

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

March 28, 2002

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

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD).

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

I have made a number of recommendations to improve WHISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations-model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers, and staff. This report outlines 98 detailed recommendations that could save WHISD more than \$9.5 million over the next five years, while reinvesting more than \$2.2 million to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach more than \$7.3 million that the district can redirect to the classroom.

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

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



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary Overview

In July 2001, the Comptroller announced her intent to conduct a review of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) at the request of the new superintendent, Mr. Harvey Rayson, several board members and constituents concerned about the district's history of leadership instability, mismanagement and lack of financial and educational accountability.

Work began in Wilmer-Hutchins in September 2001. Based upon more than six months of work, this report identifies WHISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district management and operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 98 recommendations could result in net savings of more than \$7.3 million over the next five years.

Improving The Texas School Performance Review

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

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

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

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

- Develop strategies to ensure the district's processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;
- Challenge any process, procedure, program or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and
- Put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages Test": government should do no job if a business in the Yellow Pages can do that job better and at a lower cost.

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

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

TSPR in Wilmer-Hutchins ISD

On September 24, 2001, TSPR began its performance review of WHISD. The team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held a public forum in the high school library on September 27, 2001 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted two focus group sessions, one with teachers and one with parents and community members. The Comptroller's office also received letters and phone calls from parents, teachers and community members. To ensure that all stakeholder groups had input, TSPR sent surveys to students, parents, teachers, campus and central administrators and support staff.

A total of 248 respondents answered surveys: 68 administrative and support staff; five principals and assistant principals; 68 teachers; 43 parents and 64 students completed written surveys as part of the review. Details from the surveys and public forums appear in **Appendices A** through **F**.

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

WHISD is a district in turmoil with a long history of high employee turnover including five superintendents from 1996 through 2001, and

mismanagement evidenced by official interventions from TEA from 1991 through 2001. Most recently, TEA assigned an education monitor to intervene on behalf of the students attending WHISD's low performing middle school as well as report to the Commissioner of Education regarding the district's special programs department. A monitor is a TEA official assigned by the Commissioner of Education to provide managerial assistance to identified districts in the areas of finance, governance or education.

Throughout the report process, TSPR had difficulty gathering and confirming data from the district. Numbers reflected in this report are therefore based largely on data from TEA.

For 2001-02, the district has \$19.9 million in total budgeted expenditures. The superintendent reported that the district expects expenditures to exceed revenues in 2001-02, as they did in 2000-01.

Student enrollment has declined by 6.1 percent from 1997-98 through 2000-01, while staffing increased by 8.9 percent. Teacher and administrator morale is low and many fear for their jobs.

Gibson Consulting Group Inc., an Austin-based consulting firm, was contracted to assist with the review of WHISD at a cost of \$150,000.

WHISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The selected peer districts were DeSoto ISD Lancaster ISD and La Marque ISD's. TSPR also compared WHISD to district averages in TEA's Regional Education Service Center X (Region 10), to which WHISD belongs, and the state as a whole.

During its six-month review, TSPR developed 98 recommendations to improve operations and save taxpayers more than \$9.5million by 2006-07. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach more than \$7.3 million by 2006-07.

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 4**. Many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct impact, but would improve the district's overall operations.

Wilmer-Hutchins ISD

WHISD encompasses 64 square miles located in southern Dallas County and serves students from the communities of Wilmer and Hutchins, as well as parts of Dallas, Ferris and Lancaster. The district was established

in 1927 and is a blend of urban, suburban and rural settings. Students are 73.9 percent African American, 20.7 percent Hispanic, 5.1 percent Anglo and 0.3 percent Asian, Pacific Islander and Native American.

Exhibit 1 details the demographic characteristics of the WHISD and its peer school districts.

Exhibit 1
Demographic Characteristics of Students in WHISD
and Peer School Districts
2000-01

District	Number of Students	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent Minority	Percent Eco-Disadvantaged
De Soto	6,941	56.4%	11.2%	31.0%	1.4%	69.0%	33.5%
Lancaster	4,206	68.6%	13.6%	17.3%	0.6%	82.7%	47.3%
La Marque	4,063	65.5%	13.6%	20.2%	0.7%	79.8%	49.0%
Wilmer-Hutchins	3,283	73.9%	20.7%	5.1%	0.3%	94.9%	71.9%
State	4,059,619	14.4%	40.6%	42.0%	3.0%	58.0%	49.3%

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

WHISD served 3,283 students during 2000-01, a decrease of nearly 3 percent from the 1996-97 enrollment (**Exhibit 2**), and including several enrollment increase and decrease fluctuations between 1996-97 and 2000-01. District officials, however, expect enrollment to continue to decline.

Exhibit 2
WHISD Student Enrollment History

School Year	Actual Student Enrollment	Percent Change From 1996-97
1996-97	3,381	-
1997-98	3,495	3.0%
1998-99	3,651	8.0%

1999-2000	3,444	2.0%
2000-01	3,283	(2.9%)

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

In August 2001, the WHISD Board of Trustees increased its adopted tax rate by 2 percent, from \$1.503 (\$1.468 maintenance and operations plus \$0.035 debt service) for calendar year 1999 to \$1.528 (\$1.465 maintenance and operations plus \$0.063 debt service) for calendar 2000. In 2000-01, WHISD's property value reached \$126,513 per student, nearly \$100,000 less than the state average of \$215,232.

The district's annual operating budget was \$19.85 million for 2000-01, an increase of 2 percent over the 1999-2000 annual budget of \$19.4 million.

WHISD's 2000-01 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) passing rate was 58.4 percent compared to the state average of 82.1 percent and the regional average of 80.6 percent. The 2000-01 passing rate of 58.4 percent improved over the 1999-2000 passing rate of 50.6 percent; however, it remains well below the regional and state averages. Also dangerously low is the number of WHISD students graduating under TEA's recommended high school program, 0.7 percent, as compared to 38.6 percent for the state and 39.7 percent for the region in 2000-01.

Additionally, no students in WHISD's class of 2000 scored at or above the average passing criterion for the Scholastic Aptitude Test I (SAT) or American College Testing Program (ACT), two assessments traditionally used in consideration for college admission. The mean SAT score for WHISD students in the class of 2000 was 721 as compared to 990 for the state and 1,012 for Region 10. The mean ACT score was 14.6 for WHISD's class of 2000 students as compared to 20.3 for the state and 21.0 for the region.

On August 16, 2001, TEA released the TAAS results and accountability ratings for the 2000-01 school year. WHISD received an overall Academically Acceptable rating. According to these latest reports the district has five Academically Acceptable and one Low Performing school. This does not represent a change from last year's overall rating of Acceptable; however, it does represent a change from two low performing campuses in 1999-2000 to one in 2000-01.

While TSPR found commendable programs and practices being carried out by dedicated and hardworking employees of the district, ongoing controversies have overshadowed many of these efforts. After more than six months, TSPR has found that the following challenges must be faced

and overcome to regain management and educational stability, community trust and to restore education as the primary focus of the district. WHISD is facing a number of challenges including:

- enhancing student performance;
- stabilizing leadership and governance;
- instituting a system of internal controls; and
- improving planning and management.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Enhance Student Performance

- **Use student achievement data, including course grades and achievement test scores, to identify student and teacher needs and improve student performance.** WHISD's overall passing rates for TAAS, End-of-Course tests (EOC), SAT college entrance exams and the ACT are below state and regional levels. Without improved scores on the EOC tests as well as TAAS tests at all grade levels, few WHISD students will earn a high school diploma when the new Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test is in place in 2003. By using performance data, the district will be better able to identify areas of strength and weakness, and modify programs accordingly.
- **Develop a comprehensive curriculum plan and add curriculum guides.** The district has no overall curriculum plan and lacks many curriculum guides in most subjects except for math, causing a disconnected curriculum plan for students and adversely affecting their test scores. Developing a comprehensive plan will assist the district in delineating responsibilities for curriculum development, review and management, textbook adoption, alignment with Texas Essential of Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), evaluation, staff training, and reports to the board on program effectiveness and budgeting to ultimately improve student TAAS, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing Program (ACT) scores.
- **Restructure the compensatory education program and incorporate specific plans into DIP and CIPs.** Reexamining and restructuring the compensatory education program designed to assist students at risk of failing will help the district improve student performance, support accountability for spent funds and enhance data accuracy.

Stabilize Leadership and Governance

- **Request a TEA master to oversee the district and comply with state laws .** WHISD's Board of Trustees is in violation of laws applicable to district governance including the Texas Education Code (TEC), the Government Code and the Tax Code. The district's tumultuous governance history and high turnover of superintendents underscore a pattern of disregard for law and managerial stability. The assignment of a TEA master with the authority to approve or disapprove any action of the board, the superintendent or a campus principal would provide the district with an experienced advocate possessing necessary managerial skills and knowledgeable in school district governance laws and regulations at a cost of \$78,780 for 18 months.
- **Hire an internal auditor to report directly to the Board of Trustees.** WHISD does not have an internal auditor that can evaluate the manner in which the district's organizational units conduct their activities and whether they comply with board and administrative policies and procedures, as well as federal, state and local government laws and guidelines. Hiring an internal auditor would ensure that the district is in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), the district's financial operations are objectively evaluated, and the board is continuously informed of and understands these situations during and after times when TEA is not directly involved in assistive activities for the district.
- **Change the election of board members to single-member districts for three to five positions .** At-large election of all seven board members has resulted in concerns that citizens in several geographic areas are not represented on the board. Changing the election of the WHISD board would provide the community with an opportunity to vote for board members who represent their areas.
- **Develop and implement a Code of Conduct for the WHISD board.** By developing and using a Code of Conduct that includes a definition of roles, a mechanism for self-evaluation and training in communication, board members would fully understand their clearly defined responsibilities and ethical standards and objectively assess their ability to accomplish district goals within established parameters. Board members that are not participating regularly or who are performing contrary to district-established goals would be subject to appropriate sanctions.

Institute a System of Internal Controls

- **Establish a contracting process and monitor vendor compliance.** WHISD has no contracting and monitoring processes resulting in the use of unlicensed professionals, the absence of required contracts and the absence of reference checks. The district was unable to provide a comprehensive listing of current contracts. By establishing a contracting process and assigning staff responsibility for monitoring, the district would ensure that licensed professionals with credible references are hired and that all services and goods received from a contract are monitored on a continuous basis.
- **Prepare competitive bids according to state law.** WHISD does not competitively bid all items exceeding \$25,000 nor obtain quotes for all items valued between \$10,000 and \$24,999 as required by law. Additionally, no district personnel are held responsible for compliance or non-compliance with these laws. By following the competitive bidding process the district would not only be in compliance with state law but should save money and improve services.
- **Monitor implementation of external auditor's recommendations.** The district has no procedures to ensure that it addresses and corrects audit findings. As a result, the external auditors findings note repeated internal control and board policy noncompliance issues each year. By establishing procedures to monitor implementation of external auditor recommendations, the district could break its perpetual cycle of noncompliance and effectively control district policies and management.

Improve Planning and Management

- **Develop a strategic plan and overhaul the DIP and CIP processes using district and community input.** WHISD does not have a strategic plan, a strategic planning committee nor effective district improvement plan (DIP) and campus improvement plan (CIP) processes adversely affecting the accountability and performance of individual and departmental efforts to improve student education. By developing and implementing a strategic plan, the district partners with the community, staff and parents to identify and accomplish both broad and detailed district goals supported by specific programs, objectives and budgeted funds.
- **Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan.** WHISD's lack of a long range planning function is preventing the district from meeting facility needs for students and staff. The district's portable and permanent facilities are in poor condition

with no formal plans for renovation or replacement. By developing a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan with input from both district staff and the community and by using enrollment projections, the district could budget necessary funds, apply for available facilities grants and explore possible bond issues to maximize student and staff facility needs.

- **Combine four schools into three and adjust attendance boundaries.** As part of the facilities planning process, the district should evaluate whether it is more feasible to provide major renovations to the existing facilities or provide three new replacement elementary schools phased in over several years. Given the district's declining enrollment, the fact that they are not maximizing learning space and the poor condition of the facilities as observed by the review team, renovating the existing elementary schools may prove to be less cost effective for the district than adjusting attendance boundaries and replacing facilities.
- **Implement staffing allocation formulas and reduce the number of central administrator and educational aide positions .** WHISD does not use allocation formulas or models when making staffing decisions resulting in a significantly higher percentage of central administrators and educational aides than both state and peer averages. By using staffing formulas and reducing the number of staff positions in both of these categories, the district could realize savings of more than \$3.1 million over five years.
- **Identify the district's financial constraints and budgetary goals.** The district's budget lacks commonly used details and summarizes expense items and salaries at such a generalized level that users cannot determine specific use of the funds. Also, WHISD has neither a budgeting process nor a budget calendar. The district's Budget Planning Committee should meet to identify the district's goals and financial constraints and develop a comprehensive budget process. This action will assist the district to better monitor and subsequently manage their annual and long-term financial resources.
- **Contract with Dallas County for tax collections .** WHISD has a low tax collection rate of 87 percent effecting loss of immediate funds and causing a high percent of account referrals to delinquent tax collection. Closing the Tax Office, entering into an interlocal agreement with Dallas County and targeting a previously met 94 percent collection rate,the district could realize savings of nearly \$1.4 million over five years through an increase in tax collection rates and elimination of related district salaries.

- **Close the district's supply warehouse.** The district's warehouse procurement system is slow, ineffectively managed and lacks purchase planning. Piles of textbooks, evidence of rats and insects, water seepage, holes in the walls, trash and mud covering the floors and insulation hanging from gaps in the warehouse ceiling highlight both safety issues and mismanagement. By eliminating the warehouse and ordering supplies on a just-in-time basis, the district could save more than \$565,000 in salaries and benefits over five years.
- **Outsource student transportation.** WHISD transportation costs have increased at a greater rate than their ridership, and they do not effectively manage their resources, routes, staff schedules and vehicle maintenance. Between 1997 and 2000, costs increased 75 percent while ridership increased 10 percent. Outsourcing transportation services would give a qualified company the opportunity to provide services at a reduced rate and under separate, controlled management outside of district parameters.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

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

- **WHISD conducted an internal needs assessment to improve district educational service delivery.** Recognizing the need for improvement in academics and student services, the district's director of Research, Development and Planning designed, conducted and published an internal needs assessment highlighting specific programs and services and using disaggregated data when available.
- **WHISD raised teacher salaries to remain competitive in the local market.** In order to compete with other local districts, the district effected a teacher pay raise to bolster recruitment efforts and help retain teachers who might leave the district for better pay schedules.
- **WHISD uses grants and business donations to support student and community programs.** In order to promote collaboration between the district and the community, WHISD entered into a collaboration agreement with the John C. Ford Program to provide

future assistance in obtaining grants and academic, social and emotional support to the district's students through a variety of programs. Kennedy-Curry Middle School is the only school currently involved in this program. The district additionally received a donation of computers and related equipment from InterVoice Brite, Inc. valued between \$800,000 and \$1 million in January 2002 to assist in their efforts to provide student and community access to computers.

- **The district efficiently uses cooperative agreements.** WHISD participates in three cooperative purchasing agreements to obtain goods and equipment at reasonable prices while eliminating the effort and expense associated with the bidding process. These agreements save both time and money in the procurement process and ensure district compliance with state laws for the items purchased through cooperative bid participation.
- **The district increased interest income by diversifying its investment portfolio.** Historically, the district has conservatively invested excess funds into a six-month certificate of deposit. The district changed its investment strategy, as permitted by local investment policy, to include investments in the LoneStar Liquidity Plus Fund to increase interest income.
- **WHISD provides meals exceeding national program standards.** The director of Nutrition Services and cafeteria managers cooperate to carefully plan and prepare breakfast and lunch menus to meet or exceed all nutritional standards set by the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The district uses NutriKid software to ensure meals adhere to all national dietary guidelines.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many of TSPR's recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that could be used to improve classroom instruction. The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums.

TSPR recommended 98 ways to save WHISD more than \$9.5 million in gross savings over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities will cost the district more than \$2.2 million during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of more than \$7.3 million by 2006-07.

Exhibit 3
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District

Year	Total
2002-03 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$938,021
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,604,799
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,887,176
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,507,314
2006-07 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$1,525,404
One Time Net (Costs) Savings	(\$132,592)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2002-07	\$7,330,122

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

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

	and provide communication training. p. 41							
6	Prepare more detailed board minutes and improve the report format. p. 43	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7	Develop an organizational structure to reflect a logical alignment of duties and adequate span of control. p. 45	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8	Create an in-house counsel position requiring experience in labor and school law to assist the board with governance, compliance, litigation and the development of policies and procedures. p. 49	\$0	\$0	\$80,053	\$95,996	\$113,533	\$289,582	\$0
9	Adopt a policy to request and analyze proposals for outside legal services every three years through formal agreements. p. 51	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10	Designate an individual to maintain the district's records and document the procedure for information requests. p. 53	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

11	Form a strategic planning committee with broad representation from the district and community to develop the district's strategic plan and overhaul the district and campus improvement plans processes. p. 60	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$7,500)	\$0
12	Document budgeting priorities, procedures and a calendar and contract for specific board member training. p. 64	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$24,750)	\$0
13	Create a coordinator of Community Involvement position to act as a liaison between central administration and campus staff, and between the district and the community. p. 70	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$215,460)	\$0
14	Implement creative methods to involve parents. p. 72	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15	Develop a system to manage media relations that identifies positive events that should be reported to local	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	p. 105							
21	Develop a formal program evaluation plan, process and schedule including use of a consistent report format. p. 107	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$72,000)	\$0
22	Train teachers in the interrelationships among TEKS, TAKS, national and local standards, curriculum guides, school reform initiatives, student assessments and data analysis. p. 110	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
23	Examine special education referral and identification methods and incorporate more effective strategies into the Student Support Committee process. p. 115	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
24	Fully participate in Medicaid reimbursement programs. p. 117	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$249,755	\$0
25	Restructure the compensatory education program, and incorporate specific plans into district and campus improvement plans. p. 121	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

26	Implement a high-quality bilingual education program. p. 125	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$957,220)	(\$4,000)
27	Fully implement the <i>Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students</i> . p. 127	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$37,500)	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 2	(\$254,753)	(\$254,753)	(\$254,753)	(\$205,753)	(\$205,753)	(\$1,175,765)	(\$4,000)

Chapter 3: Human Resources Management

28	Implement staffing allocation formulas and reduce the number of central administrator and educational aide positions. p. 135	\$348,944	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$3,132,380	\$0
29	Update all employee job descriptions. p. 137	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
30	Create a formal staffing plan that includes a system for tracking staffing allocation and student enrollment, staff turnover, reasons for leaving and other key measures. p. 139	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31	Increase professional requirements for Human Resources Department employees. p. 141	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
32	Create and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	implement a recruiting and retention plan to decrease the number of non-certified teachers. p. 147							
33	Create and implement a staff development plan that includes instructional and non-instructional staff. p. 148	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
34	Review and update personnel policies. p. 150	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
35	Remove illegal requests for information from all applications. p. 152	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36	Revise the district's at-will policy to include all personnel except those positions required to be under contract by law and those positions designated as key personnel. p. 153	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 3	\$348,944	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$3,132,380	\$0
Chapter 4: Facilities Use and Management								
37	Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan. p. 160	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$11,550)
38	Combine four	\$0	\$0	\$202,324	\$202,324	\$202,324	\$606,972	\$0

	existing elementary schools into three and adjust attendance boundaries. p. 163							
39	Apply for the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program to enable renovations at existing schools and for new school construction. p. 166	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
40	Privatize the maintenance and grounds functions with the exception of a few multi-purpose maintenance staff. p. 171	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41	Implement an automated system to manage work orders. p. 173	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
42	Apply a modified industry standard of at least 17,000 square feet per custodian across all schools. p. 174	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$325,520	\$0
43	Develop a comprehensive and mandatory training program for custodial staff. p. 175	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$22,480)	\$0
44	Use the LoanSTAR program to identify and finance energy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	retrofits. p. 178							
45	Institute an energy awareness campaign at each school. p. 179	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$7,300	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 4	\$62,068	\$62,068	\$264,392	\$264,392	\$264,392	\$917,312	(\$11,550)

Chapter 5: Asset and Risk Management

46	Restructure the bank depository agreement and sweep combined daily balances into overnight investments. p. 189	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$80,860	\$0
47	Combine all activity fund bank accounts into one interest bearing account. p. 190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$5,950	(\$500)
48	Establish a committee to manage the transition to the state health plan. p. 196	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
49	Identify workers' compensation claims by worker classification and develops strategies to reduce claims. p. 199	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
50	Cancel the premium finance agreement and pay insurance premiums in full when they are due. p. 201	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$5,850	\$0
51	Establish policies and procedures to	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	classify items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more as fixed assets and those with a unit cost of \$500 or more as inventory items. p. 204							
52	Assign individual accountability for fixed asset custody to principals and department heads in WHISD. p. 205	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
53	Hire a consultant to update the district's fixed asset database and perform an annual physical inventory. p. 206	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$17,500)	\$0
54	Establish board policy addressing accountability for district property and prosecute persons found with stolen district property. p. 208	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 5	\$15,032	\$15,032	\$15,032	\$15,032	\$15,032	\$75,160	(\$500)
Chapter 6: Financial Management								
55	Establish clear lines of responsibility and institute internal control procedures in the Business Services Department. p. 222	(\$66,528)	(\$72,576)	(\$72,576)	(\$72,576)	(\$72,576)	(\$356,832)	\$0
56	Establish an organized accounts payable filing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	system. p. 224							
57	Cross-train accounts payable and payroll processing personnel. p. 225	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
58	Identify the district's financial constraints and budgetary goals for the next five years. p. 230	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
59	Establish a Finance Committee to provide the board with detailed financial reports that compare actual versus budgeted revenues and expenditures every month. p. 231	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
60	Conduct actuarial studies to determine potential liabilities and appropriate reserve levels. p. 235	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$8,000)
61	Close the Tax Office and enter into an interlocal agreement with Dallas County to collect the district's property taxes. p. 238	\$252,652	\$506,510	\$506,510	\$62,258	\$62,258	\$1,390,188	\$0
62	Execute a written contract with the delinquent tax collection attorney. p. 241	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

74	Develop and test a disaster recovery plan and create written backup procedures. p. 281	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
75	Reorganize the Technology Committee to develop and implement a formal technology plan. p. 283	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
76	Establish districtwide policies and procedures that require all technology purchase requisitions to have the written approval of the Technology Department. p. 285	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
77	Develop a districtwide process for managing the hardware inventory. p. 288	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
78	Electronically track all technical support requests and response times to improve efficiency and effectiveness of technical support. p. 289	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
79	Develop written standards for personal computers. p. 290	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Totals-Chapter 8	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$1,082,075	\$0
Chapter 9: Student Transportation								
80	Issue Request for Proposals to outsource student transportation. p. 306	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$429,910	\$0
81	Implement a performance-monitoring program to measure accomplishments and identify areas for improvement. p. 312	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
82	Develop a procedure for evaluating routes and schedules on a periodic basis and redesign routes and schedules where indicated. p. 314	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
83	Expand the driver and monitor training programs, and perform annual driver evaluations. p. 316	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$21,265)	\$0
84	Develop and implement a procedure to identify vandals and recover damage costs. p. 318	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$34,860	\$0
85	Use dispatch and radio equipment to track driver performance and on-time	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	performance and develop procedures for radio use in emergencies. p. 320							
86	Adopt a long-range vehicle replacement plan. p. 322	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
87	Establish a formal preventive maintenance plan that uses a calendar schedule. p. 324	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
88	Schedule training for, and implement, the Vehicle Maintenance Information System. p. 325	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,407)
	Totals-Chapter 9	\$88,701	\$88,701	\$88,701	\$88,701	\$88,701	\$443,505	(\$1,407)

Chapter 10: Food Services

89	Identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. p. 335	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$622,125	\$0
90	Eliminate operational barriers and implement new programs to increase meal participation. p. 339	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
91	Compile and distribute monthly financial data to all cafeteria managers. p. 341	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
92	Use all of the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	features of the point-of-sale system to generate the reports that are necessary to evaluate the department. p. 342							
	Totals-Chapter 10	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$622,125	\$0
Chapter 11: Safety and Security								
93	Position law enforcement officers in plain sight of all students, staff and parents. p. 352	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
94	Require all staff to wear picture identification badges, provide a numbered visitor badge for all district visitors and post check-in signs in plain sight. p. 353	(\$8,053)	\$0	\$0	(\$553)	\$0	(\$8,606)	\$0
95	Re-key the district locks and establish a district policy and a set of procedures designed to track all district keys. p. 356	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$8,935)
96	Eliminate outstanding safety hazards to improve district safety. p. 358	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$12,945)
97	Establish a truancy management plan addressing truancy, attendance and	\$64,000	\$128,000	\$128,000	\$128,000	\$128,000	\$576,000	\$0

	dropout prevention and raise the district's attendance rate to 94 percent. p. 362							
98	Provide the truancy officer with online access and spreadsheet applications to track truancy statistics. p. 364	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 11	\$55,947	\$128,000	\$128,000	\$127,447	\$128,000	\$567,394	(\$21,880)
	Gross Savings	\$1,381,597	\$2,046,370	\$2,328,747	\$1,900,438	\$1,917,975	\$9,575,127	\$0
	Gross Costs	(\$443,576)	(\$441,571)	(\$441,571)	(\$393,124)	(\$392,571)	(\$2,112,413)	(\$132,592)
	Net Total	\$938,021	\$1,604,799	\$1,887,176	\$1,507,314	\$1,525,404	\$7,462,714	(\$132,592)
							Total Gross Savings	\$9,575,127
							Total Gross Costs	(\$2,245,005)
							Net	\$7,330,122

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the organization and management of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in four major sections:

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

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

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

BACKGROUND

WHISD was created in 1928 through a consolidation of four independent school districts: Christian Valley, Hutchins, Wilmer and Patrick. In 1966-67 and 1967-68 racial integration of WHISD schools occurred and over the course of the 1970s the African-American population of the district increased so that the once predominantly Anglo district was predominantly African-American by 1980. In the late 1970s, a federal court order issued by Judge Barefoot Sanders increased the district's population by ruling that South Dallas students were required to enroll in WHISD.

