasizes the focus on instructional training topics. There is no comprehensive coordinated effort to schedule training for non-instructional personnel. **Exhibit 3-5** summarizes training provided by category for school year 2009–10.

Exhibit 3-6 summarizes the survey results responding to the district’s professional development plan. Because the district places a significant amount of importance on instructional staff development, the majority of principals and teachers felt strongly that the staff development program was effective. However, 52 percent of the administration and support staff disagreed or had no opinion.

**EXHIBIT 3-4
FISCAL IMPACT PERSONNEL RESTRUCTURING**

ACTIVITY	ANNUAL AND ONE-TIME COST	FIVE YEAR COST
Create a human resources generalist position (\$46,000 salary + 15% benefits)	\$52,900	\$264,500
TASBO certification	\$1,020 one-time cost	
TASBO training	\$480	\$2,400
TASPAs training	\$816	\$4,080

SOURCE: Review Team calculations.

**EXHIBIT 3-5
TAFT ISD TRAINING SUMMARY
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	PARTICIPANTS
Administrator Training	District and Campus Administration
Guidance & Counseling Academy	School Counselors
Science Collaborative Training	All Campus Instructional Staff
Math Collaborative Training	All Campus Instructional Staff
Balanced Literacy Training	Elementary Instructional Staff
District Staff Development	All Campus Faculty
Social Studies Planning	All Campus Instructional Staff

SOURCE: Taft ISD Highly Qualified Professional Development Plan.

**EXHIBIT 3-6
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: “The district operates an effective staff development program.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	10%	39%	34%	9%	9%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
Teachers	50	8%	55%	19%	14%	4%

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

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

The lack of training and development is also reflected in other areas of the district as highlighted here and discussed in other chapters in this report. The district lacks:

- training plans for the Maintenance Department;
- safety training initiatives focused on incidents that resulted in workers’ compensation claims;
- instructional technology training to assist with integration of technology in the curriculum;
- gifted and talented (G/T) six hour update training for some of the staff responsible for the instruction of G/T students; and
- on-going training for child nutrition staff.

Staff development programs should serve all employees of the district. Leadership and developmental training of staff at all district levels will provide an internal pipeline for promoting staff into vacant teacher and administrative staff positions. Administrative leadership development is critical for campus principals. They are responsible for achieving operational, financial, as well as the instructional goals on their individual campus.

Professional development is an important component in the retention of qualified personnel. Leadership training is necessary to ensure district employees are properly coached on how to be effective leaders, manage their organizations, and perform daily operational function. Blending operational and personal management skills training with instructional enhancement seminars builds a multifaceted leadership team. Integrating leadership development into Taft ISD’s professional development schedule will have a positive effect on academic improvement.

The district should develop a comprehensive training plan and establish professional development requirements for all district staff. This plan should be updated on an annual basis and compliance with training requirements should be monitored by Personnel. Funding for districtwide professional development should be included in the budget process and be specifically allocated as training so that the funds can be made available as the appropriate training courses are identified or scheduled.

Leadership and professional development should be coordinated for the district so that all staff have the opportunity to receive at least the minimum training to

perform their specific duties and meet their personnel evaluation goals. Training should be coordinated through Personnel to provide universal leadership training to all supervisory roles or positions and as a supplement to curriculum-based training provided to teachers.

Region 2 already provides support services to the district including the provision of the CSCOPE curriculum, human resources administration and some professional development services. Courses in fundamental management skills, time management skills, and leadership preparation training could be integrated with academic-based staff development. Taft ISD could also consider the services of other providers to conduct Fundamental Management Skills, Time Management for Leaders, or Building an Authentic Leadership Image sessions. These courses can be taken either in a live setting, group online training class, or self-paced online course. The cost associated with these courses could be considered an investment in the continuing education of personnel that ultimately will provide a return through improvements in student academic performance and efficient district operations.

This recommendation can be implemented with no fiscal impact by using Personnel staff to develop and coordinate training and by reallocating current staff development costs to cover all district personnel.

PERSONNEL FILE MAINTENANCE (REC. 18)

Taft ISD personnel file information and maintenance is decentralized and, as a result, lacks the structure, security and confidentiality required for personnel documents.

General personnel file information (applications, I-9s, required district forms, etc.) are stored in cabinets in the superintendent's suite which is physically located away from Personnel. Highly qualified certificates and supporting training documentation are filed alphabetically in campus binders separated by professional and paraprofessional designation, and are stored in the assistant superintendent for Personnel's office. Annual personnel evaluations are maintained all together in a single file folder by campus except Petty Elementary. Petty Elementary maintains a separate file folder for each professional staff evaluated with one combined folder containing all paraprofessional staff evaluations for the year. Benefit election information is separately maintained in the payroll clerk's office. This method of personnel file maintenance is inefficient and presents opportunity for information, particularly training

and certification documentation, to be misplaced or compromised.

The file cabinets where the current staff's personnel files are stored remained unlocked during the onsite visit of this review and there is no formal system to access or request specific files from the cabinet. A review of selected files showed that there is no consistency in the order the documents were being maintained in the files, even for standard human resources forms. Some files contained a separator that divided prior year's records from current file information, such as policy and handbook acknowledgements, transcripts, and contract renewals. Due to the disparate locations of personnel information, the personnel files did not contain annual evaluation information nor certification and training documents. In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), confidential and benefit related information had been removed from the personnel files.

The PDAS is used for campus-based professional staff. This electronic evaluation document provides a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of classroom personnel. Evaluations are manually entered into the system, then printed for the evaluator and staff to acknowledge, sign and include in their permanent file. While onsite, it was observed that current year evaluations were loosely maintained in manila folders by individual campuses; some were in alphabetical order; some were separated by evaluation phase; and some organized by employee. Because of the lack of a document organization system, it was difficult to ascertain whether each employee had received both the observation and summative evaluation during the period. Evaluations for non-campus based school administrators and other non-teaching professionals also lacked a formal organized filing system.

Strict adherence to file maintenance and retention guidelines is sometimes problematic for school districts. Most do not have sufficient financial resources to dedicate staff to the efforts or contract with an outside vendor.

San Elizario ISD's HR Department developed a process for ensuring that personnel records are complete and easily accessible. The department uses comprehensive checklists to enhance the accuracy and consistency of personnel records and to ensure that staff gathers all necessary information for compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. HR staff use the personnel folder checklists to consistently order and file the documentation in the employee records.

This process helps staff quickly determine when folders are incomplete so that they can prioritize obtaining needed information to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. San Elizario ISD also uses color-coded tabs to categorize employee files. By categorizing files in this manner, the human resources department can locate, manage, and replace files efficiently while minimizing the risk of misfiling documents or files.

Waxahachie ISD HR Department staff places documentation in a designated order in each file for ease of locating information, and consistently uses a checklist of documentation provided during new hire processing to ensure documents are properly collected. Waxahachie ISD HR Department also protects files from tampering and inappropriate viewing by ensuring that no one can retrieve or view a file without requesting access from a HR department staff person.

Taft ISD should centralize the management of all personnel records into one location and establish a formal file organization system that includes tracking mechanisms to ensure that records are updated in a timely manner and are complete. Additionally, a formal file check-out system should be developed and implemented. Having a coordinated file maintenance program reduces the potential for data mismanagement. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SUBSTITUTE STAFF USE (REC. 19)

Taft ISD relies heavily on the use of substitute teachers in the classroom and lacks a formal tracking system to schedule and track their usage. Furthermore, the assistant superintendent for Personnel does not know how many substitutes are used, which substitutes are consistently used, or which substitutes are never used.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel prepares and distributes a list of approved substitutes at the beginning of each school year. An approved substitute is an individual who has been finger-printed, passed the background check, and attended a one hour orientation session conducted by the assistant superintendent for Personnel. Once a substitute candidate has successfully completed these three tasks, they remain on the approved substitute list until they request to be removed from the list or unsatisfactory performance is reported. The current system for scheduling and selecting substitutes rests with the principals. As each campus is provided the same approved substitute list each year, campus principals are allowed to select and contact the substitute(s)

they prefer. If a specific substitute is the preferred choice of several principals, that individual may receive several calls on the same day as the district doesn't have an organized or centralized selection system. Moreover, the approved substitute list could contain individuals who are no longer interested or available, and as such could be contacted by a campus to fill a vacancy which further enhances the inefficiency of this selection process. This approach results in inefficient processing of teacher absences and substitute teacher payroll reporting.

Although the use of substitute teachers is not formally tracked, the detailed teacher's payroll information was obtained for September 2010. Taft ISD paid a total of \$91,472 in substitute pay for September 1, 2010 through March 30, 2011. **Exhibit 3-7** summarizes the number of times substitute teachers were used during September 2010 by campus. On average, 13 percent of the total available teaching time in September was filled by substitute teachers. The total amount paid for substitute teachers in September 2010 (\$15,307) represents 17 percent of the total substitute teacher payments made between September 1, 2010 and March 30, 2011. Given that December 2010 had only 13 school days and there were additional days where the school was closed for weather conditions, the results of September's substitute teacher calculations would be representative of a typical month's usage of substitute teachers.

Based on the survey results in **Exhibit 3-8** and discussions with district staff, the most significant use of substitutes at Taft ISD coincides with curriculum based professional development. While required staff development is critical to successes within the classroom, it is also important that training be scheduled to allow teachers to spend as much time in the classroom with their students as possible.

The general perception exists in the education industry that each day a substitute teacher is used in the classroom represents time that the student is not receiving instructional content delivered by their teacher. In many instances, substitute teachers are provided light or supplemental instruction to deliver to the students. Frequently, this is in the form of watching an educational movie or doing a worksheet. In every district there is a need to provide innovative and creative professional development strategies to educate and retain quality district staff. However, districts that have effective development training programs limit the time that instructional staff are away from the classroom learning environment.

**EXHIBIT 3-7
TAFT ISD
ANALYSIS OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHER USE BY CAMPUS
SEPTEMBER 2010**

SCHOOL	# OF TIMES SUBSTITUTE WAS USED	# OF TEACHERS ASSIGNED TO THE SCHOOL	# OF TEACHING DAYS IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL AVAILABLE TEACHING DAYS IN SEPTEMBER *	PERCENTAGE OF SUBSTITUTE DAYS TO TEACHING DAYS **
High School	44	33	21	693	6%
Jr. High	64	21	21	441	15%
Petty Elementary	155	39	21	819	19%
TOTAL	263	93	21	1953	
Average					13%
September 1, 2010 to March 30, 2011 payments to substitute teachers					\$91,472
Percentage of total payments made in September 2010					17%

*Calculated based upon the number of teachers assigned to the school and the number of teaching days per the district calendar.

**Calculated based upon the number of times a substitute was used divided by the number of teaching days.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Payroll, Taft ISD Calendar, Taft ISD Staff Directory, school year 2010–11.

**EXHIBIT 3-8
TAFT ISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: “The district successfully projects future staffing needs.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	7%	31%	46%	5%	11%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
Teachers	50	4%	31%	45%	12%	8%
Survey Question: “Substitute workers are rarely used.”						
District Administration and Support Staff	90	4%	25%	35%	32%	5%
Principals and Assistant Principals	5	0%	0%	0%	80%	20%
Teachers	50	0%	14%	16%	43%	27%
Parents	40	2%	30%	20%	35%	13%

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

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

Districts can use a variety of strategies to manage, but maximize the effectiveness of substitute teachers. Some examples used in school districts and elsewhere include:

- Kerrville ISD took steps to restructure the time that teachers are required to attend staff development and other trainings by requiring some staff development and training activities to take place after the regular workday and without additional compensation except for required expenses.

- Spring ISD maintains a well organized substitute program requiring minimal personnel time to manage. Spring ISD’s substitute teacher placement service recruits and trains qualified candidates in classroom management, effective teaching techniques, and district policies and procedures. The district also implemented an automated substitute system that makes placement more efficient by allowing principals or teachers who need a substitute to call in to the system and request a substitute by date, time,

and location. The system then automatically calls each qualified substitute until the request is filled.

Taft ISD should strategically develop a process to effectively manage the use of substitutes in the classroom. As a result, substitute teachers should be centrally disbursed and a tracking system should be established to monitor substitute teacher use. Personnel should then use the tracking reports to have weekly communications with the campus principals to monitor substitute assignments and prepare for extended staff absences. Approximately every six weeks, teachers should evaluate the substitutes that were used to cover their classrooms. After the evaluation is completed and signed by the substitute and the teacher, it should be reviewed by the principal before providing a copy to Personnel. If the evaluation is positive, it goes in their file in Personnel and the individual should remain on the district's substitute list. If

performance was unsatisfactory, Personnel should schedule a face to face meeting to discuss actions for improvement or inform the individual that they will be removed from the approved list.

Given the fact that most of the district's curriculum training is provided by Region 2 or third parties, additional consideration should be made to ensure professional development training which requires the use of substitutes in the classroom is minimized or staggered throughout the year. The enhanced coordination of substitute teacher use can be achieved with current resources by assigning the responsibility to a current administrative staff person. A tracking system can be designed in a database or spreadsheet.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
16. Create an HR generalist position to more effectively coordinate HR functions across the district.	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$270,980)	(\$1,020)
17. Develop a comprehensive training plan and establish professional development requirements for all district staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
18. Centralize the management of all personnel records into one location and establish a formal file organization system that includes tracking mechanisms to ensure that records are updated in a timely manner and are complete.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
19. Develop a process to effectively manage the use of substitutes in the classroom.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$54,196)	(\$270,980)	(\$1,020)

CHAPTER 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 4. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

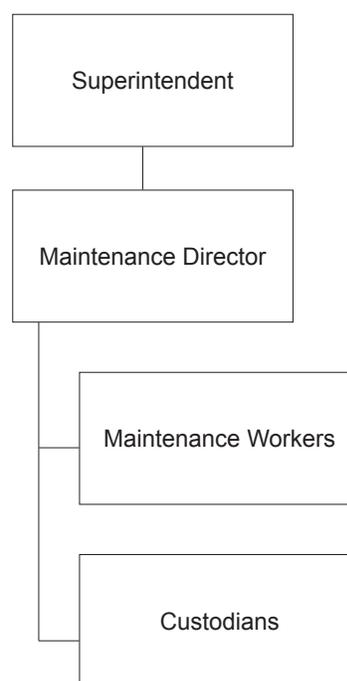
Facilities planning based on programmatic requirements, student growth or decline, structural maintenance, funding, and legislative mandates is essential to support educational programs and student needs effectively. Strategic planning activities must be performed under clearly defined policies, procedures, and practices that can be adapted to accommodate changes. Preventive maintenance and timely repairs should be performed to ensure that facilities are in working order and provide an atmosphere conducive for learning. Custodial operations should provide for the general cleanliness and daily upkeep of facilities. Grounds operations ensure that the schoolyards are properly groomed and maintained. An energy management program should be implemented that is focused on monitoring energy costs and usage and establishing energy conservation practices. Typical facility organizations actively manage construction and maintenance projects as well.

Of Taft Independent School District's (ISD) 214 employees, 23 staff members comprise the Maintenance Department including a director, nine maintenance workers, and 13 custodians. The director of the Maintenance Department oversees the district's maintenance and custodial operations and reports to the superintendent. **Exhibit 4-1** presents Taft ISD's Maintenance Department organization for school year 2010–11.

Taft ISD's facilities include four campuses, an administration building, and a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) portable building located across the street from Taft Junior High. These facilities house about 1,143 students and 214 employees as of school year 2009–10. As of school year 2010–11, Taft ISD combined the Petty Elementary campus with East Elementary and leased five portable buildings containing two classrooms to accommodate the consolidation. With the passing of a bond election in May 2010, the former East Elementary campus will be renovated and converted to replace the oldest campus, Taft Junior High. **Exhibit 4-2** depicts the district's main building inventory.

Exhibit 4-3 provides a summary of major renovations within the past five years and shows the absence of major construction projects during this period.

EXHIBIT 4-1
TAFT ISD MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11



SOURCE: Taft ISD Organization Chart.

EXHIBIT 4-2
TAFT ISD MAIN BUILDING INVENTORY

FACILITY	YEAR(S) BUILT/ RENOVATED	SQUARE FEET
Petty Elementary (Pre-K–2)	1963, 1985	53,379
*East Elementary (Grades 3–5)	1957-1966, 2002	39,334
Taft Junior High(Grades 6–8)	1921-1947	109,626
Taft High School (Grades 9–12)	1949-1963, 1977, 2002	129,204
		331,543

*Campus closed effective school year 2010–11 for renovation to replace Taft Junior High.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department.

**EXHIBIT 4-3
TAFT ISD MAJOR RENOVATIONS FOR PAST FIVE YEARS
2006 TO 2010**

DESCRIPTION	YEAR	COST
Bathrooms at Football Field	2006	\$199,288
Cafeteria Expansion	2006	\$198,592
Parking Lots	2006	\$449,803
AT&T Voice Over IP	2006	\$124,074
Covered Playgrounds	2006	\$161,463
Café Roof Repairs	2008	\$37,124
Café Freezers, Ovens, Steamer	2009, 2010	\$94,002
Roof	2010	\$52,950
Baseball Lights	2010	\$129,850
Technology Infrastructure	2008, 2009, 2010	\$1,178,500
Various	2006–2010	\$185,865

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department.

Exhibit 4-4 provides a summary of Taft ISD’s maintenance and operations expenses which average about 11 percent of the district’s total operating expenditures.

Taft ISD’s enrollment declined consistently in recent years from 1,391 in school year 2005–06 to 1,143 in school year 2009–10, with a significant decrease of 161 students, or 11.78 percent, in school year 2008–09.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The district engaged a consultant to assess the staffing allocation guidelines in May 2009 and implemented the consultant’s recommendation to combine the two elementary campuses.
- Although a significant portion of the facilities are more than 50 years old, Taft ISD does an effective job in keeping its schools clean.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD has not effectively managed the provisions of the agreement with the City of Taft regarding the funding of maintenance and operations of the community recreational water park, which has contributed to significant annual deficits.
- Taft ISD’s in-house automated work order system tracks work orders electronically but fails to offer some basic attributes of an effective system such as tracking costs.
- The Maintenance Director is only responsible for maintenance operations and does not have a defined role for construction and renovation projects.
- The district lacks a comprehensive long-range facility master plan that incorporates the facilities condition assessment in planning for future construction and renovation.
- The Maintenance Department lacks formal written policies and procedures.
- Taft ISD has not implemented a preventive maintenance program for its facilities.
- Training plans have not been developed for the Maintenance Department.
- Taft ISD lacks an energy management program to control energy costs in district facilities.
- The Maintenance Department does not use a formal staffing allocation process to assign staff to each facility, which has resulted in understaffing and overstaffing at some campuses.

**EXHIBIT 4-4
TAFT ISD SUMMARY OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES
SCHOOL YEARS 2005–06 TO 2009–10**

SCHOOL YEAR	PLANT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS EXPENSES	PERCENT OF TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	STATE PERCENT OF TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES
2009–10	\$1,125,362	9.7%	10.7%
2008–09	\$1,440,749	11.2%	10.8%
2007–08	\$1,525,662	11.7%	10.9%
2006–07	\$1,531,433	11.9%	10.9%
2005–06	\$1,401,249	12.0%	10.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 20:** Meet with City of Taft officials to discuss the operation of the community recreational water park and determine ways to reduce operating deficits.
- **Recommendation 21:** Coordinate with the Technology staff to either enhance the current work order system or perform a cost benefit analysis to acquire a more effective computerized system.
- **Recommendation 22:** Include the Maintenance Director in relevant planning meetings for construction and renovation projects.
- **Recommendation 23:** Develop a long-range facilities master plan.
- **Recommendation 24:** Develop a maintenance and custodial policies and procedures manual.
- **Recommendation 25:** Develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities.
- **Recommendation 26:** Develop individual staff training plans for Maintenance staff.
- **Recommendation 27:** Develop a formal energy management program.
- **Recommendation 28:** Develop a staffing allocation model for both Maintenance and Custodial staff to ensure proper labor productivity and allocation.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STAFFING ALLOCATION STUDY

The district engaged a consultant to assess the staffing allocation guidelines in May 2009 and implemented the consultant's recommendation to combine the two elementary campuses. The study indicated that the activities to develop the guidelines included the following:

- Reviewed the current staffing patterns
- Met with the superintendent and staff to discuss existing guidelines
- Analyzed district financial data in relation to existing guidelines
- Developed a prototype for the revised staffing guidelines

- Met with the superintendent and staff to review the proposed staffing guidelines
- Revised the proposed guidelines
- Met with the Taft ISD principals to review the proposed guidelines
- Submitted the finalized staffing guidelines to the superintendent

The study found that the most important variable impacting staffing in Taft ISD is a declining enrollment resulting in very small campus enrollments. The average campus enrollment was less than 400 students creating the undesirable condition of excessive expenditures for infrastructure costs. As a result, the consultant recommended combining the two elementary campuses into one campus.

At the beginning of school year 2010–11, Taft ISD combined its Petty Elementary Campus (PK–2) with its East Elementary Campus (3–5) in response to a study that recommended Taft ISD consolidate from four to three campuses to maximize instructional funding. The study also concluded that maintenance and custodial staffing was appropriate in 2009 as summarized in **Exhibit 4-5**.

A school district's implementation of appropriate staffing guidelines is the most expedient way to address the issue of financial efficiency to provide the best instructional program for its students. Other districts can replicate the consolidation of their schools based on consistently declining enrollment and potential underutilized building capacity.

HIGH SATISFACTION RATINGS FOR SCHOOL CLEANLINESS

Although a significant portion of the facilities are more than 50 years old, Taft ISD does an effective job in keeping its schools clean. District stakeholders reported high satisfaction ratings with the Maintenance Department regarding school cleanliness. Taft ISD's stakeholder survey results show that the district's principals and assistant principals, district administration, teachers, parents and students felt that the department maintained clean schools.

Exhibit 4-6 indicates that 95 percent of parents, 80 percent of principals and assistant principals, 74 percent of students, 69 percent of teachers, and 65 percent of administrators and support staff responding to the survey felt that school facilities are clean.

Though some repairs were needed to roofs, ceilings, and other areas, the review team observed the overall cleanliness

**EXHIBIT 4-5
TAFT ISD ACTUAL CUSTODIAL STAFF ALLOCATION STUDY**

FACILITY	GROSS SQUARE FEET (GSF)	ACTUAL CUSTODIAL POSITIONS	ALLOCATION PER STUDY	SQUARE FEET ALLOCATION PER CUSTODIAN
Petty Elementary	53,379	2	2	26,690
East Elementary	39,334	3	2	19,667
Taft Junior High	109,626	4	5	21,925
Taft High School	129,204	5	5	25,841
TOTAL	331,543	14	14	

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department, Consultant's Staffing Guidelines Report, May 2009.

**EXHIBIT 4-6
SURVEY RESPONSES**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: "Schools are clean."					
Principals/Assistant Principals	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Teachers	6.1%	63.3%	8.2%	18.4%	4.0%
Administrative & Support Staff	19.8%	45.3%	18.6%	11.6%	4.7%
Students	17.0%	57.4%	12.8%	9.6%	3.2%
Parents	22.5%	72.5%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

of the buildings during the facilities walk-through during the onsite visit to the district.

Providing timely quality facility maintenance and cleaning services for Taft ISD schools supports the district's goal for cost-effective maintenance operations and prolonging the functionality of its buildings.

DETAILED FINDINGS

COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL PARK (REC. 20)

Taft ISD has not effectively managed the provisions of the agreement with the City of Taft (City) regarding the funding of maintenance and operations of the community recreational water park, which has contributed to significant annual deficits. Taft ISD operates a community recreational water park but has not corresponded with the City to request additional funding or alternatives to avoid net losses of more than \$50,000 annually.

The district entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement (agreement) with the City effective for a 20-year period beginning April 23, 2004 for the construction and maintenance of a community recreational park located on property owned by the City and Taft ISD. The parties received funding pursuant to a \$500,000 grant contract with

the Texas Parks and Wildlife and \$1,000,000 school bond proceeds to construct a park including a variety of amenities such as a swimming pool, bath house, parking lots, community pavilion, walking trails, tennis courts, baseball field, and softball field for the benefit of the community.

Section 2.3 of the agreement states that the cost paid by the City shall be reviewed and adjusted every three years; however, Taft ISD has not met with the City to adjust the City's share of the costs. Since 2004, the contract was sent by the City for renewal in 2008, and Taft ISD administration has not held any other dialog with the City.

In addition, one of the action items on the last page of the agreement was to establish a voluntary park donation fund. This fund was to be used for the maintenance, repair, and upgrade of City parks and neighborhood mini-parks and play lots, yet this action item has not been implemented. The district is entitled to all pool revenue and a Taft ISD teacher, who also serves as the Taft Water Park manager, ensures the district receives all revenue. As shown in **Exhibit 4-7**, gross expenses exceed revenues resulting in a net loss that has increased each year since 2008.

**EXHIBIT 4-7
WATER PARK ANNUAL NET LOSS
FISCAL YEARS 2008 TO 2010**

REVENUE/EXPENSE	FY2010	FY2009	FY2008
Local revenues	\$39,307	\$37,227	\$38,119
State revenues	\$2,679	\$2,536	\$2,597
Total revenues	\$41,986	\$39,763	\$40,716
Payroll costs	\$67,859	\$62,261	\$63,327
Professional and contracted Services	\$0	\$680	\$516
Supplies and materials	\$38,588	\$33,655	\$28,219
Other operating costs			\$69
Total operating expenses	\$106,447	\$96,596	\$92,131
Net Income/(Loss)	(\$64,461)	(\$56,833)	(\$51,415)

SOURCE: Taft ISD Annual Financial Report, Statement of Activities, 2008 to 2010.

The water park is open for two and a half months from the end of May through mid-August. The swimming pool is 3 feet deep. Fees to use the water park are as follows:

- Private party \$220
- Public party \$150
- Cost per person \$3
- Family season pass \$130
- Individual season pass \$55
- Groups of 20 or more \$2 each

Exhibit 4-8 displays photos of the water park.

Exhibit 4-9 highlights the contractual responsibilities for Taft ISD and the City.

In accordance with Section 1.1 Term of the agreement, the term shall end on April 23, 2024, unless otherwise extended or sooner terminated by mutual agreement of the Parties.

Taft ISD should meet with City of Taft officials to discuss the operation of the community recreational water park and determine ways to reduce operating deficits. The district should conduct a cost/benefit analysis to analyze expenses and ensure that the City is billed for all costs for which it is responsible. The superintendent should provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees (board) to disclose the revenue and expenses of operating the water park. The board should have a clear understanding of the role of the water park in the district’s mission of educating its children. Taft ISD should analyze water park expenses annually as a basis for negotiating with the City to reduce costs. Assuming the district can reduce the loss by approximately 25 percent of the average annual loss of \$60,000, it would save \$15,000 per year.

WORK ORDER SYSTEM (REC. 21)

Taft ISD’s in-house automated work order system tracks work orders electronically but fails to offer some basic attributes of an effective system such as tracking costs.

**EXHIBIT 4-8
WATER PARK PHOTOS**



SOURCE: <http://www.taftitx.com/waterpark.html>.

**EXHIBIT 4-9
TAFT ISD'S AND CITY'S KEY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MAINTAIN WATER PARK**

DISTRICT'S RESPONSIBILITIES	CITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES
Maintain the facilities and grounds.	Remit \$15,000 to the District annually to share in the cost of maintenance personnel. Reimburse the District 50% of the cost for purchase and upkeep of maintenance equipment for the grounds including lawn mowers and edgers. Amount paid to be reviewed and adjusted every three years.
Retain all revenue from the pool to defray operating expenses and overhead. Employ qualified staff, including a lifeguard, to be onsite at the swimming pool during operating hours.	Pay all utilities including water, sewer, electricity, telephone, and dumpster/trash pickup services.
Maintain liability insurance for District events including coverage for lifeguard services.	Maintain liability insurance for City events.
Maintain detailed accounting records supporting the direct costs.	Maintain detailed accounting records supporting the direct costs.

SOURCE: Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, April 2004.

District employees can log into the system to submit a work order request. The system automatically sends a receipt confirmation to the requestor and the applicable school principal. Taft ISD's Maintenance Director prints the request and manually prioritizes the work orders, using his discretion to route them to Maintenance staff. When the request is completed, the maintenance worker writes his/her name and date completed on the printout and submits the signed work order request form to the office. The office clerk enters the date completed into the work order system and stamps, initials, and files the request form.

Requestors can view the status of the work order and enter comments. The superintendent and director periodically review the service request status screen which shows the requestor's name, issue, date requested, and request status (completed or blank), but it does not show the time it took to complete the request or if it was a follow up request. No report is generated listing only the backlog of work orders, and there is no field to enter costs. Supervisory follow-up on completed work orders to ensure that work was completed properly and timely is not required or performed.

A real-time work order system is an effective tool for managing the maintenance operation and the public's investment in facilities. This type of system is comprised of programs that provide the Maintenance Director with tools and reports to manage the flow of work and monitor staff performance. These tools and reports can contribute to a more efficient and effective maintenance program. Work order systems can also be programmed to produce preventive maintenance work orders on a pre-set schedule. This feature helps to ensure that preventive maintenance work is completed on a timely basis, therefore minimizing deferred maintenance.

Effective automated work order systems should have the following capabilities:

- Establish targets for work order completion times and track success rates;
- Prioritize work orders objectively and efficiently;
- Monitor work order status;
- Track direct labor hours and material costs by school, work order, and staff;
- Quantify the amount of travel time between district facilities;
- Provide easier access to historical maintenance records for each school; and
- Schedule and automatically generate timely work for preventive maintenance.

Sinton ISD uses an automated system that tracks hours, supplies, and facilities through multiple menus. The system generates work orders, prioritizes work order maintenance requests, monitors and adjusts materials, tracks labor and material costs, generates online and hard copy reports, performs cost analysis, and establishes inventory reorder levels. Carrizo Springs CISD identifies work orders as either emergency or regular maintenance and indicates if proper funding is available. The system generates work orders and provides online and hard copy reports.

A Technology Department technician is uncertain if the current work order system can be enhanced to set effective, accurate targets for completion, measure performance, and establish cost-control strategies.

The Maintenance Director should coordinate with the Technology staff to either enhance the current work order system or perform a cost benefit analysis to acquire a more effective computerized system. The director should provide a list of the required features to enhance the current system and request the Technology Department identify which options can be added and project a timeline for completion. The district could then submit online requests for free demonstrations and bids from various outside vendors. Once bids are received, Technology staff could perform a cost benefit analysis for comparison. If a system is purchased, the cost depends on the vendors and options selected. The fiscal impact assumes that the Technology Department can add the required features, so this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT (REC. 22)

The Maintenance Director is only responsible for maintenance operations and does not have a defined role for construction and renovation projects. As a result, the Maintenance staff may not be involved in critical construction planning or pre-occupancy and post-occupancy building evaluations. Essentially, Maintenance staff may only become directly involved with newly constructed or renovated schools after the fact when equipment malfunctions or facilities need repairs.

A summary of the district’s bond propositions is presented in **Exhibit 4-10**.

The current construction project will be managed by a construction management firm. Taft ISD contracted with AG/CM on June 1, 2010 to serve as the program management team consisting of a program manager, project manager, and necessary cost estimators to assist in the oversight of the construction process for the district’s 2010 bond projects. The program manager reports directly to and works under the direction of the superintendent. The project manager assists in the development of construction strategies, phasing of construction to minimize disruption of services, cost estimating and budget verification, and other matters. The project manager assists in managing the design, budgeting, and procurement process prior to the start of construction. The Maintenance Director is not involved in monitoring the quality of the contractor’s work.

In addition, Taft ISD established a Bond Oversight Committee (Committee) responsible for reviewing every phase of the building process from monitoring construction timelines to overseeing bond budget expenditures. After the junior high and Petty Elementary projects are completed, any remaining funds will be allocated to other construction projects. The Committee will lead the planning and make recommendations for other construction projects and present the recommendations to the board for approval. The Committee members were appointed as follows: two community members selected by the board, five community members selected by the superintendent, one staff member selected by each campus Site-Based Decision-Making Committee, and the board president. District employees

**EXHIBIT 4-10
TAFT ISD BOND REFERENDUM ALLOCATION
2010**

PROPOSITION	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Proposition 1	Petty Elementary Conversion into a PK-5th grade campus will provide a new administration/special programs area, a new cafetorium and six new classrooms.	\$7,000,000
Proposition 2	East Elementary Conversion to Junior High housing 6th -8th grade students will provide an up-to-date comprehensive Junior High.	\$9,500,000
Proposition 3	Other possible construction projects if funding allows: New furniture for both Junior High and Petty Elementary Convert Green Avenue Building to Instructional Support Center Auditorium Renovations Demolition of current Maintenance facility and repurpose main Jr. High Building to a Maintenance and Operations building New and/or upgraded sports facilities Other district projects such as new roofs for existing buildings-High School, Central Office, Junior High Main	\$1,700,000

SOURCE: Taft ISD Bond Brochure, 2010.

such as the Maintenance Director will provide input to the committee as requested or required.

Although the superintendent plans to meet regularly with the architect and contract construction team, the Maintenance Director is not an official and ongoing member of the Bond Oversight Committee.

Taft ISD should include the Maintenance Director in relevant planning meetings for construction and renovation projects. The district should include the Maintenance Director on the planning committee for all construction and capital improvements to minimize additional costs to operate and maintain its facilities. This ongoing involvement will strengthen decision-making surrounding construction projects as well as day-to-day maintenance. Maintenance and energy management can provide critical support services for construction planning, pre-construction, and construction, post-construction, pre-occupancy, and post-occupancy phases of capital improvement activities.

The Maintenance Department can also assist in developing material standards for items such as plumbing parts, carpet, wall coverings, and light fixtures that are used in building construction and renovation. Currently, staff are dispersed to a maintenance issue, the issue is diagnosed, necessary parts are purchased, and staff return to repair the maintenance issue. However, if materials are standardized and inventoried, the Maintenance staff can take materials with them to the work site and complete the repair without having to purchase materials. Selecting standardized materials districtwide can benefit the district with improved inventory management and reduces the number of different inventoried items. The increased volume can reduce purchasing cost providing the district with greater purchasing power when dealing with wholesale suppliers. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

LONG-RANGE FACILITY PLANNING (REC. 23)

The district lacks a comprehensive long-range facility master plan that incorporates the facilities condition assessment in planning for future construction and renovation. A long-range facility master plan provides a roadmap for future construction and renovation programs. A typical facilities assessment program evaluates exterior, interior, mechanical systems, safety and building code compliance. An effective deferred maintenance plan accounts for all possible major maintenance requirements for future years rather than reacting to problems as they arise.

The review team requested critical data necessary for planning, but the documents were unavailable such as:

- A board approved construction and facility master plan that documents the history and projections of facility needs, available revenue sources, student enrollment, standardized building components and equipment, and other critical factors in long-term planning;
- The building design capacity for each facility;
- Space utilization plan to optimize classroom and building space; and
- A formal facilities condition assessment program or deferred maintenance plan to assess facility conditions, identify deferred maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the existing facilities.

Taft ISD provided a list of major roof repairs needed on most of the buildings as shown in **Exhibit 4-11**, but no approved funding plan was available.

A comprehensive school facility master plan can include the following:

- An extensive evaluation of the condition and educational functionality of existing buildings and sites;
- A capacity analysis of all district education facilities, reflecting the district's instructional program;
- An evaluation of each campus and facility to determine its best use, in light of local programs and state staffing and space requirements;
- A determination of technology capabilities within existing facilities;
- Information relative to school facilities conformance to state and federal mandates;
- A series of recommendations and options available to the district to meet current and projected facility needs; and
- A 10-year enrollment forecast by grade and by campus for the entire district.

San Angelo ISD officials in conjunction with the board of trustees and the district Facility Advisory Committee have developed a Long Range Facilities Plan to address the current and future needs of the district. In keeping with school board

**EXHIBIT 4-11
TAFT ISD DEFERRED MAINTENANCE - ROOF MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEARS 2010 TO 2013**

ROOF AREA	SQUARE FOOTAGE FOR SECTIONS NEEDING ROOF		2010	2011	2012	2013
	REPAIR	MAINTENANCE				
East Elementary School	50,235		\$602,820			
Petty Elementary School	40,664		\$487,968			
Junior High Auditorium	5,400		\$ 67,500			
High School	56,803	\$54,054	\$307,016	\$187,880	\$159,225	\$181,289
Junior High	27,575	\$10,500	\$72,900	\$98,000		\$24,000
Administration Building	7,780		\$95,305			
Green Avenue Building Additions	8,232			\$98,784		
TOTALS	196,689	\$64,554	\$1,633,509	\$384,664	\$159,225	\$205,289

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department.

policy, the plan addresses the district’s anticipated school facilities needs and priorities. San Angelo ISD’s Long Range Facilities Master Plan can be found at: <http://www.saisd.org/Departments/Maintenance/RevitalizationPlan.asp>.

Taft ISD should develop a long-range facilities master plan. In developing a long-range facilities master plan, the superintendent, the assistant superintendents, and the Maintenance Director could collaborate with facilities professionals to assist with critical planning activities. Manor Independent School District contracts with an educational facility planning and construction program management firm to assist with the district’s long-range facilities planning and capital improvement programs. The Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) offers facility planning services to Texas school districts that include a detailed study of current facilities and projected building needs as well as demographic analysis and enrollment forecasts. TASA offers services in this area at a cost, but the actual costs would be determined if the district decides to use these services.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 24)

The Maintenance Department lacks formal written policies and procedures. Without a policies and procedures manual, the department does not provide a guide to its employees to ensure consistency in addressing a given situation or problem. It also does not provide a training guide for new employees to help in performing their functions. Based on interviews and data requests with administration and maintenance workers and reviews of a sample of work order files, the following conditions exist at Taft ISD as a result of lack of written standards for the department:

- There is no requirement to maintain inspection reports. Inspection reports were requested, but the review team was told that there were no inspection reports. Maintenance relies on work order requests to identify problems or repairs needed.
- Work orders are closed without supervisory inspection for quality assurance and timeliness. A review of closed work order files showed that maintenance workers initialed and submitted work order requests upon completion without any documented management review.

According to the Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, sponsored by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), a maintenance and operations procedures manual should, at a minimum, contain a mission statement, personnel policies, purchasing regulations, accountability measures, asbestos procedures, repair standards, vehicle use guidelines, security standards, and work order procedures.

Documented maintenance procedures should include:

- Names and locations of vendors from whom the staff can purchase maintenance supplies;
- Work order procedures;
- Major types of maintenance work and correct procedures (for example, small construction, roof repair, lighting repair, electrical work, minor plumbing, and so forth);
- Emergency/crisis situations and procedures; and

- Safety procedures.