WHISD serves 3,283 students. According to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), in 2000-01, 73.9 percent of the district's students are African-American, 20.7 percent are Hispanic, 5.1 percent are Anglo and 0.3

percent were of other ethnicities. Nearly 72 percent of the district's students are economically disadvantaged, and 9 percent have a limited proficiency in English.

The district boundaries of WHISD include two small cities, a portion of Dallas, one of the nation's largest cities and a small portion of two additional cities. Hutchins is a small town with a population of 2,805 people over 8.6 square miles. Wilmer has a population of 3,393 over 6.2 square miles. WHISD boundaries also include a portion of Ferris, a city of 2,187 and over 3.1 square miles and Lancaster, a mid-size city of 26,270 over 29.2 square miles. In contrast, Dallas is a city with a population of more than 1 million covering more than 384.7 square miles.

WHISD has a troubled history of mismanagement over the last 20 years, numerous lawsuits and grievances, high turnover of superintendents, teachers and staff and a high degree of animosity and mistrust among board members and between the board and the community. The lack of progress made by the district was evident in the September and October 2001 board meetings in which school board members made derogatory comments about specific district staff members and teachers. The organization of the district is in chaos. There is no organizational structure to the central administration and many staff members do not know what their titles or responsibilities are.

TEA has intervened in the district numerous times over the course of its history. **Exhibit 1-1** summarizes those interventions:

**Exhibit 1-1
History of TEA Involvement with WHISD
1982-2001**

Month/Year	Action
1982	Reduction of accreditation status from Accredited to Accredited Warned, and the district received a financial monitor. A financial monitor is an advocate experienced in financial management and without authority to circumvent that of the district's board.
1985	The financial monitor was removed from the district, and accreditation status was raised from Accredited Warned to Accredited Advised.
1987	Accreditation status was raised from Accredited Advised to Accredited.
January 1987 to March 1996	No accreditation status changes and no intervention occurred, but in 1993 specific actions on dropouts were required of the district due to the district's high dropout rate. In 1995, a follow-up

	<p>accreditation visit focused on financial planning, school governance and district-level planning and decision making to improve student performance at two schools, one of which was rated low-performing for the third consecutive year. School governance problems were cited during this 1995 accreditation visit as well.</p>
1996	<p>A preliminary report focusing on financial practices, school governance and accreditation lowered the district's accreditation status to Accredited Warned and announced that a monitoring team would be assigned when the report became final, and that pre-clearance from the U.S. Justice Department would be sought to assign a management team to the district. The Commissioner of Education assigned a monitoring team to the district. The Justice Department granted pre-clearance for TEA to assign a management team to the district. The agency elevated the monitoring team to a management team. A management team or a master provides the district with an experienced advocate or set of professionals possessing necessary managerial skills and knowledgeable in school district governance, financial management and education and with the authority to make decisions for the district without board approval. Later in the year, the commissioner diminished the management team's involvement in the district, and the management team wrote to the district encouraging improvement in communication among members of the governance team.</p>
1997	<p>The management team wrote to the district reprimanding the Board of Trustees for its behavior. The management team submitted its 90-day report detailing progress in six areas of responsibility. The commissioner raised the status of the district to Academically Acceptable and requested that the district submit a management plan to TEA to ensure long-term stability of the district. Following approval of the plan, an orderly exit of the management team would be discussed.</p>
1998	<p>The district responded with an outline of its management plan. The commissioner wrote to the district, listing four conditions that had to be met before the management team would be removed. One of the TEA managers, Stan Lawrence, resigned from the assignment in February and began work as superintendent of the district in April. School governance problems resurfaced in early Fall, but the Commissioner of Education removed the management team from the district in November.</p>
1999	<p>A District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visit to the school cited numerous compliance issues. but a report of the</p>

	<p>follow-up visit to "observe conditions subsequent to the removal of the management team" recommended the discontinuation of observation of the district. A report indicated that several students had skipped school during the TAAS test, according to the Dallas News. TEA sent representatives to monitor the TAAS at an elementary school as part of an investigation into possible test tampering.</p>
2000	<p>An on-site evaluation revealed multiple governance issues. A class-size waiver did not receive approval for the eleventh consecutive semester, but the district received notification to initiate changes to comply with state law. The report of an on-site school governance investigation in February 2000 indicated disagreements between the board and the superintendent, Stanton Lawrence. The report required TEA presence at every regular board meeting for 120 days following the date of the report. A review by the School Financial Audits Division of the district's 1998-99 Annual Financial Report indicated discrepancies. A letter from the Commissioner of Education to the board president expressed concerns about the climate at board meetings and the financial management of the district. The district submitted corrective action documentation in response to the January 2000 DEC visit. The material submitted was deficient.</p> <p>The chairperson of the January 2000 follow-up visit to the district documented his efforts to obtain appropriate corrective action documentation from the district and the district's inadequate response. TEA's Special Data Inquiry Unit (SDIU) investigated student leaver documentation because of poor data quality. Student leavers are students who are no longer attend district schools.</p>
2001	<p>The on-site accreditation review sent the district the report of low-performing schools from December 2000. A report from the March 2001 follow-up visit found that six indicators in Special Education were noncompliant. The Dallas County District Attorney's Office advised the district of complaints received over several years about alleged illegal conduct by district personnel. The letter requested periodic reports and documentation that new policies are implemented and progress is made. TEA assigned an educational monitor to the district in December 2001 to provide guidance to the low performing Kennedy-Curry Middle School and to the district's special programs. As of the release of this report, the educational monitor is still assigned to the district.</p>

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Chronology of Events, October 2001 and TEA, December 2001.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the organization and management of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in four major sections:

A. GOVERNANCE

WHISD's Board of Trustees consists of seven members. Trustees serve three-year terms on a rotating basis. All members are elected at-large.

Exhibit 1-2 lists the board members, appropriate titles, their term expiration dates, years of board member service and professional experience.

Exhibit 1-2
WHISD Board of Trustees
2000-01

Board Member	Title	Term Expires	Full Years of Service as of October 2001	Occupation
Joan Bonner	President	2003	6 years	Nurse for Juvenile Center
Ann Walker	Vice President	2004	4 years	Bus driver for church and day care teacher
Lunita White	Secretary	2002	21 years	Retired, Lottery Commission
G. Virginia Hill	Assistant Secretary	2004	5 months	Retired
Luther D. Edwards III	Member	2003	8 years (except for 8 months due to contested election results)	Consultant
Eddie Washington	Member	2002	17 years	Retired, School Administration
Lamar Walton	Member	2002	9 years	DISD Teacher; Reverend

Source: WHISD Superintendent's Office, October 2001.

Regular board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the boardroom of the WHISD Administrative Building at 3820 East Illinois Avenue. The board also holds special meetings called for a variety of reasons, sometimes within one week of a regular meeting. The public has an opportunity to provide comments at each of these meetings. Individuals are strictly limited to three minutes to address the board, and they must wait for the board to come to the agenda item on which they wish to comment.

The superintendent and board president create the agenda for each meeting. A board member who wants to request an agenda item notifies the board president, and any staff person who wants to request an agenda item contacts the superintendent who then decides whether or not to add the item. The attorney who is on retainer for the district then receives the agenda, but that purpose remains unclear. The meeting notice is posted in the administration building 72 hours before the meeting as required by law. Many district staff were unable to identify additional locations where meeting notices are publicly posted. The TSPR review team later received a response from the district that the notice is posted in several local grocery stores and at all school campuses. The district no longer posts notices of meetings in the newspaper because of the cost.

FINDING

The board does not consistently follow provisions of state law. Section 26.06(a)-(e) of the Tax Code requires that a public hearing on a tax increase be held and requires seven days advance public notice by publishing notice of the meeting in the newspaper. WHISD held such a meeting on August 13, 2001, and although the posted notice of a special board meeting to have a public hearing on the 2001-02 tax rate is dated August 10, 2001, WHISD also provided an affidavit that notice of the meeting was published in the Dallas Morning News on August 3, 2001. The Tax Code also requires, however, that "the meeting to vote on the increase may not be earlier than the third day or later than the 14th day after the date of the public hearing." The entire WHISD public hearing to increase the tax rate took 24 minutes, from a call to order at 7:55 p.m. until adjournment at 8:19 p.m. The board then adopted the increase during a regular meeting the same evening in violation of the Tax Code requirement to wait at least three days for a vote.

The WHISD District Advisory Committee (DAC) has not met from August 2001 through October 2001, nor identified its members. In addition, in 2001 the board allowed all schools but one to submit Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) developed by site based decision-making (SBDM) committees that included only school employees and no members of the community. These omissions are in violation of section

11.251(b) of the Texas Education Code, "Planning and Decision-Making Process," which requires that the board establish a procedure under which meetings are held regularly by district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees that include representative professional staff, parents of students enrolled in the district and community members, including business representatives. The board, or the board's designee, is also required to meet periodically with the district-level committee to review the committee's deliberations.

In addition, section 551.071 of the Government Code, "Consultation With Attorney; Closed Meeting," states that "a governmental body may not conduct a private consultation with its attorney except: (1) when the governmental body seeks the advice of its attorney about: (A) pending or contemplated litigation; or (B) a settlement offer; or (2) on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with this chapter." During the WHISD board meeting on October 8, 2001, the board discussed and approved the attorney's contract in closed executive session with the attorney present. The signed contract was produced after this meeting, but the board took no action once they reconvened in open session to adopt the attorney's contract.

WHISD board policy cites an attorney general opinion stating, "the Board shall not hire as an independent contractor for personal services an individual who is related to a Trustee within a prohibited degree" (*Atty. Gen. Op. DM-76; 1992*). A board member told the review team that an individual contractor who has received significant sums of money from the district is married to the granddaughter of a board member. State law prohibits the hiring of the spouse of a board member's grandchild as an independent contractor. The two individuals are related within a prohibited degree, as stated in section 573.002 of the Government Code.

A public official who hires an individual related to a board member disregarding the family relationship limitations as designated in law must be removed from office, as stated in section 573.081 of the Government Code. In a similar case described in the Attorney General's handbook, "Public Officers: Traps for the Unwary," members of the board of directors of a municipal utility district who voted to appoint the spouse of one of the directors to a paid position with the district violated section 573.041 of the Government Code and were subject to removal from office (*Tex. Atty. Gen. Op. JC-184 (2000) at 2, citing Texas Government Code section 573.081 (Vernon 1994)*). These members were also subject to a criminal conviction for official misconduct and a fine of between \$100 and \$1,000 (*Ibid., citing Texas Government Code section 573.084 (Vernon 1994)*). The members of the WHISD board who approved the contract with this independent contractor could be removed for this violation.

The review team was unable to determine if there are additional nepotism issues in the district since the district was not able to produce copies of anti-nepotism statements signed by board members despite repeated requests for them. One board member independently submitted copies of his completed anti-nepotism questionnaire from the district's auditors.

Many districts use an attorney to ensure compliance with state law. WHISD has an attorney who receives each board meeting agenda in advance and is present at board meetings. This arrangement has not prevented the board, however, from acting in apparent violation of these provisions of state law.

According to section 39.131 of the TEC, the commissioner of Education has the authority to assign a monitor, master, management team or board of managers to a district as a level of state intervention and sanction and appropriately charge the costs of this assignment to the district. WHISD currently has a monitor assigned as previously mentioned. A master or management team may direct actions to be taken by a campus principal, the superintendent or the board. Additionally, a master or management team has the authority to approve or disapprove any action of a campus principal, the superintendent or the board. "A board of managers may exercise all of the duties assigned to a board of trustees of a school district by law, rule, or regulation" (TEC section 39.131(f)). TEA has historically assigned a monitor, master or management team to Texas school districts experiencing difficulties in board governance, financial management and education service delivery until the district requiring assistance can demonstrate improvements in the areas of need.

Recommendation 1:

Request a Texas Education Agency master to oversee the district and ensure compliance with state law.

The district has had a TEA management team or a group of masters in its history and may require this level of assistance from TEA again. The district should request a master from the Commissioner of Education to help the district comply with state law and refocus the entire direction of the district on the implementation of law to the ultimate goal of improved student education. The master could also help the district implement the recommendations in this review and improve the management of the district in the areas of governance, financial management and student performance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board holds a meeting to propose and approve the	April 2002
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	district's official request for a TEA master.	
2.	The superintendent and board president send a letter to the Commissioner of Education to request a master.	May 2002
3.	The board and superintendent work under the supervision of a master.	Beginning in June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The district must pay a master \$50 per hour not to exceed \$400 a day plus expenses at the state rate currently set in 2002 to \$80 per day for lodging and \$25 per day for meals at a total cost of \$505 per day. The district has one board meeting per month but calls, on average, one additional special meeting per month. The master should attend each board meeting as well as a minimum of 10 additional days in the district per month for the first six months of assignment for a cost of \$36,360 (12 x \$505 = \$6,060 x 6 = \$36,360). The master should then reduce total number of days in the district per month to eight including attendance at board meetings for the following six months for a total cost of \$24,240 (8 x \$505 = \$4,040 x 6 = \$24,240). After one year, the master should reduce total number of days in the district to six per month including attendance at board meetings for the remaining six months assuming the commissioner continues to authorize the intervention at a cost of \$18,180 (6 x \$505 = \$3,030 x 6 = \$18,180). All of this expense is shown in the first year, although a portion of the expense will be incurred in 2001-02.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Request a Texas Education Agency master to oversee the district and ensure compliance with state law.	(\$78,780)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The district does not track continuing education hours for board members. Despite repeated requests from TSPR, the district did not produce evidence that all of their board members completed the minimum number of hours of continuing education required by law; however, records were independently obtained to document these hours. The superintendent said that he did not have the required code needed to access the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) records of training because of changes in support personnel. One board member submitted his TASB Board Member Continuing Education Report independently, and that documentation showed that he completed 31.75 hours of training in 1998-

99, 48.5 hours in 1999-2000 and 12.25 hours in 2000-01. The Regional Education Service Center X (Region 10) reported that only one board member attended training in 2001, and it was a three-hour new board member training session.

The State Board of Education's (SBOE) requirements for hours of in-service training for new and experienced board members are presented in **Exhibit 1-3**. State law (TEC 7.102 (c) 7) grants the SBOE the authority to provide and require training for school district boards. According to the Texas Administrative Code (Title 19, Part II, Section 61.1), the SBOE requires that new board members attend a minimum of 16 hours of in-service training for the first year. Experienced board members, like all members of the WHISD board but one, should receive eight in-service training hours annually and should attend a legislative update session to maintain their understanding of Texas education requirements.

Exhibit 1-3
Overview of Continuing Education Requirements
For School Board Members

Type of Continuing Education	First Year Board Member	Experienced Board Member
Local District Orientation	Required within 60 days of election or appointment; No specified length	Not required
Orientation to the Texas Education Code	three hours	Not required
Update to the Texas Education Code	Incorporated into Orientation to the Texas Education Code	After legislative session: of sufficient length to address major changes
Team-building Session/Assessment of Continuing Education Needs of the Board-Superintendent Team	At least three hours	At least three hours
Additional Continuing Education, based on assessed need and Framework for School Board Development	At least 10 hours	At least five hours
Total Minimum Number of Hours	16 hours, plus local district orientation	eight hours, plus update

Source: Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part II, Section 61.1.

Exhibit 1-4 provides a listing of continuing education hours completed by WHISD's board members for 1998-99 through January 2002 as reported by Region 10 and TASB.

Exhibit 1-4
Continuing Education Hours Attended by WHISD Board Members

Board Member	Continuing Education Hours		
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Joan Bonner	38.25	16.25	5.00
Ann Walker	36.75	27.00	5.00
Lunita White	32.25	15.00	0.00
G. Virginia Hill	N/A	9.50	5.00
Luther D. Edwards III	45.50	12.25	5.00
Eddie Washington	6.00	14.00	0.00
Lamar Walton	45.00	16.25	5.00
Total Hours	203.75	110.25	25.00
Average Hours per Member	29.11	15.75	3.57

Source: Texas Association of School Boards, January 2002 and Regional Education Service Center X (Region 10), 1999-2000.

Exhibit 1-5 shows the training hours attended by board members of the three peer districts identified by WHISD.

Exhibit 1-5
Continuing Education Hours Attended by Peer District Board Members

La Marque ISD Board Member Training Hours		Lancaster ISD Board Member Training Hours		DeSoto ISD Board Member Training Hours	
1999-2000	2000-01	1999-2000	2000-01	1999-2000	2000-01
148.5	176.3	12.0	5.0	22.8	40.0
137.3	185.5	3.0	5.0	58.0	79.5

20.3	34.8	18.0	12.0	18.0	18.0
25.5	46.0	6.0	2.0	101.3	104.3
204.8	240.5	6.0	3.0	72.5	72.5
25.8	52.3	23.3	13.0	51.3	28.3
133.0	147.8	0.0	9.3	23.0	47.8
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	90.3	98.0
695.20	883.2	68.3	49.3	437.2	488.4

Source: La Marque ISD superintendent's Office; Lancaster ISD superintendent's Office; DeSoto ISD board secretary, October 2001.

Karnes City ISD prioritizes board member training and accurately maintains and updates a list of annual training hours for each board member earned through TASB. Upon course completion, Karnes City ISD confirms any hours earned with TASB prior to district updates. District administrators keep their TASB access code readily available to authorized personnel for use with TASB's online member services. Additionally, when training certificates are received, the district ensures that participating board members receive a copy of the documentation for their personal records.

Recommendation 2:

Track board member training and develop sanctions to ensure compliance with state requirements for continuing education.

The district should maintain current, accurate records for board training and verify its data with TASB and Region 10 on a quarterly basis. District records should be updated immediately to ensure compliance with law. If board members are not completing the required hours of training, the board should develop sanctions accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent's secretary develops a tracking system for recording board member training hours, by required category.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent contacts the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to obtain the district's online access code and ensures it is readily available to authorized personnel.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent's secretary ensures documentation is	May 2002

	obtained from TASB and Region 10, as necessary, to support board member training and ensures each board member receives a copy of training documentation for their personal records retention.	
4.	The superintendent's secretary compares board member training hours to TASB and Region 10 reports on a quarterly basis and makes necessary adjustments.	June 2002 and quarterly thereafter
5.	The superintendent's secretary prepares a quarterly report for the board identifying training hours taken and training hours needed during the remainder of the year.	June 2002 and quarterly thereafter
6.	The board develops sanctions for members who do not complete the required hours of training.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

At-large election of all board members has resulted in a perception by the residents of several geographic areas of the district that their concerns are not represented on the board. This perception is heightened by the troubled history of the district, involving high turnover and several governmental investigations, which has fostered tension and mistrust toward the school board. The district includes the towns of Wilmer and Hutchins, a small portion of Lancaster and Ferris, and a portion of South Dallas. Three of these areas are not represented on the WHISD board. Two WHISD board members reside in Hutchins and five reside in Dallas. No WHISD board member resides in Wilmer, Lancaster or Ferris.

The 2000-01 PEIMS data shows that the WHISD student body is made up of 73.9 percent African-American students, 20.7 percent Hispanic students and 5.1 percent Anglo students. There are concentrated geographic areas of Hispanic students within the district, however. This is evident in the ethnicity of two of the district's elementary schools where Hispanics represent a larger percentage of the student body than the district as a whole. Located in Hutchins, C.S. Winn Elementary's student body is 47.8 percent African-American, 39.1 percent Hispanic, and 12.7 percent Anglo. Located in Wilmer, Wilmer Elementary's student body is 33.7 percent African-American, 50.2 percent Hispanic, and 15.5 percent Anglo. All WHISD board members are African-American.

TEC § 11.052, " Single-Member Trustee Districts," states that a school board may vote that the trustees of the district come from single-member

districts. To adopt this order, the district must hold a public hearing at which registered voters of the district have an opportunity to comment on whether or not they favor the election of trustees. The board must publish notice of the hearing in a newspaper that has general circulation in the district not later than the seventh day before the date of the hearing. The board must adopt this order not later than the 120th day before the date of the first election at which the election of the trustees from single-member districts occurs.

If at least 15 percent or 15,000 (whichever is less) of the registered voters of the school district sign a petition that they want the proposition of single-member districts to be submitted to the voters, then the board must order that the proposition be placed on the ballot at the first regular election of trustees held after the 120th day after the petition is submitted to the board.

Recommendation 3:

Change the election of three to five board positions to single-member districts.

If the board votes to change to single-member districts, the board must then divide the school district into the appropriate trustee districts based on the number of members of the board that are to be elected from single-member districts. The trustee districts must be compact and contiguous and must be of equal population as nearly as practicable. Trustee districts must be drawn not later than the 90th day before the date of the first election of trustees from single-member districts. At the first election at which the trustees are elected from trustee districts, all positions on the board must be filled. The trustees then elected will draw lots for staggered terms.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board posts notice in the newspaper to registered voters at least seven days in advance of a public hearing for trustees of single-member districts.	April 2002
2.	If there is no petition to the board to include the issue on the ballot, the board votes to switch to single-member districts.	At least four months before the next school board election
3.	The board divides the district into seven single-member districts that are compact and contiguous and equal in population.	At least 90 days before the next school board election
4.	The school board election is held to elect board	August 2002

members from single-member districts.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The board's policies are not current nor do district staff and members of the community know how to access them. The district contracts with TASB to issue their board policies online. As part of this service, TASB periodically develops an update of policies, which often includes legally required changes in policy and identifies local policies that must be changed as a result. TASB distributes these updates in hard copy to all districts on a regular basis; however, TASB does not revise each district's policies online until that district's board has formally adopted the update and communicates their decision to TASB.

WHISD is behind in this process. TASB issued Update 65 in February 2001 but has not received communication from WHISD that the board has adopted those changes. Discussion of the item occurred in the August 13, 2001 regular meeting, but was tabled until the September 10th meeting when it was adopted, seven months after it was issued.

In a May 1999 audit of the district, "*A Curriculum Management Audit of WHISD*," the Texas Curriculum Management Audit Center of the Texas Association of School Administrators reviewed the district's policies by policy number and found the vast majority of required policies identified by the state, both legal and local, were missing. By September 2001, the review team found the district's policies on the district Web site, and they included those that had been missing. A board member said that the previous superintendent brought several updated policies to the board; however, before that time the board had not updated them since 1983.

Although the district's policy manual has been automated by TASB, many WHISD managers and school leaders in the district are not aware that the policies are available on the district's Web site. The district was unable to tell TSPR who is responsible for updating and disseminating policies.

Ysleta ISD (YISD) created a process to expedite policy updates and revisions. The district also subscribes to the TASB policy service, which provides draft policies that respond to changes in the Texas Education Code. YISD uses the updates to create its own policies.

The associate superintendent for Human Resources at YISD coordinates all updates to the policy manual. When these updates affect various

functional areas within the district, the associate superintendent forwards the update to the cabinet member responsible for revising the related local policies. This cabinet member makes the revisions and forwards the update to the associate superintendent to be placed in the district's policy manual. Each update is logged using a numbering system, date stamped and initialed when included in the policy manual.

Recommendation 4:

Designate a staff person to develop, review and update board policies and disseminate policy information to the public.

Updating policies and disseminating information about their Internet access to the public and district employees should help the board become more accountable to the public. Ensuring that local policies are in compliance with state law should also help increase the credibility of the administration and the board within the community.

The district should appoint a designee to review policy and rule updates established by the Commissioner of Education or the SBOE, facilitate policy revisions and update the district's policy manual on a regular basis.

The district should change its Web site by moving the link to the board policies from the board section of the site and creating Board Policies as a stand-alone link on the district home page. The district should publish instructions for board policy access in its newsletter.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints a staff person to review and update board policies.	April 2002
2.	That staff person works with the superintendent to coordinate updates to the policies.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent presents policy updates to the board for adoption in a timely manner.	Begin May 2002 and continuing every six months thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Communication between board members and the superintendent and self-censorship mechanisms are ineffective causing confusion between their respective roles. Both the board and the superintendent of WHISD are dissatisfied with their communication. Communication between board members and the superintendent takes place without the full board present, so misunderstandings, gaps in information and confusion concerning duties arise. There are no regular written reports from the superintendent to the board. The packets of information sent to the board in advance of meetings are often incomplete and lacking detail.

When the superintendent and the board are not communicating, funding and programs for schools can be delayed, confusion increases over who is responsible for what and low morale results. WHISD's history of high turnover of superintendents and the recent selection process of the superintendent that did not include the interim superintendent as a finalist have contributed to an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust in the central administration of the district.

While a school district board and administration have specific roles and duties that should be clearly delineated, they are interdependent. In WHISD, the board and superintendent do not function as a team nor employ strategies to check their actions. During the TSPR review, several board members were suspicious of the superintendent's actions and said they did not believe he was giving them all the information they needed. In one instance, a board member said the superintendent told the board he was hiring an individual for a particular position who was later found in a different position. The board called a number of special meetings to discuss personnel issues, indicating a lack of trust in the superintendent's operation of the district's day-to-day affairs. At the same time, the superintendent does not feel that he has gotten complete information from the board. In one example, the superintendent stated that he did not have all the information about the lawsuits against the district because the board did not share it with him.

Spring ISD's board offers a best-practice model for communication between a board and superintendent. Since the mid-1990s, Spring ISD's board presidents and administrators have made presentations at state and national conferences and to other school district boards on board management, board committees and long-range planning.

Many school districts in Texas use TASB's guides for self-policing and use a facilitator to provide training in areas of need for the superintendent and the board.

The Navarro ISD board of trustees developed a Code of Conduct to better define its roles and responsibilities, to help the board function as an

effective team, to create a mechanism for members to police their actions and to provide sanctions for those members not acting in a manner deemed beneficial to the education of students and the goals of the district. The Code of Conduct addresses four primary educational and ethical standards (**Exhibit 1-6**).

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

Function	Standard
Governance	Bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, State Board of Education rules, court orders pertaining to schools and district policies and procedures.
	Make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children in the district, regardless of ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing. These decisions will place the needs of children above the wants of adults.
	Recognize that board must make decisions as a whole and make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise the board. All action should take place in an official board meeting.
	Focus board action on policy making, goal setting, planning and evaluation and insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
	Vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of recommendations by the Superintendent.
	Delegate authority for the administration of the school to the Superintendent. Board members will not engage in micromanagement.
Conduct	Hold confidential all matters that, if disclosed, may have an impact on the district. Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, including closed session agenda items.
	Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings, arrive on time, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.

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

Source: Navarro ISD.

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

Exhibit 1-7
Standard Board Operating Procedures
Navarro ISD

Subjects Addressed
Developing the board meeting agenda
Member conduct during board meetings
Voting

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

Source: Navarro ISD.

The superintendent of NISD stated that since the board's Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures have been implemented, interference between district leadership and management has diminished and TAAS scores have greatly improved due to the board's focus on continued improvement of the education of the district's students.

Recommendation 5:

Develop and implement a Board Code of Conduct and provide communication training.

The WHISD board and superintendent need to work as a team. Role definition is essential to successful teamwork. Once roles are established and understood, the importance and purpose of communicating with other team members becomes clear. The superintendent and the board should solicit assistance from Region 10 to obtain training in communication skills.

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

Once the board receives this training, it should establish "self-censorship" guidelines and obtain additional guidance concerning governance issues from a variety of sources. Future WHISD board meetings should include ongoing discussions of best practices in governance. As specific governance issues are addressed, the board should discuss specific remedies or practices that would support effective communication. For example, the board should establish written guidelines outlining how citizens can properly use the district's chain of command. The board should become involved only after all other avenues have been exhausted.

The WHISD board could benefit from examining the TASB guidelines for self-policing and from a private facilitator. Once roles are clearly established and the board and superintendent are communicating, additional internal WHISD board training should focus on updating board policy and guidelines for planning, accountability and personnel that reflect the specifically designated roles of board members and staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the board attend joint training inclusive of communication strategies.	Completed on January 26, 2002
2.	The board obtains TASB's self-censorship guidelines, Navarro ISD's Code of Conduct and standard board operating procedures and information from Spring ISD regarding the operating relationship between their superintendent and their board.	April 2002
3.	The board reviews the obtained information as a group in a	April 2002

	special meeting.	
4.	The superintendent's office obtains the training schedule from TASB and other vendors and provides those to the board for decisions regarding future training.	May 2002
5.	Board members and the superintendent attend training sessions and use a facilitator in district meetings when necessary.	May 2002 and Ongoing
6.	Board members use an evaluation instrument developed by the facilitator to assess the need for additional training.	September 2002 and yearly thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional costs for training and facilitators would be approximately \$2,000 each year based on a facilitator fee of \$250 an hour for one eight-hour session.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop and implement a Board Code of Conduct and provide communication training.	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)

FINDING

WHISD's board minutes lack sufficient details describing the basis for district decisions and limit the public's ability to hold the board accountable for their decisions. An employee of Wilmer Elementary takes minutes at board meetings. The information included in the minutes is the date of the board meeting, times of call to order and adjournment, votes taken by each board member; motions made, names of individuals making and seconding motions and resolutions.

The minutes refer to previous agendas, making it impossible to discern the item in question unless the previous agenda is available. The minutes do not include information on the discussions for each agenda item. An example of WHISD board minutes is presented in **Exhibit 1-8**.

Exhibit 1-8 Example of WHISD Board Minutes

Excerpt from August 13, 2001, regular board meeting:

1. Consider and take action, if any, on approval of CEP contract.
Motion by Ms. Walker, seconded by Rev. Walton, to not renew the contract with CEP.
MOTION CARRIED
2. Consider and take action, if any, on approval of John C. Ford Foundation Program at Kennedy-Curry Middle School.
Motion by Mrs. White, seconded by Mr. Washington, to approve the John C. Ford Foundation Program at Kennedy-Curry Middle School.
MOTION CARRIED. Walker-Opposed.
3. Consider and take action, if any, on approval of Student Handbooks.
Motion by Mrs. White, seconded by Rev. Walton, to approve the Student Handbooks for the High School, Kennedy-Curry, C.S. Winn, Wilmer and Alta Mesa Schools.
MOTION CARRIED Walker-Opposed.

Source: WHISD board meeting minutes, August 13, 2001.

The minutes do not state whether there was any discussion, nor do they describe the content of the discussion. Audio tapes of WHISD board meetings are available; however, listening to an entire tape rather than reviewing printed minutes is time-consuming and ineffective.

Many school boards include details beyond basic attendance, motions and votes in their written board minutes giving a clear indication of any processes applied by the board and factors considered when making decisions. Previous agendas with relevance are attached and main agenda items are described enabling any person not in attendance at a particular board meeting to read the minutes and clearly discern the issues regarding a particular board decision.

Recommendation 6:

Prepare more detailed board minutes and improve the report format.

A more detailed minutes report is necessary. The minutes should include the title of each agenda item, and the board should provide more detail and cross-references to create a more reader-friendly document. This will improve the board's accountability to the community by describing each decision thoroughly and in an organized manner.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	A district employee or the board secretary takes detailed board	April
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	meeting notes including what was said and by whom, using the tape of the meeting if necessary.	2002
2.	The employee or secretary assigns each agenda item a number and formats the report to show a clear distinction between the different agenda items and the type of item recorded.	April 2002
3.	The employee or secretary includes descriptions of discussions for each agenda item, with particular emphasis on items that require a vote.	April 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the organization and management of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in four major sections:

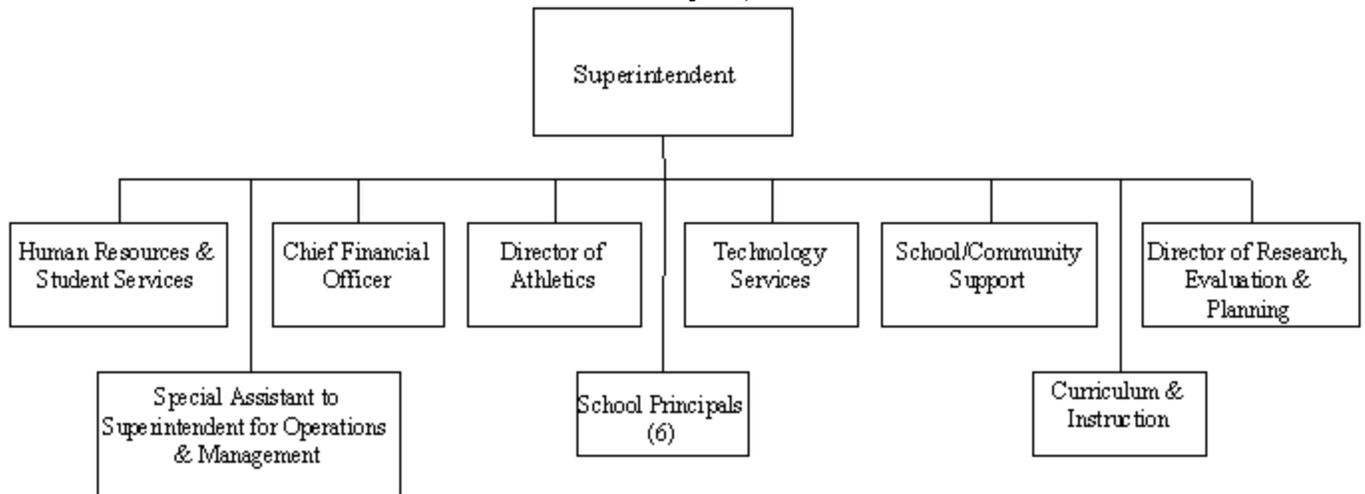
B. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

FINDING

There is no defined organizational structure at WHISD. Many vacancies exist in the executive staff roster. There is no organizational chart and many district staff members do not know their titles, responsibilities or to whom they report. This lack of organizational structure limits the district's ability to accomplish basic responsibilities and inhibits effective planning and budgeting. It also prohibits accountability in the district. Unclear expectations of duties and staff have created an increased risk for employee grievances and lawsuits. Representatives of the district told the review team that the district faces numerous grievances and several lawsuits, although the district has been unable to produce a comprehensive list.

The most recent organizational chart the district was able to produce was dated January 10, 2000 (**Exhibit 1-9**).

Exhibit 1-9
WHISD Organization Chart
As of January 10, 2000



Source: WHISD Superintendent's Office, October 2001.

Note: Organization structure as under prior Superintendent.

The superintendent has made changes to the roles and positions of staff, but he has not communicated these changes through memos, job descriptions or organization charts. He has formulated a "Draft

Proposed Reorganization Chart/Plan," dated August 1, 2001 with a note that reorganization will continue throughout 2001-02. It is not clear either in the draft proposed reorganization chart nor in the district itself who reports directly to the superintendent. The draft plan lists the school principals, elementary and secondary curriculum coordinators and one Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) coordinator by name but does not define their responsibilities nor to whom they report. The other positions listed in the draft chart have the following identified duties, some with individuals listed by responsibility, some with titles and others without names or titles:

Director of Business Services: Purchasing, Bookkeeping, Payroll, Accounts Payable, Coordinator of Transportation, Coordinator Maintenance, Coordinator Food Service, Warehouse Supervisor, Attendance/PEIMS, Tax Office Supervisor, Special/Hispanic Program Coordinator, Safety/Security/Inventory Supervisor, Truancy Officer.

Director of Personnel: Health Services, Loss Control, Worker's Compensation, Secretary, Receptionist.

Director of Instruction and Special Programs: TEKS Coordinators, Technology, Instruction/Assessment, Categorical Programs, Staff Development, TAAS/TAKS, Special Programs (sublistings of G/T and Career and Technology), Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading, Writing Programs, Security Coordinator, Athletic Director.

Director of Special Education: Diagnosticians, Speech Therapist, Programs, Teachers, Staff, Secretary, Data Clerk.

Director of Alternative Programs: Alternative School, Alternative School Assistant, Dropout Program/GED, Special Programs, Community Liaison.

The draft proposed reorganization plan includes some of the existing positions, and the superintendent has filled some positions and left other positions empty. The district listed the following positions on a district contact sheet: director of Personnel, director of School and Community Relations, director of Child Nutrition, director of Special Programs, director of Transportation, director of Special Education, director of Security, supervisor of Maintenance, District Nurse coordinator and director of Alternative Programs.

The positions of director of Curriculum & Instruction, School Psychologist and director of Student Services are listed as vacant. The status of filling these positions is unclear as well as the future status of current positions not included in the draft plan.

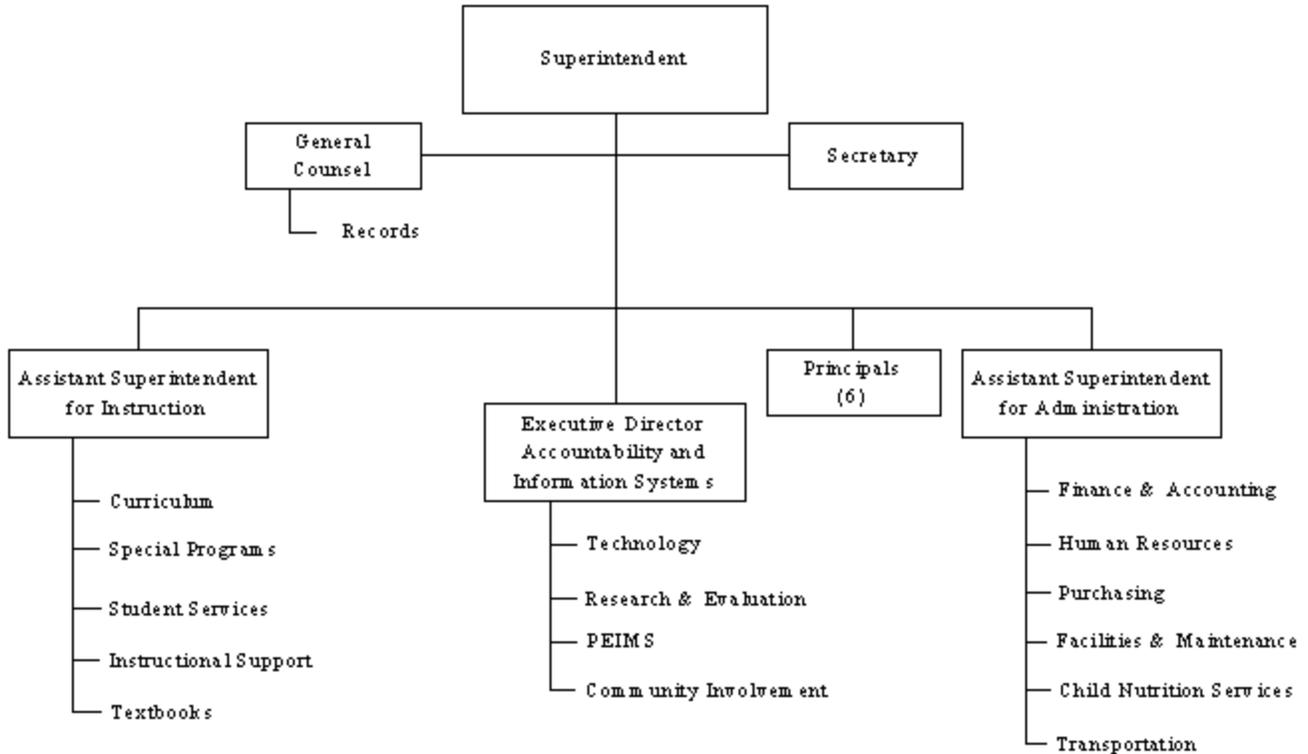
In addition to those listed on the contact sheet, the district has a Technology coordinator and a director of Research and Evaluation. The director of Business Services and director of Personnel have stated that their positions are chief Financial Officer and executive director of Human Resources respectively, although the draft proposed reorganization plan does not give these titles. The director of Business Services relies on a consultant to the district, but the consultant has no identified areas of responsibility.

Recommendation 7:

Develop an organizational structure to reflect a logical alignment of duties and adequate span of control.

The roles and responsibilities of the employees who report to the superintendent should represent logical groupings of related duties. Over the next year, the district should create the organization structure presented in **Exhibit 1-10**.

**Exhibit 1-10
Recommended Organization Chart for WHISD**



Source: TSPR, November 2001.

This structure would allow the superintendent to rely on 11 employees, including principals and his secretary, who report directly to him. The superintendent would consequently not directly managing such a large staff. One employee is at a slightly lower level only because of a lesser scope of responsibility, but the direct reporting relationship is important due to the need for the district to focus on these areas. As discussed in separate recommendations, the district should hire an in-house general counsel and designate a single staff member to be responsible for records management.

On the instructional side, an assistant superintendent for Instruction should oversee special programs, instructional support, student services and curriculum. The director of Special Programs should oversee special education, bilingual programs, English as a Second Language programs, compensatory/Title I funds, gifted and talented programs and alternative education. The coordinator of Student Services should oversee the school psychologists and the school nurses; however, the position of Nurse coordinator should be eliminated.

On the administrative side, an assistant superintendent for Administration should oversee Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, Purchasing, Facilities and Maintenance, Child Nutrition Services and Transportation. Security will become a part of Facilities and Maintenance.

The executive director for Accountability and Information Systems should be a new direct report to the superintendent, overseeing Technology, Research and Evaluation, PEIMS and Community Involvement.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent develops an organizational plan and implementation timetable and presents it to the board.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources initiates the creation of new job descriptions.	July 2002
3.	The director of Business Services develops reports to provide program and department financial information to levels consistent with the scope of responsibility of specific management positions.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent implements the organizational changes.	August 2002 - December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The creation of responsibilities and changes in position grades should be done without adding administrative costs to the district. There are many positions in the district at high pay levels within existing grades. Converting the director of Business Services to assistant superintendent of Administration should not involve a pay raise as it reduces the areas of responsibility. The fiscal impact of changes to central administration staff is discussed in Chapter 3, Human Resources Management.

FINDING

WHISD is defending itself against numerous lawsuits and spends a disproportionate amount of its budget on legal fees. The district does not, however, maintain an accurate, comprehensive list of the suits and is unable to respond to basic requests for information about the number of lawsuits pending against it or the substance and status of those lawsuits.

The board renewed a three-year retainer contract in October 2001 for \$9,982 a month plus expenses and 10 percent annual increases in fees to an attorney who was not licensed to practice law in the state of Texas at the time the contract was signed. WHISD staff did not check this licensure and said that they did not consistently check professional licensures for other attorneys or other professionals who perform duties for the district. This contract stipulates that the attorney perform the following services:

"(1) act as General Counsel to the district and as legal advisor and legal representative to the School Board, individual school board members, school board committees, administrators and principals on all legal matters as the board directs, except tax collection and workers compensation;

- (2) train administrators and board on nonrenewable and termination procedures;
- (3) act as an advisor to hearing panels and to the board during hearings and grievances. Prepare and respond to correspondence on them;
- (4) consultation on legal matters with the board of trustees and superintendent;
- (5) consult on contracts and personnel;
- (6) consult on open records requests;
- (7) advise and consult board and superintendent in TEA and University Interscholastic League matters;
- (8) advise on legislative or other legal matters that may affect administrative operations and on special education procedures and code of student conduct. Provide copies of legislative bills as appropriate; and
- (9) attend board meetings."

Paragraph 1 of this contract may pose a significant problem to providing the contracted services because an attorney who represents the board as a whole might not be able to represent individual board members, committees, administrators and principals when a conflict of interest may exist among them.

Although the attorney attends each board meeting pursuant to his contract, the review team has received no evidence of his notification to the board of apparent violations of numerous provisions of state law. These apparent violations include adopting a tax rate increase earlier than the third day after the public hearing and contracting with a relative of a board member, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, the information that the review team received indicates that the attorney has not advised all board members of the nature of lawsuits against the district nor the requirements of the Open Records Act, as at least one board member stated that a list of litigation pending against the district was confidential.