Documented custodial procedures should include:

- Cleaning procedures, including supplies, basic office cleaning, restroom cleaning and sanitation, hard surface floor maintenance (dusting, mopping, stripping, finishing, and burnishing);
- Integrated pest management;
- Energy management guidelines;
- Safety procedures;
- Facility assessment guidelines;
- Recycling and refuse;
- Custodial certification; and
- Cleaning standards (classrooms, restrooms, gyms, locker rooms, showers, offices, libraries, and other areas).

San Angelo ISD provides a good example of facility maintenance policies and procedures, which can be found at <http://www.saisd.org/Departments/Maintenance/RevitalizationPlan.asp>.

The Maintenance Department should develop a maintenance and custodial policies and procedures manual. The Maintenance Director should contact a facility planning association and several area school districts to identify models for policies and procedures manuals and request all employees to make a list of the work they performed. Using these models and employee input, the director should customize a manual for Taft ISD, meet with employees to discuss the contents of the manual and which areas are applicable to each group, and conduct training necessary to implement the policies and procedures. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE (REC. 25)

Taft ISD has not implemented a preventive maintenance program for its facilities. Currently maintenance is mostly based upon work order requests, which occurs after a problem is identified. The superintendent and Maintenance Director conduct weekly meetings and most meetings include a tour of the district, but they do not maintain an inspection checklist or detailed schedule for repairs. Maintenance staff indicated that sometimes they do not have adequate or properly functioning equipment to do their jobs.

Industry best practices indicate that a widely used strategy to contain maintenance operations costs involves the development of a preventive maintenance program. Preventive maintenance provides a planned approach designed to avoid equipment breakdowns and prevent routine problems from escalating into major repairs or possible premature replacement and includes a timeline schedule for project completion and inspection and maintenance procedures.

San Angelo ISD's Maintenance Department plans scheduled maintenance projects out over five years and keeps a database of the year projects are scheduled to be performed together with the budget amount. By tracking scheduled maintenance over a five-year period, San Angelo ISD has a factual basis for maintenance budgets up to five years into the future. Additionally, by scheduling the work in advance, the district is able to make sure they have the proper supplies on hand to perform the maintenance.

Additionally, San Angelo ISD's Maintenance Department has implemented a forward maintenance crew that visits each school at least once a year and performs preventive maintenance and low priority work orders. The forward maintenance crew, which includes mechanical, electrical, carpentry, painting and plumbing expertise, comes to each school at least once a year to make the repairs that have not been emergencies but are needed to upgrade facilities and provide appropriate spaces for the educational program. During their visits, the crews satisfy the majority of maintenance needs that are either preventive maintenance or have not been of sufficient priority to receive immediate attention.

San Angelo ISD's facility preventive maintenance schedule can be found at <http://www.saisd.org/Departments/Maintenance/RevitalizationPlan.asp>.

Taft ISD should develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities. The Maintenance Director should develop the preventive maintenance program. The plan should include a list of equipment that requires routine inspection, estimated costs for inspection/repair, and a timeline schedule to complete inspections/repairs. Once the preventive maintenance program is implemented, the district should adequately fund its preventive maintenance budget to address the scheduled preventive maintenance activities. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

TRAINING (REC. 26)

Training plans have not been developed for the Maintenance Department. A planned program of training enhances functional skills and knowledge, and cross-training can promote job fulfillment and provide backups when employees are absent. The district has provided some training for its Maintenance Department staff, but only as it relates to safety and security.

Districts can initiate a periodic training program by developing individual training and professional development plans to minimize possible on-the-job accidents, staff inefficiencies, repeat work, and to ensure that maintenance personnel are knowledgeable in current maintenance and custodial procedures and methods.

Generally, there are five basic areas of training focus:

- Training new employees;
- Training current employees who have changed task or function;
- Cross-training employees;
- Training all employees when new statutes need to be enforced; and
- Training all employees when new equipment, tools, or products are purchased.

Exhibit 4-12 provides the peer districts’ average annual training hours. The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Taft ISD.

Taft ISD should develop individual training plans for Maintenance staff. The Maintenance Director should conduct formalized training specific to all job operations and the safety considerations related to these functions. Policies and procedures document existing practices and can be used

**EXHIBIT 4-12
PEER AVERAGE ANNUAL TRAINING HOURS - MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

CLASSIFICATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL TRAINING HOURS			
	TAFT ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD	MULESHOE ISD	SINTON ISD
Maintenance	0	20	20	2
Grounds	0	10	10	2
Custodial	0	25	20	2

NOTE: Data for Poteet ISD was not available.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

as a training guide for new employees. Training can present new methods and opportunities to improve existing practices. Clear documentation of training should be reviewed periodically to ensure that consistent and updated training is provided and to measure safety improvement practices. It is also recommended that the Maintenance Director maintain documentation of all safety related training conducted and that these documents be stored at a designated document center for easy access and reference for management and employees alike. Ongoing evaluation of training efforts, including all aspects of the experience, should be built into the program for educating employees about the facilities and grounds. It is encouraged that any training provided to the organization be videotaped, if possible, for future reference and training opportunities.

The Maintenance Director should work with the Personnel Department to schedule and plan training and to reach out to vendors and suppliers who offer free training. The estimated annual cost for additional training is \$2,000 as there is no current budget for training.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT (REC. 27)

Taft ISD lacks an energy management program to control energy costs in district facilities. The administration told the review team that in 2002 the district spent \$291,000 for a major retrofitting of all lights and centralizing the air conditioner controls. Although the new facilities that will be constructed under the bond program will be modern energy efficient facilities, and the district will reduce the amount of building space by about 40,000 square feet to heat and cool, the district does not perform a periodic trend analysis of energy costs by building. The district manages some energy costs by controlling a set time to turn air conditioning systems on and off, but no one monitors the energy costs.

Texas Education Code Section 44.902 states the following: LONG-RANGE ENERGY PLAN TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRIC ENERGY. (a) The Board of Trustees of a school district shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district’s annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district’s energy plan.

No one has been assigned responsibility to implement this goal, and it is not a goal in the school year 2010–11 District Improvement Plan.

Exhibit 4-13 displays Taft ISD’s annual energy cost from school years 2005–06 to 2009–10 depicting significant fluctuations during this period.

The Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) provides several programs and resources that school districts can use to develop an energy management program and formal policy to promote energy usage awareness throughout the district. SECO’s Schools/Local Government Energy Program assists schools to set up and maintain effective energy-efficiency programs. SECO provides facility preliminary energy assessments, energy management training workshops, technical support in designing new facilities and onsite training for student energy awareness projects.

SECO provides Texas school districts with the Energy Education Curriculum Program at no cost to the school district. The Energy Education Curriculum Program promotes energy conservation and efficiency through education. SECO’s Energy Education Curriculum Program’s goal is to increase Texas teachers’ awareness of alternative energy in their communities and to improve their understanding of the nature and extent of energy and its resources, energy conservation and efficiency, the economic and environmental effects of energy use, and alternative energy technologies.

SECO also provides school districts with an Energy Efficiency Partnership Program; this project provides personalized onsite technical assistance to public schools that includes:

- Analysis of utility bills and other building information to determine energy and cost utilization indices of facilities;

- Recommended maintenance procedures and capital energy retrofits;
- Design and monitoring of customized procedures to control the run times of energy-using systems;
- Informal onsite training for building operators and maintenance staff;
- Follow-up visits to assist with the implementation of the recommendations and to determine savings associated with the project;
- Development of an overall energy management policy; and
- Assistance with the development of guidelines for efficiency levels of future equipment purchases.

Taft ISD’s Maintenance Department should develop a formal energy management program.

Reputable energy management experts such as SECO recommend that an effective energy management program should have an effective energy policy statement. Taft ISD’s assistant superintendent for Business should coordinate with the maintenance director to develop the district’s energy management program using SECO information as a guide. In order to have an effective energy management program, the entire school district including students must be aware and involved. SECO recommends that the program include effective energy policy statements which state that the fulfillment of this policy is the joint responsibility of the trustees, administrators, teachers, students and support personnel. Energy conservation training programs should be conducted for campus staff and students. The assistant superintendent for Business should coordinate with SECO

**EXHIBIT 4-13
TAFT ISD DISTRICTWIDE ENERGY COST
SCHOOL YEARS 2005–06 TO 2009–10**

FACILITY	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
High School	\$58,580	\$119,030	\$190,793	\$146,241	\$147,266
Junior High	\$46,066	\$82,297	\$122,030	\$116,731	\$131,346
East Elementary	\$24,580	\$36,165	\$ 42,283	\$47,429	\$47,762
Petty Elementary	\$22,983	\$38,144	\$46,057	\$51,382	\$51,742
Transportation-Bus Garage	\$245	\$1,186	\$3,450	\$3,952	\$3,980
Districtwide-Administration Building	\$38,817	\$20,046	\$17,101	\$18,002	\$18,049
TOTAL	\$191,271	\$296,868	\$421,714	\$383,737	\$400,145

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department.

who provides informal onsite training and personalized onsite technical assistance.

SECO also recommends best practices elements for an energy management program that include a mission statement, on-going monitoring and distribution of facility-specific energy bills, documents reasonable achievable savings targets for annual energy consumption/costs, and documents energy related tasks for custodial, maintenance and administrative staff. The assistant superintendent should review the information offered by SECO including the free Energy Education Curriculum Program and contact them for onsite technical assistance if needed.

Energy-Efficient Education, a 2001 publication distributed by SECO, identifies the following important points in establishing an energy policy:

- Acknowledge rising utility costs of the district and the necessity for energy controls;
- Set realistic and attainable goals and timelines for accomplishment of these goals;
- Apply goals and timelines to the entire district and require commitment from all staff and students;
- Designate an energy manager that answers directly to the superintendent and board;
- Require the preparation of an energy management plan for board approval that keeps the program visible, relevant, and responsive; and
- Allot an energy management budget that is directly linked to expected savings.

After the program is established, the Maintenance Department can assist to educate the district on energy saving techniques and establish an energy conscious environment and promote the energy management program. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

STAFF ALLOCATION (REC. 28)

The Maintenance Department does not use a formal staffing allocation process to assign staff to each facility, which has resulted in understaffing and overstaffing at some campuses. Staffing is generally the largest portion of a department's costs and overstaffing takes needed funds from the district's instructional programs.

Taft ISD has a staff of nine maintenance workers and 13 custodians that the district deploys districtwide. The review team compared the district's maintenance staffing levels to selected peer districts, or school districts similar to Taft ISD that are used for comparison purposes. This comparison revealed that Taft ISD's maintenance staffing levels are comparable to its peers. **Exhibit 4-14** shows Taft ISD maintenance function staffing comparison to its selected peer districts and indicates a similar ratio of maintenance staff to the number of schools. Some of Taft ISD's maintenance workers also work as bus drivers. Although each worker is responsible for specialized functions such as a plumber or electrician, all staff are classified the same.

In 2002, the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) published findings to establish custodial staffing guidelines for educational facilities. Based on the guidelines published by APPA, custodians should clean approximately 21,000 square feet per day to establish a school at "Level 2," the APPA standard for "Ordinary Tidiness." A building cleaned at "Level 2" is considered acceptable for classroom and school space. When compared to industry standards, Taft ISD meets the standard.

APPA also provides an adjusted guideline for cleaning that assumes that special attention is paid to some custodial tasks and provides an adjusted guideline for more demanding cleaning activities. The adjusted guideline requires each custodian to clean about 16,705 square feet of floor space. **Exhibit 4-15** shows the district's custodial allocation for its daily cleanable square feet.

Based on APPA guidelines, the total custodial staff meets the allocation standard. However, the guidelines indicate that there may be more custodians than needed at the elementary campus and not enough at the high school.

Taft ISD should develop a staffing allocation model for both Maintenance and Custodial staff to ensure proper labor productivity and allocation. Given the renovation of East Elementary to Taft Junior High, the district could use the new facility as an opportunity to develop staffing guidelines based on industry standards for the campuses to ensure efficient utilization of staff. The Assistant Superintendent for Personnel should use the model above and the 2009 study to perform the staffing allocation. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**EXHIBIT 4-14
MAINTENANCE STAFFING COMPARISONS FOR TAFT ISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

VARIABLE	TAFT ISD	SINTON ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD	MULESHOE ISD	PEER AVERAGE (W/O TAFT ISD)
2009–10 Enrollment	1,143	2,125	2,314	1,464	
Total Number of Schools	3	4	6	4	5
Management					
Director reports to:	Supt.	Dep. Supt.	Exec. Dir.	Asst. Supt.	
Director	1	1	1	1	
Asst. Director			1		
Supervisor		1			
Administrative and Clerical			2		
General Maintenance/Craftsmen	1	1		5	
Painters	1	1	1		
Carpenters and Helpers	2	1	2		
Plumbers	1	1	2		
HVAC Technicians	1	1	2 Also Elect.		
Locksmith			Also Carpenter		
Electricians			1 Asst. Elec.		
Grounds	3*	4	7		
Mechanics		1	2		
Energy Management			Also HVAC		
Other					
Total Facilities-Related Positions	10	12	21	6	
Ratio of Maintenance Staff to Schools	3.3	3.0	3.5	1.5	3

*One Grounds position became vacant after the Review Team visited the district in February 2011 and had not been filled at the time of this report. SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department and Peer Survey Completed by Maintenance Director or designee. Data for Poteet ISD was not available.

**EXHIBIT 4-15
TAFT ISD ACTUAL CUSTODIAL STAFF ALLOCATION STUDY
COMPARED TO INDUSTRY STANDARD**

FACILITY	GROSS SQUARE FEET (GSF)	ACTUAL CUSTODIAL POSITIONS	INDUSTRY STANDARD GSF/21,000	INDUSTRY STANDARD GSF/16,705
Petty Elementary**	53,379	4	3	3
East Elementary*	39,334	0	0	0
Taft Junior High	109,626	4	5	7
Taft High School	129,204	5	6	8
TOTAL	331,543	13	14	18

*Campus closed effective school year 2010–11; several portable buildings added to Petty Elementary to accommodate the consolidation of the elementary schools.

**Excludes square feet for portable buildings; data not provided.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department, as of February 2011.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
20. Meet with City of Taft officials to discuss the operation of the community recreational water park and determine ways to reduce operating deficits.	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$60,000	\$0
21. Coordinate with the Technology staff to either enhance the current work order system or perform a cost benefit analysis to acquire a more effective computerized system.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
22. Include the Maintenance director in relevant planning meetings for construction and renovation projects.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
23. Develop a long-range facilities master plan.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
24. Develop a maintenance and custodial policies and procedures manual.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
25. Develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26. Develop individual staff training plans for Maintenance staff.	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$10,000)	\$0
27. Develop a formal energy management program.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
28. Develop a staffing allocation model for both Maintenance and Custodial staff to ensure proper labor productivity and allocation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	(\$2,000)	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$50,000	\$0

CHAPTER 5

BUSINESS SERVICES

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 5. BUSINESS SERVICES

School districts face the task of carefully balancing the dual demands of educating America’s children while balancing their budgets with available resources. Now more than ever, districts must employ innovative teaching methods and identify resourceful means of obtaining more and better value for their money. Success depends on their ability to address budget shortfalls, identify and eliminate wasteful practices, and manage business affairs wisely and efficiently. Sound financial management, asset and risk management, and sound purchasing techniques provide some of the tools school districts need to meet that challenge. These functions are collectively referred to as business services.

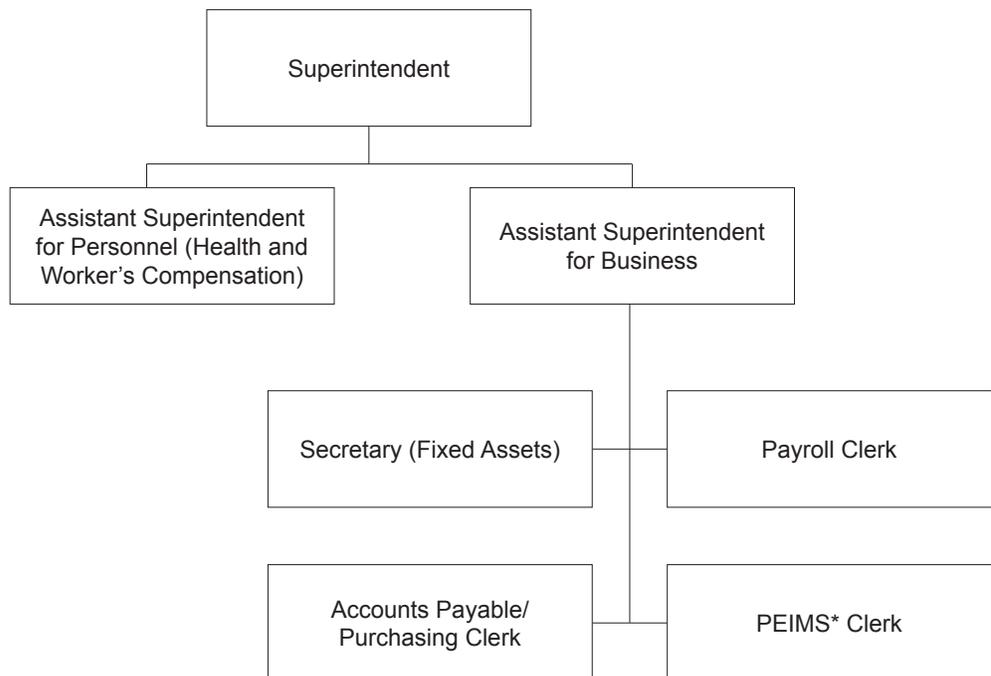
Financial management ensures that school districts receive and manage revenue from varied sources; develop balanced budgets to control spending; and issue timely, accurate, and relevant financial reports. Asset and risk management uses efficient banking structures to manage cash and liquidity; employs a variety of cash management techniques; maximizes investment earnings; ensures the health and well being of

district employees; reduces the risk of loss from unforeseen, catastrophic events; and safeguards fixed assets. Effective procurement practices ensure that the “right” goods are acquired, at the “right” time, in the correct quantities, at the “right” price, all in accordance with state and local purchasing regulations and guidelines.

Taft ISD’s financial and purchasing functions are under the supervision and oversight of the assistant superintendent for Business. Asset and risk management functions are divided between the assistant superintendent for Business and the assistant superintendent for Personnel. The assistant superintendent for Business has six direct reports, including the food service director, and is responsible for cash, investments, debt, and fixed assets inventory. The assistant superintendent for Personnel oversees administration of the district’s health plans and workers’ compensation programs but has no direct reports to assist with these functions.

Exhibit 5-1 provides an overview of the organization in which business services functions reside.

**EXHIBIT 5-1
TAFT ISD BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**



*Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).
SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department.

Financial management plays a major role in district activities and touches every aspect of school operations. Effective financial management involves developing budgets to monitor spending, control costs, and establish accountability while ensuring that actual financial results are properly captured, categorized, recorded, and reported as a measure against the budget.

Taft ISD's adopted budget for fiscal year 2010–11 is \$12.9 million. The district derives 50 percent of its revenue from the state, 36 percent from property taxes and other local sources, and 14 percent from the federal government. Local revenues are derived primarily from property taxes. The district's 2010 total tax rate is \$1.3097 composed of \$1.17 maintenance and operations and \$0.1397 debt service (interest and sinking). Functions define how a district spends its money. The budget is developed and adopted at the functional level. On a functional basis, the district's top three budgeted expenditures are for instruction, plant maintenance and operations, and debt service.

A clerk in the Business Department performs both purchasing and accounts payable functions. Campuses and departments submit purchase requisitions online through the district's Skyward financial system. After ensuring that the requisitions have been approved and funds are available, the clerk releases the requisition, which then becomes a purchase order. During fiscal years 2008–09 and 2009–10, Taft ISD generated 4,027 and 3,241 purchase orders valued at \$4.2 million and \$4.9 million, respectively. Accounts Payable processed 2,835 checks valued at \$3.8 million for fiscal year 2008–09 and 2,758 checks valued at \$4.6 million for fiscal year 2009–10.

Taft ISD participates in three cooperative purchasing programs: the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) Purchasing Program, the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) BuyBoards, and the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN). Texas Education Code Section 44.031 requires all contracts, except for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period, be procured by the method that provides the best value for the district through one of the following: (1) competitive bidding, (2) competitive sealed proposals, (3) a request for proposals, (4) interlocal contracts, (5) reverse auctions, or (6) the formation of a political subdivision corporation under Local Government Code Section 304.001.

Taft ISD maintains its operating funds at Wells Fargo bank while investing idle cash in TexPool, MBIA-Texas, and TexStar investment pools. The district's most recent bond election was held on May 8, 2010. Voters approved the issuance of \$18.2 million of School Building Bonds for the conversion of East Elementary School into a junior high school and the renovation of Petty Elementary School. Estrada Hinojosa & Company, Inc. is the district's bond advisor.

The district's auditor is Ernest R. Garza and Company, P.C. whose latest report indicated that Taft ISD's financial statements are an accurate representation of the district's financial condition (unqualified opinion).

The district has a self-insured medical plan accounted for through an Internal Service Fund. Humana administers four plans from which employees may choose. The district uses an independent insurance agent to assist with evaluating requests for proposals for health, disability, cancer, dental, and vision insurance. The district's contribution is \$255 per employee consisting of \$180 from the district and \$75 from the state.

Taft ISD obtains property casualty insurance through the Regional Pool Alliance. General, auto, and physical damage liability is obtained through the Texas Association of Public Schools (TAPS). Workers' Compensation Insurance is through SchoolComp.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD has taken a proactive approach to historic deficits and anticipated funding reductions by creating three budget scenarios for fiscal year 2011–12.
- Taft ISD conducts a periodic review of student activity funds to compensate for internal control weaknesses inherent in monitoring and safeguarding such funds.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD does not produce a budget document that communicates the financial allocation details of the district as well as function as an instrument of financial management and control.
- Taft ISD's budget development and control processes do not promote the principles of site-based budgeting whereby school principals are the business managers over their campuses.

- Taft ISD's internal controls over certain key business processes are insufficient to ensure that errors or irregularities will not occur or be detected within a reasonable timeframe.
- Taft ISD does not use available tools and technology to manage its cash position.
- Taft ISD does not use workers' compensation loss information to manage losses through safety training initiatives.
- Taft ISD has not maximized the use of technology to make payroll and fixed asset business processes more effective and efficient.
- Taft ISD does not consistently follow its policy and procedures of issuing purchase orders before a purchase is made.
- Taft ISD has longstanding relationships for auditing and insurance agent services, and, therefore, has not issued a request for proposals (RFP) for such services in years.
- Taft ISD has not purchased fidelity bonds for some employees who handle cash or who are in sensitive financial management positions.
- Taft ISD does not have a fund balance policy for its health insurance fund thereby endangering adequate health coverage for the district's employees.
- Taft ISD does not have a process to review and verify the accuracy of payroll deductions used for third-party payments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 29:** Improve the budget document so that it communicates district financial information more clearly and concisely on the district's website.
- **Recommendation 30:** Allow school principals a greater role in the development, control, and modification of their budgets.
- **Recommendation 31:** Strengthen Business Department internal controls over key business processes.
- **Recommendation 32:** Expand the use of cash management services to manage cash efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances.
- **Recommendation 33:** Develop a loss statistics database from its workers' compensation loss reports to target safety training and use the information to manage workers' compensation claims.
- **Recommendation 34:** Maximize the use of technology in the areas of payroll and fixed assets.
- **Recommendation 35:** Enforce purchase order requirements, and institute a process for legitimate exceptions, such as emergency purchases.
- **Recommendation 36:** Issue an RFP for auditing and insurance agent services.
- **Recommendation 37:** Purchase fidelity bonds for all employees who have cash handling responsibilities or duties related to cash receipts and disbursements.
- **Recommendation 38:** Adopt a Health Insurance Fund Balance policy to ensure that the balance does not fall below board of trustee (board)-defined thresholds.
- **Recommendation 39:** Implement an independent review procedure for the reconciliation of payroll deductions used for third-party payments.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FUND BALANCE

Taft ISD has taken a proactive approach to historic deficits and anticipated funding reductions by creating three budget scenarios for fiscal year 2011–12. The district has recovered successfully from a deficit General Fund balance and is acting proactively to prepare for an imminent decline in resources projected for fiscal year 2011–12. Fund balance is an important factor in determining a school district's financial status. A school district's fund balance is segregated by fund and type. The General Fund, Unrestricted Fund Balance is a standard barometer of how much money the district has available to absorb operating losses or unforeseen financial emergencies. Unrestricted fund balance is like a savings account; it represents unexpended resources the district has available for future obligations.

At the end of fiscal year 2007–08, the district's General Fund, Unrestricted Balance was negative \$200,115. In fact, because this amount indicated that the district was ailing financially, the district failed its 2007–2008 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) rating. It received a Substandard Achievement rating that year because it failed

the first indicator, which states: “Was the Total Fund Balance Less Reserved Fund Balance Greater Than Zero In the General Fund?” The district’s response was “No.”

In addition, at the end of fiscal year 2007–08, Taft ISD’s fund balance was short of the optimum fund balance, as determined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) required calculation worksheet included in the district’s audited financial statements by \$1.6 million.

In subsequent years, actions taken during fiscal year 2008–09, continued on through fiscal year 2009–10 to rebuild the fund balance. During fiscal year 2008–09, it increased its tax rate from \$1.1379 to \$1.2607. The maintenance and operations (M&O) component increased 12.5 percent from \$1.04 to \$1.17. This additional revenue coupled with a reduction in workforce of approximately 16 percent set the district on a course towards replenishing its fund balance.

As a result, the fund balance at the end of fiscal years 2008–09 and 2009–10 was \$312,692 and \$727,684, respectively. The FIRST rating for these years improved to Standard Achievement, and the district is moving closer to TEA’s optimum fund balance. The shortfall has declined from \$1.6 million at the end of fiscal year 2007–08 to \$263,292 in fiscal year 2009–10.

In preparation of its fiscal year 2011–12 budget and in anticipation of cuts in state funding, the district has developed three budget cutting scenarios. They anticipate a 10 percent cut, a 15 percent cut, and a 20 percent cut. Areas examined include personnel, contracted services, and supplies.

This type of planning and preparation is a positive step towards ensuring that the district stays on track with rebuilding its General Fund balance.

ACTIVITY FUND REVIEWS

Taft ISD conducts a periodic review of student activity funds to compensate for internal control weaknesses inherent in monitoring and safeguarding such funds. By their very nature, school activity funds are subject to misuse and misappropriation. Students and their advisors conduct fund raising activities, handle cash, and are responsible to account for and report financial transactions. Therefore, student activity funds are often the subject of auditor findings as well as the source of disciplinary action against school administrators in cases where such funds have been misused.

Taft ISD’s accounts payable clerk (clerk) performs “surprise” reviews of each school activity fund at least once per semester. During the visit, the clerk uses a review form to record the campus name, the check register range reviewed, and receipt numbers reviewed. The clerk checks to determine, for each disbursement, whether a check request was completed, principal’s signature is present, requestor’s signature is present, original receipt or invoice is present, and sales tax paid. The clerk also writes notes on each exception and submits the review form to the assistant superintendent for Business for review.

The assistant superintendent for Business reviews and approves the review sheet and sends the campus an e-mail. If there were no findings, the campus receives a message like the following:

“On December 9, 2010, [accounts payable/purchasing clerk] went to your campus and conducted a routine surprise audit of your Student Activity Funds. The overall results were very good with no exceptions noted. This will be the only correspondence concerning the audit and I appreciate your diligence in overseeing your Student Activity Fund process. Furthermore, I appreciate the courtesy extended to my staff in regards to the surprise audits that we conduct. You should expect at least one each semester. Please let me know if you any questions or concerns concerning this process or Student Activity Funds in general.”

If exceptions were noted, the assistant superintendent for Business communicates them to the campus for follow-up and appropriate action.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BUDGET DOCUMENT (REC. 29)

Taft ISD does not produce a budget document that communicates the financial allocation details of the district as well as function as an instrument of financial management and control. The district does not publish a user-friendly budget document. The document posted on the website meets all legal requirements; however, because it is not very informative, Taft ISD is missing an opportunity to communicate with its constituency. Someone unfamiliar with school district accounting and finances will not be enlightened by the district’s budget. Those somewhat familiar with school district finances could become confused or misinterpret the data.

There are two budget links on the district’s website. One opens a spreadsheet showing the prior year’s “actual” budget

and current year's "proposed" budgeted expenditure by function and per student. The other opens the adopted budget and also shows revenues. There is no explanation of the difference between "actual" budget and "proposed" budget. Those unfamiliar with these terms might not understand that the "actual" budget, also known as the "current" budget, is the adopted budget as amended. Those familiar with these terms would not know whether the budget includes all funds or only the General Fund because the distinction is not made on the documents.

In addition, although not required by law, there is no discussion of budget goals, priorities, or objectives in the district's budget presentation. Also, there are no explanatory narratives, charts, or graphs to highlight important information and numerical relationships. These deficiencies limit the budget's usefulness as a communications device, policy document, and financial plan. In its present form, Taft ISD's budget cannot be used to understand the financial allocation details of the district. Consequently, Taft ISD is missing an opportunity to enhance its image in the community by demonstrating a commitment to financial accountability, transparency, and stewardship.

A budget can and should be more than just a financial plan. A budget can have additional purposes such as a communications device, a policy document, and a financial plan. In fact, budgets are most useful and effective when used as a means for both the district staff and the community at-large to understand the financial allocation details of the district. The district has an opportunity to "tell its story" when the budget communicates what is behind and beyond the numbers.

The Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) is a national organization that promotes excellence in the form, content, and presentation of budget documents through budget award programs. The GFOA's program is designed for any governmental entity. These programs establish a number of criteria for exemplary budget documents and provide certification awards to nonprofit entities whose budget documents meet the criteria. Many educational institutions across the country use the criteria to apply for the award, but some use them merely to improve their budget document's content, format, and presentation.

The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Taft ISD. Carrizo Springs CISD, one of Taft ISD's peer districts, posts a budget on its website that is more understandable and useful than the budget

posted online by Taft ISD. It shows a column for General Fund and one for all funds. Expenditures are categorized by object, function, and organization. It also shows percentages and per student amounts. Although Carrizo Springs CISD does not include a budget narrative, the presentation of its budget is more informative.

Even if Taft ISD does not choose to apply for GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, it could use GFOA criteria and examples from GFOA award winning budgets to improve its budget presentation. For example, districts could improve the presentation of its budget by summarizing, on a single page, its budgeted revenue and expenditures by fund and function. To illustrate, **Exhibit 5-2** presents the budget summary page from the North East ISD, a recipient of the GFOA budget award for the past 10 years.

Taft ISD should take steps to improve the budget document so that it communicates district financial information more clearly and concisely on the district's website. It should clarify what funds are included, define the difference between "actual" and "proposed" budget, and include information to provide more insight such as charts, written analysis, and executive level summaries. Incremental steps could be made gradually over time and would improve the budget's presentation on the district's website. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL (REC. 30)

Taft ISD's budget development and control processes do not promote the principles of site-based budgeting whereby school principals are the business managers over their campuses. School principals advised the review team that once their line item budget is submitted to the Business Department, their involvement ends. After the budget is adopted, they receive their final budget allocations, which may be different from what they requested. During onsite interviews, school principals expressed wanting to know more about their budget and how it is derived, since they have little to no involvement or say in what they ultimately receive. Despite assurances from central administration, answers to their questions continue to remain vague and not very helpful.

In the survey conducted by the review team, 80 percent of school principals acknowledge ample involvement in the budget development process. This involvement reflects the initial input school principals have in developing their initial budget. However, when asked if they fully understand the district's financial management policies, received adequate

**EXHIBIT 5-2
BEST PRACTICE BUDGET SUMMARY**

ESTIMATED REVENUES	GENERAL FUND	SCHOOL NUTRITION FUND	DEBT SERVICE FUND	TOTAL ALL FUNDS
Local	\$270,887,062	\$13,084,751	\$86,975,903	\$370,947,716
State	\$190,372,939	\$753,452		\$191,126,391
Federal And Other	\$1,233,814	\$11,621,355		\$12,855,169
Other Resources	\$173,125			\$173,125
Total Revenues	\$462,666,940	\$25,459,558	\$86,975,903	\$575,102,401
Appropriations				
Function 11 Instruction	\$285,975,032			\$285,975,032
Function 12 Instructional Resources & Media Services	\$7,952,960			\$7,952,960
Function 13 Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development	\$9,503,919			\$9,503,919
Function 21 Instructional Leadership	\$5,792,512			\$5,792,512
Function 23 School Leadership	\$30,542,034			\$30,542,034
Function 31 Guidance & Counseling	\$16,688,741			\$16,688,741
Function 32 Social Work Services	\$2,066,777			\$2,066,777
Function 33 Health Services	\$6,956,447			\$6,956,447
Function 34 Student Transportation	\$15,144,808			\$15,144,808
Function 35 Food Services		\$22,857,244		\$22,857,244
Function 36 Extra Curricular Activities	\$8,020,836			\$8,020,836
Function 41 General Administration	\$15,017,050			\$15,017,050
Function 51 Plant Maintenance And Operations	\$52,670,458	\$2,591,843		\$55,262,301
Function 52 Security and Monitoring Services	\$3,546,011	\$65,000		\$3,611,011
Function 53 Data Processing Services	\$3,574,883			\$3,574,883
Function 61 Community Services	\$274,665			\$274,665
Function 71 Debt Service			\$88,244,589	\$88,244,589
Function 81 Facilities Acquisition & Construction	\$152,234			\$152,234
Function 93 Payments To Fiscal Agent	\$350,000			\$350,000
Function 95 Juvenile Justice Alternative Education	\$350,000			\$350,000
Total Appropriations	\$464,579,367	\$25,514,087	\$88,244,589	\$578,338,043
Other Uses	\$30,000			\$30,000
Total Appropriations and Other Uses	\$464,609,367	\$25,514,087	\$88,244,589	\$578,368,043
Projected Beginning Fund Balance 07/1/07	\$67,702,615	\$4,821,109	\$34,831,289	\$107,355,013
Net Revenue/Sources Over (Appropriation) (Uses)	(\$1,942,427)	(\$54,529)	(\$1,268,686)	(\$3,265,642)
Projected Ending Fund Balance 6/30/08	\$65,760,188	\$4,766,580	\$33,562,603	\$104,089,371
Reserved Designated Fund Balance	(\$4,249,888)			(\$4,249,888)
Projected Unreserved/Undesignated Fund Balance 6/30/08	\$61,510,300	\$4,766,580	\$33,562,603	\$99,839,483

SOURCE: North East ISD, Budget Document, Fiscal Year 2010.

training on the financial and budgeting system, understood how to use the financial and budgeting system to manage school finances, or could they move budget funds without contacting central office, 40 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements. **Exhibit 5-3** presents principal survey results.

Taft ISD’s budget preparation process begins in April of each year. The superintendent approves the budget process, which is outlined with school principals and staff. The assistant superintendent for Business sends each school principal a budget worksheet similar to the one shown in **Exhibit 5-4**.

The school principal enters requested funding for the current year in the “Revisions” column. According to Taft ISD’s budget instructions, the Campus Site-based Committees are required to review the allocations. However, the review team was told that the committees are not meaningfully involved in the budget process. The worksheets are sent to the assistant superintendent for Business who compiles and enters them into the budget module of the finance system. At that point, school principal involvement in the budget process ends until they need to request a budget transfer.

Taft ISD schools have access to enter purchase requisitions, check the status of budget line items, and view their budget reports. However, school principals do not have access and thus are not able to make budget transfers themselves. Instead they must submit budget transfer requests to the assistant superintendent for Business and the superintendent for approval. This is an unnecessary requirement. Taft ISD’s financial accounting system, Skyward, allows school

principals to make budget transfers from one object code to another. Moreover, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) encourages this practice. Section 5.3.4 of TEA’s Financial Accountability System Resource Guide entitled, “Budget Amendments” states:

“Campus budget managers may be granted the authority (at the discretion of the school district board) to move budgeted funds from one expenditure object to another within a function. For example, a principal may transfer budgeted funds from Supplies and Materials (Object 6300) to Other Operating Costs (Object 6400) within Instruction (Function 11) without formal board approval.”

Involving school principals more in the budget development process, and giving them the authority to make their own budget transfers would enhance their status as campus managers. Lack of participation and authority encourages feelings of isolation rather than involvement and inclusion.

To improve budget and purchasing accountability at the school level, Kingsville ISD gave each school online access to its budget line items in the district’s financial system. The online access allows school principals to monitor their budgets more effectively by generating their own budget-to-actual reports whenever they want. This also saved their Finance Department staff time previously used in generating and issuing monthly reports.

Taft ISD should allow school principals a greater role in the development, control, and modification of their budgets. Before budget adoption, and with the help of the assistant

**EXHIBIT 5-3
TAFT ISD SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS**

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I am given ample opportunity to participate in the development of my school’s budget and to determine how much money my school will have to spend during the year.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
I fully understand the district’s financial management policies and procedures and what is expected of me to monitor and protect the financial resources that have been allocated to my school.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
I have received adequate training on the district’s financial accounting and budgeting system.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
I understand how to use the district’s financial accounting and budgeting system for the financial management of my school.	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
I am able to move funds from one spending category to the other without contacting central office as long as it does not change my overall budget total.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%

SOURCE: Reveiw Team Survey, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 5-4
TAFT ISD BUDGET WORKSHEET**

FND T FC OBJ SO ORG F P1	DESCRIPTION	2009-10 REVISED BUDGET	ENCUM- BERED AMOUNT	2009-10 FYTD ACTIVITY	UNEN- CUMBERED BALANCE	REVISIONS
199 E 11 6219 00 041 0 11 000	CONTRACTED SERV	795.00	0.00	534.40	260.50	
199 E 11 6219 50 041 0 11 000	MOTIVATION SPEAKER	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	
199 E 11 6249 10 041 0 99 000	MICROSOFT LICENSE	10,588.00	0.00	10,588.00	0.00	
199 E 11 6269 01 041 0 11 000	COPY MACHINE RENTAL	11,700.00	5,910.76	5,789.24	0.00	
199 E 11 62-- -- -- -- --		23,583.00	5,910.76	16,911.74	760.50	
199 E 11 6399 00 041 0 23 000	SUPPLIES SPEC ED	1,100.00	13.29	2,910.89	(1,824.18)	
199 E 11 6399 10 041 0 11 000	SUPPLIES GENERAL	14,500.00	155.47	14,109.50	234.63	15,215 715
199 E 11 6399 14 041 0 23 000	SUPPLIES SPEC ED	0.00	0.00	115.29	(115.29)	
199 E 11 6399 24 041 0 11 000	SUPPLIES COMP LAB	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	500 300
199 E 11 6399 26 041 0 21 000	SUPPLIES GIFTED/ TALENTED	400.00	313.00	0.00	87.00	250 -150
199 E 11 6399 80 041 0 11 000	SUPPLIES COPIES	350.00	0.00	231.27	118.73	
199 E 1 6399 81 041 0 11 000	SUPPLIES POSTAGE	800.00	0.00	1,176.23	(376.23)	1,300 500
199 E 11 63-- -- -- -- --		17,350.00	481.76	18,743.58	(1,875.34)	
100 E 11 6411 14 014 0 23 000	TRAVEL SPEC ED	500.00	40.00	647.50	(187.50)	
199 E 11 6494 00 041 0 11 000	TRAVEL FIELD TRIP	500.00	0.00	90.94	409.06	
199 E 11 6494 14 041 0 23 000	TRAVEL BUS TRANS	1,000.00	0.00	1,769.25	(796.25)	
199 E 11 6499 0 014 0 11 000	AWARDS DIPLOMA	2,000.00	721.30	162.00	1,116.70	1,500 -500
199 E 11 6499 01 041 0 11 000	INSERVICE REFRESHMENTS	665.00	357.27	307.73	0.00	1,000 335
199 E 11 6499 03 041 0 11 000	MOTIVATION STUDENTS	3,000.00	191.23	2,400.09	408.68	3,500 500
199 E 11 64-- -- -- -- --		7,665.00	1,309.80	5,377.51	977.69	

SOURCE: Taft Junior High School, February 2011.

superintendent for Business, school principals should understand why their initial budget requests were either denied or reduced and be involved in the process. After budget adoption, they should be allowed to make their own budget transfers rather than relying on the Business Department. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

INTERNAL CONTROLS (REC. 31)

Taft ISD’s internal controls over certain key business processes are insufficient to ensure that errors or irregularities will not occur or be detected within a reasonable timeframe. As a result, the district is exposed to a multitude of risks including unauthorized and inaccurate transactions, misappropriation of funds, and the possibility of fraudulent transactions. In small school districts, segregation of duties is more difficult to achieve because there are fewer employees to perform tasks. In small school districts, there are fewer

employees to perform tasks, employees wear various “hats” and tend to operate in a more informal, personal manner. However, because of the risk involved and the fact that a school district is a steward of public resources, it is important to remain vigilant to ensure that internal controls exist and are operating effectively. Several areas of operation either lack sufficient controls or the controls are so weak that errors and irregularities could occur and may go undetected.