In addition to the monthly retainer fee paid to this attorney, the terms of his contract include an automatic annual 10 percent increase in fees each year over three years. The contract also requires the district to provide the attorney office space and computers as well as all related administrative and support services, including telephones, office equipment, library and supplies. It is not standard practice among school law firms to include these items in a contract. In addition, the contract obligates the district to pay for "tuition and travel for all counsel involved in providing the services to attend continuing education seminars and workshops." According to district records, more than one attorney billed the district for reimbursement for attending a school law conference, including meals, airfare and ground transportation expenses. Again, this is not standard practice among school law firms unless the firm was speaking on behalf of or in partnership with the district at the conference. In addition to his own contract, this attorney has also authorized ancillary services on the district's behalf for which the district has paid fees. For example, the law firm forwarded bills to the district for \$450 for tape transcription and \$1,520 for bodyguard services for the superintendent's secretary.

Fort Worth ISD uses a staff attorney to control the cost of legal fees and related expenses. The staff attorney provides direct legal support and advice to administrators and school personnel about contractual matters, employee grievances, student discipline hearings, interpretation of board policy and employment matters, Workers' Compensation, Open Records and Open Meetings Act issues and special education matters. The staff attorney coordinates and monitors services provided by outside legal counsel, particularly services related to special education matters, litigation and special legal matters requiring outside expertise.

Some districts contact universities and use their local Regional Education Service Centers in addition to newspaper and website advertisements when recruiting professionals for district positions.

Recommendation 8:

Create an in-house counsel position requiring experience in labor and school law to assist the board with governance, compliance, litigation and the development of policies and procedures.

As soon as practically possible, the district should hire an in-house counsel to serve as general counsel to the district. The district should require that this attorney have experience in both school law and labor law and is knowledgeable about the requirements of school governance. This position should also manage outside counsel on litigation matters. The in-house counsel should coordinate legal representation, including a check of professional licensures, and monitor firms' billings to keep costs down. The district could lower the number of court cases and further reduce costs by providing the in-house counsel with a bonus for reducing legal fees and the number of lawsuits and grievances pending. The district should post the position with university law schools, with Region 10 and in the newspaper.

Should the stated term of the attorney contract be sustained until 2004, the district might not be able to hire this person until that time. However, all lawful means to address the current contract should be explored, and the district should hire an in-house counsel at the earliest opportunity.

The district should also establish a written policy and corresponding procedures to be followed for legal representation when a conflict of interest may exist between a board member or district employee and the board as a whole.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board review the contract of the current attorney to identify all options available to the parties under the agreement and applicable law.	As soon as practically possible
2.	The superintendent works with the executive director of Human Resources to create a job description for an in-house counsel position.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent creates a proposed policy and corresponding procedures to be followed for legal representation when needed by a board member or a district employee in a conflict of interest situation.	April 2002
4.	The superintendent presents the in-house counsel job description, proposed policy and	May 2002

	procedures to the board for approval.	
5.	The board approves the job description, policy and procedures.	May 2002
6.	The executive director of Human Resources posts the in-house counsel job.	June 2002
7.	The superintendent and board members interview the candidates and make a selection.	June - August 2002
8.	The in-house counsel begins work.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

An in-house counsel position is estimated to cost \$79,380 (\$70,000 plus 13.4 percent benefits of \$9,380). The retainer contract is in effect from September 1, 2001 to September 1, 2004 and costs the district \$119,784 with a 10 percent increase each year. These savings are based on the amount the district would pay if it renewed the contract in 2004 on the same terms. Consequently, in 2004-05, the contract would cost the district \$159,433, \$175,376 in 2005-06 and \$192,913 in 2006-07, consequently savings shown are the difference between the current attorney contract and the cost of hiring in-house counsel.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create an in-house counsel position requiring experience in labor and school law to assist the board with governance, compliance, litigation and the development of policies and procedures.	\$0	\$0	\$80,053	\$95,996	\$113,533

FINDING

Although the district paid legal fees to at least 15 attorneys in 2000-01, the district was able to produce a contract for legal services with only one attorney. The review has seen no documentation indicating that the board retained each of the other attorneys or their firms. The superintendent is unclear of the specific matters that each of these attorneys is handling for the district or if they were authorized to represent the district. WHISD has significantly higher expenditures for legal services than its peers, as demonstrated in **Exhibit 1-11**.

Exhibit 1-11
Expenditures for Legal Services by WHISD and Peers
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Year	DeSoto	La Marque	Lancaster	WHISD
1996-97	37,697	119,499	135,929	156,313
1997-98	82,146	41,733	164,896	147,498

1998-99	78,285	52,475	54,413	155,119
1999-2000	144,606	23,868	57,309	139,410
Totals	\$342,734	\$237,575	\$412,547	\$598,340

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

WHISD has several lawsuits pending against it, but the district was unable to provide a complete list of those suits. The average of the three peer districts' annual legal expenses from 1996-97 through 1999-2000 is \$82,738. The average of WHISD's legal expenses within the same time period is \$149,585 excluding fees for delinquent tax collection.

Exhibit 1-12 shows the individual firms that received payment from WHISD from 1998-99 through 2000-01, including 18 different entities and excluding a district clerk and a court reporter. The district also included a payment to a Department of Public Safety officer and to a psychologist in its legal expenditures.

Exhibit 1-12
WHISD Legal Expenditures by Attorney
(excluding delinquent tax collection fees)
1998-99 to 2000-01

Attorney	Expenditures		
	2000-01	1999-2000	1998-99
Miguel Saldana	\$2,048	\$1,519	
Thelma S. Clardy	\$376	\$566	\$1,078
James C. Belt	\$120,827	\$108,900	\$100,575
Roger S. Lenox	\$2,250		
James Vanison, DPS Officer	\$100		
Linda M. Abner	\$961		
White, Hill, Sims, Wiggins	\$10,000	\$9,561	\$6,531
Daniel A. Ortiz	\$5,000		
William T. Hughey	(\$1,800)	\$3,600	\$23,100
Diana Henjum		483	\$138
Walsh, Anderson		\$6,209	\$12,648
Ramirez & Associates		\$8,573	\$3,000
Hughey and Campbell, Attorneys			\$1,500

Schwartz Eichelbaum			\$337
Mat McKool			\$772
Brenda H. Thompson			\$350
Jim Hamlin, District Clerk			\$570
Brenda Wall, Psychologist			\$1,250
Donald Hill			\$3,000
Nichols Court Reporting			\$270
Totals	\$139,762	\$139,411	\$155,119

Source: WHISD, General Ledger, 1998-99 to 2000-01 and Transaction Listing by Vendor, 2000-01.

The district cannot effectively respond to lawsuits, nor effectively evaluate the legal services it is receiving, without having detailed information about those lawsuits and about the lawyers representing the district.

Recommendation 9:

Adopt a policy to request and analyze proposals for outside legal services every three years through formal agreements.

Even with in-house counsel, WHISD will require the services of outside counsel for litigation and delinquent tax collections. The district should use its size and the amount of work it requires to negotiate lower fees. The district should develop a process for authorizing representation by any firm, and sign a formal contract with all law firms representing the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent drafts a policy to accept proposals for outside legal services every three years.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the policy to the board for approval.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent authorizes the director of purchasing to accept proposals for legal services.	June 2002
4.	Proposals are received.	June-August 2002
5.	The superintendent and newly hired in-house counsel selects a firm or firms.	September 2002 and Ongoing every three years

FISCAL IMPACT

Without specific information about the complexity of individual lawsuits pending against the district, savings cannot be determined at this time.

FINDING

There is no documented procedure at WHISD for producing records for lawsuits, audits or open records requests. The district is unable to produce records from years prior to 2001 to effectively respond to lawsuits and audits. Records reviewed by the FBI in 1996 sit in a room in the administration building's basement, but no one in the district has catalogued them or returned them to the district's operating files.

The superintendent's office handles all information requests, but district staff is unaware of this arrangement. The director of Community Relations said that the Human Resources Department handled information requests, but when the review team asked the Human Resources Department for the open records request log, the team was directed to the superintendent's administrative assistant. When the open records log was requested from the administrative assistant, a log was created and provided to the review team. The administrative assistant had been keeping copies of requests received since her employment began in May 2001 in a folder. The log contained those requests received since the hiring of the superintendent's administrative assistant. A substantial information request to which the district was required to respond by a lawsuit was not relayed to the superintendent's administrative assistant until the day before it was due. This lack of procedure makes it difficult for the district to respond to open records requests, which, by law, must be done within 10 business days.

To comply with open records requirements, many school districts have signs describing the regulations governing open records requests in administrative and school offices that are on or near highly visible bulletin boards or other areas frequented by members of the community. Furthermore, many districts document all open records requests with a manual or automated log that tracks the name of the requestor, date of receipt, type of information needed and the date that the material is sent from the district. Documented procedures used by many districts help employees process open records requests in the event pertinent personnel are absent.

Recommendation 10:

Designate an individual to maintain the district's records and document the procedure for information requests.

An existing employee of the district should maintain the data request records. That staff person should do an inventory of each office and the basement of the administration building and interview staff as to any records they may have at home. Any documents maintained by employees off-site should have copies that remain in the files.

As part of the inventory, documents should be in a database and filed by date, author and keyword. The database needs to be up to date and include new records, and a procedure should be developed for registering all newly created files and records. All information requests should go to this employee. Once the in-house counsel begins work at the district, the staff person designated to maintain the district's records should report to the in-house counsel.

Formalizing and communicating the procedure to district staff will ensure that the appropriate person handles information requests in a timely manner. Once the process has been developed, it should be communicated to district employees and the appropriate signs should be displayed in the central administration lobby, the administration annex and the school offices. The district should also designate an additional staff person responsible for these procedures if the primary staff person is absent.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent works with department heads to identify records retention clerk to maintain the district's records.	May 2002
2.	The records retention clerk works with the Technology coordinator to develop a database for cataloguing the records.	May 2002
3.	The records retention clerk inventories documents and interviews staff.	May 2002
4.	The superintendent and the records retention clerk create a procedure under which any new files, records and requests are registered.	August 2002
5.	The procedure is documented by the records retention clerk and distributed to all district staff.	August 2002
6.	The records retention clerk trains the designated back up responsible for records procedures.	September 2002
7.	The records retention clerk catalogs records in the database.	September 2002 and Ongoing
8.	The records retention clerk reports to the in-house counsel or the superintendent in the event an in-house counsel is not retained.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the organization and management of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in four major sections:

C. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Planning is essential to effective school district management. Proper planning establishes a mission and identifies goals and objectives, sets priorities, identifies ways to complete the mission and determines performance measures and benchmarks to achieve goals and objectives.

WHISD does not have an established planning process. The superintendent has identified some long-range administrative goals; however, the district does not have a strategic plan, and its District Improvement Plan is vague and not used by employees of the district.

FINDING

WHISD does not have a strategic plan or a strategic planning Committee and is not in compliance with requirements of the Texas Education Code when developing and maintaining the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs). This lack of planning has affected the ability of the district as a whole and several individual departments to do their job effectively. No performance measures to evaluate instructional and non-instructional department leaders are used by the district in an effort to hold individuals accountable for the success or failure of WHISD programs. For example, the Technology Department has not brought in as many grants as expected for a district the size of WHISD.

Other areas have been affected including Facilities, Safety and Security and Education Service Delivery. The WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report for 2000-01 specified 13 special programs that had not been evaluated on a state or local level during 2000-01 making it difficult to hold those department heads accountable not only for program success but for necessary evaluation and revisions. The district has had a high turnover rate of superintendents, creating a lack of continuity in programs and initiatives. The lack of a written and agreed upon Strategic Plan has compounded this effect, as there is no written indication of where the district is or where stakeholders have agreed they would like it to go.

WHISD has done little analysis of its goals and virtually no planning for fiscal 2002-07. The district has been able to produce only a test score

schedule indicating year-to-year percentage comparisons and goals for higher student achievement each year. The review team found no evidence of enrollment projections for the district. The superintendent has identified some administrative, long-range planning goals, but they are broad and do not include timelines or action steps. The last goal is to "develop a long-range plan for the school district (strategic planning)"; however, timelines, action steps and individuals assigned specific areas of accountability are not indicated to accomplish this goal.

The district produced a DIP from 2000-01 but did not have one for 2001-02. The planning documents reflect the fact that the site-based decision making (SBDM) committees charged with producing the DIP and CIPs have not been engaged in the planning process. The superintendent stated that the SBDM committees have not involved their members in planning for the district and schools on a significant level, and these committees have primarily existed in name only. The District Advisory Committee has yet to meet during the 2001-2002 school year, and its appointed community members are unknown. The district employee members have yet to be determined, as the district has not counted the votes.

Without an effective DIP and CIP process, WHISD loses the opportunity to have the community, schools and parents understand the district's goals and help accomplish them. The DIP and CIPs can also be a valuable budgeting tool for creating a cohesive districtwide strategy with programs that can be realistically supported with funding. Given WHISD's troubled history and low test scores, the lack of quality DIP and CIPs hinders any efforts to improve the education offered.

The language of the existing DIP is vague. For example, the district lists categories of funding such as "General Operating funds, Title I funds, State Comptroller funds, OEY funds, PreK grant" but does not list any dollar amounts. In another example, the DIP states "develop and implement programs, which emphasize teen pregnancy prevention, increase self-esteem and promote health life skills practices." The DIP also does not hold individual district staff accountable, as it lists Region 10 as the person responsible for staff development districtwide.

In some instances, the DIP categories do not correspond. For example, the DIP identifies "staff development sign in sheets, evaluation forms and observational visits" as the formative evaluation for individualized instruction. In addition, the DIP repeats, so that strategy numbers five, six and seven under Math are identical to strategy numbers one, two and three, with the identical funds, needs and goals, timeline, person responsible and evaluations.

The CIPs also consist of boilerplate language, do not tailor goals to the schools' needs and are vague in identifying methods for improvement and responsible individuals. For example, the C.S. Winn 2001-02 CIP still states, "list percent passing and campus goal," under the category of Reading Needs and Goals in Mathematics. In addition, the same formative/summative evaluation of "students improve by 5 percent" is stated for virtually all strategies, including such varied ones as "TAAS data will be studied for improvement of students achievement" and "use AEIS report to plan and implement strategies," "group assemblies to motivate students taking TAAS test" and "use newspaper ads to enhance real life math learning." Similarly, the school lists "80 percent of students will experience success" as the evaluation for every strategy to reach a target of a recognized rating on TAAS, but there are no corresponding needs and goals identified.

Kennedy-Curry Middle School's CIP leaves several blanks in its Math needs and goals, including TAAS objectives. In addition, its evaluations throughout are vague, including "increase student performance," "implementation," "lesson plans" and "increase TAAS scores." The Wilmer Elementary School CIP is much more complete than the other CIPs in the district as it includes timelines for each strategy and identifies both formative and summative evaluations. Both the Kennedy-Curry M.S. and the Wilmer Elementary School CIPs, however, misstate the district 2003 goal as 80 percent passing the TAAS and above the 40th percentile on other tests, instead of 90 percent. For the district to set this 90 percent goal by 2003 is unrealistic as the percentage of students passing TAAS in WHISD, in grades 3-8 and 10, in 2000-01 was 58.4 percent.

The Alta Mesa Learning Center CIP presents a supposed "snapshot of the school and community" with incorrect totals. It states that it has an enrollment of 439 students but goes on to state that there are 239 boys and 202 girls, and that the ethnic breakdown includes 232 boys and 294 girls who are African American, seven boys and three girls who are Anglo and one boy and two girls who are Hispanic. The document includes a heading page for student achievement data, but then does not include any information behind it. This CIP also includes vague timelines and does not identify dollar amounts.

All but one of the site-based committees did not include members of the community in the 2000-2001 school year and the documents the existing committees produced do not reflect significant input from the members. The C. S. Winn CIP was the only one to include non-school employees. A parent and a representative of Volunteers of America signed it. The Bishop Heights Elementary School CIP lacked the signatures of the committee that produced it. The superintendent cited the poor reputation

of the district in the community as an obstacle to recruiting community members of to be active members of these committees.

As an extension of the state accountability system, some Texas school districts are developing their own accountability systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness. **Exhibit 1-13** presents examples of non-instructional performance measures.

Exhibit 1-13
Examples of Non-Instructional Performance Measures, by Functional Area

Functional Area	Performance Measure (Trend and Peer Comparisons)
Human Resources	Ratio of total students to total staff Ratio of employees to human resources staff Ratio of acceptances to total job offers made Turnover ratios, by class of employee and by school Number of vacant positions at end of month, by department and by school
Facilities Management	Number of square feet per custodian, by school Custodial cost per square foot Maintenance cost per square foot, by trade, by school Energy cost per square foot, by type, by school Number of square feet per student, by school
Technology	Ratio of students to instructional computers Ratio of administrators to administrative computers Ratio of total computers to technical support Ratio of total computers to help desk support Number of computers more than five years old
Food Services	Meals per labor hour, by school Food cost per meal, by school Meal participation rates, by school Profitability by school, after indirect cost allocation
Transportation	Cost per mile, by program Cost per rider, by program Number of miles per student, by program Maintenance cost per bus Rider ship, by program, by school Bus Utilization, by program Average bus age Linear density
Safety and Security	Number of incidents reported, by type, by school

	Security cost per student, by school
Purchasing	Average dollar amount per purchase order Ratio of purchase orders processed a month to purchasing staff
Accounting	Ratio of number of operating account check a month to accounts payable staff

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

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

In 1991, the strategic plan goals and strategies were revised to reflect progress. The plan was revised again in 1998 with an additional goal to make the BISD a recognized district in 2000 and an exemplary district by 2003. In order to accomplish these goals, BISD ensured that personnel and departments were accountable for the success and ongoing review of their programs. In 2000, additional strategies were implemented to reflect accomplishments. A timeline for meeting the goals was included in the plan. The committee monitored and adjusted strategies as objectives were met.

A model strategic planning process used by Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) includes goal setting in instructional and non-instructional areas. While FBISD is a large district, its planning process is an example of a framework for a district of any size. This planning includes in-depth diagnosis and analysis of community input, critical action planning and the allocation of budget resources to specific goals and objectives. The Fort Bend ISD 2000-2001 budget was developed based on priorities established in the *District Strategic Plan 2000-2005*.

FBISD's *District Strategic Plan 2000-2005*, using a business model referred to as the Deming Cycle as its underlying foundation, was developed using a six-step process that included planning the plan, situational analysis and diagnosis, goal-setting, action planning, budgeting and writing and publishing the plan. Each step contained activities that culminated in a strategic plan containing goals and objectives. Input was obtained from various stakeholder groups including students, staff, parents and the community. The process was exhaustive and inclusive, with meticulous planning and execution by the district. FBISD's *District Improvement Plan 1996-2000* served as FBISD's strategic plan before the *District Strategic Plan 2000-2005* was developed. Both plans used the six-step strategic planning process.

Exhibit 1-14 presents the chronology of the FBISD *District Strategic Plan 2000-2005* with specific descriptions of each of the six steps and related activities.

Exhibit 1-14
FBISD District Strategic Plan 2000-05
Six-Step Strategic Planning Process

Steps and Timing	Activities
<p>Step 1 - Plan the Plan September - November 1998</p>	<p>FBISD established planning teams to complete the strategic plan, identified their respective roles, determined timelines and developed task maps. Task maps are detailed and show the project title, starting date, target completion date and actual completion date. Task maps also list task force committee members, define the project objectives and project expected results. Discrete tasks are also listed with individual responsibility assignments, start dates, target completion dates, actual completion dates and an area for planning notes.</p>
<p>Step 2 - Situational Analysis and Diagnosis February 23, 1999 - February 25, 1999 March 9, 1999 Spring 1999 August 1999</p>	<p>FBISD conducted a series of community meetings, focus groups and surveys throughout the district to obtain stakeholder input at the outset of the planning process. These activities are considered district needs assessments and include specific sessions with students (February 23, 1999), district staff (February 25, 1999), parents and community members (March 9, 1999) and employee and parent satisfaction surveys (spring 1999). In addition, during the situational analysis and diagnosis phase, FBISD cabinet members engaged in the planning process and reviewed the Academic Excellence Indicator System Report (AEIS) and national, state and district priorities (August 1999) before the goal setting phase.</p>
<p>Step 3 - Goal Setting April - November 1999</p>	<p>FBISD used information gathered from its stakeholders and analysis of AEIS data and related national, state and district priorities to establish the district's goals. The superintendent and cabinet reviewed these goals with the board for its input, shared the goals with stakeholders and refined them as appropriate.</p>
<p>Step 4 - Action Planning September 1999 - January 2000</p>	<p>FBISD administrators developed tactical plans for implementing the strategic direction contemplated by the goals and objectives established during the goal-setting phase of the process. Action planning considers the interrelationships of time, money, human resource capabilities and efficiencies to ensure proper</p>

	implementation. FBISD uses task maps as an integral component of its action planning.
Step 5 - Budgeting March - July 2000	FBISD allocated budget resources to the eight goals included in the <i>District Strategic Plan 2000-2005</i> . Budget resources were allocated based on priorities established during the goal setting and action planning steps.
Step 6 - Writing Publishing and Sharing the Plan with Stakeholders January - July 2000	FBISD wrote and published its strategic plan and clarified in writing the strategic plan communicating to stakeholders the direction in which the district is going in order to improve student achievement. After publishing the plan and sharing it with stakeholders, FBISD continuously monitors and reports the progress toward implementation with quarterly updates to the board and district stakeholders.

Source: Fort Bend ISD District Strategic Plan, 2000-05.

Through its six-step strategic planning process, FBISD developed a strategic plan containing a mission and vision, belief statements, goals and objectives. The plan is supported by detailed project task maps containing implementation strategies, timelines and responsibility assignments. FBISD's goals are organized into five strategic areas. **Exhibit 1-15** presents FBISD's goals organized by strategic area.

Exhibit 1-15
FBISD District Strategic Plan 2000-05
District Goals by Strategic Area

Strategic Area	Goal
Instructional Strategy	FBISD will promote and expect students to meet high standards of achievement consistent with the district's vision and mission. FBISD will foster character development for students, which supports the expectations of our community.
Service Strategy	FBISD will build community support through effective communications and stakeholder involvement.
Organization & Management Strategy	FBISD will attract, develop and retain quality staff for all district jobs. FBISD will accomplish its vision and mission through the effective assignment of all personnel.
Fiscal Strategy	FBISD will accomplish its vision and mission in a way that is fiscally responsible to all stakeholders.
Research and	FBISD will collect, process and analyze data and research

Development Strategy	findings to improve all aspects of the district. FBISD will foster creativity and innovation throughout the district.
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Source: FBISD District Strategic Plan, 2000-2005.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-15**, FBISD chose to narrow its strategic focus to eight goals because of its exhaustive strategic planning process. Each of these goals is accompanied by specific objectives. For example, the second goal under the district's organization and management strategy will be accomplished by implementing the following objectives:

- develop a framework for appropriate and efficient school schedules;
- systematically examine the roles, responsibilities and work schedules for all district personnel;
- improve staff effectiveness through the use of stakeholder feedback, training and resources; and
- improve the criteria, process and timeline for staff allocation.

FBISD's model six-step strategic planning process refines a potentially voluminous strategic plan into a manageable document that focuses on specific goals and objectives fashioned from districtwide stakeholder input. The superintendent and members of his cabinet present quarterly updates to the board and district stakeholders detailing FBISD's progress.

By implementing an effective SBDM process, FBISD has increased the involvement of parents, teachers and community members at the school level. The district provided resource guides and annual training for members of each campus-based leadership team.