First, budgets are important features of internal control because they ensure that limits are placed on spending. Taft ISD’s budget controls are weak because the accounts payable clerk can “switch off” the control in the financial system that prevents expenditures from being made from depleted budget line items. Under normal circumstances, when a purchase has to be issued from a line item that has insufficient funds, the school principal will submit a budget transfer form to the Business Department to move money from

another line item with adequate funds. However, school principals told the review team that in some instances, they would not complete a budget transfer form. Instead, they would simply inform the Business Department of their desire to spend out of a depleted line item and the Business Department would turn the control feature off. One school principal stated that this practice creates confusing negative budget balances and should be discontinued. An illustration of the negative balances caused by circumventing budget controls is shown in **Exhibit 5-5** under the unencumbered balance column.

Second, segregation of duties is a critical component of internal control because it ensures that no one person has complete access to a process or function that would allow them to both perpetuate and conceal improper activities. Taft ISD's segregation of duties are inadequate in the payroll and accounts payable areas. This is due to the payroll and accounts payable clerks being able to change their respective master file. For example, the payroll clerk can input employee information and change pay rates, and the accounts payable clerk can input vendor information and issue vendor checks.

Third, school secretaries control every aspect of student activity fund transactions. They issue checks, record the transaction, and reconcile the bank account. Complete access to a process is a clear violation of the principle of segregation of duties. No single individual should be able to control all aspects of a process. Although the accounts payable clerk performs periodic reviews of activity funds, the review is not designed to expose a plan to misappropriate funds.

Finally, the review team was told that staff responsible for critical functions is cross trained. However, neither the payroll clerk nor the accounts payable clerk has ever actually conducted the other person's job. As a result, cross training has never actually taken place. Until the respective roles are actually reversed, there is no way of knowing whether these critical processes would continue uninterrupted if the payroll clerk or accounts payable clerk were somehow absent for an extended period of time.

In 1992, the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) issued Internal Control – Integrated Framework (Framework) to help businesses and other entities assess and enhance their internal control systems. The Framework consists of five components as follows:

- Risk assessment;
- Control activities;

- Control environment;
- Information and communication; and
- Monitoring.

Determining whether an organization's internal controls are effective involves judgment resulting from an assessment of whether the five components are present and functioning effectively without material weakness.

Taft ISD should strengthen Business Department internal controls over key business processes. The COSO best practice framework should be used as a baseline for evaluating and improving the existing internal control structure. Obvious weaknesses in internal controls, such as budget line-item control, segregation of duties, and cross training should be corrected immediately. The switch preventing budget lines from being overspent should not be turned off. Access to human resources, payroll, and accounts payable systems should be segregated. Payroll personnel should not be able to change pay rates, particularly their own, and should not be given access to the human resources and accounts payable modules. Taft ISD's Business Department should adapt the Framework to its circumstances and continually monitor adherence to the five components as the district's internal control environment changes and evolves. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CASH MANAGEMENT (REC. 32)

Taft ISD does not use available tools and technology to manage its cash position. The district does not use cash management techniques such as sweep accounts, payroll imprest accounts, and controlled disbursement to manage cash efficiently. The district's primary cash management technique is to pay invoices soon after they are received with no regard for their due date. There is no effort to manage cash in such a way as to leave idle cash balances in interest bearing accounts for as long as possible to maximize interest earnings.

Today banks offer a variety of cash management services to help organizations manage their cash more effectively. These services include the following:

- Controlled disbursement;
- Payroll zero balance account;
- Positive pay; and
- Consolidated account structure with sweep mechanism.

**EXHIBIT 5-5
TAFT ISD NEGATIVE BUDGET BALANCES
FISCAL YEAR 2011**

FND T FC OBJ SO ORG F PI	DESCRIPTION		2010-11 REVISED BUDGET	ENCUMBERED AMOUNT	2010-11 FYTD ACTIVITY	UNENCUMBERED BALANCE	
199	General Fund						
199 E 11 6219 00 101 0 11 0	Contracted		500.00	0.00	225.00	275.00	
199 E 11 6249 08 101 0 11 0	Xerox Maint	Petty	24,757.00	17,069.89	7,687.11	0.00	
199 E 11 6249 10 101 0 99 0	Microsoft L	Petty	23,176.00	0.00	8,752.39	14,423.61	
199 E 11 62----			48,433.00	17,069.89	16,664.50	14,698.61	
199 E 11 6399 04 101 0 11 0	Supplies	Technology	Petty	7,335.00	2,895.49	4,439.51	0.00
199 E 11 6399 05 101 0 30 0	Supplies	SCE	Petty	9,000.00	2,880.03	6,119.97	0.00
199 E 11 6399 10 101 0 11 0	Supplies	General	Petty	16,169.00	3,443.94	12,715.05	10.01
199 E 11 6399 14 101 0 23 0	Supplies	Spec Ed	Petty	1,700.00	1,034.87	1,089.81	-424.68
199 E 11 6399 16 101 0 11 0	Supplies	Pre K		3,000.00	2,273.25	726.75	0.00
199 E 11 6399 17 101 0 11 0	Supplies	Kinder		3,000.00	232.02	2,757.26	10.72
199 E 11 6399 18 101 0 11 0	Supplies	1st		3,000.00	995.62	2,004.38	0.00
199 E 11 6399 19 101 0 11 0	Supplies	2nd		3,000.00	993.70	2,006.30	0.00
199 E 11 6399 20 101 0 11 0	Supplies	3rd		3,000.00	1,667.15	1,269.83	63.02
199 E 11 6399 21 101 0 11 0	Supplies	4th		3,000.00	2,169.87	804.76	25.37
199 E 11 6399 22 101 0 11 0	Supplies	5th		3,000.00	872.47	2,243.37	-115.84
199 E 11 6399 26 101 0 21 0	Supplies	Gifted/Tale	Petty	800.00	380.00	0.00	420.00
199 E 11 6399 80 101 0 11 0	Supplies	Copies	Petty	550.00	0.00	1,151.01	-601.01
199 E 11 6399 81 101 0 11 0	Supplies	Postage	Petty	700.00	0.00	0.00	700.00
199 E 11 6399 91 101 0 99 0	Supplies	Title I	Petty	28,000.00	7,503.46	20,425.48	71.06
199 E 11 63----			85,254.00	27,341.87	57,753.48	158.65	
199 E 11 6494 00 101 0 11 0	Travel	Field Trip	Petty	7,000.00	0.00	130.00	6,870.00
199 E 11 6499 00 101 0 11 0	Awards	Diploma	Petty	300.00	199.16	0.00	100.84
199 E 11 6499 00 101 0 23 0	Special Ed			200.00	0.00	139.14	60.86
199 E 11 6499 01 101 0 11 0	Inservice	Refreshment	Petty	1,500.00	1,308.06	191.94	0.00
199 E 11 6499 03 101 0 11 0	Motivation	Students	Petty	6,000.00	1,859.79	4,250.07	-109.86
199 E 11 64----			15,000.00	3,367.01	4,711.15	6,921.84	
199 E 12 6249 00 101 0 99 0	Maintenance	Media	Petty	675.00	0.00	652.07	22.93
199 E 12 62-----			675.00	0.00	652.07	22.93	
199 E 12 6321 00 101 0 99 0	Library	Boo	Petty	8,550.00	0.00	0.00	8,550.00
199 E 12 6329 00 101 0 99 0	Supplies	Reading Mat	Petty	1,445.00	520.74	0.00	924.26
199 E 12 6399 01 101 0 99 0	Resource	Media		1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	0.00
199 E 12 6399 02 101 0 99 0	Supplies	Media	Petty	3,275.00	1,264.95	2,007.44	2.61
199 E 12 63-----			14,470.00	2,985.69	2,007.44	9,476.87	
199 E 13 6219 00 101 0 21 0	Contracted	GT		0.00	55.00	2,012.02	-2,067.02
199 E 13 6219 14 101 0 23 0	Inservice			90.00	65.00	0.00	25.00
199 E 13 62-----			90.00	120.00	2,012.02	-2,042.02	
199 E 13 6399 00 101 0 11 0	Teacher	Supplies		1,154.00	156.61	997.39	0.00
199 E 13 63-----			1,154.00	156.01	997.39	0.00	

SOURCE: Taft ISD School Revenue and Expense Report.

Controlled disbursement allows cash managers to transfer just enough cash into the account to cover cash requirements for that day. Each morning, the bank provides the amount of checks clearing the account that day. This service eliminates the guesswork regarding how much cash needs to remain in the accounts to cover clearing checks. As a result, idle cash can remain in investment accounts longer, thereby increasing investment return. Currently, Taft ISD manually calculates the cash requirement based on the amount of payroll and vendor checks written and ensures that the bank account balance is sufficient to cover these checks. This method exposes the district to the risk of overdrawing an account by mistake. Controlled disbursement is the best insurance against overdrawing accounts.

A payroll zero balance account (ZBA) is an example of an immediate benefit that Taft ISD could receive by expanding cash management services. As disbursements are made from a ZBA account, the exact amount necessary to cover the disbursements is automatically transferred to the account. Therefore, the account always has a zero balance. Currently, Taft ISD has a payroll account but manually transfers funds sufficient to cover payroll. Automatic transfer would eliminate the need for manual transfers.

In a high interest rate environment, Taft ISD would be able to use cash management tools and techniques to earn enough

interest to offset bank charges. During fiscal year 2009–10, Taft ISD earned \$1,268 through compensating balances in all of its bank accounts. If these balances had been invested in TexPool over the same period, they would have earned an estimated \$744, a difference of \$524 for the year. In the current low-interest rate environment, Taft ISD is better off leaving excess cash in its bank accounts as compensating balances because more interest is being earned. This interest is currently being used to offset the bank's service charges, which totaled \$9,529 for fiscal year 2009–10. **Exhibit 5-6** supports this analysis.

Although the current environment of low interest rates makes these cash management tools less attractive, they will become more cost beneficial as interest rates begin to rise. As a result, the district should position itself to benefit from these tools and techniques once interest rates rise.

According to the assistant superintendent for Business, the district will be issuing a bank depository RFP for 2011–2012 to replace its agreement with Wells Fargo bank, which expires in August 2011. As a result, Taft ISD should use this opportunity to expand the use of cash management services to manage cash efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances. The assistant superintendent for Business should identify all of the cash management services that the district is not currently using and ensure that these services

**EXHIBIT 5-6
TAFT ISD INTEREST EARNINGS
FISCAL YEAR 2009–10**

MONTH	DAYS	TAFT ISD BANK ACCOUNTS		TEXPOOL		BANK ACCOUNT SAVINGS	BANK CHARGES
		AVERAGE BAL	EARNINGS ALLOWANCE	INTEREST RATE	CALCULATED INTEREST		
Sep-09	30	\$407,821.00	\$120.00	0.2822%	\$94.59	\$25.41	\$746.00
Oct-09	31	\$460,167.00	\$139.00	0.2095%	\$81.88	\$57.12	\$787.00
Nov-09	30	\$649,658.00	\$187.00	0.2112%	\$112.77	\$74.23	\$783.00
Dec-09	31	\$387,709.00	\$119.00	0.2090%	\$68.82	\$50.18	\$748.00
Jan-10	31	\$302,435.00	\$92.00	0.1630%	\$41.87	\$50.13	\$687.00
Feb-10	28	\$295,256.00	\$81.00	0.1512%	\$34.25	\$46.75	\$813.00
Mar-10	31	\$342,989.00	\$104.00	0.1577%	\$45.94	\$58.06	\$680.00
Apr-10	30	\$325,548.00	\$96.00	0.1662%	\$44.47	\$51.53	\$821.00
May-10	31	\$299,700.00	\$92.00	0.1935%	\$49.25	\$42.75	\$891.00
Jun-10	30	\$266,034.00	\$79.00	0.2780%	\$60.79	\$18.21	\$837.00
Jul-10	31	\$258,130.00	\$73.00	0.2259%	\$49.52	\$23.48	\$925.00
Aug-10	31	\$308,912.00	\$86.00	0.2279%	\$59.79	\$26.21	\$811.00
TOTAL			\$1,268.00		\$743.94	\$524.06	\$9,529.00

SOURCE: Review Team calculations, Taft ISD Business Department and TexPool Interest Rate History.

are included and priced in the 2012 depository contract bid or RFP. The assistant superintendent for Business should work closely with the bank to ensure that the district receives value-added services at cost effective rates. Two services that would immediately benefit Taft ISD are sweep accounts and controlled disbursement. These services should be included in the next depository contract. Assuming Taft ISD could save 10 percent on its service charges with its next depository contract, the estimated annual savings would be approximately \$1,000 per year (\$9,529 x 10%) based on fiscal year 2009–10 service charges.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION REPORTS (REC. 33)

Taft ISD does not use workers' compensation loss information to manage losses through safety training initiatives. By not using loss reports, the district could be missing an opportunity to reduce its claims through targeted safety training. Approximately 31 percent of district administrators disagreed with the survey statement that the district has adequate safety programs and training to prevent work-related accidents. **Exhibit 5-7** provides an overview of responses to the district administrator survey related to work-related accidents.

Taft ISD obtains workers' compensation coverage through SchoolComp, a self-insurance pool. SchoolComp is a project of the Texas Public Schools Workers' Compensation Project of which Taft ISD is a member. As a member of the pool, Taft ISD receives professional claims management services, workers' compensation loss reports, and specific and aggregate excess insurance coverage to protect the district from unlimited liability. Despite receiving workers' compensation loss reports, the district does not use them to

make data driven decisions about safety training initiatives. SchoolComp is a self-insurance pool, which means that Taft ISD has control over the funds that it puts into the program. The money stays in Taft ISD's bank account until it is needed for claims or program expenses. The advantage of this arrangement is that no funds are ever forfeited to the program unlike insurance premiums or contributions to traditional insurance programs. **Exhibit 5-8** through **Exhibit 5-11** presents workers' compensation contributions to the self-insurance fund and self-insured retention for Fiscal Years 2007–08 to 2010–11. Retention represents the amount of liability, per occurrence, retained by Taft ISD.

Between fiscal years 2008 and 2010, Taft ISD averaged 20 claims per year, which is the second highest number of claims in comparison to its peer districts over the same period. Taft ISD's claims, however, have not been as costly. Between fiscal years 2007–08 and 2009–10, Taft ISD's average incurred cost totaled \$10,645, the lowest among the peer districts. Incurred cost per claims averaged \$518 per year. However, Taft ISD's average cost per claim rose steadily between fiscal years 2007–08 and 2009–10. This negative trend underscores the need for targeted training to prevent a major claim in the future.

By documenting and tracking losses, school districts are able to reduce claims through targeted safety training. Taft ISD's peers use a variety of strategies to address workers' compensation claims. Muleshoe ISD implemented a work shoe program for maintenance and custodial workers and distributes wellness e-mails to help keep employees educated on safety and wellness. A work shoe program provides safety

**EXHIBIT 5-7
TAFT ISD ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY**

SURVEY QUESTION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The district has adequate safety programs and training to prevent work-related accidents.	8.2%	31.8%	29.4%	18.8%	11.8%

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 5-8
TAFT ISD WORKERS' COMPENSATION FUNDING AND RETENTION
FISCAL YEARS 2007–08 TO 2010–11**

FISCAL YEAR	FUNDING	RETENTION
2007–08	\$40,175	\$34,865
2008–09	\$34,019	\$30,810
2009–10	\$27,522	\$24,925
2010–11	\$26,935	\$23,851

SOURCE: Taft ISD School Comp Worker's Compensation Reports.

EXHIBIT 5-9
TAFT ISD AND PEER DISTRICT* WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS
FISCAL YEARS 2007-08 TO 2009-10

DISTRICT	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	AVERAGE
Taft ISD	16	18	26	20
Muleshoe ISD	7	8	10	8
Carrizo Springs CISD	28	25	22	25
Sinton ISD	15	16	17	16

*Data for Poteet ISD was not available.

SOURCE: Workers' Compensation Loss Reports for Respective Districts by Fiscal Year.

EXHIBIT 5-10
TAFT ISD AND PEER DISTRICT* WORKERS' COMPENSATION INCURRED COSTS
FISCAL YEARS 2007-08 TO 2009-10

DISTRICT	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	AVERAGE
Taft ISD	\$7,308	\$8,759	\$15,867	\$10,645
Muleshoe ISD	\$74,291	\$18,353	\$455	\$31,033
Carrizo Springs CISD	\$21,764	\$33,072	\$51,447	\$35,428
Sinton ISD	\$32,167	\$71,359	\$30,271	\$44,599

*Data for Poteet ISD was not available.

SOURCE: Workers' Compensation Loss Reports by Respective Districts and Fiscal Year.

EXHIBIT 5-11
TAFT ISD AND PEER DISTRICT* WORKERS' COMPENSATION COSTS PER CLAIM
FISCAL YEARS 2007-08 TO 2009-10

DISTRICT	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	AVERAGE
Taft ISD	\$457	\$487	\$610	\$518
Muleshoe ISD	\$10,613	\$2,294	\$46	\$4,318
Carrizo Springs CISD	\$777	\$1,323	\$2,339	\$1,480
Sinton ISD	\$2,144	\$4,460	\$1,781	\$2,795

*Data for Poteet ISD was not available.

SOURCE: Workers' Compensation Loss Reports by Respective Districts and Fiscal Year.

shoes, made from materials that prevent slips and protect the feet, for employees who work in conditions where slips and falls may occur. Carrizo Springs CISD conducts quarterly safety meetings, offers personal protective equipment, safety incentives, and school safety programs; and publishes a quarterly wellness newsletter. Sinton ISD holds central safety meetings and operates a safety incentive program.

Taft ISD should develop a loss statistics database from its workers' compensation loss reports and use the information to target safety training and manage workers' compensation claims. Targeted safety training that is developed based on an analysis of injury by employee group, type of injury, and nature of accident will enable employees to be more aware of how to avoid accidents. If Taft ISD could reduce claims costs by 10 percent through targeted safety initiatives, the district could save approximately \$1,600 per year (\$15,867 x 10%)

based on fiscal year 2009-10 total incurred costs (**Exhibit 5-10**).

TECHNOLOGY OPTIMIZATION (REC. 34)

Taft ISD has not maximized the use of technology to make payroll and fixed asset business processes more effective and efficient. As a result, the district is not receiving all of the benefits of its technology investment in these areas. In the payroll area, the district purchased biometric time clocks for employees to clock in-and-out using their thumbprint. The technology is "cutting edge" and designed to eliminate much of the paperwork and manual effort involved with collecting information off of timesheets and leave forms. The district implemented the time clock system in January 2010 and has 13 units in the following locations:

- Field House-1;

- High School-3;
- Krumnow (student center, food service)-1;
- Junior High School-2;
- Petty Elementary School-2;
- Old Petty Elementary School-1;
- Maintenance Department-1;
- Administration-1; and
- Technology Department has 1 that had not been installed as of February 2011.

Although the district generates time reports from the system, it has not begun using the information to process payroll and does not have a documented plan for implementation. Currently, the reports are used to compare time to the current timesheets and leave reports that the system was supposed to eliminate. Therefore, the district continues to rely on the same system it used before investing in the biometric technology. This practice will continue unless the district develops a comprehensive strategy that includes tasks, responsibilities, and a timeline showing when parallel processing will end.

In the fixed assets area, the district uses bar code technology to record fixed assets. Although bar code tags are affixed to assets, the district does not use location codes. Location codes identify where in the building an asset is located. If entered into the fixed asset system, these codes would enable the district to monitor more closely the location of its fixed assets.

In addition, the district is not using a feature of its fixed asset system that would allow the fixed asset clerk to be notified of when a fixed asset is purchased. This information would enable the tagging of fixed assets on the front end of the accountability process rather than at the end. Currently, the fixed asset clerk waits for notification from the school or department that fixed assets have been received and need to be tagged. This process is inefficient and could result in some assets not being tagged. In fact, while at the district, the review team noted several computer monitors and key boards that did not have tags. They were missed because the Technology Department did not notify the fixed assets clerk that the equipment had been received. If the notification features of the district's financial management software had been used, the fixed asset clerk would have known before the

invoice was processed that a fixed asset had been received in the district and needed to be tagged.

Taft ISD should maximize the use of technology in the areas of payroll and fixed assets. The district should use the information generated from its biometric time clocks in the payroll process. The district should document and implement a comprehensive plan that includes employee training if necessary as well as a set of expectations as to how employees are to use the system. It should also include a timeline with a specific date for full implementation. The district should also use location codes to track where fixed assets are located in its buildings. Finally, the district should use the notification feature of its financial system to alert the fixed asset clerk of fixed asset purchases so that they can be identified and flagged before the school or department provides notification of receipt. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PURCHASE ORDERS (REC. 35)

Taft ISD does not consistently follow its policy and procedures of issuing purchase orders before a purchase is made. Purchase orders are sometimes issued after goods have been ordered and shipped thereby circumventing the approval process. As a result, purchase orders created after the fact could result in unauthorized purchases of goods and services that are not in accordance with the district's mission and objectives.

The purchasing process begins with authorized individuals submitting a purchase requisition through the district's financial system. Purchase orders are required for all purchases except those from activity funds. At the schools, principals approve requisitions initiated by authorized individuals. If the purchase relates to a grant, program directors overseeing the various educational programs must also approve the requisition. Department heads approve requisitions initiated in their department. Once approved, the requisition is routed to the Business Department through the financial system's workflow. The accounts payable/purchasing clerk reviews the requisitions and "releases" them through the system creating a purchase order, which is sent to the vendor.

Taft ISD's *Business Department Policy and Procedures Manual* governs procurement activities within the district. It outlines procurement procedures for the district such as purchasing sources and guidelines, credit card procedures, unallowable purchases, approval process, requisition entry, fixed asset purchasing procedures, payment process, and check request procedures. The manual states the following:

Purchase order originators, principals, and department heads are responsible for informing all staff of these written procedures to ensure orders and services are placed using proper procedures and to avoid commitment of district dollars without proper approval. Items and services cannot be committed without a properly drawn and approved purchase order. It is against district policy to place an order without an approved purchased order. Purchase orders have a signature line in the bottom right hand corner.....Taft ISD requires a purchase order be issued prior to any purchase.

The review team conducted a test of purchase orders to determine whether they were being issued in accordance with district policy. The review team selected 22 purchase orders for testing noting that 7, or 32 percent, were created after the goods were received. **Exhibit 5-12** provides a summary of the exceptions noted. The negative days to deliver indicate that the purchase order was created after the goods were received.

The review team was advised that in some instances the maintenance and food service departments have “emergencies” that require them to circumvent the process. However, none of these “emergencies” appeared in the test the review team performed. For certain rare emergencies, it may be necessary to suspend district policy to obtain a purchase order before a purchase is made. However, these situations should occur rarely. Some districts use blanket purchase orders to avoid issuing multiple purchase orders for recurring purchases. Taft ISD also uses blanket purchase orders, but may need to expand their use.

Taft ISD should enforce purchase order requirements, and institute a process for legitimate exceptions, such as emergency purchases. The district should ensure that all

schools and departments follow the district’s policy that no purchase is to be made without a purchase order. Only in rare emergency situations should this policy be waived. In such instances, the purchase order should be created as soon as practical after the purchase and the reason for suspension of district policy clearly documented. In some instances, blanket purchase orders should be used for recurring items such as maintenance and food service supplies. The district currently uses blanket purchase orders but may need to conduct an analysis to expand their use in order to avoid purchases being made before they are approved. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

EXTERNAL AUDIT AND INSURANCE SERVICES (REC. 36)

Taft ISD has longstanding relationships for auditing and insurance services, and, therefore, has not issued an RFP for such services in years. The district has not issued an RFP for audit services in eight years and has not issued an RFP for insurance agent services in 10 plus years. Accordingly, Taft ISD has used the same providers for these services during their respective time periods.

Taft ISD is required by state and federal law, as well as internal policy, to undergo an annual external audit of their financial statements. The fact that the district has never changed auditors does not violate any law or district policy. However, if the district’s long-standing relationship with the same auditors creates the perception, in the public’s mind, that the auditors lack independence, confidence in the district’s audited financial information could be undermined. Auditor independence is an important concept to both internal and external auditors. Auditing standards require auditors to maintain independence so that opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be

**EXHIBIT 5-12
TAFT ISD PURCHASE ORDERS ISSUED AFTER GOODS RECEIVED**

PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER	VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	PURCHASE ORDER CREATION DATE	DATE GOODS RECEIVED	DAYS TO DELIVER
9051100027	Stump Enterprises	Grease Trap Service	10/19/2010	10/18/2010	-1
9051100015	Zee Medical	Medical Supplies and Cabinets	09/14/2010	09/01/2010	-13
8251100034	Rubens Fleet Service	Bus Parts	11/03/2010	10/27/2010	-7
11100078	Team Threadz	Drum Major Dress	10/20/2010	08/23/2010	-58
9051100043	Beta Technology	Chemicals/Maint Exp.	12/14/2010	12/08/2010	-6
7311100100	Graybar	Electrical Supplies	10/07/2010	09/01/2010	-36
11100069	Whataburger	Meals for band managers	09/17/2010	08/27/2010	-21

SOURCE: Taft ISD Purchase Orders.

impartial and will be viewed as impartial by knowledgeable third parties.

With respect to auditor independence, perception is as important as reality. In a November 2003 study entitled, *Public Accounting Firms: Required Study of the Potential Effects of Mandatory Audit Firm Rotation*, the Government Accountability Office concluded that the benefits of mandatory firm rotation were not certain and that more experience with the effects of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act was needed. The study also acknowledged that nearly 99 percent of the Fortune 1000 public companies have no public accounting firm rotation policy.

There is a longstanding debate in the auditing profession about whether auditors should be rotated periodically to ensure independence. A January 2005 article in *The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Journal* entitled, *"Audit Firm Rotation and Audit Quality,"* contrasts the divergent views in the accounting profession about the benefits of auditor rotation. In a section entitled, *"Why audit firm rotation might be the answer,"* the article states the following:

"The nature of auditing required that auditors interact extensively with their clients. Long-term relationships may result in a troublesome degree of closeness between management and the auditor....When a contentious issue arises, this close relationship may create a conflict of interest for the auditor that can adversely affect the audit process."

In another section entitled, *"Why audit firm rotation might not be the answer,"* an alternative view is presented as follows:

"Auditors from a new firm are faced with a 'getting to know each other' stage and are unlikely to have the necessary open, respectful professional relationship that builds over time. The close relationship contributes to knowledge-sharing and is critical to the audit process."

The article raises questions and concerns but is inconclusive as to whether rotation of auditors should be mandatory:

"The idea of enhancing auditor independence through mandatory audit firm rotation appeals superficially to many, yet the net effects of rotation are far from certain.... Experience and further research related to ... audit firm rotation... may lead to a more informed decision on mandatory audit firm rotation than is now possible."

Furthermore, Taft ISD uses an insurance agent as a broker to bring various health insurance options to the district for consideration. These options include health insurance, vision, dental, cancer, disability, and cafeteria plans. Services

performed by the agent include assistance with preparation of health care requests for proposal; receipt of proposals; tabulation, analysis, and presentation of results; and recommendations on health care plans. Once the district selects the health care providers, the agency oversees the open enrollment process, gathers completed applications for review, and provides the district with copies of the applications. The agency also responds to employee questions and requests for insurance cards, claim forms, and directories. It also provides quarterly and year-end reviews of the district's healthcare plan. There is no out-of-pocket cost to the district for these services because the insurance company pays the agency's fees, which are disclosed to the district.

Taft ISD should issue an RFP for auditing and insurance agent services. Although there is no legal requirement for the district to issue an RFP for audit and insurance agent services, Taft ISD should periodically issue an RFP for such services to determine if it can receive better value for services rendered. The district may decide to continue with its existing service providers. However, a periodic "check of the market" might reveal opportunities for cost savings or service enhancements of which the district may not be aware because it has not bid the services for such a long time period. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FIDELITY BONDS (REC. 37)

Taft ISD has not purchased fidelity bonds for some employees who handle cash or who are in sensitive financial management positions. A fidelity bond is a form of insurance protection that covers policyholders for losses that they incur from dishonest employees. Such losses could include money, securities, and other district property. Without this protection, dishonest employees are in position to cause losses that can put the district at significant risk. Currently, Taft ISD carries specific fidelity bonds as shown in **Exhibit 5-13**.

Well managed organizations protect themselves by bonding employees who are in a unique position to cause financial loss to the organization.

Taft ISD should purchase fidelity bonds for all employees who have cash handling responsibilities or duties related to cash receipts and disbursements. By identifying and bonding all employees that handle cash, or who are in financially sensitive positions, Taft ISD would be protecting its assets at a relatively minimal and affordable cost. Based on current premiums, Taft ISD could purchase four bonds at \$50 each

for a total of \$200 (\$50 x 4). The bonds would cover a two-year period, with the fiscal impact every other year.

HEALTH INSURANCE FUND BALANCE (REC. 38)

Taft ISD does not have a fund balance policy for its health insurance fund thereby endangering adequate health coverage for the district’s employees. Without such a policy, the district has not responded to decreases in its health insurance fund that have occurred over the past three years allowing for the fund balance to potentially drop below sufficient levels.

Taft ISD self insures for employee health care coverage through Humana Health Plan of Texas (Humana). The district maintains an internal service fund to record contributions and claims expenses. Employees may choose between four Humana plans. In addition to basic health care, the district also offers cancer, vision, dental, disability, and free term life insurance to its employees.

For fiscal year 2010–11, \$255 is contributed towards each employee’s health care coverage. This amount consists of \$180 from the district plus \$75 from the state. The total contribution increased 8.5 percent from the fiscal year 2009–10 contribution of \$235, when the district’s portion was \$160 per employee plus \$75 from the state. Employees pay the difference between the total cost of insurance and the district’s and state’s contribution. The actual amount each employee pays depends on which of the four coverage options they select. **Exhibit 5-14** provides a summary of costs for Humana’s lowest cost option, which carries a \$2,000 deductible per individual.

Each year, Taft ISD’s insurance agent provides a financial evaluation of the health insurance fund. The agent projects total funding based on the number of employees in each plan and total district and employee contributions. The agent calculates expected claims funding and maximum claims funding scenarios. The difference between the contributions and the expected claims is paid through the fund balance of the district’s Internal Service Fund, which has been steadily declining. Since fiscal year 2007–08, contributions to the health care fund have decreased nine percent. Moreover, despite a 31 percent decrease in expenses, the fund balance has declined by 29 percent. Fund balance as a percentage of expenditures fell from 67 percent in fiscal year 2007–08 to 45 percent in fiscal year 2009–10. **Exhibit 5-15** provides an overview of operating results for the health care fund for fiscal years 2007–08 to 2009–10.

Organizations often establish policies to preserve fund balances. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires school districts to include a calculation of minimum fund balances in their audited financial statements. Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) has as one of its financial indicators whether a district’s total General Fund balance is more than 50 percent and less than 150 percent of TEA’s optimum fund balance as calculated in the annual financial report.

Laredo ISD (LISD) established a general fund balance goal that exceeds the guidelines established by the TEA. LISD board policy CA (LOCAL) sets a goal of attaining an unreserved, undesignated fund balance of at least two months’ operating costs within five years. To meet that goal,

**EXHIBIT 5-13
TAFT ISD’S CURRENT FIDELITY BONDS**

POSITION	AMOUNT	PREMIUM	PERIOD
Superintendent	\$50,000	\$175	6/2009–6/2011
Assistant Superintendent for Business	\$50,000	\$175	8/2009–8/2011
Payroll Clerk	\$50,000	\$50	11/10–11/11
Notary	\$10,000	\$71	2/07–2/11
Police Chief	\$1,000	\$50	1/09–1/11
Cafeteria Supervisor	\$5,000	\$50	12/10–9/11
Accounts Payable Clerk	None	N/A**	N/A**
Fixed Assets Clerk	None	N/A**	N/A**
*Water Park Staff	None	N/A**	N/A**
School Bookkeepers	None	N/A**	N/A**

*Some of these individuals handle cash when the water park is operational.

**N/A signifies “Not Applicable.”

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department, as of February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 5-14
TAFT ISD HEALTH CARE PREMIUMS-HUMANA LOW COST OPTION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010-11**

CATEGORY	TOTAL COST	CONTRIBUTION	EMPLOYEE COST
Employee Only	\$315	\$255	\$60
Employee & Children	\$580	\$255	\$325
Employee & Spouse	\$630	\$255	\$375
Employee & Family	\$755	\$255	\$500

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Department.

**EXHIBIT 5-15
TAFT ISD HEALTH CARE INTERNAL SERVICE FUND BALANCE
FISCAL YEARS 2007-08 TO 2009-10**

CATEGORY	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	PERCENT CHANGE
Beginning Fund Balance (a)	\$901,384	\$539,342	\$422,750	(53%)
Revenue (b)	\$983,587	\$854,284	\$894,720	(9%)
Expenses (c)	\$1,345,629	\$970,876	\$933,407	(31%)
Income (Loss) (b – c)	(\$362,042)	(\$116,592)	(\$38,687)	89%
Ending Fund Balance (a) + (b – c)	\$539,342	\$422,750	\$384,063	(29%)
Fund Balance as a Percent of Expenditures (a/c) x 100	67%	56%	45%	(22%)

SOURCE: Taft ISD, Audited Financial Statements.

the policy empowers the superintendent and business manager to implement various budgetary measures to reach the goal.

Manatee County Government in Florida adopted a policy regarding budgeted reserves to ensure that funds are available for operating cash and emergencies. For the funds covered by the policy, the required minimum balance is 20 percent of the fund’s total operating expenditures.

Taft ISD should adopt a Health Insurance Fund Balance Policy to ensure that the balance does not fall below Board-defined thresholds. Although the district invested an additional \$100,000 in the health care fund during Fiscal year 2010-11 to address the decline in fund balance, it does not have a policy to guide its funding decisions. The Manatee County Government, Florida policy provides an excellent model. It outlines the purpose and intent, defines the funds subject to the policy, and specifies minimum reserve levels. The policy can be found at www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/financial-management/budget-downloads.html; then select the fiscal year 2010-11 Adopted Budget link; the policy is on page 235 of the Budget Book (page 247 of the portable document format (pdf) file). This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION RECONCILIATION (REC. 39)

Taft ISD does not have a process to review and verify the accuracy of payroll deductions used for third-party payments. Taft ISD’s payroll clerk reconciles payroll deductions to employee obligations, as determined by the third-party vendor. The clerk pays vendors once a month after payroll is processed on the 25th of the month. However, no one oversees the reconciliation process to determine that it was performed or that the reconciliations were conducted correctly. Oversight is important to ensure that these obligations are being satisfied timely and accurately. Otherwise errors could occur and go undetected, which would mean that the district could overpay or underpay employee obligations. Overpaying these obligations could result in a misuse of district resources. Failure to remit the correct amount to the appropriate third parties could create financial problems for employees who may default on their obligations.

In addition to payroll tax deductions, Taft ISD makes other deductions from employee paychecks for tax sheltered annuity contributions; health insurance premiums, including supplemental benefits such as vision and dental coverage, flexible spending account contributions for dependent care and medical expenses; credit union and other loan repayments; membership or agency union dues; child

support and other wage garnishment obligations. The district remits checks to the related vendors based on amounts deducted from employee payroll checks and amounts billed by the vendor based on its listing of employee obligations. A few tax sheltered annuity vendors will not send a billing list if there is only one participant; however, most of the vendors send a billing list.

Accounting personnel in companies large and small typically reconcile payroll deductions at least monthly to make certain that the amounts deducted from individual employee checks equals the aggregate amount transmitted to third-parties. They also verify through reconciliation that the detailed listings of employee obligations provided by the vendor balance with the actual payroll deductions.

Taft ISD should implement an independent review procedure for the reconciliation of payroll deductions used for third-party payments. The assistant superintendent for Business should obtain and review the payroll clerk's reconciliation of payroll deductions and third-party payments to make certain that the amounts deducted from individual employee checks equals the third-party vendor's listing of employee obligations as well as the amount paid to the vendors. Performing a supervisory review of the reconciliation of employee deductions and third-party payments will reduce the risk of untimely, inaccurate payments. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
29. Improve the budget document so that it communicates district financial information more clearly and concisely on the district's website.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
30. Allow school principals a greater role in the development, control, and modification of their budgets.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31. Strengthen Business Department internal controls over key business processes.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
32. Expand the use of cash management services to manage cash efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances.	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$0
33. Develop a loss statistics database from its workers' compensation loss reports to target safety training and use the information to manage workers' compensation claims.	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$8,000	\$0
34. Maximize the use of technology in the areas of payroll and fixed assets.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
35. Enforce purchase order requirements, and institute a process for legitimate exceptions, such as emergency purchases.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36. Issue an RFP for auditing and insurance agent services.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
37. Purchase fidelity bonds for all employees who have cash handling responsibilities or duties related to cash receipts and disbursements.	(\$200)	\$0	(\$200)	\$0	(\$200)	(\$600)	\$0
38. Adopt a Health Insurance Fund Balance policy to ensure that the balance does not fall below Board-defined thresholds.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
39. Implement an independent review procedure for the reconciliation of payroll deductions used for third-party payments.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	\$2,400	\$2,600	\$2,400	\$2,600	\$2,400	\$12,400	\$0

CHAPTER 6

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 6. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

The Taft Independent School District (ISD) Information Technology Department (IT) provides a variety of technology services that support instructional learning and administrative functions. The IT Department designs and maintains the network and telecommunications infrastructure, supports the computer-based information systems, and maintains the desktop computing hardware and software for the district. The superintendent has been overseeing the functions of the IT Department since 2010. The department is staffed with one and a half Computer Technicians. The district has a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator that reports to the assistant superintendent for Business. There is no dedicated Instructional Technology position. **Exhibit 6-1** depicts the Taft ISD Information Technology and PEIMS organizations for school year 2010–11.

The Taft ISD superintendent, as interim IT director (director), has responsibility for planning and managing technology services districtwide. The director is responsible for the development of short and long-range plans for the integration of technology into all districtwide programs. The director establishes priorities to ensure that timely and

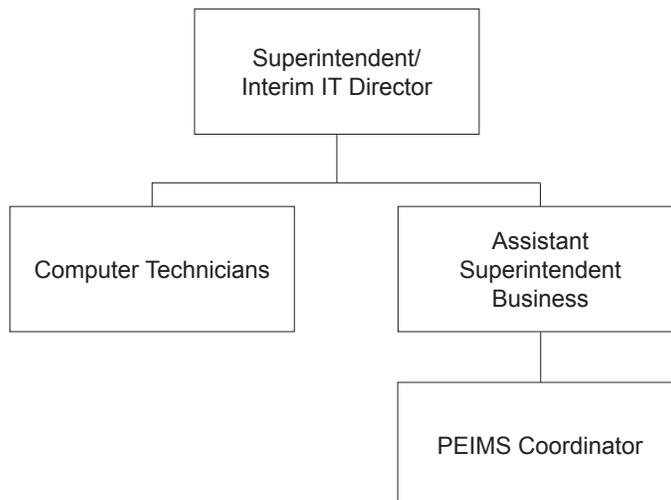
efficient computer services are provided to all campuses and administrative departments.

The computer technicians' primary responsibility is to provide onsite technical support by installing and maintaining computer hardware and software throughout the district. They are also responsible for maintenance of network hardware and software, and administration of operating systems, servers, and network services.

The PEIMS coordinator is responsible for the collection, integration, formatting, and submission of all data required according to Texas Education Agency (TEA) PEIMS Data Standards. The coordinator works closely with the campus PEIMS coordinators, business office, and personnel office staff to ensure that informational PEIMS data is input correctly and submitted in a timely manner. The coordinator distributes PEIMS submission edits and reports to appropriate staff for analysis, verification, and correction.

Taft ISD has a Technology Committee (committee) composed of representatives from the administration, teachers, students, and the IT Department that meets on a periodic basis to determine the technology needs of the

EXHIBIT 6-1
TAFT ISD
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PEIMS ORGANIZATIONS
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11



SOURCE: Taft ISD Organization Chart, June 2010.

district. The committee used a process of interviews, surveys, and brainstorming sessions with key stakeholders to develop a technology plan that serves as the roadmap for funding and implementation of technology in the district.

The major focus of Taft ISD’s technology plan is the implementation of a districtwide, integrated network of communication, information, and curriculum resources. The prominent features of the technology plan are:

- Coordinate the use of technology at each level of instruction through comprehensive planning.
- Maintain or increase student achievement in all areas.
- Districtwide integration of technology into the existing curriculum and into future curriculum frameworks.
- Equal access to technology tools to help each student develop skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for higher education and employment.
- An on-going plan to implement training and support to enable staff to use technology and to integrate the technology into instruction.
- Ensure that each graduate has proficiency in the use of technology as a tool (such as word processing, database management, spreadsheet development, research and publishing through the internet and communication through email).
- Provide telecommunications infrastructure access at all campuses to regional, state, national, and international resources.

- Enhance student skills in the areas of independent research and communication.
- Improve the district’s information management system.

Taft ISD has installed a network architecture that is based on an underground 24-pair fiber ring interconnecting all campuses and the administration building. The ring provides redundancy so that if there is a failure at any point the entire network is not affected. A 20- megabyte microwave transport connection with Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) provides wide area network (WAN) connectivity to the district. The network architecture also provides for wireless local area network (LAN) connectivity districtwide. The increased focus and demand for technology use for instructional and administrative purposes has resulted in a greater dependency upon technology tools within the district.

Taft ISD’s IT budget for school year 2010–11 is approximately \$533,392 or \$478 per student. The budget includes \$401,852 for IT Department expenses and \$131,540 allocated for network upgrades and equipment purchases identified in the district’s 2008–11 Technology Plan. As reflected in the school year 2008–09 budget, major network and equipment upgrades were planned during this period. In subsequent years, the district’s IT budget has decreased as the district’s enrollment has decreased. **Exhibit 6-2** shows Taft ISD’s IT budgets for the last three years from school years 2008–09 to 2010–11.

Based on the district’s Skyward asset management system data as of February 2011, there are 790 desktops and 208

**EXHIBIT 6-2
TAFT ISD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BUDGETS
SCHOOL YEARS 2008–09 TO 2010–11**

DESCRIPTION	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11
Salaries/ Benefits	\$194,677	\$211,058	\$247,534
Contracted Services	81,981	138,930	103,930
Supplies/Software	42,466	24,466	23,966
Other Operating Expenses	183,464	141,089	26,422
Technology Plan Expenditures	1,326,960	131,540	131,540
TOTAL	\$1,829,548	\$647,083	\$533,392
Number of Students	1,206	1,143	1,117
Average per Student	\$1,517	\$566	\$478

SOURCE: Taft ISD Information Technology Department Budgets and Taft ISD Technology Plan (2008–11).

laptops for a total of 998 computers in the district. Of those units, 80 computers are used primarily for administrative purposes and 918 are available for student access, resulting in a student-to-computer ratio of 1.22:1. This means the district has met the student-to-computer ratio of a 4:1 to be reached by 2004 as recommended in the State Board of Education's (SBOE) 1996–2010 Long-Range Plan for Technology. Although closely approaching it, the district has not yet reached the student-to-computer ratio of 1:1 by 2010 as recommended in the updated 2006–2020 SBOE Long-Range Plan for Technology. The district has met the 1:1 teacher-to-computer ratio as recommended by the 2006–2020 SBOE Long-Range Plan for Technology.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a robust network infrastructure with wireless connectivity that will adequately support the district's technology needs.
- Taft ISD has “virtualized” its server infrastructure utilizing VMware's vSphere technology reducing the number of servers needed to support the district's computing requirements.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD's IT Department has several organizational issues surrounding the superintendent serving as the IT director and one computer technician position being only part-time.
- Taft ISD does not have an instructional technology position to coordinate technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum.
- Taft ISD lacks a comprehensive replacement strategy for the district's computing hardware.
- The IT Department lacks documented policies and procedures to drive operational activities and standardization.
- Taft ISD does not have a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the computer operations facility is rendered inoperable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 40:** Establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities for computer technicians,

upgrade the part-time computer technician position to full-time, and fill the full-time IT director position.

- **Recommendation 41:** Create an instructional technology coordinator position with responsibility for technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum.
- **Recommendation 42:** Review different options and determine an appropriate computer replacement strategy.
- **Recommendation 43:** Develop and publish policies and procedures that establish standards for IT operations and hardware/software installation.
- **Recommendation 44:** Develop and implement a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the computer operations facility is rendered inoperable.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

Taft ISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a robust network infrastructure with wireless connectivity that will adequately support the district's technology needs. Taft ISD actively participates in the E-Rate program governed by the Universal Services Administration Company's School and Library Division to enhance its network and telecommunications infrastructure. The E-Rate funding cycle runs from July 1st to June 30th each year and requests for funds must be submitted annually. The district is currently working with E-Rate 13 (2010–11) funds and has submitted a request for E-Rate 14 (2011–12) funding. Taft ISD used E-Rate funding to upgrade its network switches, routers, servers, and internet access infrastructure. The upgrade included enhancing the wireless infrastructure to a wireless mesh network that provides wireless connectivity throughout the district. Also, E-Rate funds are being used for third-party network and telecommunications equipment maintenance support, and the microwave internet access transport between the district and Region 2.

Exhibit 6-3 shows a comparison of E-Rate funding requested by Taft ISD and its peer districts over the past five years. The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Taft ISD. Taft ISD, compared to its peer districts over the past five years, has used more E-Rate

EXHIBIT 6-3
TAFT ISD COMPARISON OF E-RATE FUNDING REQUEST TO PEER DISTRICTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2006–07 TO 2010–11

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL
Muleshoe ISD	\$176,120	\$78,381	\$116,596	\$104,462	\$77,071	\$552,630
Poteet ISD	\$326,531	\$152,577	\$97,913	\$105,895	\$105,919	\$788,835
Carrizo Springs CISD	\$248,325	\$248,325	\$242,520	\$532,494	\$398,492	\$1,670,156
Sinton ISD	\$78,673	\$391,074	\$382,145	\$84,762	\$817,647	\$1,754,301
Taft ISD	\$331,275	\$173,477	\$1,229,708	\$202,332	\$210,199	\$2,146,991

SOURCE: Taft ISD and Peer Districts Technology Planning and E-Rate Funding Reports.

funds to upgrade its network and telecommunications infrastructures.

The main features of Taft ISD's enhanced infrastructure include a 20-megabyte microwave transport between the district and Region 2 and 10-gigabyte links between main distribution facilities (MDF) and intermediate distribution facilities (IDF) with one gigabyte links to the desktop. A Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telecommunications system has been installed at all of the district's locations. Wireless connectivity is available throughout the district, and Taft ISD uses a network firewall and internet content filtering to keep the network secure and free from unwanted access.

VIRTUALIZED SERVER INFRASTRUCTURE

Taft ISD has "virtualized" its server infrastructure utilizing VMware's vSphere technology reducing the number of servers needed to support the district's computing requirements. Virtualized server technology provides the capability to mask server resources to divide one physical server into multiple isolated virtual environments, thus reducing the number of servers required. Using virtualized server technology, the district has been able to reduce the number of servers required from 20 servers to three. This reduction benefits the district by reducing hardware costs, space requirements, and energy consumption. It also improves operational efficiency and makes the server environment easier to support and maintain.

Exhibit 6-4 shows Taft ISD's wide area network (WAN) configuration.

DETAILED FINDINGS

IT DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES (REC. 40)

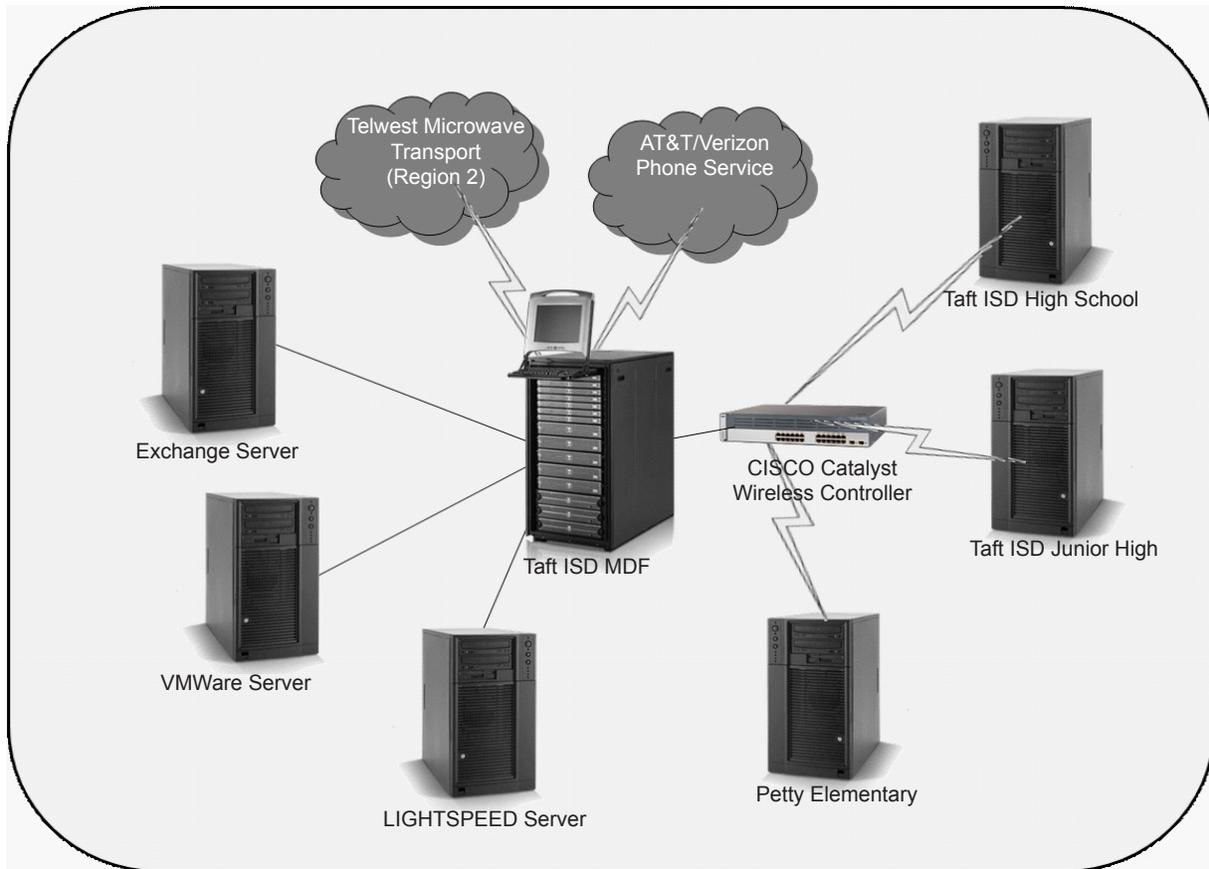
Taft ISD's IT Department has several organizational issues surrounding the superintendent serving as the IT director and one computer technician position being only part-time.

Since the previous IT director left the district in 2010, the superintendent has been serving as the IT director in addition to the superintendent responsibilities. While interviewing the superintendent, he stated budget constraints prevent hiring or appointing a new IT director in the foreseeable future. With the superintendent serving as both functions, it is important that clearly defined roles and responsibilities are defined for the computer technicians. Currently, technicians feel they are getting things done but are unsure of their authority and areas of responsibility. This uncertainty leads to some hesitation and confusion in proactively handling IT issues.

Gartner Research, a division of Gartner, Inc. and one of the world's leading information technology research and advisory companies, cited the importance of structure for a technology department in a school district in a Gartner Research Note entitled *K–12 E-Education: Technology Framework*. According to this document, a key component of the recommended framework for a school district is a department of information technology that is independent of other functional areas and headed by a chief information officer who reports directly to the superintendent.

Taft ISD has not implemented IT staffing levels to adequately support the district's needs. The IT Department is staffed with one full-time and one part-time computer technician. Having made a significant investment to install a robust and state-of-the-art network and computing infrastructure, it is not in the best interest of the district to provide inadequate support to maintain it. Due to the effort required to maintain the infrastructure and handle other districtwide IT issues in a timely manner, a minimum of two full-time computer technicians are needed. **Exhibit 6-5** compares Taft ISD's IT staffing level to its peer districts. Taft ISD has the lowest staffing of 1.5 compared to its peers, which range from three to five staff members.

**EXHIBIT 6-4
TAFT ISD WIDE AREA NETWORK (WAN) CONFIGURATION**



SOURCE: Taft ISD IT Department, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 6-5
TAFT ISD
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STAFFING LEVEL COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

DISTRICT	IT DIRECTOR	ASSOC. IT DIRECTOR	COMPUTER TECHNICIANS (FTEs)	TOTAL STAFFING (FTEs)
Taft ISD	0*	0	1.5	1.5
Muleshoe ISD	1	0	2	3
Poteet ISD	1	0	2	3
Sinton ISD	1	1	2	4
Carrizo Springs CISD	1	0	4	5

*Superintendent is Interim IT Director.

SOURCE: Taft ISD and Peer Districts IT Department Organization Charts.

An alternative approach to augmenting the district’s staffing needs would be to engage the services of a third-party vendor to provide supplemental support. The drawback to this approach is that it would take time for the third-party vendor

to become familiar with the district’s computing environment in order to be able to provide adequate support.

The district should establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities for computer technicians, upgrade the part-time computer technician position to full-time, and fill the full-time IT director position. Clarity in roles and responsibilities will eliminate all confusion with authority and areas of responsibilities. In upgrading the part-time computer technician position to full-time, the fiscal impact assumes that Taft ISD would give consideration to the current position holder, since the employee is also a part-time teacher. The fiscal impact assumes that the part-time teacher duties could be eliminated or absorbed by other instructional staff. To properly manage and maintain the robust technology infrastructure present, the district should fill the full-time IT director position to provide a constant daily oversight of all IT functional areas. There is no fiscal impact since the IT director's position is already in the budget for school year 2010–11.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY (REC. 41)

Taft ISD does not have an instructional technology position to coordinate technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum. The use of instructional technology enables students to function in today's technology-advanced workplaces and technologically advanced society. Regardless of career choice, all students need the problem solving and critical thinking skills for incorporating technology into their daily activities. A curriculum that incorporates technology expands content and guides students toward higher potential. School districts serve as the link between the education systems of today and the technology of tomorrow.

In the absence of an instructional technology position, the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction collaborates with the principals and assistant principals on technology curriculum issues. Taft ISD maintains its entire curriculum in an online curriculum management system, CSCOPE. The system vendor has worked closely with the district to include features in the product to meet the district's needs. Teachers are able to access the information from school, home, or elsewhere. Additionally, the system has the capability to disaggregate student data pulled from the district's Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC) files. DMAC is a suite of web-based applications designed to assist educators with their assessment and curriculum needs. Several of DMAC's key applications—State Assessment, TAG-TEKS Assessment Generator, TEKScore, and Personal Graduation Plan (PGP)—complements CSCOPE, allowing teachers to track the

performance of individual students, identify specific weaknesses of students, and prepare learning activities targeted at those areas. The system also includes a host of learning resources that the teacher can draw upon to assist students when learning new objectives, or for working on objectives with which they have previously had difficulty.

Currently, the district offers technology application courses at the high school and junior high campuses. The elementary campuses offer reading, math, and science applications to teach the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Many instructional tools and programs are in place at the campuses. Some of the programs include Study Island, Read Naturally, and Discover Education to reinforce learning; and Accelerated Reader to promote and reward reading. Every teacher has connectivity to United Streaming; a multiple award-winning, digital content delivery application that offers more than 22,000 core curriculum, standards-based video clips, lesson plans, and assessments in science, social studies, math, language arts, and health, with extensive professional development.

Every classroom in Taft ISD has a digital projector that can be used by teachers or students for displaying lessons or projects. District teachers use the digital projector to display lesson materials and illustrate how students are to perform certain activities related to the lesson. They also can use it to display materials, maps, and other resources found on educational websites. Each classroom is equipped with a 36" SMART TV, which allows connections between a classroom computer, DVD player, or document camera.

Taft ISD has made a significant investment in recent years to implement a technology infrastructure that will adequately support integration of technology into the teaching curriculum districtwide. The district has installed internet access to all campuses, installed computer labs equipped with 15 to 25 computers, acquired six mobile labs with 24 computers each for campuses, implemented wireless technology throughout the district, and made significant progress in providing adequate software programs and technology tools for teachers' use at each campus. The district uses video conferencing to facilitate distance learning with other school districts and area trade/technical institutions. The district administrative staff uses Apple IPADs to conveniently capture information during routine classroom walkthroughs.

Exhibit 6-6 shows Taft ISD technology tools and software programs in use by the district in 2010–11. However, for

EXHIBIT 6-6
TAFT ISD
TECHNOLOGY TOOLS AND SOFTWARE PROGRAMS
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS		SOFTWARE PROGRAMS	
DEVICE	QUANTITY		
Multimedia Projectors	146	Microsoft Office 2003	Microsoft Office 2007
Document Cameras	14	Skyward	Success Maker
Video Camcorders	57	WebCCAT	Follett/Destiny
Smartboards	4	A+ Anywhere Learning	DMAC
Elmo Visual Presenters	30	Accelerated Reader	Light Speed
Cameras	57	CSCOPE	Kurzweil 3000
Document Scanners	28	TPRI Reading Software	Microsoft Office 2010
Digital Camcorders	13	Circle Reading Software	United Streaming
DVD Players	26	Study Island	Read Naturally
CD Players	47	Discover Education	FitnessGram
Cassette Recorders	22		
Video Conference Units	7		
Graphing Calculators	457		
Apple iPads	15		
PDAs			
Palm	44		
Pocket PC	6		
Smart TVs	120		
Color Printers	7		

SOURCE: Taft ISD IT Department.

true integration of technology into the teaching curriculum to occur, teachers must be proficient in the use of available technology tools.

Training is a crucial factor in determining whether technology is used effectively. Instructional staff must be comfortable with the use of instructional technology tools in order to effectively integrate technology into their instruction. The Taft ISD Technology Plan (2008-2011) incorporates instructional components throughout that provides teachers with the training and tools to integrate technology effectively into instruction. **Exhibit 6-7** shows the goals and objectives of the district's technology plan.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed the Texas School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart for use by campuses and districts in conducting self-assessments of their progress of integrating technology into the curriculum in alignment with the goals of the State Board of Education's (SBOE) Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020. The key areas of the STaR Chart are Teaching and Learning; Educator Preparation and Development; Leadership,

Administration, and Instructional Support; and Infrastructure for Technology. There are four stages of progress in the key areas: Early Tech, Developing Tech, Advanced Tech, and Target Tech. **Exhibit 6-8** displays the key areas and the stages of progress within each area.

Exhibit 6-9 shows a summary of Taft ISD's school year 2009–10 STaR Chart ratings by campus, with both the rating for level of progress and the actual score provided in each of the four focus areas. Taft ISD's average ranges from Developing Tech to Advanced Tech.

When comparing campus progress in the Taft ISD Summary STaR Chart, the stages of progress indicate that the integration of technology within the district is inconsistent. The self-assessment results ranges from very low at Petty Elementary (Early Tech – Developing Tech) to very high at Taft Junior High (Advanced Tech – Target Tech), with Taft High falling somewhere in between (Developing Tech – Advanced Tech). The intervention of an instructional technology coordinator could provide coordination and facilitation of a program that would improve Taft ISD staff

**EXHIBIT 6-7
TAFT ISD
TECHNOLOGY PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Goal 1 – To coordinate the use of technology at each level of instruction through comprehensive planning.	Objective 1.1 – 100% of the teachers will implement the district plan for sequential use of technology curriculum tools in grade pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade to facilitate learning.
Goal 2 – Districtwide integration of technology into existing curriculum.	Objective 2.1 – Provide personnel and technology tools to implement and support district instructional programs. Objective 2.2 – 100% of the teachers will have access to and use the technology resources needed to address the individual needs of all students.
Goal 3 – Design an on-going plan to implement the training and support of staff in the use of technology and the integration of technology in district instructional programs.	Objective 3.1 – 100% of the district instructional staff will participate in staff development for the implementation of instructional technology to address the needs of all students. Objective 3.2 – The district parent coordinator will provide training twice a year, Fall/Spring, to all the parents and citizens of the community.
Goal 4 – Provide electronic and communication access to the region, state, national, and international resources at all campuses.	Objective 4.1 – Facilitate teacher and students access to search internet, selected databases, and telecommunications.
Goal 5 – Improve information management.	Objective 5.1 – 100% of the district administration, faculty and support staff will have the adequate technology equipment to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which student records are maintained and evaluated.
Goal 6 – Develop and maintain an ongoing process for evaluation.	Objective 6.1 – The Districtwide Education Improvement Committee will research/review/ evaluate existing programs for specific student and/or campus needs annually. Objective 6.2 – Annually, the campus and district improvement committees will evaluate the use or maintenance of effective programs, discontinue ineffective programs, and implement new programs.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Technology Plan (2008–11).

**EXHIBIT 6-8
TEXAS CAMPUS STaR CHART FOCUS AREAS AND SCORING**

KEY AREA	FOCUS AREAS	SCORES DEPICTING LEVELS OF PROGRESS
Teaching and Learning	Patterns of classroom use Frequency/design of instructional setting using digital content Content area connections Technology application TEKS implementation Student mastery of technology applications (TEKS) Online learning	Early Tech (6–8) points Developing Tech (9–14) points Advanced Tech (15–20) points Target Tech (21–24) points
Educator Preparation and Development	Professional development experiences Models of professional development Capabilities of educators Technology professional development participation Levels of understanding and patterns of use Capabilities of educators with online learning	Early Tech (6–8) points Developing Tech (9–14) points Advanced Tech (15–20) points Target Tech (21–24) points
Leadership, Administration and Instructional Support	Leadership and vision Planning Instructional support Communication and collaboration Budget Leadership and support for online learning	Early Tech (5–7) points Developing Tech (8–12) points Advanced Tech (13–17) points Target Tech (18–20) points
Infrastructure for Technology	Students per computers Internet access connectivity/speed Other classroom technology Technical support Local Area Network/Wide Area Network Distance Learning Capability	Early Tech (5–7) points Developing Tech (8–12) points Advanced Tech (13–17) points Target Tech (18–20) points

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Campus STaR Chart.

EXHIBIT 6-9
TAFT ISD
SUMMARY STaR CHART RATINGS BY CAMPUS
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10

CAMPUS	TEACHING AND LEARNING	EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT	LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION, AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TECHNOLOGY
Petty Elementary	Early Tech (8)	Early Tech (7)	Developing Tech (12)	Developing Tech (10)
Taft Junior High	Advanced Tech (20)	Advanced Tech (16)	Advanced Tech (17)	Target Tech (18)
Taft High School	Developing Tech (13)	Developing Tech (12)	Advanced Tech (16)	Advanced Tech (14)
Taft ISD Average	Developing Tech (14)	Developing Tech (12)	Advanced Tech (15)	Advanced Tech (14)

SOURCE: Taft ISD Campus Summary STaR Chart Report.

proficiency in the use and integration of technology into the curriculum.

When comparing the STaR summary report for Taft ISD against its peer districts and state averages, the district's overall progress in the four key areas falls within the same range as the majority of Texas school districts. **Exhibit 6-10** shows Taft ISD Summary STaR Chart average ratings versus its peer districts and the state averages.

While the district's STaR ratings are within the present state averages, these ratings need improvement to reach the goal of target tech in the 2006–2020 SBOE Long-Range Plan for Technology.

The district should create an instructional technology coordinator position with responsibility for technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum. This position should be responsible for developing and maintaining a quality program for computer instruction for all K–12 students; assisting instructional personnel to integrate technology into all educational programs; and leading the development of the district's long-range plan for instructional technology. The instructional technology position should be filled by a person who is well-trained in operating instructional networks, using technologies for instructional purposes, and integrating new technologies into the curriculum. The instructional technology position would be responsible for:

EXHIBIT 6-10
TAFT ISD
SUMMARY STaR CHART COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS AND THE STATE
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10

DISTRICT	TEACHING AND LEARNING	EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT	LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TECHNOLOGY
Carrizo Springs CISD	Developing Tech (13)	Developing Tech (13)	Advanced Tech (14)	Target Tech (18)
Muleshoe ISD	Developing Tech (12)	Developing Tech (11)	Advanced Tech (14)	Advanced Tech (17)
Poteet ISD	Developing Tech (12)	Developing Tech (10)	Advanced Tech (12)	Advanced Tech (14)
Sinton ISD	Developing Tech (11)	Developing Tech (10)	Developing Tech (11)	Advanced Tech (14)
Taft ISD	Developing Tech (14)	Developing Tech (12)	Advanced Tech (15)	Advanced Tech (14)
State Average	Developing Tech	Developing Tech	Advanced Tech	Advanced Tech

SOURCE: Taft ISD and Peer Districts Campus Summary STaR Chart Reports.

- Advising schools regarding effective strategies and helpful educational resources;
- Providing expert advice on classroom uses of technology;
- Serving as the primary instructional technology support resource for the Technology Committee;
- Coordinating districtwide teacher training;
- Leading the effort to implement various technology standards in schools;
- Collaborating on network implementation efforts to ensure that Taft ISD's WAN and LAN satisfy instructional needs;
- Monitoring the adequacy of district technology support; and
- Facilitating the acquisition of instructional software by schools.

The estimated annual cost to the district for the instructional technology coordinator is \$51,750, based on a salary of \$45,000 plus benefits of 15 percent. The total five year cost of this recommendation would be \$258,750 (\$51,750 x 5).

HARDWARE REPLACEMENT STRATEGY (REC. 42)

Taft ISD lacks a comprehensive replacement strategy for the district's computing hardware. Replacement strategies focus on periodically replacing computers and mobile computer labs at schools and other district locations. As part of this process, districts can also establish hardware standards that are enforced by their IT Department.

To minimize the fiscal impact and provide the lowest total cost of ownership (TCO), a district can research various alternatives for funding the replacement strategy. One of the options a district can consider is leasing. A Gartner Research study shows that standout organizations and businesses evaluate several high-level business drivers that affect the decision to lease or purchase personal computers (PCs) and define the associated evaluation criteria. Before making a decision to implement a PC leasing program, organizations ask four key questions:

- What is the organization's real computer equipment replacement life cycle?
- Does the organization have the ability to track the equipment during its life cycle?

- Does the organization plan to lease this equipment as part of a well-considered strategy with strong consensus throughout the organization?
- Are the software applications and processing requirements reasonably stable?

PC leasing programs are just one of many tools for resolving financial, technological, and organizational demands in the context of equipment acquisition. **Exhibit 6-11** lists the five critical factors that organizations face in executing the actual PC lease, according to a Gartner Research study.

Another option for a district to consider is using a service provider to replace and maintain new computers. Fort Worth ISD uses an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to provide repair and replacement services for new computers in order to lower their TCO for computer hardware. Under this agreement, the OEM must repair or replace equipment within 48 hours during the first three years following purchase. Fort Worth's vendor offered this service to the district without additional cost to its preexisting hardware bid in an effort to keep the district's business. The agreement calls for a technician to be onsite the following business day if the vendor receives a call before 5:00 p.m. If the technician cannot resolve the problem that day, the technician returns the next day. If the vendor can't fix the problem within 48 hours, the vendor installs a replacement computer in the classroom. Fort Worth ISD covers about 2,000 computers in this agreement. PC leasing companies provide a similar level of support to districts that choose to lease computers.

Many school districts employ a cost-effective PC acquisition program that allows them to explore creative leasing and purchasing options. By doing so, these districts obtain a greater number of machines at a lower cost and upgrade technology more frequently to prevent computer obsolescence.

The district should review different options and determine an appropriate computer replacement strategy. Taft ISD has started this process by replacing computers at some of its campuses and identifying a need, in its State of the District Workbook, to replace 25 percent of its computers each year if the budget allows. The district should use input from key stakeholders through its Technology Committee and research the various options to determine the best alternative for acquiring computers, their replacement schedule, and how best to budget and pay for the computers. By developing a regular replacement strategy, the district can better manage the significant cost of providing technology to its students.

**EXHIBIT 6-11
CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PC LEASING**

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
1. Understand the Enterprise's Motivations for Leasing	The motivations to lease are driven primarily by technology and financial management decisions, rather than by capital cost pressures. From the perspective of the technology department, leasing can help minimize the impact of technology obsolescence, while it facilitates product acquisition and embraces the life cycle management of assets.
2. Select an Appropriate Lease Term	To select the right lease term, an enterprise needs to determine the amount of time the system will be needed. This is the most difficult step, but it is also the key assumption for determining whether to lease or purchase equipment. Leasing works best when you match the term of the lease to the amount of time you expect to use the equipment.
3. Negotiate Contract Terms and Conditions	Inattention to lease terms and conditions is one of the major reasons PC leasing initiatives fail. The advantages of leasing are only gained through careful negotiation, thorough contract review, and meticulous documentation. Best-practice contracts use easily understood language and examples that help explain the intent of the lessor and lessee. Throughout the negotiation process, it is essential that enterprises understand the legal, financial, and business aspects of a lease contract and the practical day-to-day implications these contracts pose.
4. Asset Management Is Required	It is recommended that enterprises require lessors to provide notification of the expiration date of each equipment schedule, along with their renewal and purchase options and pricing, 90 to 120 days before expiration. The lessee would then be required to notify the lessor of its intention 30 days after receiving such notice. Most lessors will offer some level of asset management tracking data.
5. Put Someone in Charge	Enterprises that are "best-in-class" in PC leasing generally have empowered an individual within the organization to shepherd the lease process from start to finish. Depending on the size of the lease initiative, a part-time or full-time employee reports to IT management or up through the finance organization. It is critical that management fully empowers that person to make tough decisions and provides this individual with the appropriate resources to carry out the lease initiative.

SOURCE: Gartner Research Study, July 2001.

This recommendation can be implemented with current resources.

DOCUMENTED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 43)

The IT Department lacks documented policies and procedures to drive operational activities and standardization. The IT Department has not developed policies and procedures for most information technology functions. Documented policies and procedures provide clear direction to staff and protect the district from loss of information in the event of staff turnover. At the same time, written policies and procedures can facilitate assimilation of new staff into the district in the most effective way. Policies and procedures also provide daily guidance for technology activities and ensure the district's technology function can continue to operate in the event of a personnel change. Without documented policies and procedures, functions may be carried out in an inconsistent, inefficient, and ineffective manner. Additionally, the lack of procedures can also result in situations in which the district employees cannot access email, network files, student information, or connect to the

regional education service centers for services should an absence occur among technology staff.

Taft ISD has developed Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) for employee and student electronic information resource usage and student email access. These AUP's are posted on the district's website. However, policies to govern the daily functions of the IT Department are non-existent. Not having documented policies and procedures leaves the district unprepared for emergencies and other problems that can often occur to challenge the staff. The impact to the district is slower resolution of problems that require more in-depth technical expertise.

The publication, *"Innovative Solutions to Help Address the Issues and Challenges Facing Most Public School Districts"* by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts in April 2003, stresses the importance of well-written procedures. Okeechobee County Schools in Florida provides an example of a well-structured and comprehensive policies and procedures manual. **Exhibit 6-12** shows the Table of Contents for suggested manual content.

Having documented policies and procedures, such as the ones outlined in **Exhibit 6-12**, assist in daily operations and troubleshooting of non-routine problems. It also enhances the efficiency and overall effectiveness of the technical staff that assist district personnel on technology related needs.

Taft ISD should develop and publish policies and procedures that establish standards for IT operations and hardware/software installation. The IT Technology, working with the Technology Committee, should identify and map out functions or activities that require a policy or procedure to be compliant or make a process more effective. A plan should be developed to document and publish policies and procedures incorporating standards, as appropriate. These policies and procedures should become a part of a standard operating procedures manual as well as posted on the district and campus websites. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

DISASTER RECOVERY/BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN (REC. 44)

Taft ISD does not have a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the computer operations facility is rendered inoperable. Without a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, the district is at risk of losing critical data and operations in the event of an unforeseen disaster.

Currently, the district is using the dynamic backup capability of its servers to locally backup data. The dynamic backup capability allows data on servers to be backed-up while still accessible to the users, eliminating the need for downtime to perform such a critical operation. However, there is no offsite storage rotation to ensure the availability of current information if a system restore is required due to a catastrophic outage or the computer operations facility is destroyed.

The primary objective of a disaster recovery/business continuity plan is to protect the district in the event its operations and technology services become unusable. Prior planning and test exercises minimize chaos and ensures a level of organizational stability and orderly recovery after a disaster. **Exhibit 6-13** lists the key elements of a disaster recovery plan.

Taft ISD should develop and implement a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the computer operations facility is rendered inoperable. The plan would identify critical systems and data that must be protected and

would help the district restore operations and technology services as soon as possible after a crisis had occurred.

The district should also establish a disaster recovery team comprised of representation from the superintendent's office, principals, teachers, district staff, outside vendors, maintenance, security, and technical staff. The district's disaster recovery team should conduct an annual review of the plan to ensure that changes in staff, organization, or systems are incorporated in the plan.

Essential elements in the disaster recovery plan should include:

- Develop a complete list of critical activities performed within the district;
- Identify which systems and staff are necessary to perform functions;
- List key personnel for each function, and their responsibilities;
- Create an inventory of all technology assets including hardware, software systems and data, documentation, and supplies that correctly identify the location with sufficient information to document loss for insurance recovery;
- Define actions to be taken when a pending disaster is projected;
- Identify actions taken to restore critical functions;
- Keep the plan simple but effective; and
- Keep the plan components in an accessible location that can be accessed in the event of an emergency.

As part of the development of the disaster recovery/business continuity plan, Taft ISD should consider exploring alternatives for use as a backup facility for key application processing and network connectivity if the computer operations facility is inoperable for an extended period of time. Many districts use the vendor which provides the software for them to backup their system, or their regional education service center, to serve as a backup computing facility or to provide redundant network capability in case of a problem or disaster. For example, in 2004 Clinton ISD entered into a reciprocal agreement with Region 19 for disaster recovery services. The two organizations compared compatibility options to ensure mission critical systems could be aligned with minimum expenses. Taft ISD should

EXHIBIT 6-12
OKEECHOBEE COUNTY SCHOOLS
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

- I. Purpose
- II. Access To Policy
- III. Ownership and Use of Information Technology Resources
- IV. Technology Equipment
- V. Software
- VI. Guidelines for the Use of Technology Resources
 - a. The Following Guidelines Have Been Developed for All Users
 - b. Safety Guidelines for All Users
- VII. Access to Technology Resources
- VIII. User Accounts
- IX. Passwords
- X. Disclosure of Passwords
- XI. Network Management and Security
 - a. Bandwidth
 - b. Hacking
 - c. Port Scanning and Sniffing
 - d. Network Infrastructure and Communication Closets
 - e. Network Address Assignment and Synamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP)
 - f. Domain Name Registration
 - g. Wireless Networks
 - h. Anonymous File Transfer Protocol (FTP) Sites
 - i. Firewalls
- XII. Laptop Computer and Electronic Data Mobile Device Security
 - a. Policy Statement
 - b. Reason for Policy/Purpose
 - c. Protection of Confidential Data
 - d. Definitions
 - e. Policy/Procedures
 - f. Protection of Confidential Data
 - g. Reporting Loss/Theft of Equipment or Data
 - h. Disposal of Property Used to Access or Store Confidential Data
- XIII. Electronic Mail
 - a. Definition of Email
 - b. Purpose
 - c. Procedures
- XIV. Student Technology Privileges and Acceptable Use
 - a. Computer Lab Scheduling/Rules
 - b. Telecommunication Plan and Electronic Communication Use Policy
 - c. Vilating Internet Policy, Rues and Regulations or Inappropriate Use of the Network
 - d. Safety Guidelines for Students
- XV. Web Publishing Policy
 - a. State of Purpose
 - b. Design and Development Guidelines
 - c. Content Guidelines for Department, School, and Teacher Web Pages
 - d. Best Practices Guidelines for Web Page Development
 - e. Web Site Limitations and Restrictions
 - f. Video and Audio Podcasts
- XVI. Loss Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery

SOURCE: Okeechobee County Schools, Florida, Technology Department, 2008.