FBISD's model includes the Academic Advisory Council, which serves as the District Education Improvement Council, and campus-based leadership teams (CBLT). CBLTs serve as the primary decision-making committees for Fort Bend schools and include teachers, parents and community members. The superintendent's cabinet, in cooperation with the Academic Advisory Council, is responsible for developing Fort Bend's DIP, while each CBLT is responsible for developing individual CIPs.

Each plan is tied to the strategic goals and related objectives included in the *District Strategic Plan 2000-2005*. Each member of the CBLT must sign an affidavit confirming that he/she participated in the process that culminated in the development of CIPs. Each principal then submits the CIPs to central administration where they are reviewed to ensure individual school goals are consistent with the district's strategic goals.

Each member of the CBLT receives a SBDM resource guide and targeted annual training by principals. The resource guide is used in training and in guiding the teams. The guide lists six categories essential to effective administration and management of a school district and school: planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development and school organization. The six categories are further divided into sub-functions. The resource guide is easy to read and understand, and makes lines of authority and decision-making clear at all levels.

Principals reported that the district's SBDM model and the training helped the CBLTs understand their roles and provide valuable advice to principals throughout the process.

An effective process of developing the DIP and CIPs has also helped districts create more effective budgets. By developing a sound planning process that tied budget allocation to district and campus improvement plans, Smithville ISD (SISD) ensured that funds were effectively directed toward increasing student performance.

The superintendent coordinated the district's improvement initiatives with the budget development process. The Business manager sent a budget worksheet to each principal and program director in February. Each principal distributed budget request sheets to the teachers to complete and return to the principal. The principal assembled the request sheets and developed a school budget. The principal submitted the school's budget to the Business manager by the end of March. Next, budget meetings were held with all principals and program directors during April. The Business manager, the campus principal and the superintendent met to review the budget submitted by each campus and program. Every staff position was reviewed. Any principal who could not justify a staff position lost that position.

The superintendent requested justification for budget requests. If an item could not be justified, funding was reduced. In some cases, funding increased for line items based upon campus improvement plan strategies. According to the superintendent, the purpose of this approach was to establish an expectation that principals must be knowledgeable about their campus budgets and to ensure that principals articulated the need for their programs and educational services in terms of the costs involved.

The Business manager then recorded all the principals' submissions on one document. The superintendent reviewed the document and made some adjustments, and presented the first draft to the board in May. Adjustments were made during the summer as tax data became available and staffing changes such as retirements and terminations were made. Additional drafts were presented to the board each month during the summer.

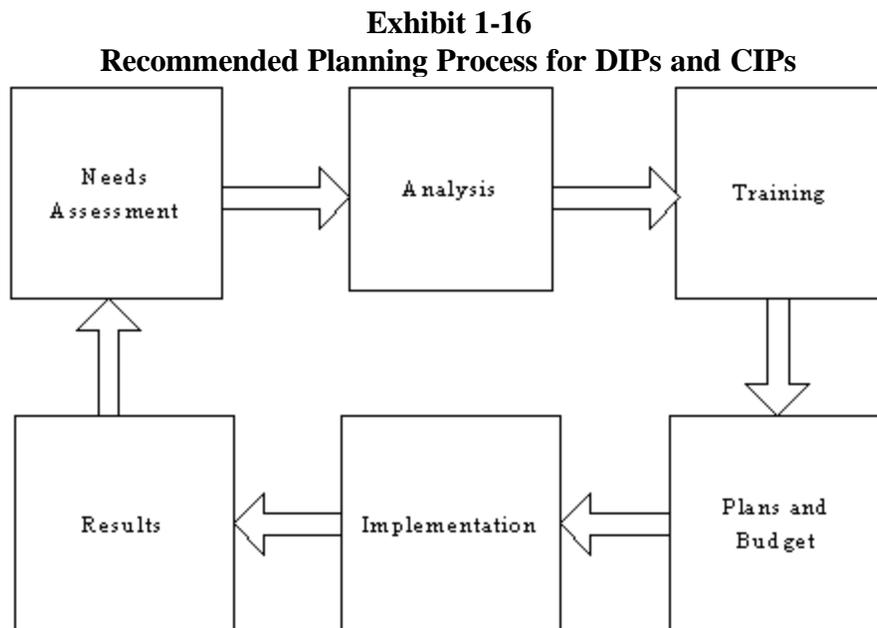
By requiring principals to justify their budget request in terms of campus improvement needs, SISD increased the accountability of campus principals and ensured that budgeting was made in line with clearly developed campus plans for increasing student performance.

Recommendation 11:

Form a strategic planning committee with broad representation from the district and community to develop the district's strategic plan and overhaul the district and campus improvement plans' processes.

In forming the strategic planning committee, the district should follow procedures similar to the FBISD model so that the strategic planning committee receives updates from the board and the District Advisory Committee. The district should set specific steps and target dates for goals in the DIP. SBDM committees should be involved in the process, so that the plan becomes a comprehensive document used throughout the district. The district should also require corresponding steps and due dates to be set in the CIPs.

Exhibit 1-16 shows a recommended planning process.



Source: TSPR, November 2001.

The DIP and CIPs will improve if the committee members charged with developing them are actively engaged in a planning process. The district needs to reach out to the community to convince them to become SBDM members, selecting the members carefully and developing a planning

process that will engage the members to give their best input. The district also needs to encourage school-level SBDM committees to contribute to the CIP and tailor goals and steps to their individual schools within the framework defined by the DIP. Because of the challenges the district is facing, a trainer with expertise in developing successful DIPs and CIPs should be brought into the district to train the committee members.

The timeline of the process is also crucial in developing an effective plan. The district needs to form committees and begin to develop a SBDM plan before the school year begins and the committees need to meet monthly throughout the year. Elections for district employee District Advisory Committee (DAC) members should be held in the spring so that the committee can meet at the beginning of the school year or before the school year begins. Community members of the DAC should also be recruited and appointed in the spring so that they can be an integral part of the committee.

The development of the CIPs should begin during the prior school year, before the development of the school budget. Accordingly, new members of SBDM teams should be elected in early April, allowing time for training and intensive involvement in school planning and budgeting. A draft of the CIP could be created in the spring and updated in the fall after the submission of up-to-date student performance data.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes an initiative to improve the involvement of SBDM committees in planning and decision-making at the district and school levels.	April 2002
2.	The board adopts a policy to elect district and school SBDM committee members and appoint community members each April.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent and principals begin recruiting SBDM committee members each January, allowing three months to recruit members.	April 2002 and Ongoing
4.	The superintendent designates the executive director of Human Resources to research trainers with expertise in successful DIPs and CIPs.	April 2002
5.	Board members, the superintendent and the District Advisory Committee (DAC) convene and create a Strategic Plan Development Committee (SPDC) to assist them in creation of the district's strategic plan.	May 2002
6.	The SPDC meets and obtains information about the Fort Bend	May -

	ISD model and any other pertinent information to assist them in developing a proposed strategic plan.	August 2002
7.	The executive director of Human Resources recommends trainers with expertise in DIPs and CIPs to potentially train committee members, and the superintendent makes a selection.	May 2002
8.	The board asks the DAC and the superintendent to draft specific goals, priorities and timetables for instructional and non-instructional areas and implementation steps for submission to the SPDC for inclusion in the strategic plan.	May 2002
9.	The superintendent asks department heads to work with their staff to develop realistic goals and implementation steps.	June 2002
10.	SBDM committee members are elected and appointed for the 2002-2003 school year.	June 2002
11.	The superintendent and principals provide an orientation packet to new members describing their role in each component of district planning and decision-making.	July 2002
12.	The executive director of Human Resources obtains the selected trainer to provide a training session for SBDM committee members explaining expertise of how other districts have been successful in developing effective DIPs and CIPs.	July 2002
13.	The superintendent decides on the frequency and length of meetings for the district-level committee. Each principal determines the same parameters for the school-level committees. They also determine whether sub-committees will be used and inform committee members of the changes.	August 2002
14.	The SPDC presents a proposed strategic plan to the superintendent, DAC and board for review and approval.	August 2002
15.	The board adopts the district strategic plan and superintendent ensures dissemination of information regarding the plan to staff, students, parents and the community.	September 2002
16.	The superintendent monitors the progress of school SBDM committees, and the board monitors the progress of the DAC including adherence to the adopted strategic plan.	October 2002 and Ongoing
17.	The strategic plan is placed on the district Web site and disseminated to all district staff, which holds meetings on how best to implement the plan.	October 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Two half-days of training for the SBDM committees include the cost of a trainer at an estimated cost of \$1,500 a day. The district could hold meetings in the board conference room, eliminating the need to rent a facility. Because committee membership will change over time, and the plan requires updating and monitoring each year, the district should hold these training sessions each year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Form a strategic planning committee with broad representation from the district and community to develop the district's strategic plan and overhaul the district and campus improvement plans' processes.	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)

FINDING

The district does not document its budgeting priorities, nor demonstrate that those priorities are met in the budget. Further, the board members have stated publicly that they do not understand the budget and need a "decoder" to explain it to them. The superintendent has also expressed his need for help understanding the budget. Without an understanding of the budget and a documented set of priorities, it is impossible for the board to target funds to meet the goals of the district and to monitor the district's expenditures to determine whether those expenditures help meet those goals.

The board held a special meeting on August 13, 2001, to have a public hearing on the district's 2001-2002 budget. The meeting lasted 24 minutes. It appears from the tape that the board limited public input to three questions.

The district's policy manual includes a policy outlining the importance of the annual operating budget developed by the board in 1990 (**Exhibit 1-17**), but the board and superintendent are not following it.

Exhibit 1-17 Local Board Policy on the Annual Operating Budget

Budget Planning	Budget planning shall be an integral part of overall program planning so that the budget effectively reflects the district's programs and activities and provides the resources to implement them. The consideration of general educational goals, specific
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	program goals and alternatives for achieving program goals will be a part of the planning process. Budget planning and evaluation are continuous processes and should be a part of each month's activities.
Ad Hoc Committees	The board may appoint ad hoc committees of representative citizens and district personnel to provide a wider expression of community opinion on financial aspects of the school program. The board shall define in precise terms the scope of the committee's charge and shall designate the period of time committee members shall serve. The committee shall be dissolved upon completion of its charge or the expiration of the term set by the Board, whichever comes first.
Schedules	The Superintendent or designee shall supervise the development of a budget calendar and a specific plan for budget preparation. The budget schedule shall include time lines for designated individuals or groups to submit their budget proposals.

Source: WHISD Web site, WHISD Board Policies, Update 36, CE (L)-A, April 17, 1990.

To the extent the district has a planning process, there is no evidence that it includes budget planning and evaluation as a part of each month's activities. There are no ad hoc committees of citizens and district personnel to express community opinion on financial aspects of the school program, and the DAC did not exist in November 2001.

Recommendation 12:

Document budgeting priorities, procedures and a calendar and contract for specific board member training.

The district should hire a trainer to work closely with the board and superintendent until each WHISD they can effectively evaluate the district's budget.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to ensure a budget calendar, procedures for budget development and budget priorities are included in the district's strategic plan.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent works in conjunction with the director of Business Services to develop a budget calendar, priorities and procedures associated with the development of the budget and	June - July 2002

	presents them to the Strategic Plan Development Committee for inclusion in the district's strategic plan for approval by the board.	
3.	The board president assigns the superintendent responsibility for collecting information about a planning retreat for the board to understand the budgeting process, calendar and documentation.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent and board president identify at least three trainers qualified to lead board retreats and request proposals from each.	September 2002
5.	The board president and the superintendent, select a team-building facilitator for the retreat.	October 2002
6.	The board approves the selection of the facilitator and selects the date of the retreat from a list of available dates.	October 2002
7.	The board and superintendent attend a planning retreat.	November 2002
8.	The board and superintendent attend a second planning retreat, with annual retreats thereafter.	May 2003 and Annually thereafter
9.	The superintendent makes an annual report to the board on the implementation and impact of the model.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on a nearby district's historical experience with similar meetings, the estimated cost of a facilitator is \$1,500 a day. The district could hold the meeting in the board conference room, eliminating the need to rent a facility. Assuming a two-day planning session with one meal served each day, the cost is expected to be no more than \$3,100. The trainer would need to be available for follow-up questions from the board and superintendent. At an hourly rate of \$185, 10 hours of time for questions over the course of the year would cost \$1,850. The total cost is expected to be \$4,950 per year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Document budgeting priorities, procedures and a calendar and contract for specific board member training.	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)	(\$4,950)

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the organization and management of the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in four major sections:

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The quality of a school district's educational services increases when effective partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders-parents, local businesses, civic groups and faith-based organizations-are established. In order to maximize what the community can bring to students' education, it is important for school districts to institute programs that provide community support and financial resources.

The review team spoke to teachers, principals, parents, local government officials and members of the clergy to gather feedback on the district's progress and its challenges. The single most common concern expressed by parents, employees and other community members was the perception that the district and the board are not focused on the students.

During a focus group, parents said they do not feel they are welcome at the schools. One parent said that she thought that was because, "they don't want anyone to see what they are doing." Many businesses in the district are not locally based. The director of Community Relations said that negative perceptions of the school district made securing business partnerships difficult.

Exhibit 1-18 presents responses to surveys that TSPR sent to students, teachers, parents and other district staff. The majority of parents and district administrative and support staff feel that the district does not communicate well with parents. The majority of principals and teachers feel that the district does communicate well with parents. The fact the groups responsible for sending communication and the groups that receive communication view the issue so differently is significant. Principals feel that school facilities are available for public use, but parents and teachers did not provide an opinion, which may indicate they are unaware the facilities are available.

Exhibit 1-18 Survey Responses

The district regularly communicates with parents.

Respondent	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	2.3%	32.6%	16.3%	25.6%	23.3%
Teachers	7.1%	57.4%	13.2%	13.2%	8.8%
Principals and Assistant Principals	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
District Administrator and Support Staff	4.4%	17.6%	17.6%	23.5%	36.8%
District facilities are open for community use.					
Respondent	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	2.6%	16.3%	46.5%	30.2%	4.7%
Teachers	5.9%	32.4%	38.2%	14.7%	8.8%
Principals and Assistant Principals	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
District Administrator and Support Staff	1.5%	13.2%	23.5%	26.5%	35.3%

Source: TSPR Survey Results, October 2001.

The district could not provide an approved plan or goals for community involvement. The director of Community Relations provided the review team with a working draft of goals dated October 26, 2001. The superintendent's long-range planning goals do not include a specific initiative for community involvement.

To boost involvement in the district's schools, the superintendent has developed a public relations initiative that includes:

Town Hall Meetings: In October 2001, the superintendent began a series of town hall meetings in the various communities throughout WHISD. The meetings introduce the superintendent to the community and solicit input from the citizens.

Business Luncheon: The superintendent plans to sponsor a luncheon for local business owners. The luncheon will provide information to the business leaders on the district's budget, tax rate and other business-related items.

Alumni Honor Banquet: The superintendent plans to sponsor an alumni banquet to recognize and honor outstanding graduates of WHISD.

The first town hall meeting was held in October 2001. This initiative represents the first step to improving community relations.

FINDING

The district has entered into a collaboration agreement with the John C. Ford Program to seek grant funding to secure Pentium II and Pentium III computers for the program and agreed to provide the following services at all participating WHISD schools, at no charge:

- Youth Science, Math & Business Technology Academy;
- Entry-Advanced Business Technology Training;
- SAT/Pre-SAT training programs;
- Adult Basic Education Programs, including the Educational Learning System Tele-Academy and Business Technology Training Programs;
- communications skills training;
- customer relations training;
- corporate and community college instructors;
- job placement assistance for adult graduates;
- mentors; and
- follow-up services for Ford Program graduates.

Schools participating in the program also have full use of the \$2 million Distance Education Network. In September 2001, the superintendent said Kennedy-Curry Middle School was the only school participating in the program, but the district plans to expand the program to other campuses in the future.

Additionally, the superintendent solicited assistance for the district and received a donation on January 25, 2002 from InterVoice Brite, Inc. in Dallas consisting of seven computers, seven monitors, two printers, 60 file servers and 10 racks for the servers valued between \$800,000 and \$1 million. The superintendent said that he plans to expand the district's efforts to further business donations and increase grants to support this collaboration between the district and the community.

COMMENDATION

WHISD has begun implementing a program to make computers and other resources available to students and the community through grants and business donations.

FINDING

The principal of Alta Mesa Learning Center, which is for students in grades two through five, has identified several ways to meet the needs of the student body and obtain more parental involvement.

One of the successful initiatives at the school is One Community/One Child. One Community/One Child is a grant-based program that allows working parents a small stipend to come to school to work with their children. In the past, the principal has targeted specific students, but in 2001 the principal is specifying dates and inviting more parents to come to school on those dates. The program provides parent education in math, reading and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and presents workshops on special programs such as Title I, reading recovery and classroom behavior issues. Employers of participants in the program receive follow-up letters thanking them for allowing the parent to be at the school.

For students facing home-life issues, the principal solicits private practice counselors to donate time for counseling students on such issues and/or makes referrals to the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation or other appropriate agencies.

The campus has an active parent teacher organization that is planning a campus beautification program and fall carnival. When asked how the organization supported the school, the principal said they provided whatever was requested.

Students from Alta Mesa have also visited the Dallas Opera, and the school is beginning a program that will provide orchestra instruments and lessons to students. The principal has also been successful in coordinating a mentoring program with the Paul Quinn College football team. When asked how this partnership evolved, the principal said that she knew from teaching at the college that the team had to perform community service, so she approached the team to provide support to her school.

The principal credits increased parent involvement to the open door/open campus policy that allows parents and community members to visit that campus at any time. Parents are also invited to participate in staff development with the teachers when appropriate. The principal prints a monthly calendar sent home with students that highlights events taking place at the campus that month, and the principal is active in the students' lives and often visits students' homes, churches and outside performances and events.

The principal of Alta Mesa searches for opportunities to enhance and enrich students' education and involve parents. The principal uses the Internet to research what other schools around the state and the country are doing, reads the paper to find out what opportunities are available to her students, identifies local organizations that provide services to families and refers families to those providers.

COMMENDATION

Alta Mesa Learning Center has implemented several innovative ways to involve parents, businesses and local agencies in meeting students' needs.

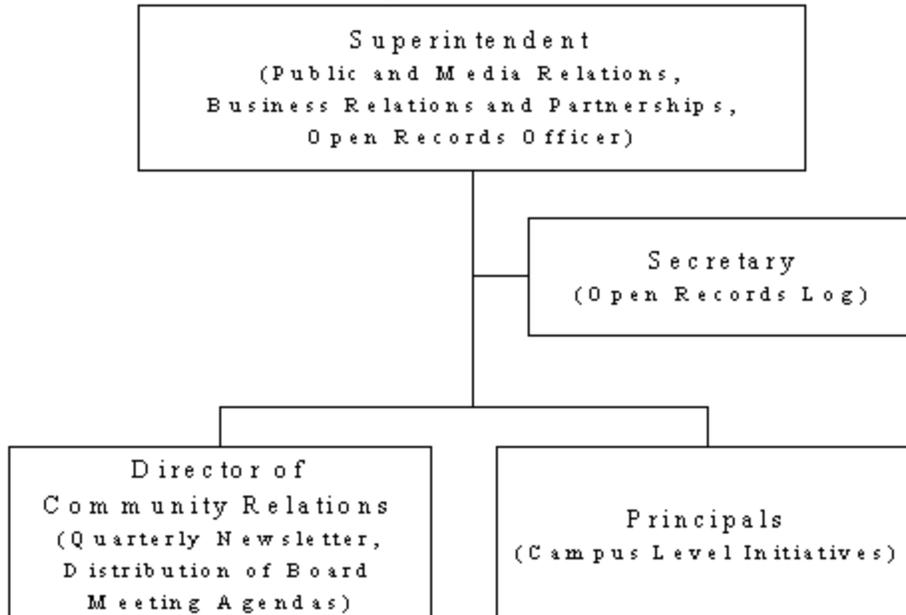
FINDING

There is no effective liaison between central administration and campus staff or between the district and the community. This lack of communication is critical because the district suffers from negative community perceptions about the focus and integrity of the administration.

The superintendent directly handles media and public relations. The superintendent also, with the assistance of his secretary, handles open record requests. Principals are responsible for the community relations component of all individual school initiatives.

The district has a director of Community Relations position that reports directly to the superintendent. **Exhibit 1-19** presents the organization of the community relations' distribution of duties.

Exhibit 1-19
Community Relations Organization and Distribution of Duties



Source: Interviews with WHISD staff, September 2001.

The director of Community Relations does not oversee any staff, nor is this position involved in the budget process. The Community Relations Department does have a \$9,200 budget excluding salaries. The district's job description for the director of Community Relations position, dated January 31, 2000, includes the following duties:

- liaison to district council of PTAs;
- liaison between the school district, schools and the community in special projects;
- plans, coordinates and implements the district parent involvement program;
- works with parent/community advisory board;
- works with community through parent involvement program strategies;
- plans, coordinates and in some instances leads parent classes/workshops;
- assists with districtwide regular and special program presentations and outreach to families;
- coordinates with community agencies to promote parent educational programs to improve student achievement;
- provides assistance to and coordination for school volunteer programs; and
- develops partnerships with business and industry to provide services and support to the district.

The director of Community Relations does not perform these duties. Instead, WHISD uses this position to provide administrative communications support to the superintendent. The director of Community Relations is responsible for publishing and distributing the quarterly newsletter, distributing board meeting agendas, boardroom bulletin board memos, updating the staff directory, list of birthdays for central office personnel, providing content for the superintendent's page on the district Web site, creating a Christmas card contest for art students and other projects as assigned.

During the 2000-01 school year, the director of Community Relations was involved in the bi-weekly DAC meetings, publishing the staff directory, handling media relations and business partnerships. The director also participated in department meetings and made reports to the school board about community relations. The DAC has yet to meet in the 2001-02 school year, and the director said that department meetings and board reports have also been discontinued. The superintendent said he had temporarily suspended the DAC and board reports, but gave no explanation why they were suspended or when they would be reinstated.

Most districts assign either one person or department responsibility for coordinating business and parental involvement and to act as a community liaison and spokesperson. In smaller districts, these duties are sometimes assigned to the superintendent.

Recommendation 13:

Create a coordinator of Community Involvement position to act as a liaison between central administration and campus staff, and between the district and the community.

Assigning these duties solely to the superintendent may be overwhelming considering the range of his other duties. A coordinator should share ideas with campus administrators and make recommendations to the superintendent about the types of programs needed on each campus. The coordinator of Community Involvement should work with the superintendent to develop and implement initiatives to improve relations with the community and to create relationships with local businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Human Resources to create a coordinator of Community Relations position and a corresponding job description.	April 2002
2.	The position of coordinator of Community Involvement is	April - June

	posted and interviews are held with the superintendent.	2002
3.	A coordinator of Community Involvement is hired.	June 2002
4.	The coordinator of Community Involvement works with the superintendent, principals, teachers and parent-teacher organization members to create a plan for community, business and parent involvement.	June - August 2002
5.	The coordinator of Community Involvement and superintendent work together to implement the plan.	August 2002 and Ongoing
6.	The superintendent evaluates the work of the coordinator annually.	Ongoing at least Annually
7.	The superintendent and DAC evaluate the plan and revise it at least annually to reflect changes in student needs and the district's mission.	Ongoing at least Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

The salary for the coordinator of Community Involvement should not exceed \$38,000 per year. The benefits rate for the district is 13.4 percent for an annual benefits cost of \$5,092. The annual cost of the coordinator position would be \$43,092 (\$38,000 salary plus \$5,092 in benefits).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create a coordinator of Community Involvement position to act as a liaison between central administration and campus staff, and between the district and the community.	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)	(\$43,092)

FINDING

The district has no comprehensive plan or strategies for involving parents in the education of their children. Public forum comments on community involvement included the following:

- would like to see board members more active in the community;
- notices are not given to students to give to parents;
- would like to see some of the district's schools welcome the community instead of giving cold feelings;

- there is no communication with the community. When asked, someone always say we'll get back to you but never do;
- there is no community/parent involvement. We lack it. PLEASE HELP!!;
- residents never receive notices of meetings; and
- notices should be posted in the newspaper for all board meetings.