**EXHIBIT 6-13
KEY ELEMENTS OF A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN**

STEP	DETAILS
Build the disaster recovery team.	Identify a disaster recovery team that includes key policy makers, building management, end-users, key outside contractors and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the system. Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	Develop an inventory of all computer technology assets including data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. Establish reciprocal agreements with comparable organizations to share each other's equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the system to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. Make plans to procure hardware, software, and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations are resumed as soon as possible. Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. Locate support resources that might be needed, such as equipment repair, trucking and cleaning companies. Arrange with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders. Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details within the plan.	Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so that everyone knows exactly what needs to be done. Define actions to be taken in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. Define actions to be taken at the onset of an undesirable event to limit damage, loss and compromised data integrity. Identify actions to be taken to restore critical functions. Define actions to be taken to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	Test the plan frequently and completely. Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Deal with damage appropriately.	If a disaster actually occurs, document all costs and videotape the damage. Be prepared to overcome downtime as insurance settlements can take time to resolve.
Give consideration to other significant issues.	Don't make the plan unnecessarily complicated. Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that others are authorized and prepared to implement if it is needed. Update the plan regularly whenever changes are made to your system.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology", November 2002.

consider this type arrangement with a regional education service center that provides this service.

The district should immediately implement an automated offsite server backup and data storage capability. For example, Iron Mountain's LiveVault provides a fully automated offsite backup and recovery operation with little or no IT intervention. Also, since there are no tapes or disks involved, it lowers the total cost of ownership (TCO) and makes this type solution even more cost effective. The cost for this

capability is based on the number of servers and the amount of data to be stored. For a minimum of 3 servers with a maximum of 250-gigabytes of data, the annual cost would be \$5,400 (3 x \$150 = \$450/month, \$450 x 12 = \$5,400 annually). The total 5-year cost of this recommendation would be \$27,000 (\$5,400 x 5).

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
40. Establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities for computer technicians, upgrade the part-time computer technician position to full-time, and fill the full-time IT director position.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41. Create an instructional technology coordinator position with responsibility for technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum.	(\$51,750)	(\$51,750)	(\$51,750)	(\$51,750)	(\$51,750)	(\$258,750)	\$0
42. Review different options and determine an appropriate computer replacement strategy.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
43. Develop and publish policies and procedures that establish standards for IT operations and hardware/software installation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
44. Develop and implement a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the computer operations facility is rendered inoperable.	(\$5,400)	(\$5,400)	(\$5,400)	(\$5,400)	(\$5,400)	(\$27,000)	\$0
TOTALS	(\$57,150)	(\$57,150)	(\$57,150)	(\$57,150)	(\$57,150)	(\$285,750)	\$0

CHAPTER 7

CHILD NUTRITION

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 7. CHILD NUTRITION

Effective food service operations provide students and staff appealing and nutritious breakfasts and lunches at a reasonable cost in an environment that is safe, clean, and accessible. These operations must comply with federal and state regulations, and local board of Trustees policy. The United States Congress directed the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in 1946 to “safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritional agricultural products.” The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the NSLP and School Breakfast Program (SBP). These are federally assisted meal programs operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions.

Districts that participate in the NSLP and SBP must serve students meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional value and offer free or reduced-price meals to eligible students. When districts participate in the NSLP and SBP, they receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each eligible meal served at schools.

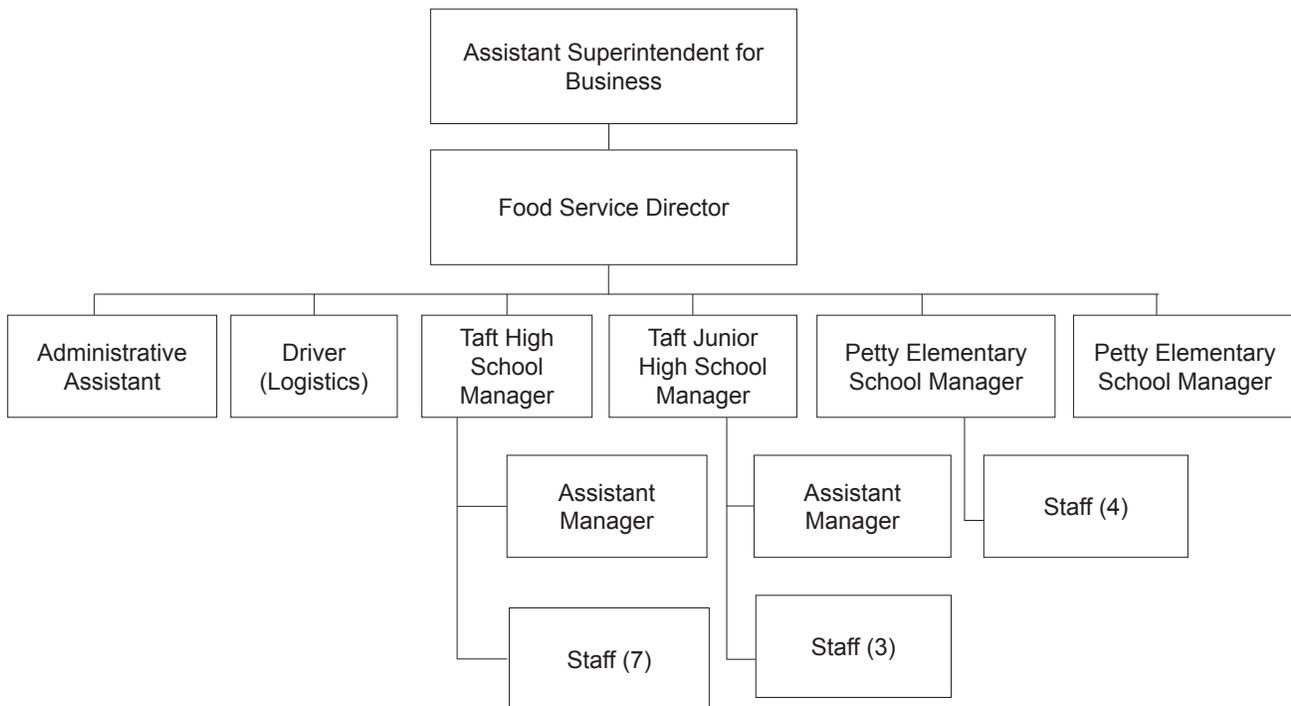
Food service operations have been renamed Child Nutrition in many districts to encompass the fact that the NSLP focuses on nutritional content of meals provided to students. Taft Independent School District (ISD) calls their food service operations Child Nutrition. For purposes of this report, food service and Child Nutrition are both used to refer to food service operations. There are a total of 24 employees in Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition operations. The functions of central Child Nutrition operations are split between the director, administrative assistant, and the driver (logistics person). Taft ISD Child Nutrition is managed by the Child Nutrition director who reports to the assistant superintendent for Business. The director manages overall Child Nutrition operations, plans school menus, prepares and files meal claims to Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), and manages the USDA commodity ordering and usage. The administrative assistant is responsible for processing student eligibility applications for free- and reduced-price meals, processing accounts payable, inventory management, and ordering foods and supplies. The driver (logistics person) is responsible for delivering prepared foods and inventory items to the schools each day. **Exhibit 7-1** depicts Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition organization.

Taft ISD has fully operational kitchens at each of its schools that operate as closed campuses, meaning that students are not allowed off school property once classes begin for the day. The high school kitchen is also considered as Taft ISD’s central kitchen as it prepares “scratch” and baked items that are then distributed to the schools for serving. Examples of items that would be prepared at the central kitchen are spaghetti, dinner rolls, and cookies. Taft ISD’s schools generally prepare their own breakfasts, pizza, hamburgers, sandwiches, and items that do not require a lot of preparation and cooking. Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition director has centralized control of all Child Nutrition functions, including food and supply inventory, meal reimbursement claims, purchasing, and cafeteria operations. As per the superintendent and assistant superintendent for Business, the Child Nutrition director is also responsible for the hiring and firing of all Child Nutrition employees.

During lunchtime, students at the junior high school and high school enter serving lines and select what items they would like on their tray, including milk from the beverage coolers. Students either enter their student identification number on a keypad or tell the cashier their student identification number. Children at the Elementary School tell the Child Nutrition workers which food items they want and select their own milk. Pre-K and elementary students have an ID card that they wear which can be scanned or manually entered by the cashier. Child Nutrition implemented Skyward Point-Of-Sale (POS) system at each school to account for all meals served. The automated POS system identifies students as eligible for either a full-paying, reduced-price, or free meal. Students that are required to pay for meals have the option of paying in advance and having the money placed in their personal meal account or paying for each meal as they go through the serving line. Each school’s cafeteria operations is connected to the district’s wide area network.

Taft ISD has implemented the universal breakfast program whereby all students in attendance eat breakfast for free. Pre-K students receive their breakfast by going through the serving line while all other students are served breakfast in the classroom. Child Nutrition staff delivers the breakfast to classrooms in containers on carts. A weekly classroom roster is prepared and updated each day. Student names not in

**EXHIBIT 7-1
TAFT ISD CHILD NUTRITION ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**



SOURCE: Taft ISD Child Nutrition Employee Listing.

attendance and therefore not receiving breakfast are circled. The listing is then scanned into the POS system by the Child Nutrition worker each day. The scanning identifies meals served for federal reimbursement.

Taft ISD Child Nutrition also offers catering services. The Child Nutrition director manages catering operations. Catering consists of preparing meals for special activities (internal ISD) such as board of trustee (board) meetings, staff development, extracurricular activities at schools and central office, and school principal meetings. Catering is also offered to the community for meetings and special events.

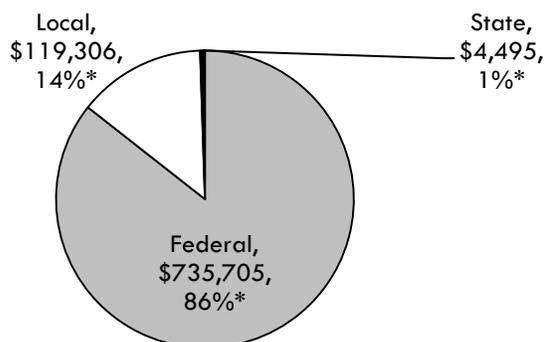
Eighty-eight percent of the district's current students are economically disadvantaged and qualify for free or reduced-price school meals in school year 2010–11. Child Nutrition served 166,073 reimbursable breakfasts and 152,782 lunches during school year 2009–10. When non-reimbursable meals are included, Taft ISD served 188,796 breakfasts and 166,490 lunches during school year 2009–10. Taft ISD serves more breakfasts than lunches due to offering all students breakfast free-of-charge. Meal participation rates are

the total number of students eating a meal at school compared to the average daily attendance, regardless of their free or reduced price eligibility. In school year 2009–10, Taft ISD breakfast participation rates were 94 percent for elementary school students, 86 percent for junior high school students, and 68 percent for high school students. Lunch participation rates were 92 percent for elementary school students, 75 percent for junior high school students, and 62 percent for high school students.

Taft ISD schools met the eligibility criteria for severe need as defined by the USDA and received an additional \$0.02 cents for every lunch served and an additional \$0.28 for every reduced-price or free breakfast served. The school year 2009–10 Taft ISD Child Nutrition revenues were \$859,506 and expenditures were \$837,976. In school year 2009–10, revenues were greater than expenditures as the Child Nutrition program was able to contain food costs by using commodities. The Child Nutrition director also attributed some profit from catering revenues.

Exhibit 7-2 depicts Taft ISD's Child Nutrition revenues by source for school year 2009–10. Of the total school year 2009–10 revenues (\$859,506), federal reimbursements represented 86 percent (\$735,705), state reimbursements represented 1 percent (\$4,495), and local sales represented 14 percent (\$119,306).

EXHIBIT 7-2
TAFT ISD
CHILD NUTRITION REVENUES BY SOURCE
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10



*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
 SOURCE: Taft ISD Audited Child Nutrition Financial Statements.

In school year 2009–10, the Child Nutrition program began to see profit from operations, something not seen since school year 2006–07. However, Child Nutrition still had a negative fund balance of (\$115,856) as of August 31, 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD Child Nutrition is working with the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) Child Nutrition Program Specialist in a pilot program to develop and implement stronger management tools in order to improve the program's financial operations.
- Taft ISD Child Nutrition used 90 percent of the USDA commodities provided by the NSLP and SBP.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD's lack of tracking expenditures associated with catering activities appears to be inconsistent with USDA's Child Nutrition Program regulations resulting in inaccurate operating results.

- Taft ISD Child Nutrition incurred fund balance deficits for three of the past five years as a result of not controlling costs.
- Taft ISD is losing revenues by serving free breakfasts to district employees and visitors, and providing replacement lunches to students that drop their trays at no cost.
- Taft ISD's Child Nutrition meal pricing structure results in revenues from free and reduced price student meals being used to subsidize full pay student meals.
- Taft ISD does not prepare monthly financial reports.
- Taft ISD's Child Nutrition operations do not have a strategic plan nor regular meetings with Child Nutrition staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 45:** Establish separate budget accounts for catering expenditures.
- **Recommendation 46:** Restore profitability and control costs in Child Nutrition operations.
- **Recommendation 47:** Charge staff, visitors, and students for all meals served if they are not reimbursable by the NSLP.
- **Recommendation 48:** Evaluate meal prices charged prior to each school year and adjust the prices to equal the reimbursement received for each free student meal.
- **Recommendation 49:** Develop financial reports to enhance financial controls, monitoring of operations, and accountability of cafeteria managers.
- **Recommendation 50:** Develop a strategic plan to guide decision-making with regards to cafeteria operations and conduct monthly meetings with Child Nutrition staff.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

REGION 2 ASSISTANCE

Taft ISD Child Nutrition is working with the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) Child Nutrition Program Specialist to participate in a pilot program to develop and implement stronger management tools in order to improve the program's financial operations. As such, the

Child Nutrition director reached out to Region 2 for assistance. Region 2 is now working with Taft ISD Child Nutrition as part of a pilot program along with two other districts, San Diego ISD and Flour Bluff ISD, to help with calculating meals per labor hour (MPLH), planning menus pre- and post- costing, and developing a communications program. The pilot is being developed in three phases with an anticipated completion date of summer 2011:

- Phase I – Developing a spreadsheet to identify costs and determine meals per labor hour (MPLH);
- Phase II – Developing processes to determine meal costs; planning menu costing including pre- and post-meal production; and
- Phase III – Developing communications to be distributed to the administration, school board, and community promoting food service activities such as number of meals served, financial outcomes, activities to increase meal participation, menu promotion and the healthy eating challenge, and the projections for the next reporting period.

These management tools will enable the Child Nutrition director to better manage operations and also provide the operational and financial information to district administrators to facilitate making sound business decisions. Region 2 also assisted the Child Nutrition director with calculating the MPLH and menu pre- cost for this review.

COMMODITY USAGE

Taft ISD Child Nutrition used 90 percent of the USDA commodities provided by the NSLP and SBP. The USDA provides commodities to school districts as a means of lowering food costs. Many school districts either do not use available USDA commodities, or use very little. The amount of USDA commodities that are available to schools depends upon the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled and the district's previous commodity usage. To enable the most use of commodity entitlement dollars, Taft ISD diverts a large portion of their commodities to food processors. The district also participates in the Farm to School Program which enables Taft ISD to use commodity entitlement dollars for fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season. The National Farm to School Program is a collaborative program of the Center for Food & Justice, Occidental College, and the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC). It was initiated in 2000 and has been credited with introducing more healthy foods into children's diets while providing additional markets for farmers.

Taft ISD had available and used commodities valued at \$33,470 for school year 2009–10 and have been allocated \$35,500 for school year 2010–11. Taft ISD is able to use all of its commodities due to the emphasis that the Child Nutrition director places on incorporating commodities into menus and recipes which allows for a greater variety of menu items.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CATERING OPERATIONS (REC. 45)

Taft ISD's lack of tracking expenditures associated with catering activities appears to be inconsistent with USDA's Child Nutrition Program regulations resulting in inaccurate operating results. Additionally, 20 of the catering invoices totaling \$2,142.65, of the 70 invoices totaling \$9,007.74, for the period of August 2010 through January 31, 2011 have not been collected as of February 14, 2011. Child Nutrition provides catering to internal organizations and to the local community as a source of additional income for their operations to help supplement some of the operating costs. Although food, salaries, and overhead costs are associated with catering, they are not tracked separately from the Child Nutrition program costs. However, the revenues received from catering activities are recorded in a separate budget account.

Federal Register Vol. 69 No 250 Dec. 30, 2004 Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service 7 CFR Parts 210, 215 and 220 states that a school food service authority is permitted to engage in activities that are outside of the scope of the nonprofit school food service; however, the school food authority must ensure that none of the resources from its nonprofit school food service subsidize the costs of such activities. Direct and indirect costs must be fully funded by the revenues received from such activities or from sources outside the nonprofit school food service account.

The Child Nutrition director facilitates Taft ISD's catering operations. The Child Nutrition director works with catering customers to develop the desired menu, then orders the food from Taft ISD's vendors. The food is then prepared in Taft ISD's central kitchen by Taft ISD Child Nutrition staff and delivered to the customer. All of these costs are charged to the Child Nutrition budget instead of being tracked separately and recorded in a budget expense account specific for catering operations.

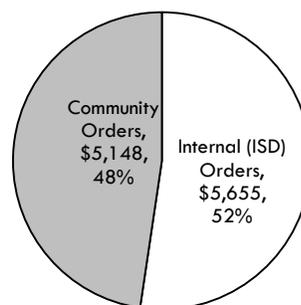
A catering menu with prices had not been developed as of this review. Instead, the Child Nutrition director prices each

order as they are received. Not having a catering menu with established prices can lead to instances where all costs associated with producing the item may not be covered. All costs associated with producing the meal are not being included in the price. Costs that are not included are food, labor, overhead (electricity, equipment usage, waste management, etc.), and profit. Profit should be included in the costing of a menu to ensure that a profit is built into the quote.

The Child Nutrition director tracks catering orders and invoices on a manual log. A review of the manual log indicates that there are catering orders for almost every business day. **Exhibit 7-3** summarizes the catering revenues by source and **Exhibit 7-4** summarizes the catering activities for August 2010 to February 2011. At the time of the review, in total, Taft ISD Child Nutrition has fulfilled 78 catering orders totaling \$10,727.74 during the period. Community orders represented 38 percent of the volume with an average per order of \$171.60. Internal orders represented a higher volume (62 percent) but lower average amount per order, \$116.24.

The Child Nutrition director should work with the assistant superintendent for Business to establish separate budget accounts for catering expenditures. These should include labor, food, and overhead. All staff time should be tracked separately for catering activities and all food ordered and

**EXHIBIT 7-3
TAFT ISD
CATERING SERVICE REVENUES BY SOURCE
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**



SOURCE: Taft ISD Child Nutrition director special events listing.

used for catering orders should be charged to the catering budget. An overhead rate should be developed and added to all catering invoices. The overhead rate should include utilities and equipment usage.

Additionally, all catering activities should be maintained in either a Microsoft Access database or spreadsheet. This will facilitate managing the invoicing and collection process. A catering contract should be developed and should include payment requirements, including a 50 percent down payment. Collection activities should be enhanced to collect

**EXHIBIT 7-4
TAFT ISD
CATERING EVENTS BY CATEGORY
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

MONTH	INTERNAL (ISD) NUMBER	INTERNAL (ISD) AMOUNT	COMMUNITY NUMBER	COMMUNITY AMOUNT	TOTAL NUMBER	TOTAL AMOUNT
Aug. 2010	6	\$ 438.00	1	\$65.00	7	\$503.00
Sept. 2010	2	\$162.50	4	\$285.00	6	\$447.50
Oct. 2010	12	\$1,742.50	8	\$1,178.89	20	\$2,921.39
Nov. 2010	11	\$1,220.95	3	\$213.75	14	\$1,434.70
Dec. 2010	10	\$1,387.00	6	\$1,590.00	16	\$2,977.00
Jan. 2011	4	\$472.40	3	\$251.75	7	\$724.15
Feb. 2011	3	\$ 156.25	5	\$1,563.75	8	\$1,720.00
TOTAL	48	\$ 5,579.60	30	\$5,148.14	78	\$ 10,727.74
Average Revenue Per Order		\$116.24		\$171.60		\$137.54
Percentage of Total	62%	52%	38%	48%		

SOURCE: Taft ISD Child Nutrition director special events listing.

on the current unpaid invoices. The Child Nutrition director plans on working with Region 2 to develop a catering menu. The Child Nutrition director should also work with Taft ISD's assistant superintendent for Business and Region 2 to develop accurate cost tracking methods.

In addition, Taft ISD should cooperate with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) regarding the recommendation of the Legislative Budget Board that TDA conduct an investigation of Taft ISD's Child Nutrition program under provisions of the US Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 7 CFR 210.19(A)(1)(c)(vii)(5) regarding investigations, which cites: "Each State agency shall promptly investigate complaints received or irregularities noted in connection with the operation of the Program, and shall take appropriate action to correct any irregularities." The TDA investigation should review the actions and environment leading to the program discrepancies in the Taft ISD Child Nutrition program.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PROFITABILITY (REC. 46)

Taft ISD Child Nutrition incurred fund balance deficits for three of the past five years as a result of not controlling costs. The district has labor costs that absorb a higher percentage of revenues than industry standards. Additionally, Child Nutrition is not charging Taft ISD for full and reduced price breakfasts served, menus are not pre- and post- costed to control food costs, food cost per meal served are higher than industry average, and meals are being served but not being paid for or claimed for reimbursement.

Child Nutrition had been profitable prior to school year 2006–07 and had a fund balance of \$167,292 on August 31, 2006. The Child Nutrition fund balance lost a total of \$304,678 in the three years between school years 2006–07 and 2009–10, leaving a negative fund balance of (\$115,856) as of August 31, 2010. Taft ISD hired a new Child Nutrition director in December 2008 and was able to generate a profit in 2010. **Exhibit 7-5** summarizes Child Nutrition revenues and expenditures for school years 2005–06 to 2009–10.

The district attributes the causes of losses to (1) staff was not reduced to coincide with the decreased enrollment, (2) purchase of equipment, and (3) food costs were not being controlled and inventory was not being properly managed. The new Child Nutrition director has reduced inventory levels, made use of all USDA commodities provided, and increased catering services. These efforts resulted in a positive contribution to the fund balance in school year 2009–10.

MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH)

The food service industry measures productivity by MPLH and labor percentage as a percentage of revenues. The school food service industry, a subset of the national foodservice industry, uses productivity guidelines published by Dorothy Pannell, Joseph Martin, and Charlotte Oakley as a commonly accepted management tool. For the purposes of this report, industry standards refer to the school food service industry. Data analyzed for this review indicate that the largest contributor to operational losses is that productivity is lower than school food service industry standards resulting in labor costs that absorb a higher percentage of revenues than industry standard.

EXHIBIT 7-5
TAFT ISD
CHILD NUTRITION ANNUAL REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND FUND BALANCE
SCHOOL YEARS 2005–06 TO 2009–10

CATEGORY	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
Local	\$88,476	\$91,079	\$97,874	\$119,815	\$119,306
State	\$5,225	\$5,005	\$4,869	\$4,728	\$4,495
Federal	\$710,196	\$645,603	\$677,489	\$734,370	\$735,705
TOTAL REVENUES	\$803,897	\$741,687	\$780,232	\$858,913	\$859,506
Expenditures	\$759,622	\$905,978	\$862,877	\$916,656	\$837,976
Profit/(Loss)	\$44,275	(\$164,291)	(\$82,645)	(\$57,743)	\$21,530
Fund Balance	\$167,292	\$3,001	(\$79,643)	(\$137,386)	(\$115,856)

NOTE: Fiscal year 2008–09 federal revenues include \$61,001 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds for equipment; Federal revenues for all years includes United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities approximate to the actual USDA expenditures.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Summary Budgets for Respective Years.

Labor is the largest Child Nutrition operation expense at Taft ISD. **Exhibit 7-6** displays Child Nutrition revenues and expenditures for school year 2009–10 and the budget for school year 2010–11. While the budgeted revenue and expenditures are less in school year 2010–11 than actual results in school year 2009–10, the percentage of expenditures allocated to payroll is budgeted at 48 percent of expenditures for school year 2010–11 compared to 49 percent in school year 2009–10. Food cost is budgeted higher while capital equipment is budgeted lower in school year 2010–11 than school year 2009–10 actual costs.

When applying commonly accepted industry standards for school food service financial management to Taft ISD's Child Nutrition expenditures for 2009–10, the results indicate that Taft ISD is spending too much on labor. A comparison of Taft ISD's labor expenditure as a percentage of revenue to industry standards, as identified in *Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence, Second Edition* (2008), indicates that Taft ISD spent at least three percent more of its revenue to labor than the recommended industry standard. **Exhibit 7-7** provides a comparison of Taft ISD labor expenditures as a percentage of revenues to industry standards.

Taft ISD Child Nutrition is performing below industry standards for productivity which is causing their labor costs to be higher than industry standards. Productivity in food service operations is measured in MPLH. The food service industry established the MPLH standards based upon the number of meals and meal equivalents served and the type of food preparation. It is a critical indicator that many successful food service organizations use to control labor costs. One reimbursable lunch is considered a meal. Breakfast, a la carte sales, and snacks are converted to one reimbursable lunch based upon a formula prior to calculating MPLH. Most districts use MPLH as a guide to staffing levels as it provides the necessary information to make quick labor adjustments as needed.

EXHIBIT 7-6
TAFT ISD
CHILD NUTRITION ANALYSIS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
SEPTEMBER 1, 2009 TO JANUARY 25, 2011

CATEGORY	2009–10 ACTUAL	2009–10 PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL	2010–11 BUDGET	2010–11 PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET
Revenues				
Local	\$119,306	14%*	\$127,525	16%*
State	\$4,495	1%*	\$4,000	1%*
Federal	\$735,705	86%*	\$667,987	84%*
TOTAL REVENUES	\$859,506	100%*	\$799,512	100%*
Expenditures				
Payroll	\$409,325	49%	\$384,600	48%
Contracted Services, Maint. & Energy	\$13,077	2%	\$14,000	2%
Food	\$318,077	38%	\$327,139	41%
USDA Commodities	\$33,470	4%	\$35,500	4%
Supplies–Non Food	\$28,376	3%	\$33,600	4%
Travel, Insurance & Operating Expenses	\$2,653	0%	\$4,500	1%
Capital Equipment	\$33,000	4%	\$0	0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$837,978	100%	\$799,339	100%

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Summary Budgets for Respective Years; percentages calculated by the Review Team.

EXHIBIT 7-7
TAFT ISD
LABOR EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE TO INDUSTRY STANDARDS
FISCAL YEAR 2010

CATEGORY	REVENUE	EXPENDITURES	EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUES		TAFT ISD EXPENDITURE USING INDUSTRY STANDARD	DOLLAR VALUE OF VARIANCE
			INDUSTRY STANDARDS	INDUSTRY STANDARDS		
Local/State/Federal Revenue	\$859,506	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*
Labor	N/A*	\$409,325	48%	40-45%	\$386,778	\$22,547**

*N/A is Not Applicable;

**Based on 45 percent as the industry standard.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Child Nutrition Budget and Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence, Second Edition, by Joseph Martin PhD, RD, LD, and Charlotte Oakley, PhD, RD, FADA (2008).

Taft ISD does not calculate MPLH by campus level and does not maintain consolidated reports of meals served by campus. Therefore, MPLH is being calculated at the district level for this analysis. **Exhibit 7-8** shows industry standards and the district's actual MPLH for October 2010. Compared to industry standards, the district's average MPLH is seven MPLH above the low standard and nine MPLH above the high standard. Taft ISD is not meeting industry standards as they are preparing fewer meals per student than they should be. While Taft ISD could be considered using the convenience system as they use disposable trays, serve bakery bread products and precooked items, they also bake dinner rolls, desserts, and other items from scratch. Therefore the conventional system for industry MPLH standards was used

EXHIBIT 7-8
TAFT ISD CHILD NUTRITION
MEALS PER LABOR HOUR
OCTOBER 2010

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
A Meal Equivalents for the Month	30,788
B Number of Serving Days	21
C Meal Equivalents per Day (A/B)	1,466
D Number of Labor Hours per Day *	119.5
E Average Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH) (C / D)	12.27
F Recommended MPLH Based on Meals Served per Day	19–21
G Taft ISD MPLH over Recommended MPLH	7-9

*Excludes the Child Nutrition director, administrative assistant, and driver (logistics) employee.

SOURCE: Taft ISD School Year 2010–11, 240 Cafeteria Financial Summary Report with Number of Meals Served by Month; Taft ISD Food Service Staffing Report with Hours; "Cost Control For School Foodservices" Third Edition, by Dorothy Pannell-Martin, Revised July 2000.

for this analysis. Conventional systems require higher labor hours and therefore produce less MPLH.

The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Taft ISD. When compared to peer districts, Taft ISD spends three to eight percent more of their revenues on labor than its peers. **Exhibit 7-9** summarizes expenditures as a percentage of revenues for Taft ISD and peer districts. Taft ISD is the highest at 48 percent while Carrizo Springs CISD is the lowest with 40 percent. Muleshoe ISD has outsourced its food service operations and includes the cost of labor and food in the contract, therefore, their labor costs are not compared to Taft ISD.

Finally, Taft ISD provides catering services to internal organizations and the community. Child Nutrition staff is used to prepare the food, which is contributing to the lower number of MPLH than industry standards.

BREAKFAST REIMBURSEMENT

Taft ISD does not reimburse Child Nutrition operations for breakfasts served through the universal breakfast program although the Child Nutrition account is in deficit. Taft ISD implemented a universal breakfast program meaning that it serves breakfast free-of-charge to all students. Taft ISD Child Nutrition receives the federal and state reimbursement revenue through the meal claim process, however, they are not receiving the local revenue that would normally be paid by the students on reduced and full payment. According to the USDA regulations, when the overall nonprofit school food service account activity is insufficient to cover Program costs, the school food authority of a school participating in Provision 2 [Universal Breakfast Program] must pay the difference from non-Federal sources. **Exhibit 7-10** summarizes the number of breakfasts served and the revenues that should be provided to the Child Nutrition fund. Based

**EXHIBIT 7-9
TAFT ISD
COMPARISON OF CHILD NUTRITION EXPENDITURES TO PEER DISTRICTS*
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

CATEGORY	TAFT ISD	SINTON ISD	MULESHOE ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD
Revenues				
Local	\$119,306	\$312,138	\$149,388	\$211,801
State	\$4,495	\$20,593	\$5,673	\$44,339
Federal	\$735,705	\$960,002	\$754,554	\$1,449,224
TOTAL REVENUES	\$859,506	\$1,292,733	\$909,615	\$ 1,705,364
Expenditures				
Payroll	48%	45%	0%	40%
Contracted Services, Maintenance & Energy	2%	6%	89%	0%
Food	37%	41%	0%	38%
USDA** Commodities	4%	0%	0%	0%
Supplies-- Non Food	3%	6%	0%	1%
Travel, Insurance & Operating Expenses	0%	0%	0%	0%
Capital Equipment	4%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	7%	4%	20%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	98%	98%	90%	80%
Net Profit	2%	2%	10%	20%

*Data for Poteet ISD was not available; **USDA (United States Department of Agriculture).
SOURCE: Taft ISD Audited Financial Statements and Peer District Surveys, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 7-10
TAFT ISD
BREAKFAST REVENUE
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

	TOTAL BREAKFASTS SERVED IN THE YEAR	2009–10 USDA* REIMBURSEMENT RATES	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USDA* REIMBURSEMENT AND FULL REIMBURSEMENT**	POTENTIAL TAFT ISD REIMBURSEMENT TO CHILD NUTRITION FUND**	FIVE YEAR ADDED REVENUES TO CHILD NUTRITION FUND
Free Breakfast	33,352	\$1.74	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Reduced-price breakfast	13,088	\$1.44	\$0.30	\$3,926.40	\$19,632.00
Full-price Breakfast	19,633	\$0.26	\$1.48	\$29,056.84	\$145,284.20
TOTAL	166,073			\$32,983.24	\$164,916.20

*United States Department of Agriculture (USDA);

**USDA NSLP reimburses Taft ISD \$1.74 for each free breakfast served. Taft ISD should reimburse the Child Nutrition fund the difference between the NSLP reimbursement for free meals and the reimbursement received for reduced-price and full-price meals served.

SOURCES: Taft ISD District Average Eligibility and Participation Summary Report, and Review Team calculations.

upon the number of breakfasts served by category, Taft ISD Child Nutrition should have been reimbursed \$32,983.24 for school year 2009–10.

COSTING OUT MENUS

The Child Nutrition director does not cost menus; however, there has been work conducted with Region 2 to prepare a pre-cost of menus for October 2010. Pre-costing menus is a

financial tool used to determine available revenues and appropriate budgeting of food costs. Region 2 determined that the average meal cost for Taft ISD's menu was \$1.22 in October 2010; however, the average was not calculated separately for breakfast and lunch. Taft ISD's average meal cost of \$1.22 is \$0.13 higher than the \$1.09 average reported in the *School Lunch and Breakfast Cost Study – II* issued by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, April 2008.

There have not been any post-costing of menus prepared. Post-costing menus is a tool used to monitor efficient food usage and minimal food waste. The Child Nutrition director plans menus on an annual basis and develops production records for campus cafeteria managers to complete on a daily basis. Taft ISD controls the portion size of all food served by using proper serving equipment and pre-plating most menu items. **Exhibit 7-11** compares Taft ISD's cost of serving meals to industry standards. Compared to the *School Lunch and Breakfast Cost Study – II*, Taft ISD is spending \$46,187 more on food each year.

FOOD SERVICE COSTS

One of the most important aspects of food service management is controlling costs. As previously mentioned, Taft ISD's costs are above peer districts and industry standards (**Exhibit 7-9**). Furthermore, **Exhibit 7-12** compares target percentages of revenue allocated to expenditure categories to Taft ISD actual amounts in school year 2009–10. Taft ISD is higher in all costs except direct costs (utilities, custodial services, maintenance) and indirect costs (allowances for overhead and miscellaneous non-recurring costs). Taft ISD has not been applying a chargeback for utilities since they have been operating with a deficit until school year 2009–10.

Taft ISD should restore profitability and control costs in Child Nutrition operations. Steps include:

- Reduce staffing by 2 full-time equivalents (FTEs) to bring labor costs in line with industry standards (**Exhibit 7-11**). Establish MPLH standards for each school and monitor MPLH reports to make appropriate staffing adjustments going forward. Reducing staff would result in an annual savings of \$24,922 (\$9.42 avg. salary per hour + 15% benefits = \$10.83 x 6.5 hours = \$70.40 per day x 177 days = \$12,461 x 2 FTEs = \$24,922).

- Charge Taft ISD for breakfasts served. This would result in an additional \$32,983 revenues for the Child Nutrition fund each year.
- Reduce food costs to meet industry standards. This would save Taft ISD \$46,187 per year.
- Pre- and post-cost menus each week. The combination of financial reports, along with menu costing reports will enable the staff to compare the department's actual results with budgeted figures and prior-year results. This undertaking can be implemented at no cost.

Exhibit 7-13 displays a table of the projected costs and savings for this recommendation.

Implementing these recommendations could provide an additional \$104,092 per year towards the Child Nutrition operations for a total five year savings of \$520,460.

SERVING NON-REIMBURSABLE MEALS (REC. 47)

Taft ISD is losing revenues by serving free breakfasts to district employees and visitors, and providing replacement lunches to students that drop their trays at no cost. Taft ISD Child Nutrition was unable to claim 30,417 meals in school year 2009–10. **Exhibit 7-14** summarizes meals served by month that were non-reimbursable. Non-reimbursable breakfasts are meals provided to teachers and teacher aides at no charge for dispensing breakfasts in the classroom. Non-reimbursable lunches are student-dropped trays, and other lunches that were provided to teachers and visitors which were not claimed for reimbursement. Some of these lunches were paid for by the teacher or visitor, therefore, a conservative estimate of 10 percent of the non-reimbursable lunches were served free-of-charge.

EXHIBIT 7-11 TAFT ISD COMPARISON OF COSTS PER MEAL TO INDUSTRY STANDARDS FISCAL YEAR 2010

DESCRIPTION	AVERAGE FOOD COST PER MEAL	NUMBER OF MEALS SERVED		ANNUAL DIFFERENCE TO INDUSTRY	FIVE YEAR REDUCED COSTS
		2009–10	TOTAL FOOD COSTS		
Taft ISD	\$1.22	355,286*	\$433,449	\$46,187	\$230,935
Industry Average	\$1.09	355,286*	\$387,262	N/A**	N/A**
TOTAL REDUCED COSTS					\$230,935

*Includes non-reimbursable meals;

**N/A (Not Applicable).

SOURCE: Taft ISD Food Service Cost per Meal Calculation; Taft ISD Participation Reports; School Lunch and Breakfast Cost Study – II issued by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, April 2008.

**EXHIBIT 7-12
GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE ON HOW TO USE REVENUE**

CATEGORY	TARGET PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE	TAFT ISD PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE 2009–10
Labor at School Level (including fringe benefits)	40%	48%
Food (including paper supplies and detergents and United States Department of Agriculture commodity value)	40%	43%
Administrative Cost (central office salaries/fringe benefits)	7%	Included in labor at School Level
Direct Costs* (utilities, custodial services, maintenance)	6%	2%
Indirect Costs**	4%	0%
Equipment, Large and Small	1%	4%
Profit*** or (Loss)	2%	3%
TOTAL	100%	100%

*Direct costs may be included in indirect costs but should not be double charged;
 **Indirect costs may be based on an allowable percentage of the revenue as set by federal and state regulations;
 ***Profit is generally put back into the program for new equipment, etc.
 SOURCE: Cost Control for School Food Service Managers, 1997; Taft ISD Summary Budget, School Year 2010–11.

**EXHIBIT 7-13
TAFT ISD SUMMARY OF PROJECTED COSTS AND SAVINGS**

ACTIVITY	ANNUAL SAVINGS (COST)	5 YEAR SAVINGS (COST)
Reduce 2 FTEs* to bring labor cost to industry standards	\$24,922	\$124,610
Reimburse the Child Nutrition fund for breakfasts served	\$32,983	\$164,915
Reduce food costs per meal served	\$46,187	\$230,935
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$104,092	\$520,460

*FTEs (Full-time Equivalents).
 SOURCE: Review Team calculations, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 7-14
TAFT ISD
LOST REVENUES NON-REIMBURSABLE MEALS SERVED
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

MEAL	NUMBER SERVED	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF MEALS SERVED FREE-OF-CHARGE	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REIMBURSEMENT PER MEAL	ANNUAL REVENUES	FIVE-YEAR REVENUES
Breakfast	22,273	22,273	\$1.74	\$38,755	\$193,775
Lunch	8,144	814*	\$2.74	\$2,230	\$11,150
TOTAL	30,417	23,087		\$40,985	\$204,925

*Calculated by the Review Team using a conservative estimate of 10 percent of lunches served as some meals were paid for.
 SOURCE: Taft ISD Food Service Activity Reports.

The district should charge staff, visitors, and students for all meals served if they are not reimbursable by the NSLP. This would result in an additional \$40,985 in revenues each year, for a five-year revenue increase of \$204,925.

MEAL PRICING (REC. 48)

Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition meal pricing structure results in revenues from free and reduced price student meals being used to subsidize full pay student meals. Each full-priced lunch served results in a financial loss for the district due to

meal prices being low. The district receives \$0.96 less revenues at the elementary school, and \$0.71 less revenues at the secondary schools per meal from students who pay than it does from reimbursements for students receiving free and reduced-price meals.

Exhibit 7-15 summarizes the differences in meal prices versus reimbursements for free and reduced-price meals. The differences range from \$0.71 cents to \$0.96 per meal served.

EXHIBIT 7-15**TAFT ISD****CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES COMPARISON OF REIMBURSEMENT RATES TO LUNCH MEAL PRICES
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

MEAL TYPE	STUDENT FREE MEAL	STUDENT REDUCED-PRICE MEAL	STUDENT FULL PAID
Primary and Elementary School Price	\$0.00	\$0.40	\$1.50
Federal Reimbursement	\$2.74	\$2.34	\$0.28
Total Revenues per Elementary School Meal	\$2.74	\$2.74	\$1.78
Federal Reimbursement Rates for Free Student Meals	\$2.74	\$2.74	\$2.74
More or (Less) Than Reimbursement	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.96)
Number of Meals Served *	70,160	4,057	9,108
Sub-Total Difference Between Reimbursement Rate And Prices	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$8,743.68)
Junior & High School Price	\$0.00	\$0.40	\$1.75
Reimbursement	\$2.74	\$2.34	\$0.28
Total Revenues per Secondary School Meal	\$2.74	\$2.74	\$2.03
More or (Less) Than Reimbursement	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.71)
Number of Meals Served *	52,928	3,745	8,751
Sub-Total Difference Between Reimbursement Rate And Prices	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$6,213.21)
TOTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REIMBURSEMENT RATE AND PRICES	\$0.00	0.00	(\$14,956.89)

*Calculated by the Review Team using the Aug. 2010 through Jan. 2011 actual participation to calculate 10 month projections of the Total Number of Lunch Served by Type.

SOURCE: National School Lunch Program Reimbursement Rates, 2010–11, and Taft ISD Food Service Participation Reports.

Taft ISD's lunch prices fall in the middle range when compared to its peer districts with prices ranging from \$1.45 to \$1.75 for an elementary school lunch, and \$1.65 to \$2.05 for a secondary school lunch. **Exhibit 7-16** provides a comparison of lunch meal prices charged by Taft ISD compared to its peer districts.

Taft ISD's assistant superintendent for Business should evaluate meal prices charged prior to each school year and adjust the prices to equal the reimbursement received for each free student meal. The adjusted prices should then be presented for board approval. Once board approval is received, parents should be notified.

Increasing the lunch prices of full paid students to \$2.50 for elementary schools and \$2.75 for secondary schools would result in additional annual revenue of \$17,859.

Exhibit 7-17 summarizes paid meals served and increased revenues. A conservative estimate of additional revenues generated by raising meal prices to equal that of reimbursements received would result in approximately \$17,859 per year or \$89,295 over five years.

MANAGEMENT REPORTING (REC. 49)

Taft ISD does not prepare monthly financial reports. Financial reports include budget-to-actual comparisons, balance sheets, profit and loss summaries by campus, cash flow statements by campus, and year-to-year comparisons by campus. Without regular financial reports that are produced at a school level, costs are hard to control, business decisions are made on subjective information, and employees are not held accountable for results. Taft ISD Child Nutrition uses the Taft ISD revenue and expenditure report (budget report) that is generated from the Skyward system as its monthly profit and loss statement for the operation as a whole.

Best practices in the school food service industry recommend that four financial and operating reports be distributed to district management and the board so they can monitor and evaluate the cash flow of operations and take corrective action if needed. The reports are: (1) budget, (2) profit-and-loss statement, (3) balance sheet, and (4) cash flow statement.

According to the *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors*, the number one requirement for cost control

**EXHIBIT 7-16
TAFT ISD
COMPARISON OF LUNCH PRICES TO PEER DISTRICTS*
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

MEAL TYPE	TAFT ISD	SINTON ISD	MULESHOE ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD
Elementary School Student Lunch	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.45	\$0.00**
Secondary School Student Lunch	\$1.75	\$2.05	\$1.65	\$0.00**
Adult Lunch	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$2.25	\$3.00
Visitor Lunch	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$2.25	\$3.25

*Data for Poteet ISD was not available; **\$0 is due to Carrizo Springs CISD participating in Provision 2 of the National School Lunch Act whereby all students eat breakfast and lunch for free.

SOURCE: Taft ISD and Peer Districts Survey Responses, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 7-17
TAFT ISD
INCREASED REVENUE ON FULL-PAID LUNCH SERVED
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

CAMPUS LEVEL	SUGGESTED LUNCH PRICE	NUMBER SERVED*	REVENUE INCREASE PER MEAL	ANNUAL DIFFERENCE IN REVENUES	FIVE YEAR DIFFERENCE IN REVENUES
Raising Meal Cost to Total Reimbursement Rate					
Elementary School Lunch	\$2.50	9,108	\$1.00	\$9,108	\$45,540
Secondary School Lunch	\$2.75	8,751	\$1.00	\$8,751	\$43,755
TOTAL INCREASED REVENUES				\$17,859	\$89,295

*Calculated by the Review Team using the Aug. 2010 through Jan. 2011 actual participation to calculate 10 month projections of the Total Number of Lunch Served by Type.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Food Service Participation Reports, 2010.

management is an accounting system and procedures that provide accurate and timely financial information and reports. Profit and loss statements should be compared each month, and to the same month one year prior, to spot sudden changes or possible errors. Additionally, profit and loss statements should be distributed to each campus within ten days of month ending. **Exhibit 7-18** provides seven financial reporting tools, the optimal frequency that they should be prepared, and whether Taft ISD uses and distributes them to its cafeteria managers.

These financial statements highlight areas of strength in addition to improvement needs. They can also be used as comparisons to prior periods to spot trends, improvements, and decline, allowing management to take appropriate steps in a timely manner. Child Nutrition staff should be able to use these reports to monitor and track key operating and financial measures (for example, net profit or loss, student participation, meals per labor hour, food costs, and wages). The Child Nutrition director can also use the reports to identify and discuss favorable and/or unfavorable trends or variances each month and adjust operations as appropriate.

Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition director should develop financial reports to enhance financial controls, monitoring of operations, and accountability of cafeteria managers. The Child Nutrition director should develop financial report templates, then generate and distribute monthly profit and loss statements, budget reports, and key operating comparison reports no later than ten days after the end of each month. Goals for financial and operational improvement should also be set for each cafeteria manager, and employee evaluations should contain an element for performance against goals. This improvement could be implemented at no cost to the district.

CHILD NUTRITION OPERATIONS (REC. 50)

Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition operations do not have a strategic plan nor regular meetings with Child Nutrition staff. As a result, decisions are made based upon the current need instead of the long-term impact. Child Nutrition management encompasses accurate accounting and reporting; effective marketing; menu planning; inventory management; establishing efficient production methods and tracking; public relations; facilities maintenance; and implementing correct sanitation procedures.

**EXHIBIT 7-18
TAFT ISD FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING EVALUATION**

REPORT/ DESCRIPTION	USES	OPTIMAL FREQUENCY IN WHICH STATEMENT SHOULD BE PREPARED	USED BY THE DISTRICT	DISTRIBUTED TO CAFETERIAS
Budget: Illustrates a plan for financial management according to each account.	Allows informed decisions and financial forecasts for the following year through the use of historical, economic, and demographic data, projected enrollment, menu changes, and changes in operational procedures. Allows a forecast of financial performance for the following year. Allows comparisons between actual and forecasted performance.	Annual with monthly monitoring	Yes, but is not prepared by campus and is not used for monthly monitoring by campus level.	No
Costing food and service.	Allows for informed decision-making about purchases and the continuation of products and services.	Daily	No. However, Taft ISD is working with Region 2 to develop this tool.	No
Revenue received from lunch and breakfast.	Allows identification of major sources of revenue such as free, reduced-price, paid, a la carte, or other.	Daily	Yes.	Yes
Balance Sheet: Illustrates the financial position of the account at a point in time.	Allows a comparison of current balances with balances at the end of the month of the prior year.	Monthly	No. Taft ISD uses the revenue and expenditure report (budget) as their balance sheet throughout the year.	No
Profit and Loss Statement: Illustrates what is left after all expenditures are paid.	Allows identification and analysis of increases or decreases in participation or expenditures. Allows identification of school making a profit or experiencing a loss. Allows administrators to determine where key challenges exist.	Weekly or Monthly	No. Taft ISD uses the revenue and expenditure report (budget) as their profit & loss statement throughout the year and it is not prepared by campus and is not used for monthly monitoring by campus level.	No
Statement of Changes: Shows changes in working capital from year to year.	Allows for the monitoring of net increases in working capital requirements.	Annually	Limited to the annual financial report prepared by Taft ISD's external auditor.	No
Key Operating Percentages: Trends, Expenditures, and Revenues over time.	Allows management and staff to monitor expenditures over time including: Food cost percentage; Labor cost percentage; Other costs percentage; Break-even point; Inventory turnover; Participation rates; Average daily labor costs; and Average hourly labor costs.	Monthly	Limited to meal participation rates.	Limited to meal participation rates

SOURCE: Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors by Dorothy Pannell and interviews with Taft ISD's Child Nutrition staff, February 2011.

Strategic planning is a management tool that is used to help an organization (1) focus its energy towards the objectives; (2) ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals; and (3) assess and adjust the organization’s direction in response to a changing environment. Strategic planning provides the foundation for a structured effort to produce decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. Developing and updating a strategic plan for Child Nutrition operations would facilitate effectively managing the operational elements previously discussed.

The goal of all school food service programs is to provide students and staff appealing and nutritious breakfasts and lunches at a reasonable cost in an environment that is safe, clean, and accessible. Meal participation rates are a measurable statistic that indicates how well a district’s food service operations are attracting students to participate in the NSLP. Taft ISD has an advisory council comprised of students and staff who serve as representatives who provide input to the board and superintendent on various district matters. Taft ISD’s Child Nutrition director obtains student and staff input for menus through the advisory council meetings that are held on a regular basis. Additionally, the Child Nutrition director takes the advisory council members to an annual food show so that they can see and sample various food items that could be provided at Taft ISD for meals. Although the advisory council exists to provide input into menus, when an independent survey was conducted by the review team, 69 percent of students surveyed responded that they disagree that cafeteria food looks and tastes good, while only 15 percent of administrator and staff survey responses agreed with the students.

Although the majority of students feel that the food is not good, Taft ISD has strong lunch and breakfast participation rates. **Exhibit 7-19** shows the distribution of students by Free or Reduced eligibility and the participation rate by Free or Reduced eligibility for school year 2009–10. On average the district’s student participation rate for breakfast and lunch was 83 percent and 76 percent, respectively.

The review team visited campus cafeterias, both elementary and secondary and observed the following:

- Lines moved quickly;
- Most students finished what was on their trays;
- Child Nutrition staff were very helpful to the students;
- Food was not displayed in a creative or inviting manner in the lunch serving lines. Other districts often use decorative signage to inform and draw attention to specific foods. Districts can also use creative ways to display foods such as fruits being displayed in clear bowls rather than in the long metal serving pans; and
- The cafeterias contained minimal nutritional information displays, signs, or posters.

Many school districts have implemented food courts and created mini serving areas within the cafeteria that have a restaurant appeal. Districts can name each area and have signage, decorative menus, and awnings that appeal to students. Districts can also have convenient stand alone containers for quick grab items such as drinks, ice creams, fruits, and snacks.

Taft ISD should develop a strategic plan to guide decision-making with regards to cafeteria operations, and conduct

EXHIBIT 7-19
TAFT ISD
CHILD NUTRITION KEY PARTICIPATION STATISTICS BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10

	TOTAL STUDENTS 2009–10	ELIGIBILITY		PARTICIPATION RATES TOTAL STUDENTS	
		PERCENT ELIGIBLE FREE OR REDUCED	PERCENT PAID	BREAKFAST	LUNCH
Petty Elementary School	590	91%	9%	94%	92%
Taft Junior High School	256	88%	12%	86%	75%
Taft High School	297	84%	16%	68%	62%
Average		88%	12%	83%	76%

SOURCE: Taft ISD Child Nutrition director.

monthly meetings with Child Nutrition staff. The plan should clearly state the organization's objectives and goals, identify the approach to achieving those goals, and list individuals responsible for facilitating the actions and time frames. The plan should be cognizant of the district's financial and non-financial resources while allowing flexibility to meet changing regulations and student requests. At a minimum, the plan should address the following components to improve operations:

- Accurate accounting and reporting;
- Effective marketing;
- Menu planning;
- Inventory management;
- Establishing efficient production methods and tracking;
- Public relations;
- Facilities maintenance; and
- Implementing correct sanitation procedures.

In order to ensure that the strategic plan becomes institutionalized and progress is made towards fulfilling the goals, the Child Nutrition director should also conduct monthly meetings with Child Nutrition staff. Meetings with staff should include reviewing operating results, discussing improvement opportunities, and addressing current issues. Currently, information flow is informal and leaves itself open to interpretation when new processes or rules are put into effect. While this has not caused a problem thus far, regular monthly meetings will help if staff will be held accountable for financial and operating results.

Some additional options that districts can use to improve student perception of the Child Nutrition operations and the presentation of their cafeteria include:

- Provide information to students, staff, and parents as to the required nutritional content of meals being served;
- Work with the advisory council to send positive messages about Child Nutrition operations;
- Create art challenges for students to design and paint posters and murals in campus cafeterias;
- Collaborate with campus art teachers and classes to design decorative menu boards; and

- Contact other school districts and the Region 2 for ideas on food presentation.

These recommendations can be implemented at no cost to the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
45. Establish separate budget accounts for catering expenditures.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
46. Restore profitability and control costs in Child Nutrition operations.	\$104,092	\$104,092	\$104,092	\$104,092	\$104,092	\$520,460	\$0
47. Charge staff, visitors, and students for all meals served if they are not reimbursable by the NSLP.	\$40,985	\$40,985	\$40,985	\$40,985	\$40,985	\$204,925	\$0
48. Evaluate meal prices charged prior to each school year and adjust the prices to equal the reimbursement received for each free student meal.	\$17,859	\$17,859	\$17,859	\$17,859	\$17,859	\$89,295	\$0
49. Develop financial reports to enhance financial controls, monitoring of operations, and accountability of cafeteria managers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
50. Develop a strategic plan to guide decision-making with regards to cafeteria operations and conduct monthly meetings with Child Nutrition staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	\$162,936	\$162,936	\$162,936	\$162,936	\$162,936	\$814,680	\$0

CHAPTER 8

TRANSPORTATION

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 8. TRANSPORTATION

Chapter 34 of the Texas Education Code authorizes, but does not require, Texas school districts to provide transportation for students in the general population to and from home and school, school, career and technology training locations, and extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a school district provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to special education services. The federal McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin even if the student no longer lives within the district.

Taft Independent School District (ISD) services a large, sparsely populated geographic area around the City of Taft and San Patricio County. School district employees working from a single location operate the transportation function. The mix of employees includes part time bus drivers, bus drivers who also work in other departments, and part time bus monitors. A total of three part time drivers and three drivers who also work in the maintenance operation provide daily services. Individuals including the assistant superintendent for Business and the Maintenance director oversee operations. According to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) 2008–09 Student Transportation Operations Cost and Mileage and the Transportation Route Services Regular Program reports, the district reported 68 total students eligible for allotment and a total of 92,143 miles. Nine total vehicles were reported in school year 2008–09, of which six are used in daily operations. TEA allocated a total of \$43,233 in state funding versus total operating costs of \$172,330 (25 percent).

Analysis of transportation costs and the limited set of operational data indicate the department is reasonably cost effective. The key measures of cost effectiveness for a student transportation system include the annual cost per transported student and the annual cost per active route bus. A useful comparison is also to convert the annual cost to a daily cost, which is a typical industry standard for pricing of contracted transportation services. **Exhibit 8-1** summarizes the metrics for Taft ISD.

EXHIBIT 8-1 TAFT ISD KEY MEASURES OF COST EFFECTIVENESS

MEASURE	METRIC
Annual Cost per Student	\$963
Annual Cost per Bus	\$19,148
Daily Cost per Bus	\$106
Buses per 100 Students Transported	5.0

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency 2008–09 Operations Report and Vehicle Summary, and Review Team calculations.

Analysis of these metrics must be conducted in the context of the district's operational environment. The daily cost per bus is an extremely competitive rate that would likely be unmatched by any private contractor. Coupled with the relatively limited scope of Taft ISD operations, this would mean that outsourcing of operations would not be feasible even if a contractor was available due to the likelihood of higher costs. The buses per 100 students transported is a composite measure that reflects the use of available seating capacity and the reuse of assets through a multi-tiered bell schedule. Highly efficient operations generally require 1.0 to 1.3 buses per 100 students. The Taft ISD value of 5.0 is reflective of the fact that the Taft ISD is a low density service area where there is a large land area, but a limited number of students. This limits the ability of the district to use common efficiency techniques such as transfer/shuttle runs (where students are dropped at a common location and taken to another location on a distinct trip) and multi-tier scheduling (where multiple schools are serviced using the bus as a result of staggered school start and end times) without negatively impacting both service quality and state allotment.

The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Taft ISD. Comparing Taft ISD cost per bus results to the peer districts further reinforces the relatively cost competitive nature of Taft ISD. **Exhibit 8-2** displays the cost per bus for Taft ISD and peer districts.

Exhibit 8-2 shows that transportation costs are consistent with similar districts when comparing per student and per bus metrics. The lower students per bus and higher buses per 100 students transported values are likely due to the smaller population of students transported by Taft ISD and not reflective of significant differences in overall efficiency.

**EXHIBIT 8-2
TAFT ISD AND PEERS COST PER BUS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

DISTRICT	TOTAL COSTS	TOTAL BUSES	TOTAL STUDENT RIDERS	COST PER STUDENT RIDER	ANNUAL COST PER BUS	BUSES PER 100 STUDENTS TRANSPORTED	STUDENTS PER BUS
Taft ISD	\$172,330	9	179*	\$963	\$19,148	5.0	20
Carrizo Springs CISD	\$776,580	38	993	\$782	\$20,436	3.8	26
Poteet ISD	\$521,696	17	541	\$964	\$30,688	3.1	32
Sinton ISD	\$620,967	25	651	\$954	\$24,839	3.8	26
Mulshoe ISD	\$413,286	21	519	\$796	\$19,680	4.1	25

*The total riders number has been adjusted to reflect actual ridership based on route reports provided at the time of the review. This number more accurately reflects actual riders than the counts reported (68) on the Texas Education Agency 2008–09 Operations Report and Vehicle Summary. SOURCE: Texas Education Agency 2008–09 Operations Report and Vehicle Summary.

Transportation funding for regular program students is provided using the preceding school year’s linear density and cost per mile. Cost per mile is calculated based on data submitted in the School Transportation Route Services Report and the Student Transportation Operations Report. Linear density of bus routes is determined based on the number of regular riders carried per mile of regular bus route during the school year. The amount that a district is reimbursed is based on the lower of the actual cost per mile or the maximum amount determined in one of the seven density groupings TEA has established. **Exhibit 8-3** summarizes the density groups.

In school year 2008–09, Taft ISD’s actual cost per mile was \$1.74 for regular program students and its linear density was 0.001. Given that its per mile costs were greater than the lowest maximum allotment rate, for regular program riders, Taft ISD was allotted \$0.68 per mile.

**EXHIBIT 8-3
LINEAR DENSITY GROUPS**

LINEAR DENSITY GROUP	MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT PER MILE
2.40 and above	\$1.43
1.65 to 2.399	\$1.25
1.15 to 1.649	\$1.11
0.90 to 1.149	\$0.97
0.65 to 0.899	\$0.88
0.40 to 0.649	\$0.79
Up to 0.399	\$0.68

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Allotment Handbook, Effective School Year 2010–11.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Taft ISD has increased emphasis on managing student discipline in order to promote safety on the school bus through the acquisition of a digital camera system and the creation of bus monitor positions.
- Regular counts of student ridership are conducted in order to assess capacity requirements.
- Taft ISD has established a single tier (single start time) bell schedule where students in all grades ride the bus together to help control costs and reduce non-productive miles.
- Taft ISD is using a cost effective approach by contracting with an outside vendor to reduce costs for transporting students to career and technical programs.
- The district has established a process for scheduling school buses for field trips that allows for more efficient use of resources.

FINDINGS

- Transportation management at Taft ISD lacks clarity of responsibilities and reporting duties.
- Taft ISD has had a limited focus on enforcement of its existing transportation policies and procedures, including a lack of appropriate statements related to transportation of students in hazardous areas.
- Taft ISD has not established a comprehensive bus replacement planning procedure.

- The district has not established a formally structured preventive maintenance program for the school bus fleet.
- Pre-trip and vehicle inspection processes are not completed in a manner consistent with regulatory requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 51:** Redefine the organizational structure to clarify responsibility for oversight of the bus monitors, better define the relationship between bus drivers and monitors, and include the accounting officer's transportation related costs in reports submitted to TEA.
- **Recommendation 52:** Define and adopt hazard areas consistent with the TEA allotment process expectations as part of a larger effort to enhance transportation policies and procedures to more clearly define expectations for service.
- **Recommendation 53:** Establish a comprehensive bus replacement planning procedure.
- **Recommendation 54:** Design and document a preventive maintenance program for the school buses.
- **Recommendation 55:** Improve the pre-trip inspection process to ensure compliance with regulations and establish a process that ensures all vehicles are inspected in a timely manner.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INCREASED EMPHASIS ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Taft ISD has recently increased the emphasis it places on managing student discipline in order to promote safety on the school bus through the acquisition of a digital camera system and the creation of bus monitor positions. This multi-faceted program came about with input from bus drivers. The program includes the installation of cameras and the establishment of a bus monitor's position for each bus. Taft ISD administrators recognized that, particularly in the afternoon take home periods, buses were full and it was increasingly difficult for bus drivers to both manage student discipline and drive the bus. The district segregated the driving duties from the discipline management requirements and created the position of bus monitor to focus on managing discipline. Monitors were hired on an hourly basis in order to control the overall cost of implementation. Additionally,

revisions are being made to the student discipline process in order to provide more timely feedback to bus staff on discipline-related issues. These changes are a positive step to increase the safety and orderliness of school bus rides.

STUDENT RIDERSHIP COUNTS

Regular counts of student ridership are conducted in order to assess capacity requirements. Taft ISD has established a process whereby it is performing daily counts of students who ride the bus. Drivers count students as they depart the bus in the morning and board the bus in the afternoon in order to minimize distractions. Drivers record the total counts on a standardized form that is maintained monthly. This effort exceeds the TEA requirement for the allotment process and has been established to rationalize the assignment of school buses to particular routes. The regular reconciliation of the number of planned riders versus actual riders provides a highly useful dataset to analyze vehicle size and routing scheme requirements.

BELL SCHEDULE

Taft ISD has established a single tier (single start time) bell schedule where students in all grades ride the bus together to help control costs and reduce non-productive miles. In most instances this type of routing scheme does not promote efficient or effective service delivery. However, when serving a large, low density geographic area a single tier system helps to minimize the number of deadhead miles that a school bus travels. Deadhead miles are miles traveled without students on board and are ineligible for inclusion in the student transportation allotment report. Taft ISD recognized that their service characteristics would result in a significant increase in deadhead miles were it to institute a multi-tiered (multiple bell times) structure. This approach has the dual benefit of helping to control costs through the minimization of non-productive miles and aligning the operating strategy with the expectations of the allotment formula.

USE OF AN ALTERNATIVE SERVICE PROVIDER

The district is using a cost effective approach by contracting with an outside vendor to reduce costs for transporting students to career and alternative programs. Taft ISD recently acquired the services of a private contractor for transporting students to career and technical programs at Del Mar College and the cosmetology program at Aransas Pass. The cost for these services is significantly below what the cost would be as a district-provided service and offers increased flexibility for these variable service requirements. District staff recognized

that establishing the most effective and efficient mix of services required alternatives to providing all services in-house. The alternative vendor was identified and a cost analysis was conducted that demonstrated the financial benefit of contracting the service.

FIELD TRIP MANAGEMENT

The district has established a process for scheduling school buses for field trips that allows for more efficient use of resources. The process requires individuals or groups requiring transportation resources to submit a form within an established time period. This form details the vehicle requirements for the trip including date, asset type, length of trip, and budget code. This information is incorporated into a master schedule that allows the assistant superintendent for Business to assess driver and vehicle scheduling requirements. The process allows for a more proactive scheduling process that better coordinates vehicle and driver needs.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT (REC. 51)

Transportation management at Taft ISD lacks clarity of responsibilities and reporting duties. Taft ISD provides home to school transportation to approximately 200 students using 9 total vehicles. It provides these services using a district-owned and operated bus fleet supplemented by a single outside contractor that provides targeted services. The limited scope of the operation has resulted in the establishment of a decentralized management structure where district staff understand their functional responsibilities, but the overall structure is not well defined.

The Maintenance director provides direct oversight of transportation operations. This individual is nominally responsible for the assignment of bus drivers to individual runs and for addressing the need for substitute drivers. However, the long tenure of individual employees and the limited number of bus runs allows the bus drivers to address these concerns when they arise. Given the limited scope of the operation and the relatively static nature of the bus routing scheme, this approach to direct oversight is appropriate.

The recent addition of the bus monitors to the array of transportation-related employees has resulted in an unclear organizational structure. The bus monitor program and installation of security cameras was established in response to concerns about student safety and the ability of bus drivers to both manage a full load of students and drive the bus. These

enhancements represent an example of school district management being responsive to employee concerns. However, the specific responsibilities, scope of authority and interactions of bus monitors require additional clarification. For example, it was unclear from interviews and available documentation whether these employees fall within the realm of transportation employees that should be overseen by the maintenance supervisor, or are they part of some other department within the school district. Additionally, the specifics of the relationship between the bus driver and the monitor while in route have not been clarified.

The assistant superintendent for Business oversees the administration and reporting functions of the Transportation Department. These responsibilities include state reporting, invoice processing, payroll management, and field trip management. In order to perform these functions, the assistant superintendent for Business is assisted by the Accounting Officer, particularly as it relates to invoice management. This structure provides for appropriate oversight and management of transportation expenditures. However, Taft ISD does not include any costs for the efforts of the Accounting Officer in their reported transportation costs.

Taft ISD should redefine the organizational structure to clarify responsibility for oversight of the bus monitors, better define the relationship between bus drivers and monitors, and include the accounting officer's transportation related costs in reports submitted to TEA. The superintendent should determine the structure of the administrative organization and the assistant superintendent for Business should establish the cost allocation procedures to more fully account for transportation administration costs. Implementation of this recommendation would not require any additional expenditures.

HAZARDOUS ROUTES (REC. 52)

Taft ISD has had a limited focus on enforcement of its existing transportation policies and procedures, including a lack of appropriate statements related to transportation of students in hazardous areas. Policies and procedures establish the expectations for service delivery that promote effective and efficient transportation. Policies define what level of service that transportation is expected to provide, while procedures detail how the department will provide those services. The policy and procedure infrastructure must be tailored to the scope of the operation in order to ensure that the expectations are reasonable and appropriate.

Taft ISD has established three transportation policy and procedure statements: CNA – Student Transportation; CNB – District Vehicles; and CNC – Transportation Safety. The statements include a legal section that identifies the statutory and legislative basis for the policies and a local section that details the expectations of Taft ISD staff related to implementation. Within the scope of these three documents is a definition of eligibility for service, an allowance for hazard condition transportation, notification requirements related to bus accidents, and a statement regarding the location and use of bus stops.

Enforcement of established expectations is an important component of policy and procedure management. As discussed in Fleet Management (discussed elsewhere in this report), the district has not complied with the inspection and maintenance expectations of the Transportation Code despite the expectation set in policy. Also, the two mile eligibility criterion established in policy is not consistently enforced as a result of the consolidation of grades into the Petty Elementary school. Students within the two mile limit are regularly transported despite the policy statement specifically prohibiting service for students where state funding is not received. The lack of a formally designated and board approved hazardous area is preventing the district from receiving any allotment from TEA for students transported from these areas. School districts must formally define and adopt hazard areas in a manner consistent with TEA expectations in the Student Transportation Allotment Handbook, which allows for recovery of some costs associated with the transportation of these students as part of the allotment process. For example, in school year 2008–09, Taft ISD reported a total of 68 students transported on the route services report. However, daily count information indicated that 179 total riders were being transported. Some portion of the 111 additional students transported are likely within areas that could be defined as hazardous by Taft ISD. Identifying these hazardous areas would allow these students to become eligible for inclusion in the transportation allotment.

In districts of limited operating size like Taft ISD, the policies and procedures primarily focus on critical planning elements and abnormal procedures. Critical planning procedures would include the current eligibility statement, concerns regarding how far students can walk to a bus stop, student data management, and how long students should be expected to ride the bus. Abnormal procedures that should be identified include driver responses to incidents and accidents,

response procedures for students who are late or do not arrive at their normal bus stop, and notification procedures regarding school closures. This array of documents would provide all stakeholders with clear expectations regarding the normal delivery of services and response procedures for abnormal events.

Taft ISD should define and adopt hazard areas consistent with the TEA allotment process expectations as part of a larger effort to enhance transportation policies and procedures to more clearly define expectations for service. Enhancements to the existing statements should include:

- Formally defining hazard areas throughout the district that would make otherwise ineligible students eligible for services. This definition and adoption by the Board of Trustees (board) is a required element in submitting these students to TEA for inclusion in the transportation allotment. This effort would require staff time to document the areas and submit the documentation to the board for approval, per the requirements of the Student Transportation Allotment Handbook. The maximum reimbursement that could be received would be equal to 10 percent of the Only Two or More Mile Service allotment.
- Establishing guidelines and a process for students to be picked up or dropped off from an alternate address. The legal structure of current policy allows for this option, but there is no established procedure that addresses how this process will be managed.
- Creating a detailed training regimen for bus drivers and monitors that established required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the designated function. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of students with disabilities.
- Document the procedures necessary to ensure compliance with TEA reporting requirements including student count procedures and mileage reporting.
- Defining the expectations of all parties and the process to be followed in the event of an accident or incident on a bus. This would require an expansion beyond the information provided in the Transportation Safety policy to include expectations on bus drivers, school staff, and transportation management staff.
- Documenting vehicle maintenance practices including when buses will be serviced (based on

established time and mileage criteria), how spare buses will be provided in the event that maintenance requirements cause a regular route bus to be available and how costs will be accumulated to allow for analysis of maintenance practices.

This effort should be part of a regular cycle of review, revision, addition, and editing for policy and procedure documentation. The maintenance director, under the leadership of the assistant superintendent for Business, should lead the effort to develop these policies. Incorporating statements related to communications, training, data management and privacy practices, and fleet management practices will help ensure that transportation practices do not become dependent on individual personalities, but are based on well defined and clearly articulated expectations for service. TEA guidelines allow for a maximum of 10 percent of the total annual allotment for transporting hazardous area students. Given that the maximum number of miles that could be claimed in school year 2008–09 was 3,575 and the reimbursement rate at Taft ISD is \$0.68 per mile, the maximum amount of additional reimbursement that could have been received was \$2,431, at a cost to the state treasury.

BUS REPLACEMENT (REC. 53)

Taft ISD has not established a comprehensive bus replacement planning procedure. As buses and other motor vehicle assets get older, they generally become less reliable and more expensive to operate. Establishing guidelines for fleet replacement are a critical component of fleet maintenance cost analysis and projecting the budget impact of an aging fleet. The depreciation report provided by the district indicates that the average age of the buses is 8.2 years. No new buses have been purchased since 2007, and the oldest bus in the fleet is 15 years old. **Exhibit 8-4** summarizes the model year distribution of the fleet.

Given that there are only nine vehicles in the fleet, Taft ISD is particularly susceptible to service disruptions when buses are out-of-service for maintenance due to the limited number of spare vehicles. The absence of these guidelines and the absence of detailed maintenance records prevent the district from conducting any strategic analysis of the tradeoffs required between capital and operating costs and from evaluating alternative financing options for the purchase of school buses. This type of analysis would provide greater assurance that an appropriate array of vehicles is available for use on a daily basis.

**EXHIBIT 8-4
TAFT ISD
MODEL YEAR DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL BUS FLEET**

UNIT NUMBER	MODEL YEAR
33	1996
34	1997
35	1999
36	2002
37	2005
B-1	2006
B-2	2006
38	2007
39	2007

SOURCE: Taft ISD Transportation Department, 2011.

As part of its annual reporting process to the board, the district has begun an effort to establish a replacement plan for the district that identifies when it would like to replace specific buses. In this plan, no costs have been assigned to the planning horizon to support budget projections, but this approach does begin a process that will allow for more complete budget planning in the future.

Taft ISD should establish a comprehensive bus replacement planning procedure. The bus replacement planning procedure should dictate the time and/or mileage period when buses should be replaced. Industry guidelines provided in a 2002 position paper by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation suggests a 12 to 15 year guideline for large buses and 8 to 10 years for smaller buses. Starting with these guidelines, the district should establish age and mileage replacement criteria for the school bus fleet. Assuming a 12 year cycle, this would require Taft ISD to replace approximately one bus per year to accommodate the current route array. Annual expenditure requirements can only be determined after the plan is developed and the most appropriate method of financing determined, so no fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE (REC. 54)

The district has not established a formally structured preventive maintenance program for the school bus fleet. A strong preventive maintenance (PM) program is the foundation of all other maintenance activities. The objective of a PM program is to minimize equipment failure and reduce the cost of operations by maintaining a constant awareness of the condition of equipment and by correcting minor defects before they become expensive repairs. Typically, PM programs recommended by vehicle manufacturers

include a multi-tiered schedule that provides for progressive service to major components. Given that all maintenance services are outsourced, it is important to document service expectations to control cost and ensure service consistency.

High functioning maintenance programs also establish a nexus between pre-trip inspection procedures, preventive maintenance services and repair services as part of an effort to control the cost of maintenance and the disruption caused by vehicles being out of service. Each aspect of the maintenance program presents opportunities for improvement.

Taft ISD’s fleet maintenance program is undefined and reactive. No specific guidelines for preventive maintenance services have been established, maintenance services are irregular and inconsistent with any manufacturer recommendations, maintenance records are lacking in appropriate detail about the services performed, and no consistent or efficient method is available to assess individual vehicle maintenance costs. Maintenance logs, though limited and lacking specific service details, indicate multiple instances of engine replacements, transmission replacements and other major repairs that are often attributable to ineffective maintenance programs. **Exhibit 8-5** summarizes the last recorded maintenance event for each unit where an equipment log was available.

The miles reported by Taft ISD indicate that each bus should have received approximately two preventive maintenance services (assuming a 3,000 mile service interval) within the last year. As can be seen from the table, no vehicle had a repair service listed within eight (8) months of the site visit. However, the accounting system records transactions with maintenance vendors. The lack of maintenance records is

**EXHIBIT 8-5
TAFT ISD
MAINTENANCE HISTORY SUMMARY**

UNIT NUMBER	LAST REPAIR DATE
B-1	4/12/2009
B-2	9/15/2009
33	10/9/2008
34	10/11/2008
35	1/7/2010
36	10/6/2009
37	5/14/2010
38	2/18/2010
39	10/1/2009

SOURCE: Taft ISD Transportation Department, 2011.

likely due to the fact that this data is not used on a regular basis to analyze cost or assess the service schedule. Improvements in the documentation of repair histories is important for both maintenance and risk management.

Using maintenance history to analyze cost is an example of why retaining an accurate history is important. The current lack of service documentation including what repairs are performed on a vehicle, when they were performed and the cost of the repairs prevents an analysis of life cycle costs of its school buses. A vehicle’s maintenance history also supports district risk management practices through the ability to respond to inquiries in the event of an accident or incident. An incomplete maintenance history prevents the district from demonstrating that it has acted prudently in its maintenance of vehicles. A maintenance record keeping system should include:

- The date of the service;
- The vehicle identification number;
- Each component that was serviced and what the service included; and
- The cost of the service.

Taft ISD should design and document a preventive maintenance program for the school buses. The PM program should detail the types of services to be performed, when the services are to be performed, and how the services will be recorded for review by management. Documentation of the preventive maintenance schedule will require staff time to review the recommended intervals from each of the bus manufacturers in the current fleet. These recommendations would then be combined into a single schedule to be used in the fleet.

In addition to the revision to the data that is recorded, efforts should be made to ensure that the history is current and complete. This responsibility should be specifically designated to an individual within the school district. Implementation of this recommendation would not require any additional expenditures.

PRE-TRIP AND VEHICLE INSPECTIONS (REC. 55)

Pre-trip and vehicle inspection processes are not completed in a manner consistent with regulatory requirements. The pre-trip inspection process at Taft ISD is informal and there were no indications that drivers were completing these forms on a regular basis. Pre-trip inspection of buses is required as part of the Commercial Driver License and is another

important component of an effective maintenance program. The inspection provides the first indication of a maintenance concern and is a key component of vehicle safety and cost control. Taft ISD has established a form for pre-trip inspections to comply with the requirements of the Commercial Driver License. The form is limited in its scope and no completed copies of these forms were available in the buses or in the vehicle maintenance files provided by the district.