TSPR surveyed teachers, district and campus administrative staff and parents. **Exhibit 1-20** presents the results when respondents were asked if schools have plenty of volunteers. The responses show that the majority of all respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that schools have enough volunteers.

Exhibit 1-20
Survey Responses

Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.					
Respondent	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	4.7%	9.3%	34.9%	30.2%	20.9%
Teachers	1.5%	16.2%	11.8%	47.1%	23.5%
Principals and Assistant Principals	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%
District Administrator and Support Staff	4.4%	14.7%	14.7%	29.4%	36.8%

Source: TSPR Survey Results, October 2001.

The mayor of Wilmer said the district does not make an effort to reach the largely Hispanic parents and community in his municipality. Many school districts with large Hispanic communities print newsletters, public notices and other school messages in Spanish and English to reach more of the parents in the community.

Socorro Independent School District (SISD) encourages strong parent involvement. Many schools host regular events to bring parents to school, including science and math fairs, language arts nights, open houses and other events. Some of the most successful events include:

- Science Project Night--where parents help students with scientific experiments;

- pajama party--where children and parents came wearing pajamas and slippers, ate cookies and milk and read bedtime stories. Each participating family was given a book to take home;
- one school hosts the Triangle of Knowledge. The students, parents and teachers of a grade level convene for an evening of science projects. Each month, a different grade level participates;
- another night each month is dedicated to language arts; parents and students come to the school to make books and work on writing skills. The school provides refreshments for these events;
- parents have taken on most of one school's decoration, painting murals in the entryway and hallways, making seasonal decorations and painting a map on the playground to use during games;
- once a month a parent is asked to host a get-together at his or her house and to invite up to 10 other parents. Two teachers attend and talk about the school and about their children and receive input from parents;
- parents can check out books from the school's library; and
- parents are also involved in extra-curricular activities such as cheerleading, choir and a Ballet Folkorico class.

Although SISD is a large district, most of these initiatives are campus-based and could be done in a smaller district.

Recommendation 14:

Implement creative methods to involve parents.

WHISD could begin by using some of the techniques used by the principal at Alta Mesa and SISD to increase parental involvement. In addition to hosting events designed to bring parents into the classrooms, the district could use the high school Spanish class to translate the quarterly newsletter and other notices into Spanish.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent invites principals, counselors, teachers and parent-teacher organization leaders to participate in a committee that will identify ways to improve parent involvement and the community.	May 2002
2.	The committee explores ways to involve parents and community members in campus activities and recommends ideas to the superintendent for approval.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent approves ideas and recommends activities to each principal.	June 2002

4.	Individual campuses host various events, providing refreshments and activities in which parents can participate with their children.	May 2002 and Ongoing
5.	Principals provide immediate feedback on event success and parental and community involvement to the superintendent and coordinator of Community Involvement.	May 2002 and Ongoing
6.	The coordinator of Community Involvement works with the high school Spanish teacher to have the newsletter and other notices translated into Spanish.	May 2002 and Ongoing
7.	Newsletters and other district communications in Spanish and English are distributed to parents.	Ongoing
8.	The committee meets on a scheduled basis to review and evaluate implemented strategies and provides appropriate suggested changes to the superintendent as necessary.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD's reputation in the community is hurt because the district does not have a system for effectively managing media relations. Negative media attention has fueled the communities' perception of the district as dishonest and poorly performing and has affected its ability to attract business partnerships and parental involvement. Positive events, such as the Ford Program, are not covered in the media. The press received by the district from 1998-2001 has been almost exclusively related to fraud investigations , mismanagement and poor performance.

The district has a quarterly newsletter printed in English only. The back-to-school special edition included information on the new superintendent, a student profile, scholarship recipient acknowledgements, sports information, teacher recognitions and student achievement recognitions. Many Texas school districts also communicate positive information to the public through marquee announcements, entrance displays in administrative and school offices, local newspaper articles or other media.

Recommendation 15:

Develop a system to manage media relations that identifies positive events that should be reported to local media.

Emphasis should be placed on building strong two-way communication to facilitate improved community relations. Information disseminated by the district should include positive reports on the district. A commitment to open, honest communication should increase public trust and support.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent forms a public relations committee including himself, the coordinator of Community Involvement and principals.	June 2002
2.	The public relations committee meets to determine the types of positive events that should be reported to the media.	June 2002
3.	Qualifying events are reported to the director of Community Relations, who reports them to the media and principals.	July 2002
4.	Principals also publicize events at their schools through marquee announcements, letters to parents and other appropriate means.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

- A. Student Performance
- B. Special Education
- C. Title I/Compensatory Education
- D. Bilingual/English as a Second Language
- E. Gifted and Talented Education

Effective educational service delivery requires appropriate instructional guidance, capable teachers, adequate resources and a thorough understanding of students' instructional needs. Well-designed and implemented instructional programs are essential to meeting the needs of all students in WHISD. Instructional leadership from WHISD's central office and schools is directly responsible for these programs' effectiveness.

BACKGROUND

WHISD, located in southern Dallas County, serves the communities of Wilmer and Hutchins as well as portions of Dallas and Lancaster. District boundaries stretch approximately 17 miles from north to south and encompass 64 square miles with a mix of urban, suburban and rural settings. WHISD is in between three districts. Specifically, Dallas Independent School District is to its north, Lancaster ISD is to its east and Ferris Independent School District is to its south.

WHISD selected three Texas school districts to serve as the peer districts for comparative purposes during this review: La Marque, De Soto and Lancaster ISDs. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided information on the state-mandated student achievement test scores, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and other student performance measures, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test I (SAT) and the American College Testing Program (ACT).

Demographic, staffing and financial data for each school district and school are reported in TEA's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports. These reports are sent to each school and district and are available on TEA's Internet Web site (www.tea.state.tx.us). The latest AEIS data published by TEA are for 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-1 presents demographic information for WHISD, the selected peer districts and the state. WHISD, with a student enrollment of 3,283, is the smallest of the four districts. WHISD has the highest percent of minority student enrollment, 94.9 percent, and the highest percent of economically disadvantaged student enrollment, 71.9 percent, among the peer districts. WHISD's minority student enrollment is 36.9 percentage points higher than the state average of 58 percent, and the district's economically disadvantaged student enrollment is 22.6 percentage points higher than the state average of 49.3 percent.

**Exhibit 2-1
Demographic Characteristics of WHISD
and Peer School Districts
2000-01**

District	Number	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent Minority	Percent Eco-Disadvantaged
De Soto	6,941	56.4%	11.2%	31.0%	1.4%	69.0%	33.5%
Lancaster	4,206	68.6%	13.6%	17.3%	0.6%	82.7%	47.3%
La Marque	4,063	65.5%	13.6%	20.2%	0.7%	79.8%	49.0%
Wilmer-Hutchins	3,283	73.9%	20.7%	5.1%	0.3%	94.9%	71.9%
State	4,059,619	14.4%	40.6%	42.0%	3.0%	58.0%	49.3%

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

Exhibit 2-2 shows that WHISD's property value per student, \$126,513, ranks lowest among its peer districts and is lower than the state average of \$215,232. Compared to the peer districts, WHISD has the second lowest maintenance and operations (M&O) tax rate, \$1.465, for 2001. The range of property values per student, \$126,513 to \$297,873, varies significantly among the peer districts. All districts had a decrease in interest rates from 1997 to 2001, and with the exception of La Marque ISD, all districts had an increase in M&O tax rate from 1997 to 2001.

**Exhibit 2-2
Property Value Per Student and Standardized Tax Rates
1997 and 2001**

		Standardized Tax Rate			
		1997		2001	
District	Value/ Student	M&O*	Interest	M&O*	Interest
De Soto	\$193,686	\$1.371	\$0.400	\$1.500	\$0.160
Lancaster	\$198,337	\$1.283	\$0.527	\$1.405	\$0.247
La Marque	\$297,873	\$1.571	\$0.151	\$1.500	\$0.125
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$126,513	\$1.396	\$0.367	\$1.465	\$0.063
State	\$215,232	\$1.313	\$0.185	\$1.384	\$0.091

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

* Maintenance and Operations.

WHISD has five regular schools that were included in the state accountability rating system in 2000-01. Under the state accountability system, TEA assigns annual ratings to each district and school, based upon (1) Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), (2) attendance, (3) dropout rates and (4) data quality. The state accountability system includes five ratings for districts: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable and Suspended: Data Inquiry. The rating category Suspended: Data Inquiry is assigned to districts when serious data reporting errors affect one or more of the base indicators used to determine accountability ratings. **Exhibit 2-3** presents a summary of the ratings that can be applied by TEA to schools and districts.

Exhibit 2-3
TEA Accountability Ratings
2000-01

Rating	Applicability/Explanation
Exemplary	District and school
Recognized	District and school
Academically Acceptable	District
Acceptable	School
Academically Unacceptable	District

Low-Performing	School
Alternative Education (AE: Commended, AE: Acceptable, AE: Needs Peer Review, or AE: Not Rated)	Schools that applied and were identified as eligible to be evaluated under alternative education procedures.
Charter School	At the district level, open-enrollment charter schools receive the label Charter School. At the school level, they are given one of the four school ratings listed above, based on the regular accountability system. First year charter schools are not rated.
Not rated	These schools include those that do not serve students within the grade 1 to grade 12 span, such as pre-kindergarten centers and early education through kindergarten schools.
Academically Unacceptable: Special Accreditation Investigation	Special Accreditation Investigations may be conducted when excessive numbers of absences or exemptions of students eligible to be tested on state assessment instruments are determined; in response to complaints related to alleged violations of civil rights or other legal requirements; in response to compliance reviews of financial accounting practices and state and federal program requirements; when extraordinary numbers of students are placed in alternative education programs; and in response to allegations involving conflict between members of the board of trustees or between the board and the district administration.
Suspended: Data Inquiry	These districts and campuses have their ratings suspended due to serious errors in the reporting of PEIMS data that affect one or more of the base indicators used for assigning accountability ratings. The errors were of such magnitude that the results were deemed to be unsuitable for ratings purposes.

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

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

To achieve a Recognized rating, 80 percent of all students and each student group must pass the same TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests.

In 2000-01, to be rated Academically Acceptable, 50 percent of each student group must have passed TAAS. Beginning in 2000-01, scores for students with disabilities and results from the TAAS Spanish version of reading and mathematics in grades three through six were included in the accountability calculations.

A district is rated Academically Unacceptable, or Low-Performing at the school level, if less than 50 percent of students pass TAAS.

Until 2000-01 the state accountability system also considered attendance and dropout rates; however, beginning with 2000-01, attendance was no longer included. According to TEA, failure to meet TAAS standards is the primary reason that a school is rated low performing.

Exhibit 2-4 shows the accountability ratings of WHISD and its peers from 1996-97 through 2000-01. WHISD was rated as acceptable in 1997-98, 1999-2000 and 2000-01. However, the district was rated unacceptable during 1996-97 and 1998-99. Lancaster ISD was rated acceptable from 1997 through 2001. De Soto ISD and La Marque ISD received an acceptable rating in 1996-97; however, De Soto ISD received a recognized rating from 1998-99 through 2000-01, and La Marque ISD earned a recognized rating during 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-4
Accountability Ratings
WHISD and Peer Districts
1996-97 through 2000-01

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
De Soto	Acceptable	Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized
Lancaster	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
La Marque	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized
Wilmer-Hutchins	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

Exhibit 2-5 displays the accountability ratings for WHISD schools from 1996-97 through 2000-01. During 2000-01, WHISD's high school and

three elementary schools received acceptable ratings, and the middle school earned a low performing rating. Wilmer-Hutchins High and Wilmer Elementary improved their ratings from low performing in 1999-2000 to acceptable in 2000-01. In 1996-97, WHISD had one exemplary and two recognized elementary schools. However, no WHISD schools were recognized or exemplary in 1999-2000 or in 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-5
Accountability Ratings
WHISD Schools
1996-97 through 2000-01

School	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Wilmer-Hutchins High	Low Performing	Acceptable	Low Performing	Low Performing	Acceptable
Kennedy-Curry Middle	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Low Performing	Low Performing
Alta Mesa Elementary	Recognized	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Bishop Heights Elementary	Not Rated - PK-K	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Rated - PK-K
Hutchins Academic Center	Acceptable	Not Rated PK-K	Low Performing	Not Rated	Not Rated
C.S. Winn Elementary	Exemplary	Recognized	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mamie White Elementary	Recognized	*	*	*	*
Wilmer Elementary	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Low Performing	Acceptable
Hutchins 5th Grade	*	*	*	*	Not Rated

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

** School not open.*

Exhibit 2-6 sets forth the distribution of campus accountability ratings for WHISD, its peer districts and the state for 1996-97 and 2000-01. All of the peer districts except WHISD had two or more recognized or exemplary schools in 2000-01. Lancaster ISD had two schools with recognized ratings and six with acceptable ratings both in 1996-97 and 2000-01. De Soto ISD and La Marque ISD increased the number of exemplary or recognized schools from 1997 through 2001. Statewide the percent of districts with an exemplary or recognized rating increased from 38 percent to 60.1 percent. De Soto ISD and La Marque ISD followed the state trend of improvement from 1997 to 2001. However, Lancaster ISD and WHISD did not.

Exhibit 2-6
Distribution of Campus Accountability Ratings
WHISD, Peer Districts and State*
1996-97 and 2000-01

District	Exemplary	Recognized	Acceptable	Low Performing	Total Rated
1996-97 Ratings					
De Soto	0 (0.0%)	2 (20.0%)	8 (80.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10
Lancaster	0 (0.0%)	2 (25.0%)	6 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8
La Marque	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (71.4%)	1 (14.3%)	7
Wilmer-Hutchins	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	7
State	683 (11.3%)	1,617 (26.7%)	3,679 (60.9%)	67 (1.1%)	6,046
2000-01 Ratings					
De Soto	1 (9.1%)	7 (63.6%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0.0%)	11
Lancaster	0 (0.0%)	2 (25.0%)	6 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8
La Marque	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Wilmer-Hutchins	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5
State	1,567 (24.2%)	2,326 (35.9%)	2,476 (38.2%)	106 (1.6%)	6,475

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

*Accountability ratings of "Not Rated" and "Alternative Education"(AE)

are not included for comparison purposes. Ratings for charter schools are not included.

Exhibit 2-7 shows the number of students at each school in WHISD during 2000-01.

**Exhibit 2-7
Number of Students Enrolled by School
2000-01**

School	Grades Served	2000-01 Enrollment
Wilmer-Hutchins High	9-12	693
Kennedy-Curry Middle	6-8	672
Alta Mesa Elementary	1-4	501
Bishop Heights Elementary	PK-K	387
Hutchins Academic	6-12	70
C.S. Winn Elementary	PK-4	368
Wilmer Elementary	PK-4	351
Hutchins 5th Grade Center	5	241
Total		3,283

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

The number of students enrolled in each grade level in WHISD is provided in **Exhibit 2-8**. WHISD's student population increased from 1996-97 through 1998-99, but decreased from 1998-99 through 2000-01. From 1996-97 through 2000-01, WHISD's student population decreased nearly 3 percent. Between 1999-2000 and 2000-01, the student population decreased from 3,444 students to 3,283 students, a decline of 161 students due to the closing of the Early Childhood center.

**Exhibit 2-8
Number of Students Enrolled by Grade Level
1996-97 Through 2000-01**

Grade Level	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	5 Year Percent Change*
Early Childhood	80	177	**	0	0	(100%)

Pre-Kindergarten	200	254	490	455	382	91.0%
Kindergarten	299	251	270	280	254	(15.1%)
Grade 1	253	286	265	257	284	12.3%
Grade 2	300	246	284	229	236	(21.3%)
Grade 3	253	287	271	257	220	(13.0%)
Grade 4	258	237	296	256	231	(10.5%)
Grade 5	256	252	257	269	241	(5.9%)
Grade 6	230	245	247	217	219	(4.8%)
Grade 7	212	245	252	231	248	17.0%
Grade 8	179	201	243	234	225	25.7%
Grade 9	278	209	235	257	246	(11.5%)
Grade 10	202	242	213	170	212	5.0%
Grade 11	198	170	178	174	142	(28.3%)
Grade 12	183	193	149	158	143	(21.9%)
Total	3,381	3,495	3,651	3,444	3,283	(2.9%)

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

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

***Indicates fewer than five students.*

As shown in **Exhibit 2-9**, of the four districts, WHISD and Lancaster ISD have the lowest instructional expenditures per student, \$2,948. All of the peer districts have lower instructional expenditures per student than the state average. The 2000-01 AEIS reports show that there are differences among the expenditure patterns across the peer districts and WHISD. For example, WHISD ranks first in the percent of instructional expenditures spent on compensatory education,

11.9 percent, and ranks last among the peer districts in the percent allocated to gifted and talented education, 0.4 percent. WHISD ranks third in the percent of instructional expenditures spent on regular education, 71.1 percent, but is very close to the state percent of 70.7 percent.

Exhibit 2-9
Instructional Expenditures in WHISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Total Expenditures	Instructional Expenditures Per Student	Percent Regular	Percent Bilingual/ESL	Percent Career Tech.	Percent Compensatory	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Educ.
De Soto	\$42,220,956	\$3,278	80.7%	0.6%	3.6%	4.0%	1.7%	9.4%
Lancaster	\$23,254,569	\$2,948	74.5%	0.8%	5.3%	6.8%	1.1%	11.5%
La Marque	\$27,542,808	\$3,312	66.6%	0.2%	6.5%	5.5%	10.2%	11.1%
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$19,858,678	\$2,948	71.1%	0.8%	5.5%	11.9%	0.4%	10.3%
State	\$26,948,681,700	\$3,500	70.7%	4.3%	4.1%	6.6%	1.8%	12.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

As seen in **Exhibit 2-10**, WHISD has the highest percentage of students enrolled in bilingual/ESL education, career and technology, and gifted/talented programs in comparison to the peer districts. In contrast, WHISD ranks lowest among the peer districts in the percentage of students receiving special education services. The percent of students receiving special education service is approximately twice as high for the state, 11.9 percent, as for WHISD, 6.2 percent.

Exhibit 2-10
Student Enrollment by Program
2000-01

District	Percent Bilingual/ ESL	Percent Career & Technology	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Education
De Soto	2.2%	15.4%	7.0%	11.3%
Lancaster	4.3%	19.1%	6.1%	12.5%
La Marque	1.7%	17.7%	5.8%	11.6%
Wilmer-Hutchins	8.3%	20.7%	7.4%	6.2%
State	12.6%	18.9%	8.4%	11.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Career and Technology Education

During a 1999 District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) audit, TEA found that WHISD's Career and Technology Education (CATE) program was largely in compliance with state regulations. The only area where the district did not meet requirements was the public notice to students, employees and the general public regarding nondiscrimination of the program.

Nearly all students, whether they continue their education after high school or not, will migrate to the workplace. Section 29.181 of the Texas Education Code requires school districts to provide a curriculum affording each student the opportunity to "master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner; and gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student's education at the post-secondary level."

The State Board of Education (SBOE) rules require school districts to offer CATE courses in at least three of eight educational areas: agricultural science and technology, business/office technology, health science technology, family and consumer sciences, industrial technology, marketing, trade and industrial and career orientation. WHISD offers programs in six of the eight required areas.

Exhibit 2-11 compares WHISD's CATE program with its peer districts and regional and state averages.

Exhibit 2-11
Percentage of Student Enrollment and Budgeted Expenditures in
CATE
WHISD Versus Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Student Enrollment		Budgeted CATE Expenditures		
	Number	Percent	Expenditure	Percent	Per Capita
De Soto	1,072	15.4%	\$801,440	3.6%	\$748
Lancaster	803	19.1%	\$641,485	5.3%	\$799
La Marque	718	17.7%	\$847,548	6.5%	\$1,180
Wilmer-Hutchins	678	20.7%	\$516,306	5.5%	\$762
Region 10*	112,242	19.4%	\$70,389,373	3.7%	\$627
State	768,200	18.9%	\$566,681,113	4.1%	\$738

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

* Most current data available for Region 10 are from 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-12 shows the percentage of expenditures by instructional function for WHISD and the peer districts. Expenditures by function are expressed as a percent of total operating expenditures. Overall instruction includes all activities dealing directly with the interaction between teachers and students, including instruction aided with computers as well as expenditures to provide resources for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEP). Instructional-related services include expenditures for educational resources and media, such as resource centers and libraries, curriculum development and instructional staff development. Compared to its peer districts, WHISD has the lowest expenditures for instruction, instructional-related services and cocurricular and extracurricular activities. In contrast, the district has the highest expenditures for instructional leadership, student transportation, food services, central administration and plant maintenance and operations. WHISD had a higher percent of expenditures as compared to the state average in seven categories: instructional leadership, student support services, student transportation, food services, central administration, plant maintenance and operations and security and monitoring services.

Exhibit 2-12
Percentage of Total Budgeted Expenditures by Instructional Function
WHISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

Expenditure Category	Wilmer-Hutchins	De Soto	Lancaster	La Marque	State
Instruction	49.7%	59.2%	53.7%	51.6%	57.8%
Instructional-Related Services	2.6%	2.7%	3.7%	3.4%	3.0%
Instructional Leadership	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%
School Leadership	5.8%	5.7%	7.2%	5.9%	5.9%
Support Services - Student	5.1%	5.4%	3.5%	4.9%	4.5%
Student Transportation	4.0%	0.7%	0.4%	3.8%	2.8%
Food Services	6.4%	5.2%	5.3%	6.3%	5.5%
Cocurricular/Extracurricular	1.5%	2.6%	2.2%	3.6%	2.5%
Central Administration	5.7%	4.9%	4.5%	5.3%	4.0%
Plant Maintenance and Operations	15.8%	10.7%	13.8%	12.0%	10.8%

Security and Monitoring Services	0.9%	0.3%	1.4%	1.2%	0.6%
Data Processing Services	0.9%	1.2%	2.8%	0.7%	1.2%
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$6,049	\$6,083	\$5,529	\$6,779	\$6,638

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-13 shows the percentage of professional staff in various categories. WHISD ranks first among the peer districts and is higher than the state average in the percentage of central administration staff and educational aides. In contrast, WHISD's percentage of teachers and professional support staff is lower than that of the peer districts or the state. In WHISD, 83.1 percent of the teachers are minority teachers, which is approximately 56 percent higher than the state average and highest among the peer districts. The higher percentage of WHISD minority teachers matches WHISD's higher percentage of minority students in comparison to the peer districts and the state.