State law also requires that vehicles operate with current inspection stickers under conditions common to the district's operations. At the time of the review, Taft ISD was using a school bus with an expired inspection sticker. The inspection sticker on the bus in question expired in November 2010. The bus had been identified as having an expired sticker and been classified as a spare unit. However, maintenance requirements had put the vehicle in regular service even with the expired inspection sticker. Two additional buses had inspection stickers scheduled to expire within two weeks of the review onsite visit.

Taft ISD should improve the pre-trip inspection process to ensure compliance with regulations and establish a process that ensures all vehicles are inspected in a timely manner. The Texas Department of Public Safety has released the "Texas Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook" that provides clear guidance on both regulatory expectations and best practices.

In addition, the district should immediately establish a process that ensures all vehicles are inspected in a timely manner. No additional costs are required to implement this recommendation as it should be part of the daily pre-trip inspection process. Operational procedures should demand that if a bus is identified as having an expired inspection sticker it will be immediately taken out of service until the inspection process is completed.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
51. Redefine the organizational structure to clarify responsibility for oversight of the bus monitors, better define the relationship between bus drivers and monitors, and include the accounting officer's transportation related costs in reports submitted to TEA.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
52. Define and adopt hazard areas consistent with TEA allotment process expectations as part of a larger effort to enhance transportation policies and procedures to more clearly define expectations for service.	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$12,155	\$0
53. Establish a comprehensive bus replacement planning procedure.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
54. Design and document a preventive maintenance program for its school buses.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
55. Improve the pre-trip inspection process to ensure compliance with regulations and establish a process that ensures all vehicles are inspected in a timely manner.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$2,431	\$12,155	\$0

CHAPTER 9

SAFETY AND SECURITY

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 9. SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety of students and school district personnel and the security of facilities and physical assets are a major concern for school districts to provide a safe and secure learning environment. A balanced approach of prevention, intervention, enforcement and recovery is essential to provide an effective safety and security program. Effective security programs include policies, procedures and programs to address crisis contingencies, student discipline, facility safety, and violence prevention.

School districts are statutorily required to create a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) providing the foundation for addressing crisis contingencies. The plan describes the district's emergency response organization and delineates the roles and responsibilities for assigned employees in the event of an emergency. Chapter 37, Section 108 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) states that each school district shall adopt and implement a multi-hazard EOP. The plan must address mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery as defined by the commissioner of education in conjunction with the governor's office of homeland security. The plan must provide for:

1. district employee training in responding to an emergency;
2. mandatory school drills to prepare district students and employees for responding to an emergency; and
3. measures to ensure coordination with local emergency management agencies, law enforcement, and fire departments in the event of an actual emergency; and the implementation of a security audit as required by TEC Section 37.108 (b).

Goal three of Taft ISD's school year 2010–11 District Improvement Plan states that the district will provide appropriate staff development and resources to support district safety, provide programs promoting school discipline and character development to reduce Student Code of Conduct violations, provide appropriate data to guide in planning for safe and secure schools, and comply with applicable legislative initiatives.

The district maintains on its website the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct which contain most of the District's rules and regulations in regards to academic and

disciplinary matters. The teachers review the student code of conduct and handbook the first week of school. Each student, teacher, and parent is required annually to sign a statement that they have received and read the Student Code of Conduct and acknowledge the rules and responsibilities outlined therein. Failure to read and sign the Student Code of Conduct does not excuse the student from any consequences if they are in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. All students enrolled in Taft ISD, regardless of age or grade level, are required to abide by the Student Code of Conduct.

The district's school year 2010–11 Student Code of Conduct states that each student is expected to comply with the following standards of behavior:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet district or campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other district staff and volunteers.
- Respect the property of others, including district property and facilities.
- Cooperate and assist with the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Avoid violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

The levels/categories of offenses as per Taft ISD's school year 2010–11 Student Code of Conduct are:

- Level I – Minor Offenses include disregard for authority, misuse of telecommunications/ electronic devices, safety transgressions, possession of prohibited items, and miscellaneous offenses such as violating dress standards or gambling. These offenses may be punishable by in-school suspension, detention,

assignment of school duties other than class tasks, withdrawal of extracurricular or honorary privileges, or other actions as determined by the campus principal.

- Level II – Serious Offenses include disregard for authority, property offenses such as robbery or theft, mistreatment of others, safety transgressions, possession of prohibited items, misuse of computers, internet, telecommunications/electronic devices, abusive use or selling of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and miscellaneous offenses. These offenses will be punishable by out of school suspension, detention, in-school suspension, and other actions as indicated for minor offenses but with greater consequences. For example, serious offenses should warrant a greater number of days spent in in-school suspension than minor offenses.
- Level III – Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) offenses consist of serious misconduct including assault, terroristic threats, drug- or alcohol-related offenses, public lewdness, abuse of volatile chemicals, conduct punishable as a felony, vandalism, engaging in two or more fights, making threats, two or more bullying or hazing offenses, inappropriate contact against a teacher or school employee, and unruly, disruptive, or abusive campus behavior. The principal or other administrator notifies the parent/guardian by telephone or other means that a violation of the student code of conduct was committed by the student which may result in suspension, removal to a disciplinary alternative education program, or expulsion.
- Level IV – Expulsion offenses include discretionary expellable offenses such as assault, criminal mischief that is punishable as a felony, murder, false alarm or report or terroristic threat and mandatory expellable offenses including firearm and prohibited weapons violations, aggravated assault, arson, murder, indecency with a child, aggravated robbery, and conduct punishable as a felony involving marijuana, controlled substances, and dangerous drugs or alcohol. Students younger than age 10 shall be placed in the DAEP. Students under age six shall not be expelled or placed in the DAEP unless the student brings a firearm to school.

The Student Code of Conduct outlines related disciplinary consequences including In-School Suspension (ISS) or placement in a DAEP for serious misconduct. Students in the ISS and DAEP are removed from the regular classroom and separated from other students, yet provided an opportunity to continue their studies while fulfilling disciplinary requirements. The assistant superintendent for Personnel and the assistant principals monitor the trend of disciplinary actions to develop strategies to help redirect student misconduct. Administration indicated that the district recently implemented the Pursuing Happiness character education program in ISS and DAEP as one of the behavior management methods.

A classroom is set aside for ISS in both the junior and senior high schools. Once a student is assigned to in-school suspension, the student's individual academic teachers and parents are notified by the assistant principal. Upon this notification, teachers assemble and send the appropriate assignments, books, and/or materials for their students to the in-school suspension teacher. Students are expected and required to stay on-task on these assignments at all times. Informal counseling and behavior training is available for ISS students. Assistant principals use their judgment to determine the amount of time that the student should remain in ISS. High school students generally remain in ISS for one day.

There is no ISS at the elementary campus because of the lack of funding available, according to administration. In lieu of ISS, the student is assigned to classroom isolation, where the student will sit away from other students in the classroom. However, these students are still able to participate in class. There are various consequences for code of conduct violations. Consequences include lunch detention, after school detention, classroom isolation, loss of privileges, phone calls home, home visits, counseling sessions, and out of school suspension. For behavior management, students are placed on positive behavior charts. The school uses Honorable Character, a program to build intrinsic motivation to support positive student behavior. In addition, the school counselor meets with students regarding their various needs.

The DAEP is located in a portable building across the street from the junior high school. DAEP students are not allowed on their home campus, any other school campuses, district property, or at any school-related activity. The intent of the DAEP is to provide a supervised educational setting for students who violate the student code of conduct or commit serious or illegal acts as described in the Chapter 37 of the TEC. Students may also be removed from class and placed in

DAEP by the principals or assistant principals for conduct outside of school and off school property. The duration of a student’s placement in the DAEP shall be determined by the principal or principal’s designee. The duration of placement at the DAEP refers to a specific number of days of successful attendance in the DAEP. Students are in control of the factors (i.e. attendance, grades, and behavior) that may extend their length of placement at the DAEP. Students placed in the DAEP earn their way back to their home campus following the completion of all of the following requirements: (1) Successful attendance for assigned number of days; (2) Passing grades (minimum of 70 or grading standards written in the student’s educational plan) in all courses; and (3) Achieving highest level on the Behavior Point Sheet. If the student does not meet the above requirements, the duration of placement at the DAEP will be extended for a minimum of five days.

Taft ISD’s school year 2010–11 Student Code of Conduct describes discipline management techniques. When a student violates the Student Code of Conduct, teachers complete a Student Discipline Action Form (Referral) Conduct and file the Referral form with the school principal or other appropriate administrator. The principal reviews the Referral and notifies the parent/guardian of the violation by telephone. If attempts to contact the parent by phone are unsuccessful, the administrator provides the student a copy of the Referral which suffices for parent notification. Discipline management techniques are correlated to the seriousness of the offense, frequency of misconduct, student’s age and grade level, the student’s attitude, and statutory requirements. Discipline may be handled through verbal correction, time out, rewards and incentives, parent-teacher conferences, detention, assigned school duties, withdrawal of privileges, suspension, DAEP placement, or other actions.

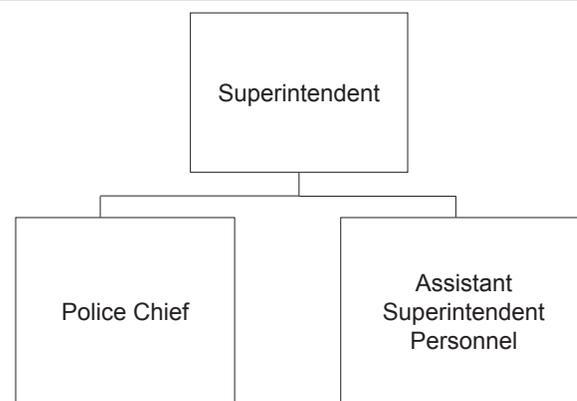
The district has a police department. Taft ISD’s Board of Trustees (board) approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City of Taft Police Department and the Taft ISD Police Department which states that the Taft ISD Police Department will have primary responsibility for law enforcement on all properties owned or under the control of the district and shall perform only those duties and enforce such laws within its jurisdiction to protect the safety and welfare of the students and employees and to protect the district’s property. The MOU also states that the City of Taft Police Department may assist in those cases where the Taft ISD Police Department determines that the offense exceeds its limited resources. Both parties will communicate and

work together to ensure a safe environment for the citizens within the district’s boundaries. The district additionally executed an Agreement for Canine Detection Services for the period of August 2010 through July 2011 to provide certified trained dogs and handlers to inspect and search Taft ISD school premises including classrooms, parking lots, lockers, restrooms, and gymnasiums for detection of drugs and other contraband.

The Taft ISD police chief reports to the superintendent and is responsible for overall safety and security. His office is located in a separate building near the junior high school. The assistant superintendent for Personnel is responsible for maintaining the district Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), reviewing and responding to the recommendations of the safety and security audits, obtaining fire drill reports from the principals, and coordinating safety training. Taft ISD’s organization of key personnel responsible for the district’s safety and security is displayed in **Exhibit 9-1**.

The review team conducted districtwide surveys which

**EXHIBIT 9-1
TAFT ISD
SAFETY AND SECURITY ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**



SOURCE: Taft ISD administration.

included questions related to safety and security. **Exhibit 9-2** shows that 100 percent of principals and assistant principals, 80 percent of parents, and 73 percent of students agreed that students feel safe and secure at schools.

Exhibit 9-3 indicates that 100 percent of principals and assistant principals, 55 percent of teachers, 46 percent of students, and 62 percent of parents agreed that school disturbances are infrequent.

EXHIBIT 9-2
TAFT ISD
SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: "Students feel safe and secure at schools."					
Principals/Assistant Principals	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Students	16.1%	57.0%	12.9%	10.8%	3.2%
Parents	20.0%	60.0%	2.5%	15.0%	2.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

EXHIBIT 9-3
TAFT ISD
SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: "School disturbances are infrequent."					
Principals/Assistant Principals	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%
Teachers	4.1%	51.0%	6.1%	26.5%	12.2%
Students	9.8%	35.9%	33.7%	14.1%	6.5%
Parents	17.5%	45.0%	20.0%	15.0%	2.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

Exhibit 9-4 shows that 80 percent of principals and assistant principals, 67 percent of district administrative and support staff, and 59 percent of teachers feel that security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.

Exhibit 9-5 shows that 100 percent of principals and assistant principals, 43 percent of district administrative and support staff, 49 percent of teachers, 53 percent of students, and 63 percent of parents feel that students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct. About 39 percent of district administrative and support staff and 35 percent of teachers disagree.

The district experienced a sharp decline from school years 2008–09 to 2009–10 in the number of student disciplinary actions and incidents. District administration indicated that Taft ISD has become more proactive regarding student behavior to minimize the out of class time for discipline issues. Instead of sending special education students to DAEP or in school suspension (ISS), the district focused on alternative methods to address their needs, including conducting parent workshops addressing discipline. The high school administration increased conferences with students to help them understand the consequences of their behavior. The high school teachers assisted in providing teacher held

EXHIBIT 9-4
TAFT ISD
SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: "Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers."					
Principals/Assistant Principals	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
District Administrative and Support Staff	23.0%	43.7%	25.3%	4.6%	3.4%
Teachers	12.2%	46.9%	32.7%	6.1%	2.0%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

**EXHIBIT 9-5
TAFT ISD
SURVEY RESULTS**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Survey Question: "Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct."					
Principals/Assistant Principals	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
District Administrative and Support Staff	12.6%	29.9%	18.4%	20.7%	18.4%
Teachers	12.2%	36.7%	16.3%	22.5%	12.2%
Students	14.0%	38.7%	23.7%	12.9%	10.7%
Parents	21.0%	42.1%	18.4%	13.2%	5.3%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2011.

detentions and parent phone calls reducing the number of office referrals.

District principals, assistant principals and some teachers also attended a Positive Behavior Training course offered by the Regional Education Service Center XIII in September 2010. In addition, the district coordinates with the Connections organization which provides free student and family counseling and workshops on discipline and behavior topics. The principals also search for intervention methods to build the students' character to minimize the number of disciplinary incidents.

Exhibit 9-6 compares Taft ISD with the selected peer districts in regard to out of school suspensions and number of expulsions. The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Taft ISD. Taft ISD had no expulsions but did have a relatively higher percent of out

**EXHIBIT 9-6
OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND NUMBER OF
EXPULSIONS
SCHOOL YEAR 2009–10**

DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT	2009–10	
		NUMBER OF OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS	NUMBER OF EXPULSIONS
Taft ISD	1,143	98	0
Carrizo Springs CISD	2,314	15	0
Muleshoe ISD	1,464	66	0
Sinton ISD	2,125	292	0

NOTE: Data for Poteet ISD was not available.
SOURCE: Review Team Peer Survey, February 2011.

of school suspensions per enrollment compared to Carrizo Springs CISD and Muleshoe ISD.

Exhibit 9-7 provides a summary of Taft ISD's student disciplinary actions from school years 2007–08 to 2009–10. The exhibit shows that most offenses relate to violations of the code of conduct. There is a significant decline in school year 2009–10 for in school suspensions and partial day in school suspensions. Overall, total truanancies declined with an increase in truanancies related to parent contributing factors.

The district has two truancy officers—one for the elementary school and one for both the junior and senior high schools. To identify truanancies, a student's absence is monitored by the campus attendance clerk. The clerk contacts the truancy officers daily when a student has an unexcused absence. The officer makes home visits and sends a letter to the parent after the third home visit that their child is in noncompliance for attendance. The officer files a report with the Truancy Court in Portland, Texas unless the parent provides excuses for the absences in question. When a student is filed on, a Recommendation Form is completed by a teacher, counselor, or principal. The Recommendation Form provides the judge an insight of the best alternatives to help the student such as tutoring, counseling, parent classes, or community service. Once the student appears before the judge, the judge determines the student's requirements to resolve the truancy case, which can include probation for 180 days. If a student fails to meet the requirements set forth by the judge, the student is rescheduled for a Show Cause appearance which usually results in the student being transported to Juvenile Detention in Sinton, Texas. If the student is 17 years or older, the student is transported to the San Patricio County jail in Sinton, Texas.

**EXHIBIT 9-7
TAFT ISD SUMMARY OF STUDENT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 TO 2009–10**

REASON CODE	STUDENT DISCIPLINARY ACTION	2009–10	2008–09	2007–08
01	Permanent Removal by a Teacher	*	*	*
02	Conduct punishable as a felony		*	5
04	Possess Controlled Substance	*	*	
05	Posses alcoholic beverage		*	
21	Violation of Code of Conduct			
	05 Out of school suspension	98	124	126
	06 In school suspension and related services	554	1,075	1,534
	07 Placement in/off campus DAEP	45	22	16
	08 Con't other dist's DAEP plcmt	*	*	
	25 Partial Day-Out of school suspension	92	100	47
	26 Partial Day-In school suspension	379	628	263
27	Assault against emp/vol		*	
28	Assault not emp/vol		*	
33	Cigarette or Tobacco Product	*	*	*
41	Fighting/Mutual Combat		67	66
42	Truancy-Parent Contributions	26	7	
43	Truancy-Stud w/at least 3 unex	8	23	43
44	Truancy-Stud w/10 unex ab		31	26

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Taft ISD Business Office, Texas Education Agency PEIMS Student Disciplinary Action Incident Counts by Reason Code Report.

Truancy officers indicated that in school year 2009–10, approximately 35 truancy reports were filed with the court compared to five filed in school year 2008–09. Of these 35 cases, five of the students transferred to another school or withdrew from the district or home schooling prior to the court date. As of January 2011, approximately 45 cases had been filed with a few referred to Juvenile Detention in Sinton, Texas; some of the cases were dismissed because students either moved or were not located; and some cases were dismissed because the parents provided excuses for the absences. Major factors are obtaining parental involvement in ensuring that students attend school, and teenage students with children who may not have a child care provider.

Administration and the truancy officers work closely with outside agencies to provide free counseling services to parents and students to address the truancy issue. The truancy officers and Taft ISD's police chief may sometimes pick up students at home and bring them to school. Attendance incentives are implemented such as perfect attendance awards, high school breakfast every six weeks for honor roll/perfect attendance students, and elementary school perfect attendance dog tags.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Access to the front entrance of the elementary school is restricted and requires an employee access card or for the receptionist to electronically unlock the door to visitors.

FINDINGS

- Taft ISD has not documented operating procedures for its police department to ensure that the department complies with authorized safety and security policy and procedures.
- Safety and security practices are not consistently applied to ensure a safe and secure learning environment in Taft ISD.
- The Taft ISD DAEP building is exposed to safety and security issues and the setting may not be conducive to a learning environment.
- Taft ISD does not maintain a plan regarding the implementation of safety and security

recommendations identified in the May 2007 safety and security audits.

- The ISS behavior management plan offers counseling and development programs but lacks a structured implementation plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 56:** Draft a comprehensive policy manual for the Taft ISD Police Department.
- **Recommendation 57:** Establish a safety and security committee with responsibilities including ensuring that all state and federal mandates for testing, planning, reviewing, and updating of emergency plans are implemented.
- **Recommendation 58:** Enhance the safety and security of the DAEP building.
- **Recommendation 59:** Coordinate with the principals and Taft ISD police chief to monitor the status of the open safety and security issues until completion.
- **Recommendation 60:** Further enhance the ISS behavior management plan.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SECURITY

Access to the front entrance of the Petty Elementary school is restricted and requires an employee access card or for the receptionist to electronically unlock the door to visitors. The district maintains security cameras to record all employees, students, and visitors entering the front doors to the administration area. A magnetic locked door and intercom system secures the front doors of the school. Visitors must buzz in on the intercom system to obtain access into the front entrance. This feature is an effective security measure in restricting access to the elementary students and staff.

DETAILED FINDINGS

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 56)

Taft ISD has not documented operating procedures for its police department to ensure that the department complies with authorized safety and security policy and procedures. There are no written procedures on the appropriate use of firearms, use of the department vehicle, and other law enforcement actions such as reporting incidents.

The Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) recommends adoptions of law enforcement standards. Standards provide a strong defense against potential complaints or liabilities when an officer acts in accordance with written policy and procedures based on accepted national standards. Taft ISD's Board policy number LDU-32-99 states that police officers shall provide police services at school or District-sponsored activities that occur off school property, investigate all criminal offenses within the district's jurisdiction and file charges against the perpetrators, perform duties of licensed peace officer enumerated in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures, assist in providing traffic control for school closings or openings or athletic events, enforce school bus regulations, and provide other law enforcement functions as deemed necessary by the administration and board.

By creating and updating a policy manual that prescribes duties and officer conduct, Spring Independent School District (SISD) provides written guidelines for its police officers. The police chief created, and annually updates, a policy manual that prescribes each officer's duties and directs officer conduct. The department 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. The procedural guidelines direct officers in performing their duties in an ethical manner.

La Vega ISD's police chief prepared a department General Orders Manual which details daily operating procedures to perform the responsibilities for the police chief position and to ensure that they are in line with the district's safety and security goals and objectives. The table of contents includes the following areas:

La Vega Independent School District

Police Department - General Orders Manual

Table of Contents

1. *Philosophy, Authority and Scope of Duty*
2. *Uniform, Equipment & Appearance*
3. *Professional Conduct & Personal Bearing*
4. *Responsibilities & General Conduct on Duty*
5. *Protection of Prisoners Rights & Property*
6. *Public Activities*
7. *Weapons*

8. *Approved Duty Equipment*
9. *Use of Force*
10. *Use of Deadly Force*
11. *Communicable Disease Policy*
12. *Employment*
13. *Off-Duty Police Employment*
14. *Vehicle Operations*
15. *Traffic Stops and Prohibited Profiling Practices*

The Taft ISD police chief should draft a comprehensive policy manual for the police department. The police chief should meet with the superintendent to outline the areas for procedure development. Procedures manual from other school districts and national standards should be reviewed to assist in identifying standards to include in the manual. The superintendent should present the outline to the board for additional input and provide examples of procedures manuals from other school districts. After the board has provided its direction, the police chief should draft the policies and procedures manual for the superintendent's review and modifications. The superintendent should submit the final draft to the board for approval and adoption. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES (REC. 57)

Safety and security practices are not consistently applied to ensure a safe and secure learning environment in Taft ISD. Various safety and security issues exist at the campuses that have not been addressed or corrected by the district. An effective safety and security program maintains a balanced approach of prevention and intervention enforcement. The following are examples of the safety and security issues noted during onsite work in Taft ISD:

- Only one of eight security cameras was operational at the junior high and high school campuses. The review team observed that the Taft ISD police chief and assistant superintendent for Business were unable to view the area covered by security cameras from their monitors. Only the Technology staff was able to view an area covered by one security camera. That one operational camera was covering a woodshop classroom because of theft reported by a teacher. Also, the district maintains an insufficient number of security cameras to cover high risk areas such as

entrances to main buildings, faculty parking lot, and cafeterias.

- There is no fence around the junior high and high schools, which allows easy trespassing opportunities. Buildings such as the cafeteria, gym, and auditorium are in separate buildings and easily accessible.
- The elementary school is fenced in but some wings of the building require students to go outside to access the restrooms. The cafeteria and portable buildings are separate buildings as well.
- The lighting is limited or inadequate at most campuses during the night. The review team attended a school function at the elementary school and observed only dim lights outside the parking areas.
- Wiring was hanging from the roofs of some of the buildings.
- Doors and windows at the schools that should be locked were not secured. A custodian said that a few teachers at the junior high school leave a door unlocked for their convenience.
- The district does not use an electronic visitor sign-in system, which has the capability to check for criminal offenders and to generate visitor badges with pictures, dates, and location or room to be visited. Visitors sign in at Taft ISD schools and obtain either a paper or plastic badge without any background checks which could result in allowing criminal offenders on campus. Vendors and delivery personnel are not given background checks but do sign in. During the review team's visit, the junior high school could not locate any visitor badges and provided a substitute teacher badge as an example. Badges are not issued at the Administration building. As an enhancement to school security, the visitor registration system reads visitor drivers' licenses, comparing information to a sex offender database. If a match is confirmed, the appropriate step(s) to take is to contact and notify campus administrators and law enforcement personnel to ensure the campus remains safe; otherwise a visitor's badge is printed that includes a photo, the visitor's name, time, and date.
- There is a lack of key control. The review team observed numerous keys in the maintenance storage room where copies of keys can be made. Supervisors

are responsible for issuing keys and obtaining the keys from exiting employees.

- The police chief's vehicle is not equipped with a two-way radio.
- A few broken/missing fire alarm pulls were observed in the high school buildings.
- The district does not routinely perform mock emergency evacuations or drills. During school year 2010–11, Petty Elementary completed four fire drills, Taft Junior High completed eight, and Taft High completed nine fire drills. No shelter in place drills were performed; administration indicated that a lockdown drill was conducted only at Taft High School.
- Teachers maintain emergency backpacks in their classroom consisting of flashlights, first aid supplies, water, food, and other emergency supplies. When three teachers at the high school were asked where they stored their backpacks, none of the teachers expressed any knowledge of these backpacks. Subsequently, the assistant principal located some of the backpacks in a storage area away from the classrooms.
- The EOP does not identify evacuation sites or contacts for these sites. The EOP includes an Emergency Drill Log but there are no instructions regarding who should complete the form and who should review and approve and follow up regarding areas requiring improvement. The emergency phone tree pages for the elementary school do not match the phone tree pages in the Petty Elementary EOP. Only a limited number of individuals have access to the EOP and Emergency Procedures Quick Reference Guide.
- District and campus improvement plans for school year 2010–11 were not approved by the superintendent and board president until November 2010.
- A current MOU between the City of Taft Police Department (City) and the Taft ISD Police Department has not been executed. The last MOU terminated December 31, 2010. Although the assistant superintendent for Personnel indicated that a new MOU was provided to the City in December 2010, the City manager's office could not locate the agreement. The assistant superintendent is confident that if the district needed help from City

police that they would have their full cooperation. Also, the school year 2010–11 District Emergency Operations Plan includes an unexecuted MOU with the San Patricio County Sheriff's Department with a December 31, 2010 termination date.

- The Visitors to the School section of the Student Handbook states that all visitors must first report to the principal's office and comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. The policy does not state that visitors must show identification and sign in and out. Typical school district visitor policies require all visitors to go first to the principal's office and sign in.

Failure to address these issues severely handicaps the district in maximizing development of a safe and secure environment. Lack of testing the Emergency Operations Plan including mock emergency drills, conducting monthly fire drills, knowing where emergency kits are located, and verifying communication systems and evacuation plans could yield dire results in a life-threatening situation. Unauthorized individuals or criminal offenders could enter the campus as there is no electronic badging system. Without security cameras, the Taft ISD police chief and administration cannot electronically monitor campus activity and maintain video and audio records of incidents.

The Unified School Safety Standards for Texas Schools were written to provide a set of criteria to help school districts develop a quality emergency management program. This framework is based within the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and aligns school district emergency operations with those of other governmental, private, and volunteer entities. The intent of Unified School Safety Standards is not to create additional mandates but to present a list of standard practices to which schools, as well as first responders (i.e., law enforcement, fire, and EMS) can align themselves to provide for the best possible safety for students, staff, and visitors. The Texas Unified School Safety and Security Standards and preliminary best practices ideas include the following:

No. 1.2 The school district should establish a school safety and security committee with responsibilities that include ensuring that all state and federal mandates for planning, review, and updates of emergency plans are implemented.

No. 1.8 The school district should have policies and procedures that govern access to its facilities. Best

practice ideas include that the access policies be in writing; staff, students, and parents be trained in procedures; procedures address visitors; policy addressing photo identification and check-in and check-out desk; and established levels for background checks.

No. 2.8 The school district multi-hazard emergency operations plan should include the development and implementation of a comprehensive multi-hazard exercise/drill program and schedule.

No. 2.10 The school district should document, maintain, and replenish emergency supplies and equipment.

Cushing ISD received a risk management grant to purchase security cameras. The \$3,000 grant was awarded in May 2009 by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund, and was the result of the district's application for funding to purchase an additional security camera for the Jr-Sr high school. The district used other funds to purchase a second camera to provide additional security for the campus.

Manor ISD maintains an electronic visitor registration system (Raptor) to record, track, and monitor visitors to school campuses throughout the district. The system enhances school security by reading visitor driver's licenses and comparing information to a sex offender database for 48 states including Texas. If there is no match, then a visitor badge is printed that includes the visitor's photo and name, time, and date. Manor ISD's Visitor Management Procedural Guide also requires every campus visitor be scanned into the visitor registration system, including parents, volunteers, vendors, board members, substitute teachers, employees who do not have a badge available, and former students.

Taft ISD should establish a safety and security committee with responsibilities including ensuring that all state and federal mandates for testing, planning, reviewing, and updating of emergency plans are implemented. The committee led by the assistant superintendent for Personnel should maintain a log of the issues noted above and meet with the superintendent, police chief, and maintenance director to perform an initial cost assessment and implementation plan. The committee should provide a monthly status report until the projects are completed or determined that they are not feasible. The committee should conduct research for possible grants to assist with the implementation costs.

Administration should conduct mock emergency evacuations or drills and maintain records of the drills performed. A key control system should be developed, the police chief's vehicle should be properly equipped, and proper lighting installed and maintained. The total implementation cost to the district cannot be completely determined until the district decides on the recommendations to be implemented. An electronic visitor's system should be purchased for each campus and the administration building. The cost for the system is \$432 per site per year, for an annual cost of \$1,728 (\$432 x 4 sites). Each site will need an identification card printer, at a cost of \$1,695 per location, for a one-time total cost of \$6,780 (\$1,695 x 4 sites). The district should also purchase additional cameras. The cost of a 16-camera security DVR system is about \$2,100 per location, or a one-time total of \$8,400 for the four sites. Finally, when the building renovation is completed, additional equipment should be acquired for the additional site.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (REC. 58)

Taft ISD's DAEP building is exposed to some safety and security issues and the setting may not be conducive to a learning environment. The objective of the DAEP is to provide a supervised educational setting for students in grades 6–12 who violate the student code of conduct or commit serious or illegal acts as described in the Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.

In the DAEP building, the review team observed that the students sat in desks facing the walls to study all day and must raise their hand to speak. The portable building has a restroom, no windows, and is located across the street from the junior high school. The review team observed the following safety and security issues:

- The building is not connected to the school district's intercom system in the case of an emergency;
- There is only one door to the building which is missing a peep hole; and
- There is only a local landline provided in the building; a two-way radio is not onsite.

These factors and the lackluster appearance of the building do not promote a positive and encouraging environment to enhance the student's self esteem and positive behavior.

Fort Bend ISD's DAEP facility and resources reflect the district' high regard for the program and the students assigned to the program. The facility is well maintained and

well equipped including classroom computers, SMART boards, and technology staff to ensure successful integration of technology into classroom lessons. The National Association of State Boards of Education's 1996 report indicates that regardless of the location, successful alternative programs provide healthy physical environments that foster education, emotional well-being, a sense of pride, and safety. In another example, Wharton ISD remodeled their DAEP building to facilitate a better learning environment.

Taft ISD should enhance the safety and security of the DAEP building. The district should provide additional security features such as a peep hole for the door and two-way radio. All students should be assured of a safe and secure as well as a motivating learning environment. The assistant superintendent for Personnel should request the Maintenance Department and other staff to recommend additional security features and improvement ideas for the DAEP building. The fiscal impact cannot be estimated until any additional security features or improvement ideas are determined.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR SAFETY AUDIT FINDINGS
(REC. 59)**

Taft ISD does not maintain a plan regarding the implementation of safety and security recommendations identified in the May 2007 safety and security audits. The Texas Education Code §37.108, as amended, requires all school districts to conduct a safety and security audit at least once every three years. The previous audit was due by September 1, 2008 and the current audit is due by August 31, 2011. The district has not formally monitored the status and resolved all issues identified in the audits. Safety audits were conducted in May 2007 by a Regional Education Service Center II consultant to identify safety and security strengths and weaknesses in the district. The last status report provided by the district indicating the actions taken and status of other recommendations was prepared July 15, 2008 by a consultant from the Regional Education Service Center. Some of the issues still unresolved include the following:

- Issuing identification badges to all visitors coming into the building;
- Conducting background checks for all vendors and delivery personnel;
- Replacing and/or recharging all fire extinguishers throughout the campus;

- Updating the campus safety/building floor plan to include key locations on the map including central power/electrical access panels, roof access points, fire exits/fire extinguishers, audio monitoring system, external water source for fire department, emergency exits, evacuation areas, custodial storage rooms, other entrance and exit points, and air conditioning systems for the buildings;
- Including procedures in all evacuation plans for persons with limited mobility or special needs;
- Keeping all exterior doors to the building locked; and
- In addition to fire drills, including other safety drills, shelter-in place and lock-downs for teachers and students at least three times a year.

Best practices consist of a systematic assessment of the safety and security status in all schools and facilities. Some school districts conduct their own assessment using the audit protocol recommended by the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) to identify safety and security strengths and weaknesses in the district. TxSSC is a central location for school safety information, and provides schools with research, training, and technical assistance to promote school safety. Safety training offered includes security criteria for instructional facilities, a model safety and security audit procedure, and assistance in developing a multi-hazard emergency operations plan. The security audit results must be reported to the school district's board and to TxSSC. Best practices from the Texas Unified School Safety Standards indicate that trained audit teams should consist of staff representing the following areas: maintenance/facilities, food service, school resource officer (SRO), nurses, administrators, teachers, and counselors.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and the maintenance director attended the School Safety & Security Audit Training in March 2011 sponsored by the Regional Education Service Center II. This training should enable them to lead periodic safety and security assessments as well as the safety and security required every three years. Benefits of the training included information regarding legislative requirements, the proper way to assess playground equipment, and construction hazards.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel should coordinate with the principals and Taft ISD police chief to monitor the status of the open safety and security issues until completion. As part of this plan, district administration should work with

the superintendent, police chief, and principals to determine the estimated costs, priority, and timeline for correction of each identified issue and should maintain a status report of open issues. The plan should entail careful analysis of findings be conducted using established criteria to identify shortcomings needing immediate attention, as well as those items that do not constitute an immediate concern. Completion of this assessment would provide the district with an understanding of safety and security issues and their needs. Questions to raise during this assessment should include:

- What level of risk does the condition present to the safety and security of students and district stakeholders?
- Can the situation be remedied with existing resources?
- If resources are not readily available, what are the options for securing resources?
- If the conclusion is to not implement a response to the condition, has the district adequately identified and evaluated all potential consequences?

The assistant superintendent for Personnel should also conduct an annual safety and security assessment to identify new safety and security issues on a timely basis. The tools and techniques obtained from the recent training class should be used as the guideline for performing the assessment.

The actual implementation cost to the district cannot be estimated until the district determines the recommendations to be implemented. The process of identifying and prioritizing the recommendations to be implemented can be performed with existing resources.

ISS BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT (REC. 60)

The ISS behavior management plan offers counseling and development programs but lacks a structured implementation plan. Interviews with district personnel indicate that although behavior management tools are available, there is no structured delivery plan or required counseling sessions. Tools include video clips such as the movie, Coach Carter, and the character education program, but there are no guidelines or monitoring to ensure that the tools are consistently used. They have parent-training staff, but parents generally do not attend unless it is athletics-related.

Counseling is available but sessions are not scheduled to ensure that it is provided. There is no plan for repeat offenders such as citizenship training and discussions with the student

regarding why they are in ISS. Also, Taft High School uses a Daily Point Sheet to track rewards and count deductions for behavior. Taft Junior High School uses a formal ISS guide that must be signed by the parent.

The district should further enhance the ISS behavior management plan. The assistant principals and counselors should develop a structured ISS plan that identifies when counseling and other tools will be used and how to track the use and success of these tools. The Daily Point Sheet and ISS guide should be incorporated in the plan. The plan should be reviewed and approved by the principals and assistant superintendent for Personnel prior to implementation. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
56. Draft a comprehensive policy manual for the Taft ISD Police Department.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
57. Establish a safety and security committee with responsibilities including ensuring that all state and federal mandates for testing, planning, reviewing, and updating of emergency plans are implemented.	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$8,640)	(\$15,180)
58. Enhance the safety and security of the DAEP building.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
59. Coordinate with the principals and Taft ISD police chief to monitor the status of the open safety and security issues until completion.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
60. Further enhance ISS behavior management plan.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$1,728)	(\$8,640)	(\$15,180)

APPENDICES

TAFT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

N = 90

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

	MALE	FEMALE				
1. Gender (Optional)	24.7%	75.3%				
	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	OTHER		
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	22.5%	1.1%	75.3%	1.1%		
	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–15 YEARS	16–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
3. How long have you been employed by Taft ISD?	12.4%	23.6%	19.1%	16.8%	11.2%	16.9%
	ADMINISTRATOR	CLERICAL STAFFER	SUPPORT STAFFER			
4. Are you a(n)?	8.7%	13.8%	77.5%			
	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–15 YEARS	16–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
5. How long have you been employed in this capacity by Taft ISD?	13.5%	29.2%	16.8%	18.0%	9.0%	13.5%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	18.2%	44.3%	28.4%	3.4%	5.7%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	21.1%	45.6%	22.2%	4.4%	6.7%
3. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	31.8%	45.9%	11.8%	4.6%	5.9%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	28.4%	43.2%	17.0%	6.8%	4.5%
5. Central administration is efficient.	21.6%	53.4%	15.9%	4.5%	4.5%
6. Central administration supports the educational process.	31.5%	42.7%	14.6%	6.7%	4.5%
7. The morale of central administration staff is good.	21.3%	51.7%	15.7%	6.7%	4.5%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
8. Education is the main priority in our school district.	41.1%	38.9%	5.6%	10.0%	4.4%
9. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	13.6%	39.8%	29.5%	12.5%	4.5%
10. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	16.1%	36.8%	33.3%	10.3%	3.4%
11. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	10.6%	38.8%	35.3%	12.9%	2.4%
12. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	19.0%	46.4%	21.4%	9.5%	3.6%
b. Writing	20.0%	45.9%	24.7%	7.1%	2.3%
c. Mathematics	14.1%	51.8%	24.7%	7.1%	2.3%
d. Science	15.3%	54.1%	22.4%	4.7%	3.5%
e. English or Language Arts	16.5%	51.8%	22.4%	5.9%	3.4%
f. Computer Instruction	18.8%	54.1%	20.0%	3.5%	3.5%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	17.9%	48.8%	25.0%	4.8%	3.5%
h. Fine Arts	10.6%	56.5%	23.5%	5.9%	3.5%
i. Physical Education	15.9%	51.2%	20.7%	6.1%	6.1%
j. Business Education	8.6%	44.4%	35.8%	7.4%	3.7%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	11.4%	43.0%	32.9%	7.6%	5.1%
l. Foreign Language	6.4%	32.1%	42.3%	12.8%	6.4%
13. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	13.3%	55.4%	22.9%	6.0%	2.4%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	8.3%	44.0%	34.5%	7.1%	6.0%
c. Special Education	12.9%	52.9%	21.2%	7.1%	5.9%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	10.6%	37.6%	41.2%	5.9%	4.7%
e. Dyslexia program	4.8%	44.0%	40.5%	4.7%	6.0%
f. Student mentoring program	7.1%	41.7%	34.5%	10.7%	6.0%
g. Advanced placement program	9.4%	47.1%	35.3%	4.7%	3.5%
h. Literacy program	4.7%	45.2%	38.1%	6.0%	6.0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	9.8%	37.8%	32.9%	12.2%	7.3%
j. Summer school programs	13.3%	55.4%	21.7%	3.6%	6.0%
k. Alternative education programs	8.4%	41.0%	36.1%	9.6%	4.8%
l. "English as a second language" program	8.4%	48.2%	32.5%	3.6%	7.2%
m. Career counseling program	12.0%	44.6%	36.1%	4.8%	2.4%
n. College counseling program	15.7%	43.4%	31.3%	6.0%	3.6%
o. Counseling the parents of students	7.2%	42.2%	30.1%	14.5%	6.0%
14. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	12.9%	48.2%	24.7%	9.4%	4.7%
15. Teacher turnover is low.	9.6%	45.8%	32.5%	9.6%	2.4%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
16. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	20.5%	39.8%	32.5%	3.6%	3.6%
17. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	19.3%	37.3%	34.9%	7.2%	1.2%
18. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	10.8%	27.7%	37.3%	14.5%	9.6%
19. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	6.0%	34.9%	47.0%	7.2%	4.8%
20. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	21.7%	47.0%	15.7%	8.4%	7.2%
21. The student-teacher ratio is reasonable.	12.2%	57.3%	22.0%	6.1%	2.4%
22. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	30.1%	53.0%	8.4%	4.8%	3.6%
23. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	28.9%	44.6%	18.1%	2.4%	6.0%
24. The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education.	12.2%	45.1%	30.5%	7.3%	4.9%
25. Teachers integrate technology into instruction.	8.5%	53.7%	28.0%	4.9%	4.9%
26. Students use technology to do their work.	7.2%	57.8%	24.1%	6.0%	4.8%
27. New teachers have appropriate professional development and support.	12.0%	41.0%	32.5%	6.0%	8.4%
28. The district has a program evaluation process and procedures looking at all the components of a program, not just at student test (TAKS, 6-week assessments) scores.	17.6%	41.2%	30.6%	3.5%	7.1%
29. The district does a good job preparing students for college.	11.8%	48.25	23.5%	10.6%	5.9%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
30. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	14.3%	38.1%	23.8%	13.1%	10.7%
31. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	13.1%	33.3%	36.9%	9.5%	7.1%
32. Substitute workers are rarely used.	4.7%	20.0%	17.6%	35.3%	22.4%
33. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	7.1%	30.6%	47.1%	4.6%	10.6%
34. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	5.9%	29.4%	41.2%	14.1%	9.4%
35. The district operates an effective staff development program.	9.6%	38.6%	34.9%	8.4%	8.4%
36. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	21.4%	47.6%	19.0%	6.0%	6.0%
37. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	3.6%	27.7%	43.4%	13.3%	12.0%
38. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	6.0%	34.5%	44.0%	8.3%	7.1%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
39. The district has distributed a well written employee handbook which clearly details policies and procedures including a fair and timely grievance process.	24.4%	48.8%	14.0%	4.7%	8.1%
40. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	14.3%	38.1%	22.6%	15.5%	9.5%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
41. The district regularly communicates with parents.	18.8%	43.5%	17.6%	14.1%	5.9%
42. The district regularly communicates with Spanish speaking parents.	15.5%	47.6%	25.0%	7.1%	4.8%
43. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	9.5%	22.6%	31.0%	26.2%	10.7%
44. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	7.1%	25.9%	24.7%	24.7%	17.6%
45. District facilities are open for community use.	12.5%	45.0%	25.0%	11.3%	6.2%
46. The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.	10.7%	36.9%	33.3%	13.1%	6.0%
47. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs.	15.5%	51.2%	21.4%	9.5%	2.4%
48. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs in Spanish.	9.6%	42.2%	34.9%	8.4%	4.8%
49. The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.	13.1%	45.2%	26.2%	8.3%	7.1%
50. The district's web site has information for parents and community members.	19.0%	51.2%	23.8%	3.6%	2.4%
51. The district's web site has information for community members who want to be school volunteers.	8.4%	38.6%	34.9%	12.0%	6.0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
52. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	13.3%	36.1%	32.5%	12.0%	6.0%
53. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	11.1%	33.3%	46.9%	4.9%	3.7%
54. Schools are clean.	19.8%	45.3%	18.6%	11.6%	4.7%
55. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	9.3%	46.5%	19.8%	11.6%	12.8%
56. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	11.5%	35.6%	18.4%	17.2%	17.2%
57. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	21.2%	41.2%	15.3%	12.9%	9.4%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
58. Campus administrators are given ample opportunity to participate in the development of the district's budget.	8.4%	30.1%	43.4%	10.8%	7.2%
59. Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	6.0%	31.3%	50.6%	4.8%	7.2%
60. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	6.0%	34.9%	38.6%	13.3%	7.2%
61. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	11.9%	27.3%	48.8%	6.0%	6.0%
62. The district has adequate safety programs and training to prevent work-related accidents.	8.2%	31.8%	29.4%	18.8%	11.8%
63. My payroll check is always correct.	36.0%	46.5%	3.5%	10.5%	3.5%
64. My payroll check is always issued on time.	44.8%	47.1%	3.5%	1.2%	3.4%
65. The district's Payroll Department does a good job of processing the district's payroll.	34.9%	51.2%	10.5%	0.0%	3.4%
66. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors the correct amount.	22.6%	39.3%	31.0%	4.8%	2.3%
67. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors on time.	22.6%	35.7%	33.3%	4.8%	3.6%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
68. Purchasing has made it easy to get what I need.	16.9%	32.5%	33.7%	10.8%	6.0%
69. Purchasing identifies the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	7.3%	39.0%	36.6%	13.4%	3.7%
70. Vendors are selected competitively.	6.2%	28.4%	60.5%	3.7%	1.2%
71. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	8.4%	30.1%	45.8%	8.4%	7.2%
72. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	13.3%	38.6%	41.0%	4.8%	2.3%
73. Teachers are provided the ancillary textbooks that they need.	13.3%	39.8%	41.0%	3.6%	2.3%
74. Textbooks are applicable to the subject matter.	14.5%	37.3%	42.2%	3.6%	2.4%
75. Textbooks are in good shape.	18.1%	34.9%	39.8%	4.8%	2.4%
76. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	24.4%	48.8%	22.0%	3.7%	1.1%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
77. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	17.4%	54.7%	12.8%	8.1%	7.0%
78. Food is served at the right temperature.	24.7%	54.1%	14.1%	3.5%	3.5%
79. Students have enough time to eat.	18.6%	43.0%	16.3%	10.5%	11.6%
80. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	22.1%	58.1%	11.6%	4.7%	3.5%
81. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	25.0%	48.8%	15.5%	8.3%	2.4%
82. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	11.6%	36.0%	17.4%	15.1%	19.8%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
83. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	39.5%	43.0%	5.8%	10.5%	1.2%
84. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	34.9%	50.0%	5.8%	5.8%	3.5%
85. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	51.8%	40.0%	5.9%	0.0%	2.3%
86. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	21.2%	30.6%	29.4%	9.4%	9.4%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
87. Transportation gets students to school on time.	36.8%	49.4%	12.6%	0.0%	1.1%
88. Transportation promptly picks up students at the end of the day.	32.2%	51.7%	12.6%	1.1%	2.3%
89. The quality of service provided by Transportation on field trips is high.	31.0%	44.0%	22.6%	1.2%	1.2%
90. School buses are clean and well maintained.	19.5%	39.1%	27.6%	10.3%	3.4%
91. School principals quickly and fairly discipline students that are disruptive on the school bus.	17.2%	31.0%	27.6%	14.9%	9.2%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
92. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	10.2%	29.5%	18.2%	33.0%	9.1%
93. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	10.3%	20.7%	25.3%	32.2%	11.5%
94. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	9.3%	24.4%	26.7%	29.1%	10.5%
95. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	23.0%	43.7%	25.3%	4.6%	3.4%
96. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	18.4%	36.8%	35.6%	5.7%	3.4%
97. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	23.3%	44.2%	27.9%	0.0%	4.6%
98. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	12.6%	29.9%	18.4%	20.7%	18.4%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
99. Students have access to and use of computers.	27.1%	57.6%	9.4%	2.4%	3.5%
100. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	23.3%	46.5%	17.4%	7.0%	5.8%
101. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	19.8%	52.3%	17.4%	7.0%	3.5%
102. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	19.8%	41.9%	20.9%	10.4%	7.0%
103. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	19.8%	50.0%	20.9%	4.7%	4.6%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
104. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	15.3%	43.5%	28.2%	9.4%	3.5%
105. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	27.9%	44.2%	19.8%	5.8%	2.3%
106. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	15.3%	40.0%	25.9%	10.6%	8.2%

PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS SURVEY

N = 5

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

		MALE	FEMALE
1.	Gender (Optional)	20.0%	80.0%

		ANGLO	HISPANIC
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	25.0%	75.0%

		1-5 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS OR MORE
3.	How long have you been employed by Taft ISD?	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%

4. What grade(s) are taught in your school? (Select all that apply)

GRADE	PERCENT	GRADE	PERCENT
Pre-Kindergarten	60.0%	Sixth Grade	20.0%
Kindergarten	60.0%	Seventh Grade	20.0%
First Grade	60.0%	Eighth Grade	20.0%
Second Grade	60.0%	Ninth Grade	20.0%
Third Grade	60.0%	Tenth Grade	20.0%
Fourth Grade	60.0%	Eleventh Grade	20.0%
Fifth Grade	60.0%	Twelfth Grade	20.0%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3. School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
6. Central administration is efficient.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
7. Central administration supports the educational process.	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
8. The morale of central administration staff is good.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9. Education is the main priority in our school district.	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
10. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
11. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
12. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
13. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
14. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
15. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
16. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
b. Writing	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
c. Mathematics	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
d. Science	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
e. English or Language Arts	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
f. Computer Instruction	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
h. Fine Arts	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
i. Physical Education	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
j. Business Education	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
l. Foreign Language	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%
17. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%
c. Special Education	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
e. Dyslexia program	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
f. Student mentoring program	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
g. Advanced placement program	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
h. Literacy program	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
j. Summer school programs	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
k. Alternative education programs	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%
l. "English as a second language" program	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
m. Career counseling program	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
n. College counseling program	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
o. Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
18. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
19. Teacher turnover is low.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
20. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
22. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
23. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
24. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
25. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
26. The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
27. Teachers integrate technology into instruction.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
28. Students use technology to do their work.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
29. New teachers have appropriate professional development and support.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
30. The district has a program evaluation process and procedures looking at all the components of a program, not just at student test (TAKS, 6-week assessments) scores.	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
31. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
32. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
33. Substitute workers are rarely used.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%
34. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
35. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
36. The district operates an effective staff development program.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
37. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
38. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%
39. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
40. The district has distributed a well written employee handbook which clearly details policies and procedures including a fair and timely grievance process.	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
41. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
42. The district regularly communicates with parents.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
43. The district regularly communicates with Spanish speaking parents.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
44. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
45. District facilities are open for community use.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
46. The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
47. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
48. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs in Spanish.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
49. The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
50. The district's web site has information for parents and community members.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
51. The district's web site has information for community members who want to be school volunteers.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
52. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
53. Schools are clean.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
54. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
55. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
56. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
57. Procedures for submitting work orders are clearly defined.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
58. I am given ample opportunity to participate in the development of my school's budget and to determine how much money my school will have to spend during the year.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
59. I fully understand the district's financial management policies and procedures and what is expected of me to monitor and protect the financial resources that have been allocated to my school.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
60. I have received adequate training on the district's financial accounting and budgeting system.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
61. I understand how to use the district's financial accounting and budgeting system for the financial management of my school.	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
62. I am able to move funds from one spending category to the other without contacting central office as long as it does not change my overall budget total.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%
63. The level of oversight that I have over student activity funds is adequate to ensure that funds are not misused or misappropriated.	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
64. The district has adequate safety and training programs to prevent work-related accidents.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65. My payroll check is always correct.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
66. My payroll check is always issued on time.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
67. The district's Payroll Department does a good job of processing the district's payroll.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
68. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors the correct amount.	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
69. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors on time.	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
70. Purchasing has made it easy to get what I need.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
71. Purchasing identifies high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
72. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%
73. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
74. Textbooks are in good shape.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
75. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
76. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources in Spanish.	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
77. I have the ancillary sets that I need.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
78. Textbooks are applicable to the subject matter.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
79. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
80. Food is served at the right temperature.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
81. Students have enough time to eat.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
82. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
83. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
84. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
85. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
86. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
87. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
88. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
89. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
90. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
91. Buses arrive and leave on time.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
92. Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
93. The district locates new schools to minimize travel time for students.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
94. The school assignment pattern fairly balances students in all schools.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

I. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
95. Transportation gets students to school on time.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
96. Transportation promptly picks up students at the end of the day.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
97. The quality of service provided by Transportation on field trips is high.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
98. School buses are clean and well maintained.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
99. Students feel safe and secure at school.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
100. School disturbances are infrequent.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
101. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
102. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
103. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
104. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
105. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
106. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
107. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
108. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
109. Students have access to and use of computers.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
110. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
111. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
112. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
113. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
114. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
115. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
116. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

TEACHERS SURVEY

N = 50

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

		MALE	FEMALE
1.	Gender (Optional)	21.0%	79.0%

		ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	57.5%	35.0%	2.5%	5.0%

		LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
3.	How long have you been employed by Taft ISD?	8.2%	40.8%	22.4%	8.2%	6.1%	14.3%

4. What grade(s) do you teach this year? (Select all that apply)			
GRADE	PERCENT	GRADE	PERCENT
Pre-Kindergarten	10.9%	Sixth Grade	10.9%
Kindergarten	13.0%	Seventh Grade	15.2%
First Grade	13.0%	Eighth Grade	13.0%
Second Grade	13.0%	Ninth Grade	26.1%
Third Grade	13.0%	Tenth Grade	30.4%
Fourth Grade	13.0%	Eleventh Grade	32.6%
Fifth Grade	10.9%	Twelfth Grade	30.4%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	10.0%	42.0%	48.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	10.0%	44.0%	40.0%	6.0%	0.0%
3. School board members work well with the superintendent.	18.0%	46.0%	34.0%	0.0%	2.0%
4. The school board has a good image in the community.	16.0%	56.0%	24.0%	2.0%	2.0%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	20.0%	46.0%	20.0%	14.0%	0.0%
6. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	16.0%	46.0%	24.0%	14.0%	0.0%

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
7. Central administration is efficient.	6.0%	46.0%	24.0%	22.0%	2.0%
8. Central administration supports the educational process.	16.0%	54.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
9. The morale of central administration staff is good.	10.2%	46.9%	32.7%	10.2%	0.0%
10. Education is the main priority in our school district.	24.5%	53.1%	14.3%	8.1%	0.0%
11. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	2.0%	34.7%	18.4%	34.7%	10.2%
12. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	2.0%	46.9%	30.6%	20.4%	0.0%
13. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.0%	38.8%	34.7%	24.5%	2.0%
14. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	18.4%	61.2%	12.2%	8.2%	0.0%
15. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	10.2%	36.7%	20.4%	28.6%	4.1%
16. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	14.3%	49.0%	16.3%	18.4%	2.0%
17. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	10.2%	65.3%	16.3%	6.1%	2.0%
b. Writing	8.2%	59.2%	18.4%	12.2%	2.0%
c. Mathematics	4.1%	63.3%	10.2%	20.4%	2.0%
d. Science	4.1%	61.2%	16.3%	16.3%	2.0%
e. English or Language Arts	10.2%	65.3%	14.3%	8.2%	2.0%
f. Computer Instruction	6.1%	53.1%	26.5%	14.3%	0.0%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	8.2%	61.2%	18.4%	10.2%	2.0%
h. Fine Arts	4.1%	55.1%	22.4%	18.4%	0.0%
i. Physical Education	6.1%	59.2%	22.4%	10.2%	2.0%
j. Business Education	2.0%	30.6%	61.2%	6.1%	0.0%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	4.1%	30.6%	51.0%	14.3%	0.0%
l. Foreign Language	4.1%	36.7%	53.1%	4.1%	2.0%
18. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	4.1%	69.4%	16.3%	10.2%	0.0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	2.0%	36.7%	20.4%	34.7%	6.1%
c. Special Education	12.2%	59.2%	10.2%	12.2%	6.1%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	0.0%	42.9%	49.0%	6.1%	2.0%
e. Dyslexia program	2.0%	38.8%	38.8%	16.3%	4.1%
f. Student mentoring program	2.0%	40.8%	26.5%	22.4%	8.2%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
g. Advanced placement program	0.0%	40.8%	44.9%	8.2%	6.1%
h. Literacy program	2.0%	40.8%	38.8%	16.3%	2.0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	8.2%	36.7%	28.6%	20.4%	6.1%
j. Summer school programs	4.1%	61.2%	20.4%	12.2%	2.0%
19. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	6.1%	63.3%	22.4%	8.2%	0.0%
20. Teacher turnover is low.	4.1%	38.8%	18.4%	30.6%	8.1%
21. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	20.4%	53.1%	14.3%	12.2%	0.0%
22. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	12.2%	65.3%	14.3%	8.2%	0.0%
23. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	22.4%	36.7%	28.6%	12.2%
24. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	8.2%	55.1%	24.5%	10.2%	2.0%
25. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	20.4%	71.4%	6.1%	2.0%	0.0%
26. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	4.1%	55.1%	14.3%	20.4%	6.1%
27. The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	12.2%	71.4%	6.1%	8.2%	2.0%
28. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	30.6%	61.2%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%
29. The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education.	2.0%	53.1%	22.4%	20.4%	2.0%
30. Teachers integrate technology into instruction.	6.1%	65.3%	12.2%	16.3%	0.0%
31. Students use technology to do their work.	8.1%	63.3%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%
32. New teachers have appropriate professional development and support.	8.2%	49.0%	16.3%	22.4%	4.1%
33. The district has a program evaluation process and procedures looking at all the components of a program, not just at student test (TAKS, 6-week assessments) scores.	12.2%	63.3%	12.2%	8.2%	4.1%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
34. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	8.2%	53.1%	10.2%	22.4%	6.1%
35. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	12.2%	46.9%	30.6%	10.2%	0.0%
36. Substitute workers are rarely used.	0.0%	14.3%	16.3%	42.9%	26.5%
37. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	4.1%	30.6%	44.9%	12.2%	8.2%
38. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	2.0%	40.8%	38.8%	16.3%	2.0%
39. The district operates an effective staff development program.	8.1%	55.1%	18.4%	14.3%	4.1%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
40. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	18.4%	71.4%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%
41. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.0%	30.6%	28.6%	26.5%	14.3%
42. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	8.2%	51.0%	24.5%	12.2%	4.1%
43. The district has distributed a well written employee handbook which clearly details policies and procedures including a fair and timely grievance process.	18.4%	59.2%	14.3%	8.1%	0.0%
44. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	14.3%	51.0%	12.2%	12.2%	10.2%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
45. The district regularly communicates with parents.	12.2%	75.5%	8.2%	4.1%	0.0%
46. The district regularly communicates with Spanish speaking parents.	18.4%	59.2%	18.4%	4.0%	0.0%
47. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	2.0%	10.2%	42.9%	36.7%	8.2%
48. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0.0%	18.4%	28.6%	46.9%	6.1%
49. District facilities are open for community use.	6.1%	46.9%	40.8%	6.1%	0.0%
50. The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.	2.0%	34.7%	49.0%	12.2%	2.0%
51. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs.	6.1%	75.5%	16.3%	2.0%	0.0%
52. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs in Spanish.	8.2%	61.2%	24.5%	6.1%	0.0%
53. The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.	10.2%	71.4%	16.3%	2.0%	0.0%
54. The district's web site has information for parents and community members.	14.3%	75.5%	8.2%	2.0%	0.0%
55. The district's web site has information for community members who want to be school volunteers.	4.2%	43.8%	37.5%	12.5%	2.0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
56. The district plans facilities construction far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	8.1%	53.1%	28.6%	10.2%	0.0%
57. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	12.2%	55.1%	18.4%	12.2%	2.0%
58. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	8.1%	32.7%	53.1%	4.1%	2.0%
59. The quality of new construction is excellent.	4.1%	20.4%	69.4%	2.0%	4.1%
60. Schools are clean.	6.1%	63.3%	8.2%	18.4%	4.0%
61. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	8.2%	49.0%	8.2%	22.4%	12.2%
62. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	8.2%	46.9%	6.1%	22.4%	16.3%
63. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	8.2%	55.1%	14.3%	16.3%	6.1%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
64. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	8.2%	44.9%	34.7%	10.2%	2.0%
65. Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	10.2%	46.9%	38.8%	4.1%	0.0%
66. Financial reports are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	12.2%	32.7%	46.9%	4.1%	4.1%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
67. Purchasing has made it easy to get what I need.	8.1%	53.1%	18.4%	16.3%	4.1%
68. Purchasing identifies the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	4.1%	46.9%	34.7%	14.3%	0.0%
69. Vendors are selected competitively.	4.0%	53.1%	32.7%	10.2%	0.0%
70. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	2.0%	42.9%	26.5%	26.5%	2.0%
71. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	8.2%	32.7%	40.8%	16.3%	2.0%
72. I have the ancillary textbooks that I need.	8.2%	36.7%	42.9%	12.2%	0.0%
73. Textbooks are applicable to the subject matter.	14.3%	40.8%	38.8%	6.1%	0.0%
74. Textbooks are in good shape.	16.3%	32.7%	42.9%	8.1%	0.0%
75. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	16.3%	63.3%	14.3%	6.1%	0.0%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
76. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	8.2%	42.9%	16.3%	22.4%	10.2%
77. Food is served at the right temperature.	8.2%	51.0%	22.4%	16.3%	2.0%
78. Students have enough time to eat.	4.1%	65.3%	8.2%	20.4%	2.0%
79. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	8.2%	77.6%	8.2%	6.0%	0.0%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
80. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	10.2%	59.2%	20.4%	10.2%	0.0%
81. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	16.3%	36.7%	6.1%	20.4%	20.4%
82. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	24.5%	55.1%	8.2%	8.1%	4.1%
83. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	20.4%	61.2%	14.3%	4.1%	0.0%
84. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	38.8%	57.1%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%
85. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	10.2%	28.6%	34.7%	20.4%	6.1%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
86. Transportation gets students to school on time.	20.4%	75.5%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%
87. Transportation promptly picks up students at the end of the day.	14.3%	71.4%	2.0%	8.2%	4.1%
88. The quality of service provided by Transportation on field trips is high.	16.3%	67.3%	14.3%	2.0%	0.0%
89. School buses are clean and well maintained.	12.2%	57.1%	20.4%	8.2%	2.0%
90. School principals quickly and fairly discipline students that are disruptive on the school bus.	12.2%	38.8%	34.7%	6.1%	8.2%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
91. School disturbances are infrequent.	4.1%	51.0%	6.1%	26.5%	12.2%
92. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	4.1%	34.7%	30.6%	18.4%	12.2%
93. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	4.0%	20.4%	32.7%	28.6%	14.3%
94. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	2.0%	36.7%	24.5%	30.6%	6.1%
95. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	12.2%	46.9%	32.7%	6.1%	2.0%
96. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	8.2%	42.9%	38.8%	6.1%	4.0%
97. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	12.2%	49.0%	32.7%	4.1%	2.0%
98. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	12.2%	36.7%	16.3%	22.5%	12.2%
99. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	4.1%	38.8%	20.4%	32.7%	4.0%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
100. Students have access to and use of computers.	16.3%	73.5%	0.0%	10.2%	0.0%
101. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	8.2%	49.0%	8.2%	26.5%	8.1%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
102. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	14.3%	59.2%	16.3%	10.2%	0.0%
103. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	8.2%	44.9%	12.2%	28.6%	6.1%
104. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	8.2%	46.9%	24.5%	16.3%	4.1%
105. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	6.1%	36.7%	36.7%	16.3%	4.1%
106. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	18.4%	71.4%	6.1%	2.0%	2.0%
107. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	12.2%	51.0%	16.3%	16.3%	4.1%

PARENTS SURVEY

N = 5

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

		MALE	FEMALE
1.	Gender (Optional)	17.9%	82.1%

		ANGLO	HISPANIC
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	5.3%	94.7%

		0–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11 YEARS OR MORE
3.	How long have you lived in Taft ISD?	10.3%	12.8%	76.9%

4. What grade(s) do your children attend? (Select all that apply)

GRADE	PERCENT	GRADE	PERCENT
Pre-Kindergarten	10.3%	Sixth Grade	17.9%
Kindergarten	17.9%	Seventh Grade	33.3%
First Grade	12.8%	Eighth Grade	23.1%
Second Grade	25.6%	Ninth Grade	12.8%
Third Grade	38.5%	Tenth Grade	5.1%
Fourth Grade	28.2%	Eleventh Grade	15.4%
Fifth Grade	35.9%	Twelfth Grade	2.6%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	15.4%	43.6%	33.3%	5.1%	2.6%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	23.1%	41.0%	33.3%	0.0%	2.6%
3. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	30.8%	53.8%	10.3%	2.5%	2.6%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	23.1%	53.8%	20.5%	0.0%	2.6%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
5. The district provides a high quality of services.	15.0%	55.0%	10.0%	17.5%	2.5%
6. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	20.0%	45.0%	15.0%	17.5%	2.5%
7. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	17.5%	47.5%	20.0%	12.5%	2.5%
8. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	10.2%	51.3%	30.8%	7.7%	0.0%
9. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	25.0%	57.5%	5.0%	12.5%	0.0%
b. Writing	27.5%	50.0%	7.5%	15.0%	0.0%
c. Mathematics	27.5%	55.0%	10.0%	7.5%	0.0%
d. Science	25.6%	64.1%	5.1%	5.1%	0.0%
e. English or Language Arts	30.0%	55.0%	12.5%	2.5%	0.0%
f. Computer Instruction	32.5%	55.0%	10.0%	2.5%	0.0%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
h. Fine Arts	25.0%	55.0%	15.0%	5.0%	0.0%
i. Physical Education	30.0%	52.5%	12.5%	5.0%	0.0%
j. Business Education	20.0%	30.0%	40.0%	7.5%	2.5%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	15.0%	37.5%	42.5%	5.0%	0.0%
l. Foreign Language	17.5%	40.0%	35.0%	7.5%	0.0%
10. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	20.5%	64.1%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	25.6%	53.8%	10.3%	7.7%	2.6%
c. Special Education	25.0%	45.0%	22.5%	7.5%	0.0%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	15.0%	47.5%	32.5%	5.0%	0.0%
e. Dyslexia program	15.0%	30.0%	47.5%	5.0%	2.5%
f. Student mentoring program	15.0%	42.5%	30.0%	10.0%	2.5%
g. Advanced placement program	17.5%	45.0%	30.0%	5.0%	2.5%
h. Literacy program	17.5%	52.5%	27.5%	2.5%	0.0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	17.5%	35.0%	45.0%	2.5%	0.0%
j. Summer school programs	25.0%	57.5%	15.0%	2.5%	0.0%
k. Alternative education programs	17.5%	47.5%	32.5%	2.5%	0.0%
l. English as a second language program	15.0%	42.5%	40.0%	2.5%	0.0%
m. Career counseling program	15.4%	48.7%	33.3%	2.6%	0.0%
n. College counseling program	20.0%	45.0%	27.5%	5.0%	2.5%
o. Counseling the parents of students	20.0%	45.0%	17.5%	15.0%	2.5%
p. Dropout prevention program	10.0%	32.5%	52.5%	5.0%	0.0%
11. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	15.0%	45.0%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
12. Teacher turnover is low.	7.5%	35.0%	50.0%	5.0%	2.5%
13. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	7.5%	5.0%
14. A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	2.5%	30.0%	20.0%	35.0%	12.5%
15. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	20.0%	60.0%	10.0%	7.5%	2.5%
16. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	30.8%	53.8%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%
17. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	30.0%	60.0%	2.5%	2.5%	5.0%
18. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	15.0%	55.0%	22.5%	7.5%	0.0%
19. The district provides a high quality education.	12.5%	57.5%	12.5%	15.0%	2.5%
20. The district has a high quality of teachers.	17.5%	45.0%	27.5%	7.5%	2.5%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
21. The district regularly communicates with parents.	12.5%	60.0%	5.0%	12.5%	10.0%
22. District facilities are open for community use.	15.0%	57.5%	17.5%	10.0%	0.0%
23. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	7.7%	59.0%	25.6%	7.7%	0.0%

D. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
24. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	17.5%	55.0%	22.5%	5.0%	0.0%
25. Schools are clean.	22.5%	72.5%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
26. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	12.5%	62.5%	2.5%	15.0%	7.5%
27. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	12.5%	60.0%	15.0%	7.5%	5.0%
28. The district uses very few portable buildings.	5.0%	57.5%	17.5%	15.0%	5.0%
29. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	15.0%	65.0%	15.0%	5.0%	0.0%

E. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
30. My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	7.5%	47.5%	27.5%	10.0%	7.5%
31. Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	12.5%	42.5%	27.5%	15.0%	2.5%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
32. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	10.0%	42.5%	40.0%	5.0%	2.5%
33. Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	10.0%	52.5%	35.0%	2.5%	0.0%
34. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	7.5%	45.0%	32.5%	12.5%	2.5%
35. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	7.5%	47.5%	40.0%	2.5%	2.5%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
36. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	15.0%	52.5%	20.0%	7.5%	5.0%
37. Textbooks are in good shape.	15.0%	40.0%	22.5%	17.5%	5.0%
38. The school library meets student's needs for books and other resources.	22.5%	67.5%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
39. My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	20.0%	55.0%	7.5%	10.0%	7.5%
40. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	38.5%	61.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41. The cafeteria food looks and tastes good.	15.4%	48.7%	18.0%	5.1%	12.8%
42. Food is served at the right temperature.	20.0%	62.5%	5.0%	7.5%	5.0%
43. Students have enough time to eat.	10.0%	60.0%	12.5%	12.5%	5.0%
44. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	20.0%	65.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%
45. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	17.5%	45.0%	25.0%	10.0%	2.5%
46. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	15.4%	59.0%	17.9%	7.7%	0.0%
47. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	22.5%	57.5%	10.0%	5.0%	5.0%
48. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	25.0%	62.5%	7.5%	5.0%	0.0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
49. My child regularly rides the bus.	18.0%	30.8%	25.6%	12.8%	12.8%
50. The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	7.9%	31.6%	47.4%	7.9%	5.2%
51. The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	10.5%	39.5%	47.4%	2.6%	0.0%
52. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	16.2%	54.1%	24.3%	5.4%	0.0%
53. The bus stop near my house is safe.	8.1%	32.4%	54.1%	5.4%	0.0%
54. The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	13.5%	40.5%	37.8%	8.1%	0.0%
55. Buses arrive and depart on time.	10.8%	37.8%	48.7%	2.7%	0.0%

I. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
56. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	11.1%	33.3%	52.8%	2.8%	0.0%
57. Buses seldom break down.	13.5%	35.1%	46.0%	5.4%	0.0%
58. Buses are clean.	10.8%	37.8%	40.5%	10.8%	0.0%
59. Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	16.2%	40.5%	40.5%	2.7%	0.0%
60. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	13.5%	32.4%	51.4%	2.7%	0.0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
61. Students feel safe and secure at school.	20.0%	60.0%	2.5%	15.0%	2.5%
62. School disturbances are infrequent.	17.5%	45.0%	20.0%	15.0%	2.5%
63. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	22.5%	37.5%	17.5%	20.0%	2.5%
64. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	22.5%	25.0%	27.5%	20.0%	5.0%
65. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	22.5%	30.0%	22.5%	22.5%	2.5%
66. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	17.5%	47.5%	27.5%	7.5%	0.0%
67. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	20.0%	47.5%	30.0%	2.5%	0.0%
68. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	25.0%	45.0%	27.5%	2.5%	0.0%
69. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	21.0%	42.1%	18.4%	13.2%	5.3%
70. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	7.5%	40.0%	37.5%	15.0%	0.0%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
71. Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	15.0%	60.0%	17.5%	7.5%	0.0%
72. Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	10.0%	77.5%	10.0%	2.5%	0.0%
73. The district meets student's needs in computer fundamentals.	12.5%	72.5%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%
74. The district meets student's needs in advanced computer skills.	17.5%	60.0%	15.0%	7.5%	0.0%
75. Students have easy access to the Internet.	17.5%	57.5%	17.5%	5.0%	2.5%

STUDENTS SURVEY

N = 94

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

		MALE	FEMALE
1.	Gender (Optional)	58.1%	41.9%

		ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	3.3%	4.4%	87.9%	4.4%

		SENIOR	JUNIOR
3.	What is your classification?	55.3%	44.7%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	11.8%	50.5%	25.8%	11.8%	0.0%
2. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	8.6%	50.5%	35.5%	5.4%	0.0%
3. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	26.1%	58.7%	7.6%	7.6%	0.0%
b. Writing	24.5%	61.7%	9.6%	4.2%	0.0%
c. Mathematics	24.7%	53.8%	9.7%	9.7%	2.1%
d. Science	25.8%	62.4%	8.6%	3.2%	0.0%
e. English or Language Arts	27.2%	57.6%	7.6%	7.6%	0.0%
f. Computer Instruction	23.4%	56.4%	18.1%	2.1%	0.0%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	43.6%	47.9%	7.4%	0.0%	1.1%
h. Fine Arts	34.0%	45.7%	18.1%	2.1%	0.0%
i. Physical Education	28.7%	46.8%	20.2%	4.3%	0.0%
j. Business Education	16.1%	30.1%	39.8%	10.8%	3.2%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	19.1%	38.3%	30.9%	9.6%	2.1%
l. Foreign Language	12.8%	39.4%	25.5%	10.6%	11.7%
4. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	20.4%	55.9%	15.1%	6.4%	2.2%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	23.7%	58.1%	11.8%	6.4%	0.0%
c. Special Education	20.4%	50.5%	26.9%	2.2%	0.0%

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
d. Student mentoring program	8.6%	31.2%	40.9%	19.3%	0.0%
e. Advanced placement program	20.4%	53.8%	17.2%	8.6%	0.0%
f. Career counseling program	10.9%	44.6%	27.2%	15.2%	2.1%
g. College counseling program	16.1%	38.7%	25.8%	16.1%	3.2%
5. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	21.7%	38.0%	19.6%	13.0%	7.6%
6. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	5.5%	29.7%	35.1%	19.8%	9.9%
7. The district provides a high quality education.	13.0%	44.6%	25.0%	13.0%	4.4%
8. The district has a high quality of teachers.	18.3%	43.0%	25.8%	12.9%	0.0%
9. The district does a good job preparing students for college.	17.0%	42.6%	22.3%	11.7%	6.4%

B. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
10. Schools are clean.	17.0%	57.4%	12.8%	9.6%	3.2%
11. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	12.8%	52.1%	13.8%	19.2%	2.1%
12. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	9.7%	32.3%	29.0%	28.0%	1.0%
13. Emergency maintenance is handled timely.	12.8%	39.4%	35.1%	11.7%	1.0%
14. School facilities are readily available for student activities.	18.3%	46.2%	23.7%	9.7%	2.1%

C. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
15. There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	10.8%	46.2%	9.7%	26.9%	6.4%
16. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	9.8%	38.0%	28.3%	18.5%	5.4%
17. Textbooks are in good shape.	5.4%	29.4%	22.8%	29.4%	13.0%
18. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	29.7%	45.0%	14.3%	7.7%	3.3%

D. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
19. The cafeteria food looks and tastes good.	2.2%	12.9%	16.1%	35.5%	33.3%
20. Food is served at the right temperature.	3.2%	37.6%	21.5%	26.9%	10.8%
21. Students have enough time to eat.	3.2%	21.5%	10.8%	37.6%	26.9%
22. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	9.7%	72.0%	9.7%	4.3%	4.3%
23. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	3.3%	38.0%	16.3%	25.0%	17.4%
24. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	11.8%	60.2%	17.2%	8.6%	2.2%
25. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	22.8%	56.5%	13.0%	4.4%	3.3%
26. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	16.7%	61.1%	13.3%	6.7%	2.2%

D. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
27. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	33.3%	51.6%	10.8%	2.2%	2.1%
28. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	6.5%	17.2%	34.4%	22.6%	19.3%

E. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
29. I regularly ride the bus.	4.3%	6.5%	18.3%	33.3%	37.6%
30. The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	7.5%	16.1%	70.0%	3.2%	3.2%
31. The length of the student bus ride is reasonable.	6.5%	20.4%	67.7%	1.1%	4.3%
32. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	8.6%	33.3%	54.8%	2.2%	1.1%
33. The bus stop near my house is safe.	7.5%	22.6%	64.5%	3.2%	2.2%
34. The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	10.8%	25.8%	61.3%	0.0%	2.1%
35. Buses arrive and depart on time.	3.2%	24.7%	58.1%	9.7%	4.3%
36. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	7.6%	31.5%	59.8%	0.0%	1.1%
37. Buses seldom break down.	2.2%	12.1%	71.4%	11.0%	3.3%
38. Buses are clean.	5.4%	21.5%	54.8%	11.8%	6.5%
39. Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	12.9%	30.1%	53.8%	2.1%	1.1%

F. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
40. I feel safe and secure at school.	16.1%	57.0%	12.9%	10.8%	3.2%
41. School disturbances are infrequent.	9.8%	35.9%	33.7%	14.1%	6.5%
42. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	6.4%	48.4%	28.0%	8.6%	8.6%
43. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	9.7%	25.8%	24.7%	26.9%	12.9%
44. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.5%	26.9%	23.7%	29.0%	12.9%
45. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	10.9%	31.5%	46.7%	7.6%	3.3%
46. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	7.5%	29.0%	50.5%	7.5%	5.4%
47. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	10.8%	38.7%	47.3%	3.2%	0.0%
48. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	14.0%	38.7%	23.7%	12.9%	10.7%
49. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	7.5%	23.7%	47.3%	15.1%	6.4%

G. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
50. Students have access to and use of computers.	45.7%	46.8%	6.4%	1.1%	0.0%
51. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	33.0%	46.8%	8.5%	9.6%	2.1%
52. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	34.0%	46.8%	12.8%	4.3%	2.1%
53. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	33.0%	50.0%	11.7%	3.2%	2.1%
54. The district meets student's needs in computer fundamentals.	31.9%	43.6%	17.0%	5.3%	2.1%
55. The district meets students needs in advanced computer skills	34.0%	40.4%	16.0%	6.4%	3.2%
56. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	41.9%	46.2%	5.4%	4.3%	2.2%
57. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	40.4%	43.6%	12.8%	2.1%	1.1%