**Exhibit 2-13
Professional Staff
WHISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

Professional Staff	Wilmer-Hutchins	De Soto	Lancaster	La Marque	State
Teachers	41.9%	58.9%	48.8%	52.7%	50.8%
Professional Support	4.8%	6.6%	7.7%	8.9%	7.8%
School Administration	3.2%	3.8%	2.9%	2.6%	2.6%
Central Administration	3.4%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.8%
Educational Aides	18.7%	4.0%	9.2%	9.4%	10.2%
Auxiliary Staff	27.9%	25.7%	30.1%	25.4%	27.8%
Percent Minority Teachers	83.1%	19.4%	20.2%	49.6%	26.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-14 shows teacher experience and turnover rates for WHISD and the peer districts. WHISD has the second lowest turnover rate, 27.2 percent, of its peer districts. However, the turnover rate in WHISD and the three peer districts is higher than the state turnover rate of 16 percent. The percent of beginning teachers in WHISD, 15.2 percent, is the second

highest among the peer districts and is higher than the state average of 7.8 percent. Compared to the peer districts, the average years of total teacher experience in WHISD is the highest, 12.2 years, and close to the average of La Marque ISD, 11.8 years, and the state, 11.9 years. The average number of years that teachers have taught in WHISD, 8.1, is close to the state average of 7.9 years.

Exhibit 2-14
Teacher Experience and Turnover Rate
WHISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

	Wilmer-Hutchins	De Soto	Lancaster	La Marque	State
Beginning Teachers	15.2%	12.7%	28.2%	11.8%	7.8%
1-5 Years Experience	24.4%	38.2%	33.5%	31.1%	27.4%
6-10 Years Experience	13.1%	13.2%	8.4%	14.8%	18.1%
11-20 Years Experience	26.2%	18.6%	20.0%	17.9%	25.3%
Over 20 Years Experience	21.2%	17.2%	9.8%	24.3%	21.4%
Average Years Experience (total)	12.2	9.4	7.2	11.8	11.9
Average Years Experience with district	8.1	5.2	4.3	7.1	7.9
Turnover	27.2%	31.6%	35.5%	19.7%	16.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

WHISD has the second highest percentage of teachers with no degree compared to the peers and the state, as seen in **Exhibit 2-15**. However, WHISD's percentage of teachers with doctorates is higher than the state and peer districts.

Exhibit 2-15
Teacher Degrees
FWISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

	Wilmer-Hutchins	De Soto	Lancaster	La Marque	State
No Degree	2.7%	0.4%	1.4%	3.2%	1.3%

Bachelor	76.8%	79.4%	80.0%	72.3%	74.7%
Master	19.4%	19.7%	18.2%	23.8%	23.4%
Doctorate	1.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE (PART 1)

Effective instruction depends upon appropriate human and fiscal resources, and upon support from the district's central office. The school administrative and instructional teams must be qualified and active in planning and implementing the curriculum. TAAS performance, the primary factor in determining a district's accountability ratings, depends on effective instruction.

TAAS is administered in grades 3-8 and 10, and includes a reading and mathematics test in each grade it is given and a writing assessment in grades 4, 8 and 10. Science and social studies tests are included at grade 8. The Spanish version of TAAS is given in grades 3-6. Also included in the TEA student assessment system are examinations in Algebra I in grades 7-12, Biology I in grades 8-12, English II and United States History. On an incremental basis between 2000 and 2003, changes will be made to the TAAS administration schedule, particularly at the high school level. By 2003, TAAS will be replaced by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills (TAKS) and administered in grades 9, 10 and 11. Reading and mathematics tests will be added at grade 9. The exit-level examination will be moved to grade 11 and will include science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics. A science test will be added at grade 5.

FINDING

WHISD conducted a comprehensive internal needs assessment of the district's student academic performance, existing academic programs, teacher grading patterns, student and teacher attendance, student dropout rates, district and campus improvement plans and the condition of school facilities in 2000-01. In addition, the needs assessment included a review of the district's progress toward compliance with federal and state education mandates. The director of Research, Planning and Evaluation conducted the evaluation and wrote the summary report entitled *Wilmer Hutchins Independent School District Annual Needs Assessment Report*.

The purpose of the study is to help the WHISD Board, district administrative staff, the District Advisory Committee and the Campus Advisory Committees make quality decisions related to "redesigning the

school curriculum, programs and services and upgrading the school facilities to better meet the needs of students in at risk situations." Also, the results of the needs assessment are to guide the district and campus advisory committees in the development of the District and Campus Improvement Plans.

The needs assessment is thorough and contains numerous data tables, graphs and short summary statements to identify areas that should be improved. In addition, the needs assessment includes suggestions for developing a communication and information tracking system for the district's special programs to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws and policies.

COMMENDATION

WHISD has conducted an internal needs assessment to improve district educational service delivery.

FINDING

Curriculum and instruction responsibilities in WHISD have been decentralized and are unfocused and uncoordinated. The position of director of Curriculum and Instruction has been vacant since July 2001 when the most recent staff member to hold that position resigned. The superintendent has assumed the responsibilities of the vacant director of Curriculum and Instruction's position. WHISD has a list of duties assigned to specific staff members; however, WHISD staff members do not have a roster of names or phone numbers of the persons assigned to districtwide curriculum and instruction duties.

Several coordinators who were previously in central administration were decentralized to individual schools during July 2001. In an interview, the superintendent said that the reason for the moves was the 2001 budget deficit and the need to improve achievement. The superintendent said that the administrators who were moved to schools serve as curriculum experts for the school and carry out some districtwide curriculum duties as well. The superintendent hopes to have a position for a central office director of Curriculum and Instruction approved in January 2002 and in place by March 2002.

The following positions related to curriculum and instruction are in place: a director of Special Education; a director of Research, Evaluation and Planning; a director of Alternative Programs; two elementary curriculum specialists; one secondary curriculum specialist; an elementary TEKS coordinator; two technology coordinators; a coordinator of career and technology education; a security coordinator and an athletic director.

Except for the directors of Special Education and Research, Evaluation and Planning, the other positions are new, and the staff members work at a school rather than a central administration location.

Constant turnover both in central administration and at the school level adds to the uncoordinated efforts regarding curriculum and instruction in WHISD. Staff members interviewed cited low morale, confusion and multiple curriculum initiatives that were never fully implemented as problems in the district. For example, the district had a reading coordinator responsible for implementing a reading initiative to raise the reading achievement of WHISD students. However, the reading coordinator resigned during the summer of 2001 and has not been replaced. As a result, the initiative ended when the staff member left the district. Another example is the change of principals at Wilmer-Hutchins High School, eight different individuals have held the position of principal at the high school in the three years from 1997-98 through 2000-01. The 2001-02 high school principal is beginning their second consecutive year. In addition, some staff members interviewed did not know who coordinated their programs at the district level due to the recent changes in central administration. As a result, they did not have a contact person at central administration to answer questions related to the their programs.

Recommendation 16:

Fill the vacant director of Curriculum and Instruction position and create a districtwide organizational Curriculum and Instruction responsibilities roster.

A staff member familiar with WHISD curriculum and instruction functions should be placed at central administration to coordinate all district curriculum efforts. One of the decentralized positions should be moved to this position. To clarify central roles for all school staff members, a roster should be created that includes all duties related to curriculum and instruction, who is assigned the specific duty and a phone number for quick reference.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the executive director of Human Resources to create a job description and post the position of director of Curriculum and Instruction.	April 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources posts the job.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent interviews candidates for the position.	May - June 2002

4.	The director of Curriculum and Instruction is hired and begins work.	July 2002
5.	The director of Curriculum and Instruction works with the superintendent to create a roster defining districtwide curriculum responsibilities by staff person.	July - August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district has no districtwide curriculum plan for all district curriculum efforts and has few to no curriculum guides in most subjects. Curriculum guides serve as work plans to guide teachers when planning instruction. Specifically, effective curriculum guides include student objectives, instructional resources, suggested classroom strategies for delivering course content and ways to assess whether students have mastered student objectives. In addition, curriculum guides should be aligned with the TEKS. To be of use to teachers, curriculum guides must be current. They should be reviewed on a four- to six-year cycle to ensure that they remain updated and contain the elements useful to classroom teachers.

The district's math curriculum guide, developed in 1999-2000, covers early childhood through grade 12. The reading/language arts curriculum guide, developed in 2000-01, spans pre-kindergarten through third grade. In addition to the math and reading/language arts curriculum guides, all schools were provided TEKS notebooks at the beginning of 2001-02. The TEKS notebooks include copies of the TEKS for each grade level or course. TEKS define the basic content to be taught in Texas and outline the knowledge and skills required of every student through the statewide accountability system.

The results of a curriculum audit conducted in 1998-99 by the Texas Curriculum Management Audit Center showed that WHISD lacked direction related to curriculum. Also, they found many areas in which curriculum guides were missing or inadequate. At the time of the audit, curriculum guides were provided for 64.4 percent of the subjects taught at the elementary level. One curriculum guide was available for middle school subjects, grade 6 Health, and no high school curriculum guides were presented to the curriculum audit team. Except for math and reading/language arts, no guides have been developed or updated since the 1998-99 curriculum audit.

One of the responsibilities of the TEKS coordinator and curriculum specialists is to "assist with the development of instructional guidelines for the campus served." According to the superintendent, the TEKS coordinator and curriculum specialists have been assigned to develop curricular plans, create curriculum guides, and align staff development with the curriculum in WHISD. The campus TEKS coordinator and curriculum specialists have also been assigned to work with teachers in preparing the benchmark tests for TAAS.

The math curriculum guide and TEKS notebooks do not include a prescribed sequence or time of year for when the TEKS should be taught. However, the reading/language art curriculum guide is precise and includes the week each reading/language arts curriculum objective is to be taught. The superintendent said that the district is reviewing Fort Worth ISD's curriculum guides, *Pathways to Excellence*. Also, WHISD has purchased TEKStar software, which includes lesson plans tied to the TEKS and TAAS objectives.

A lack of curriculum coordination can indirectly affect student test scores. By coordinating curriculum efforts consistently across a district through a districtwide curriculum plan, districts ensure that all district students are taught the same concepts at the same time of the year. Likewise, once test results become available, district staff members can target curriculum areas to be improved across the district. In addition, the review of student test results creates an opportunity to revisit the district curriculum plan and revise the plan to ensure that all students in the district are receiving adequate instruction in all subject areas.

In WHISD, the 2001 student TAAS passing rate for all tests taken was lower than the passing rate in 1997 and was below peer district, Regional Education Service Center X (Region 10) and state averages. As shown in **Exhibit 2-16**, the percentage of students passing all tests taken in WHISD decreased from 64.7 percent in 1997 to 58.4 percent in 2001, a decline of 9.6 percent. In contrast, the percent of students passing all TAAS tests taken increased from 1997 through 2001 in the peer districts, Region 10 and the state overall. In 1997, WHISD had the second highest percent of students passing all TAAS tests taken compared to the peer districts. By 2001, the percent of students passing all tests taken decreased, and WHISD had the lowest percent of students passing all TAAS tests taken in comparison to the peer districts. In 2001, Region 10 and the state's percent of students passing all TAAS tests taken is approximately 23 percentage points higher than WHISD.

Exhibit 2-16
Percentage of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken

**Sum of Grades 3-8 and 10
1996-97 through 2000-01**

District	1997 Rank	2001 Rank	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Percent Change from 1997 to 2001*
De Soto	1	1	73.9%	79.4%	80.6%	82.0%	81.0%	9.6%
Lancaster	3	3	63.9%	60.5%	64.3%	66.9%	71.2%	11.4%
La Marque	4	2	57.4%	69.8%	73.9%	79.2%	78.0%	35.9%
Wilmer-Hutchins	2	4	64.7%	64.2%	52.8%	50.6%	58.4%	(9.7%)
Region 10	N/A	N/A	73.4%	77.4%	78.5%	78.2%	80.6%	9.8%
State	N/A	N/A	73.2%	77.7%	78.3%	79.9%	82.1%	12.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

* Percent Change is defined as 2001 minus 1997.

The district's five-year TAAS performance from 1996-97 through 2000-01 is shown in **Exhibit 2-17**. Scores fluctuated between 1997 and 2001. However, the passing rates in 2000-01 are lower than the passing rates in 1996-97 for 11 of the 15 comparisons.

**Exhibit 2-17
Percentage of WHISD Students Passing TAAS, All Grade Levels
1996-97 through 2000-01**

All Students					
Subject	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Reading	79.9%	79.9%	69.4%	66.5%	73.8%
Math	72.1%	71.5%	62.9%	59.7%	71.3%
Writing	67.7%	70.0%	73.3%	67.8%	68.3%
African American Students					
Subject	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Reading	79.5%	79.4%	70.1%	66.2%	72.8%

Math	70.4%	70.0%	61.5%	59.2%	68.6%
Writing	67.4%	70.2%	73.7%	69.9%	69.6%
Hispanic Students					
Subject	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Reading	79.0%	81.6%	65.1%	66.7%	73.7%
Math	76.5%	75.9%	66.2%	61.4%	78.5%
Writing	61.3%	61.9%	70.0%	58.5%	59.1%
Anglo Students					
Subject	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Reading	87.9%	84.5%	69.1%	72.4%	88.9%
Math	85.1%	84.5%	73.9%	63.2%	82.7%
Writing	90.9%	94.4%	76.0%	71.4%	87.5%
Economically Disadvantaged Students					
Subject	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Reading	82.6%	80.4%	68.2%	67.0%	73.1%
Math	77.2%	73.3%	62.5%	59.9%	71.7%
Writing	69.5%	70.7%	72.3%	67.9%	67.5%

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

While there are varying efforts at the elementary, middle and high school levels on the part of principals and teachers to address the curriculum needs of the students, there is no unified approach or process linking the subject matter and information taught at each grade level and transitioning from the elementary to the middle to the high school for any subject. Principals and staff members interviewed said that grade level planning meetings are held at their schools to ensure teachers are teaching the same concepts across grade levels. Also, teachers who teach the same subject meet occasionally to ensure that the curriculum is aligned across grade levels at their school. However, the principals and staff members interviewed said that there is no planning or alignment of curriculum efforts between elementary and middle school and between middle and high school.

The superintendent has been working with TEA to make 2001-02 staff development decisions, and the elementary curriculum coordinator at Wilmer Elementary has been assigned to assist with the development and

implementation of staff development based upon decisions made by the superintendent. The focus of staff development for all staff members in October 2001 was on helping students master the TEKS and improving student achievement. WHISD is a member of the Region 10 cooperative for staff development. A review of 2000-01 attendance records showed that some WHISD staff members attended Region 10 staff development sessions. However, no one coordinates staff participation in Region 10 professional development offerings.

An effective plan for curriculum development and management provides direction for a district's curriculum and instructional delivery. A plan generally follows a timeline for the establishment of procedures to develop, revise, delete, enrich and evaluate written curriculum in all areas. In addition, the plan is designed to be coordinated with other district processes such as professional development, textbook adoption, budget development and districtwide long-range planning.

Staff development is most effective when it is matched to the curriculum and focused on improving instruction. According to the U.S. Department of Education's *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders*, "professional development is an often neglected element of the academic program in low-performing schools. To be effective, professional development activities must center on the classroom."

Recommendation 17:

Develop a comprehensive curriculum plan and add curriculum guides.

A coordinated approach in developing curriculum is necessary to provide a clear focus for the entire school district and to ensure consistency in instructional delivery. The curriculum plan should delineate responsibilities for curriculum guide development, review and management; staff development; long-range planning; textbook adoption; evaluation; and reports to the board on program effectiveness and program budgeting.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 10 to obtain sample curriculum management plans.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent assigns the TEKS coordinator and curriculum specialists to review sample curriculum management plans and develop a plan for WHISD.	May 2002

3.	The superintendent, principals and a group of selected teachers review the plan and give suggestions for improvement.	June 2002
4.	The TEKS coordinator and curriculum specialists make suggested revisions to the curriculum plan.	July 2002
5.	The superintendent reviews the revised curriculum management plan and submits the plan to the board for approval.	August 2002
6.	The board approves the plan.	August 2002
7.	The superintendent, principals, TEKS coordinator, curriculum specialists and teachers implement the plan.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Fifteen teams of three teachers per team will be needed to provide input into the curriculum guide writing process. The teams will write 45 guides per year for a total of 135 guides in a three-year cycle and revise outdated guides as needed thereafter. The estimate assumes that each teacher will be paid approximately \$200 per day (average teacher salary of \$37,355 divided by 185 days = \$200 per day) for five days during the summer months. (Three teachers per team for 5 days at \$200 a day or 3 teachers x 5 days = 15 x \$200 = \$3,000 x 15 teams = \$45,000 per year.)

The cost for an outside consultant to conduct a one-day training session and provide a one-day review of the writing process and a two-day critique of the guides produced is estimated at \$4,000, (4 days at \$800 per day = \$3,200 plus \$800 for expenses related to travel, printing and telephone/fax, for a total of \$4,000) for each year of the three year cycle. Total costs equal \$45,000 + \$4,000 or \$49,000 per year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop a comprehensive curriculum plan and add curriculum guides.	(\$49,000)	(\$49,000)	(\$49,000)	\$0	\$0

FINDING

WHISD secondary TAAS scores are well below regional and state averages. WHISD 2001 TAAS scores, when reviewed by grade level, are lower than Region 10 and the state in all comparisons. **Exhibit 2-18** shows the percentage of WHISD students in each grade level passing all TAAS tests taken is lower than Region 10 and the state, except for third grade.

This discrepancy is highest in grades six, eight and 10. The percent of students in WHISD passing all TAAS tests taken in grades six, eight and 10 is 38 to 41 percentage points lower than the region and the state.

Exhibit 2-18
Percentage of Students Passing TAAS
In WHISD, Region 10 and State
1996-97 and 2000-01

Grade Level*	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies		All Tests Taken	
	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001
Grade 3												
WHISD	89.5%	89.2%	88.2%	92.1%							84.9%	83.3%
Region 10	80.3%	85.3%	79.5%	81.1%							72.7%	76.6%
State	81.5%	86.8%	81.7%	83.1%							74.2%	78.2%
Grade 4												
WHISD	83.2%	80.4%	83.8%	68.9%	80.9%	74.9%					68.5%	58.5%
Region 10	81.2%	88.1%	80.4%	88.0%	86.0%	86.9%					70.4%	77.9%
State	82.5%	90.8%	82.6%	91.3%	87.1%	89.2%					72.0%	81.6%
Grade 5												
WHISD	91.8%	75.3%	96.7%	74.7%							89.8%	64.8%
Region 10	82.9%	87.2%	83.2%	91.9%							76.7%	84.6%
State	84.8%	90.2%	86.2%	94.6%							79.2%	88.2%
Grade 6												
WHISD	97.8%	50.3%	89.0%	60.8%							86.8%	44.5%
Region 10	85.9%	85.8%	82.5%	91.3%							78.0%	83.0%
State	84.6%	85.6%	81.8%	91.4%							76.8%	82.7%
Grade 7												
WHISD	60.0%	70.5%	46.7%	74.6%							42.0%	62.4%

Region 10	85.4%	88.3%	79.7%	88.1%							75.9%	82.9%
State	84.5%	89.4%	79.7%	89.6%							75.1%	84.3%
Grade 8												
WHISD	63.0%	85.9%	45.2%	70.6%	53.9%	63.2%	60.9%	77.3%	29.4%	43.4%	21.1%	27.8%
Region 10	84.7%	91.1%	77.3%	91.1%	81.8%	85.3%	83.7%	90.5%	69.3%	77.0%	59.2%	69.0%
State	83.9%	91.9%	76.3%	92.4%	80.7%	85.8%	84.6%	91.8%	67.4%	77.0%	57.3%	69.2%
Grade 10												
WHISD	61.2%	64.9%	32.9%	55.6%	63.3%	67.1%					25.5%	42.1%
Region 10	87.7%	90.2%	74.9%	89.3%	89.6%	89.8%					70.7%	81.0%
State	86.1%	90.0%	72.6%	89.3%	88.5%	89.1%					67.8%	80.3%

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

** Blank areas indicate that the TAAS is not administered in those grade levels for those particular tests.*

Performance on "all TAAS tests taken" depends upon passing the reading, writing and mathematics sections of the tests. Writing tests are administered only in grades four, eight and 10. At grade eight, "all tests taken" also includes a science and social studies test. Science and social studies tests are not included in determining accountability ratings. Because there are five tests administered in grade eight, this grade level typically has the lowest percentage of students passing all tests taken.

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) will replace the TAAS in spring 2003 and will be based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). According to the Regional Education Service Center XIII (Region 13) Office of Texas High School Education *Critical Issues Report #1*, "this TEKS-based program will be more rigorous and comprehensive than the TAAS tests that have been administered since 1994." The TAKS will be expanded to include more grade levels and more subject areas. A new exit-level assessment will be given to students in grade 11 and will be expanded from two to four subject areas. Specifically, the new grade 11 exit-level exam will contain mathematics, including Algebra I and Geometry; English language arts, including English III and writing; social studies, including early American and U.S. History; and science, including biology and integrated chemistry and

physics. With the addition of science and social studies to the new exit-level test, the End-of-Course exams will be eliminated after the 2002 spring semester.

The 2000-01 grade eight students will be the first group required to pass the new exit-level 11th grade TAKS test to earn a high school diploma. The WHISD grade eight "all tests taken" passing rate of 27.8 percent shows that the 72.2 percent who did not pass all tests taken are at risk of not passing the new 2003-04 exit-level exam and thus at-risk of not earning a high school diploma.

Kennedy-Curry Middle School received a low-performing rating from TEA in 1999-2000 and 2000-01. The middle school received a low performing rating in 2000 due to an attendance rate below 94 percent and Hispanic writing scores below 50 percent passing. In 2001, the middle school received a low performing rating due to the low Hispanic writing scores once again. Beginning in 2001, the accountability system no longer included attendance as part of the rating requirement. However, the middle school's attendance rate remained below 94 percent, which was the previous requirement for receiving an acceptable rating.

Exhibit 2-19 displays the attendance and TAAS passing rates from 1997 through 2001 for Kennedy-Curry Middle School. Attendance between 1997 and 2000 has ranged from a low of 91.5 percent in 1999 to a high of 92.4 percent in 1997. Approximately 53 percent of Kennedy-Curry middle school students passed all TAAS tests taken in 2001. This means that 47 percent of 2000-01 middle school students are at risk of not attaining a high school diploma, since students must pass all tests taken on the new 2003-04 high school exit-level exam.

Exhibit 2-19
Kennedy-Curry Middle School Attendance and TAAS Scores
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Attendance Rate	92.4%	91.9%	91.5%	92.3%	N/A
All Tests Taken					
All	37.7%	58.6%	51.9%	47.9%	53.2%
African American	34.8%	57.0%	53.2%	48.6%	51.9%
Hispanic	53.1%	60.4%	44.7%	45.5%	54.3%
Anglo	50.0%	81.8%	53.8%	47.6%	68.2%
Economically Disadvantaged	35.5%	58.9%	51.1%	46.8%	50.6%

Reading					
All	61.4%	72.5%	69.6%	62.2%	68.8%
African American	58.9%	70.8%	71.9%	63.6%	67.1%
Hispanic	75.0%	76.3%	59.6%	57.3%	72.7%
Anglo	75.0%	86.4%	66.7%	57.1%	81.0%
Economically Disadvantaged	59.4%	72.4%	68.9%	61.3%	65.7%
Math					
All	46.0%	64.5%	60.2%	63.7%	68.9%
African American	43.6%	61.9%	60.0%	62.9%	67.1%
Hispanic	60.7%	71.7%	57.6%	67.4%	73.3%
Anglo	56.3%	85.7%	69.2%	61.9%	80.0%
Economically Disadvantaged	43.3%	65.0%	59.9%	60.9%	68.8%
Writing					
All	53.9%	64.1%	79.6%	57.1%	63.2%
African American	51.7%	62.9%	82.3%	61.4%	67.1%
Hispanic	53.3%	62.5%	67.7%	43.3%	43.8%
Anglo	87.5%	*	71.4%	33.3%	*
Economically Disadvantaged	42.2%	63.3%	78.2%	56.3%	61.7%

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

*Fewer than five students took the exam.

Wilmer-Hutchins High School received a low performing rating in 1996-97, 1998-99 and 1999-2000. However, the high school improved the rating to Academically Acceptable in 2000-01. **Exhibit 2-20** shows attendance from 1997 through 2000 and TAAS passing rates from 1997 through 2001 for the high school. The attendance rate at Wilmer-Hutchins High School was below 90 percent from 1997 through 2000. Further, less than 50 percent of high school students passed all tests taken in 2001. This shows that most students did not do well enough on the exit-level test to earn a high school diploma the first time they took the test. According to the 2001 WHISD annual needs assessment, 18 seniors did not graduate in 2001 because they either could not pass the TAAS or did not have adequate credits to receive a diploma.

Exhibit 2-20
Wilmer-Hutchins High School Attendance and TAAS Scores
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Attendance Rate	87.5%	89.8%	88.4%	88.7%	N/A
All Tests Taken					
All	25.5%	27.8%	38.2%	42.2%	42.1%
African American	23.8%	26.8%	37.0%	37.8%	43.3%
Hispanic	25.0%	31.3%	58.3%	60.0%	34.8%
Anglo	*	*	20.0	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	24.0%	28.4%	38.1%	50.0%	42.9%
Reading					
All	61.2%	67.7%	67.7%	69.9%	64.9%
African American	58.9%	66.7%	70.3%	65.3%	68.3%
Hispanic	75.0%	81.3%	50.0%	93.3%	47.8%
Anglo	*	*	40.0%	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	54.0%	69.4%	70.5%	74.6%	64.5%
Math					
All	32.9%	42.5%	51.5%	50.0%	55.6%
African American	32.0%	40.8%	50.4%	44.9%	53.2%
Hispanic	25.0%	50.0%	58.3%	73.3%	69.6%
Anglo	*	*	60.0%	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	34.0%	48.1%	52.6%	59.4%	57.9%
Writing					
All	63.3%	60.5%	75.2%	81.8%	67.1%
African American	62.1%	58.1%	73.9%	81.5%	69.4%
Hispanic	66.7%	80.0%	77.8%	80.0%	56.5%
Anglo	*	*	100.0%	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	67.3%	58.9%	77.2%	82.0%	60.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01.
**Fewer than five students took the exam.*

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE (PART 2)

A view of a district's End-of-Course exams can serve as a preview of student performance on the new exit-level TAKS test. **Exhibit 2-21** shows that WHISD's passing rates for Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U.S. History End-of-Course exams are lower than the peer districts and the state average. The largest discrepancies between WHISD passing rates and those of the peer districts and the state are for Algebra I and U.S. History. Statewide, 49.2 percent of students passed the Algebra I test. However, the passing rate for WHISD students was 2.1 percent, a difference of 47.1 percent. The difference between the state passing rate and the WHISD passing rate on the U.S. History exam was 45.6 percentage points with 28.7 percent of WHISD students passing the test and 74.3 percent passing statewide. The percent of WHISD students passing the Biology End-of-Course exam was 38 percentage points lower than the state average. A difference of 25.9 percentage points exists between the state and WHISD passing rate for the English II exam. Without improved scores on the End-of-Course tests as well as TAAS tests at all grade levels, few WHISD students will earn a high school diploma when the new TAKS test is in place.

Exhibit 2-21
WHISD and Peer Districts
Percent Passing End-of-Course Exams by Student Group
2000-01

District	Percent of Students Passing Algebra I				
	All Students	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged
De Soto	38.0%	28.9%	49.1%	52.0%	24.7%
Lancaster	12.9%	10.2%	5.9%	30.0%	11.8%
La Marque	28.3%	25.7%	24.4%	46.0%	24.3%
Wilmer-Hutchins	2.1%	1.8%	4.3%	0.0%	2.4%
State	49.2%	31.3%	37.5%	63.1%	36.0%

District	Percent of Students Passing Biology I				
	All Students	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged
De Soto	78.5%	73.8%	87.8%	88.6%	74.2%
Lancaster	59.3%	56.2%	41.4%	88.4%	60.5%
La Marque	68.4%	62.5%	75.0%	83.9%	52.8%
Wilmer-Hutchins	41.9%	43.8%	37.5%	*	46.4%
State	79.9%	68.1%	67.9%	92.0%	66.8%
District	Percent of Students Passing English II				
	All Students	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged
De Soto	69.1%	65.4%	58.5%	78.9%	61.9%
Lancaster	67.8%	67.0%	63.0%	73.6%	61.8%
La Marque	76.5%	73.3%	100.0%	84.1%	67.3%
Wilmer-Hutchins	49.2%	48.7%	54.5%	*	48.5%
State	75.1%	65.0%	68.2%	82.1%	65.4%
District	Percent of Students Passing US History				
	All Students	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged
De Soto	75.2%	65.6%	77.4%	89.2%	60.3%
Lancaster	62.1%	55.6%	58.1%	82.8%	54.8%
La Marque	57.9%	51.6%	73.3%	76.6%	45.5%
Wilmer-Hutchins	28.7%	28.2%	30.4%	*	30.4%
State	74.3%	60.3%	63.1%	85.2%	59.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

*Fewer than five students took the exam.

Exhibit 2-22 shows the grade level distribution for 2000-01 high school course grades. Student grades given to WHISD high school students include A, B, C, F and student failure due to being absent more than 10 percent of the class days, denoted as A/F. High school course failure rates decreased as grade level increased. Specifically, the percent of failing grades given to grade 9 students was 36.9 percent, and the percent of

failing grades given to grade 10 and 11 students was 28.3 percent and 27 percent. The failure rate in grade 12 was smaller at 7.9 percent. The percent of failing grades given to all high school students was 27.9 percent.

Exhibit 2-22
WHISD High School Grade Distribution Chart
2000-01

Grade	No. of Students	No. of Courses Taken	No. of Grades Given	A	B	C	F	A/F*	F and A/F
9	233	1,559	1,841	15.4%	23.0%	24.7%	21.6%	15.3%	36.9%
10	185	1,161	1,332	18.7%	23.0%	29.9%	15.5%	12.8%	28.3%
11	122	714	826	16.6%	23.6%	32.8%	13.4%	13.6%	27.0%
12	138	806	840	38.7%	30.1%	23.2%	3.9%	4.0%	7.9%
Total	445	4,240	4,839	20.5%	24.3%	27.3%	15.5%	12.4%	27.9%

Source: WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report, 2000-01

**Student failure due to being absent more than 10 percent of the class days.*

***Some percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.*

According to the district annual needs assessment for 2000-01, parents and board members expressed concern about teachers who are allowed to teach in WHISD based on seniority, but are not held accountable for failing a sizeable portion of the students they teach each year. **Exhibit 2-23** shows middle and high school teachers who failed 20 or more students during the 2000-01 school year. One middle school teacher gave 59 failing grades in science and social studies classes, and a U.S. History teacher gave 51 failing grades. At the high school level, three teachers gave more than 100 failing grades. The reasons for high failure rates could be due to students not completing the required work, students not being prepared for the high school courses because of inadequate preparation at the middle school level or teachers not providing adequate instruction and reteaching when necessary.

The high school principal was concerned about some teachers giving too many failing grades. However, the principal has not had support from central administration or the board to terminate teachers who do not

improve their instruction or work to decrease course failures. Beginning with the first six-week period of fall 2001, the high school principal has required teachers with high course failure rates to develop a plan of action including "re-teach activities" to reduce failure rates.

Exhibit 2-23
WHISD Teachers With More Than 20 Course Failures
2000-01

Course	Failures Per Teacher
Grade 6	
Reading	24
Social Studies/Science	59
Science	30
Business Computer	41
Physical Education	28
Grade 7	
Math	21
Texas History	43
Physical Education	34
Language Arts	24
Grade 8	
Reading	22
Math	21
U.S. History	51
Science II	22
Grade 9	
Keyboarding	22
Integrated Physics and Chemistry	102
World Geography	132
English I	40
Algebra I	100

Integrated Physics and Chemistry	79
World Geography	48
Algebra I	43
Technology System	50
Grade 10	
U.S. History	30
English II	32
Grade 11	
Chemistry I	25

Source: WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report, 2000-01.

While WHISD has programs to provide remediation to students who did not pass the TAAS test or who were close to failing the TAAS, remediation is not provided based on low course grades.

Two of the three high school remediation programs were implemented at the time of the review team's visit, and the other was scheduled to begin at the beginning of the second six-week grading period.

- Academics Plus tutoring is provided for ninth- and tenth-grade students who had a TAAS Texas Learning Index (TLI) score below 76 on TAAS tests taken when they were in the eighth grade. Seniors who have not passed the TAAS will also receive the tutoring. Students will be placed into a class during the day and receive instruction with a three to one ratio. The district hires a private company to do the instruction.
- Nova Net, a computer-based tutoring program, is available to seniors during the lunch hour. Also, other students are scheduled to use the program during the school day.
- Beginning with the second six weeks of school, high school teachers will tutor students who have not passed the TAAS test in the afternoons after school. Students who have not passed the TAAS high school graduation requirement are required to attend.

The middle school has planned remediation programs, but at the time of the review team's visit, none of the remediation programs were implemented. The following remediation efforts were planned for the middle school in the fall of 2001.

- Teacher volunteers will provide mandatory after-school tutoring for 20 students. Two of the teacher volunteers are bilingual teachers. A writing computer lab is available as part of the after-school tutoring. However, most computers in the lab were not working at the time of the review team's visit.
- A private company, hired by WHISD, provides Academics Plus tutoring for students who had a TAAS TLI score between 50 and 71 on any of the spring 2001 TAAS tests. Students will be placed into a class during the day and receive instruction with a 3 to 1 student to instructor ratio.

In an effort to increase student performance on TAAS, the superintendent has assigned campus administrators to develop and administer TAAS benchmark tests each six weeks of 2001-02. Teachers will administer the tests to all students who will take the TAAS in spring of 2002. In addition, all WHISD schools have AEIS-IT software to analyze TAAS data. Use of AEIS-IT software allows school staff members to review TAAS data by school, grade level, student, teacher and TAAS objective and to focus TAAS remediation and instructional efforts on TAAS areas that should be improved. Except for the high school, the school administrators interviewed said that they were waiting on the technology department to enter the spring 2001 TAAS data into the AEIS-IT database at their campus and could not yet use AEIS-IT for spring 2001 TAAS analyses.

In May 1998, the U.S. Department of Education published *Turning Around Low Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders*. The guide can be found on the web at www.ed.gov/pubs. The guide explains strategies that some states and districts have pursued to help turn around low-performing schools. According to the report, "high-performing schools align curriculum, classroom practices and professional development with high academic standards for all students. These schools also build a sense of teamwork among staff, work in partnership with parents and the community and use performance data to inform choices and create a cycle of continuous improvement." To build the capacity of schools to improve student achievement, priorities should be set at the district level including:

- *Ensuring* strong leadership at the school;
- *Promoting* policies that encourage teacher commitment to reform;
- *Using* resources strategically;
- *Helping* schools use performance data to drive improvement;
- *Working* in partnership with the community; and
- *Providing* incentives for change and support for innovation.

The guide also discusses interventions used to overhaul chronically low-performing schools. Interventions vary from school redesign to

reconstitution, a last resort. The guide explains that "reconstitution involves closing a school and reopening it with new school leaders and usually with new teachers and staff." An intervention cannot succeed unless those who work in the school cooperate and are committed to turning the school around.

Spring ISD in Houston, Texas increased its passing rates at most levels in all subjects and remained above the state average by creating a specific plan for improvement and focusing on student achievement at all academic levels. The improvement plan has several components, including staff development, directed at the identification and remediation of student deficiencies. A second component is the provision of reports and summaries of TAAS data to schools. The purpose of these reports is to provide individual student data and summary data to teachers and other staff assisting them in identifying the remedial needs of individual students and groups of students. Remediation efforts focus on individual and small group activities offered during, before and after school.

Recommendation 18:

Use student achievement data, including course grades and achievement test scores, to identify student and teacher needs and improve student performance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent reviews student TAAS, benchmark and course data by school to identify areas that require improvement.	May - July 2002 and Ongoing
2.	The superintendent meets with principals each six weeks to discuss districtwide and school-specific areas that should be targeted for improvement. The superintendent highlights progress made and areas that should be targeted for improvement.	August 2002 and Ongoing
3.	Each principal studies the 2001-02 student achievement data to identify performance of students by each teacher in the school and compares it to each teacher's performance in past years.	August 2002 and Ongoing
4.	Principals meet with faculty each six weeks to discuss school-level benchmark and course data. Principals highlight progress made and discuss areas that should be improved.	September 2002 and Ongoing
5.	Teachers review student TAAS scores, benchmark scores and grades to identify overall curricular areas to improve and if needed, to reteach. Teachers also identify at-risk and low	September 2002 and Ongoing

	performing students and develop strategies to address individual student needs.	
6.	The principals meet with individual teachers who have high failure rates on TAAS, benchmark tests or grades to develop an improvement plan that includes specific teaching strategies to improve student achievement.	October 2002 and Ongoing
7.	The superintendent and principals look for ways to award teachers and students for improvements in student achievement.	October 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

None of the WHISD students who took the American College Testing Program (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test I (SAT) in 2000 met the state performance criterion of 21 on the ACT or 1,110 on the SAT. Statewide, 27.3 percent met the criterion and 33.1 percent of students in Region 10 met the criterion. TEA selected those criteria to represent high levels of student performance. Students meeting high student performance criteria on college entrance exams have a better chance to attend college and to successfully complete college coursework. The ACT includes English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning components, with scores ranging from one to 36 on each component. The ACT composite is the average of the four component scores. The SAT includes a verbal and mathematics component. Scores range from 200 to 800 for each test component. The combined total is the most frequently reported score and ranges up to a maximum of 1600.

Exhibit 2-24 presents 2000 ACT and SAT information for WHISD. The average SAT score for WHISD, 721, was lower than the peer district, Region 10 and state average SAT scores. Also, the average ACT score for WHISD students, 14.6, was lower than the peer districts, Region 10 and state scores. Due to their lower college entrance exam scores, it is likely that fewer WHISD students will be able to attend college in comparison to students in the peer and area school districts. WHISD's percent of students taking either the ACT or SAT, 36.9 percent, is 23 to 44 percentage points lower than the peer districts, 27.5 percentage points lower than Region 10 and 25.3 percentage points lower than the state.

Exhibit 2-24 College Entrance Examination Scores

**WHISD and Peer Districts
Class of 2000**

District	Percentage of Students Scoring Above Criterion	Percentage of Students Taking Examinations	Average SAT Score	Average ACT Score
De Soto	31.7%	81.3%	1,025	20.4
Lancaster	12.8%	59.5%	888	18.6
La Marque	9.6%	61.6%	855	16.5
Wilmer-Hutchins	0.0%	36.9%	721	14.6
Region 10	33.1%	64.4%	1,012	21.0
State	27.3%	62.2%	990	20.3

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE (PART 3)

SAT and ACT scores are closely related to participation in advanced academic courses in high school. According to the College Board, the organization responsible for administering the SAT, there is a strong relationship between the number of advanced academic courses a student takes and the performance on a college entrance exam. On its Web site (www.collegeboard.org) the College Board states that "the best ways to get ready for the SAT I are to take challenging academic courses and to read widely outside school throughout your school years."

Exhibit 2-25 shows the percentage of students completing advanced academic courses in 1999-2000. Compared to the peer districts, WHISD ranks last in the percentage of students completing advanced academic courses. This percent, 3.6, is 17 percentage points lower than Region 10 and 16.5 percentage points lower than the state. At least one reason for the low percentage of students completing advanced academic courses in WHISD is that the district has very few advanced course offerings, which is discussed in detail in a separate finding below.

Exhibit 2-25
Percentage of Students Completing Advanced Courses
WHISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Percentage of Students Advanced Courses
De Soto	16.6%
Lancaster	17.3%
La Marque	12.0%
Wilmer-Hutchins	3.6%
Region 10	20.6%
State	20.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999- 2000.

In September 2000, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas published a report, *Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts*. For this report, the Dana Center selected four school districts that represented the "best of the best" in terms of academic performance for ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students. These school districts, San Benito ISD, Brazosport ISD, Wichita Falls ISD and Aldine ISD, showed significant gains in the percentage of ethnic minority students taking the SAT, the percentage scoring at or above the passing criteria and the percentage of students enrolled in advanced academic courses. The study identifies several reasons and examples of why and how these schools are successful, ranging from the impact of the state accountability system to local community involvement. Specific findings include:

- The districts in the study developed the key understanding that to be successful they had to change teaching and learning practices in the classroom.
- The districts developed a set of shared equity beliefs on their commitment to the academic success of all children.
- Specific processes, practices, programs, actions and structures - focused equity practices - were instituted to achieve success for all students.
- One key strategy used was proactive redundancy, or having multiple ways to achieve specific learning goals.

Many Texas districts, such as Comal ISD, encourage students to take advanced placement (AP) courses and the subsequent AP examinations to receive college credit for courses taken while in high school. They encourage student participation by pursuing state and federal assistance for the examination fees. In 2001-02, the cost of each AP examination is \$78. TEA pays \$30 for every Texas student who takes an exam. The College Board, the examination sponsor, provides an additional \$22 fee reduction and a \$7 administrative fee waiver for students classified as economically disadvantaged. In addition, TEA uses federal grant funds to waive another \$13 reducing the total amount for an AP examination per economically disadvantaged student to \$6. Texas encourages students to pay a small portion of the examination fee because industry standard research indicates that these students score higher than those students who do not pay any fee for AP examinations.

Encouraging students to take college entrance examinations allows students to expand their career opportunities. Taking the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) helps students prepare for the actual SAT. Ysleta ISD (YISD) initiated a Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude

Test/Scholastic Aptitude Test Program initiative that encourages all secondary students to take college entrance exams before graduation. YISD pays for both the PSAT and the SAT. Included in the initiative are programs for test-taking, mini camps for students and sessions for involving parents and teachers in the process of preparing students for college admissions. YISD piloted an SAT preparation class for the spring 2000 semester at all ten district high schools in cooperation with the Houghton-Mifflin Publishing Company. The district has purchased College Board preparation materials for student use. The percent of seniors taking the SAT in YISD rose from 27 percent in 1978 to more than 90 percent in 2000.

Recommendation 19:

Develop strategies to increase the number of students taking college entrance exams.

The district develops strategies in the DIP and CIPs to ensure that more students are taking college entrance exams.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and high school principal talk to staff in other districts to gather information on programs and strategies that successfully increase the number of students taking college entrance exams and meeting TEA criteria for college entrance exam scores.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent and high school principal determine which strategies/programs to implement immediately and in the future.	June 2002 and Ongoing
3.	The superintendent ensures that strategies for improving college entrance exam scores are incorporated and updated in the DIP and the high school CIPs.	July 2002 and Ongoing
4.	The high school principal reports to the superintendent the results of the programs at least annually.	May 2003 and Ongoing Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The WHISD 2001-02 high school master schedule, which lists all courses and the times courses are offered, does not provide the necessary foreign language courses for students to participate in the "distinguished achievement" high school program.

The "distinguished achievement" program is one of three graduation plans available to high school students and includes the most stringent requirements of the three high school graduation plans. The other two graduation plans are the "minimum" plan and the "recommended" plan. The state-mandated "minimum" high school graduation plan requires students to complete 22 total credits, while the "recommended" and "distinguished achievement" high school graduate programs require students to earn 24 credits to receive a high school diploma. Although the "recommended" and "distinguished achievement" programs require the same number of total credits, the "distinguished achievement" program requires three rather than two credits in other languages and two rather than three in additional components. Also, the "distinguished achievement" program, unlike the "minimum" and "recommended" programs, requires advanced measures such as an original research project.

Beginning with the 2001-02 school year, the state has mandated that all school districts design courses to provide opportunities for students to earn the "recommended" or "distinguished achievement" program in addition to the "minimum" graduation plan. In addition, districts are required to educate students and parents of the new requirements.

According to the 2000-01 WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report, the 2000-01 high school master schedule did not enable students to satisfy the requirements for the "recommended" or "distinguished achievement" high school programs. While the high school master schedule for the fall semester of 2001 includes the necessary courses for students to earn a "recommended" diploma, the school does not offer three years of a foreign language, which is a state-mandated requirement for completion of a "distinguished achievement" diploma. Students can enroll in Spanish I or II or in French I or II at the high school, but a third year of Spanish or French is not offered. A review of the fall 2001-02 high school master schedule showed there were two advanced courses offered: Advanced Placement Chemistry I and Pre-Calculus. Unless WHISD adds the courses necessary to complete the "distinguished achievement" diploma, the district will not be in compliance with the state mandate.

Recommendation 20:

Add a third-year foreign language course to the high school master schedule, and hire a language teacher.

The third-year foreign language courses could be added to the course load of existing Spanish and French teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the high school principal evaluate the courses offered at the high school compared to the state-recommended courses and distinguished high school programs to determine what additional courses are necessary.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent, the high school principal and the executive director of Human Resources decide which courses will be added to the high school curriculum for the following school year.	June 2002
3.	The high school principal assigns foreign language teachers to teach the new courses.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming that the district hires a foreign language teacher at the average teacher salary of \$37,355, plus 13.4 percent benefits beginning in the 2002-03 school year, the district would spend \$42,360 per year. (\$37,355 salary + \$5,005 benefits = \$42,360.)

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Add third-year foreign language course to the high school master schedule, and hire a language teacher.	(\$42,360)	(\$42,360)	(\$42,360)	(\$42,360)	(\$42,360)

FINDING

WHISD had no regular program evaluation process in 2000-01. According to the WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report for 2000-01, as of August 23, 2001, the following special programs had not been evaluated on a state or local level during 2000-01:

- Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language;
- Career and Technology Education;
- Dyslexia;
- Title I, Part A, Improving Basic Programs Operated by Districts (Schoolwide);
- Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Students;
- Title II, Part B, Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development;

- Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities;
- Title VI, Innovative Education Program Strategies (Class Size Reduction);
- Gifted and Talented Education;
- Optional Extended Year;
- Pre-Kindergarten Program;
- State Compensatory Education; and
- Special Education.

In the 2000-01 WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report, the director of Research, Planning and Evaluation outlined a proposed system for documenting and evaluating each program. However, at the time of the review team's visit, the evaluation plan outlined in the report was not yet in place.

WHISD school level data are not available centrally, which hinders program evaluation efforts. In an interview, the director of Research, Planning and Evaluation said that each school keeps records individually and data is unavailable at the district level. The director also mentioned that there is no systematic method of communication between schools and central administration. As a result, it is difficult to obtain data centrally. For example, the director found it especially difficult to receive failure information from summer school administrators. The director of Research, Planning and Evaluation has met with the Technology coordinator and suggested ways to input benchmark test results and other district-level data on a central office database.

Program objectives should be measurable and adequately define the specific effect the program is expected to have on student achievement. Program evaluation should focus on results and examine:

- a program's economy, efficiency or effectiveness;
- a program's structure or design;
- program adequacy to see if it meets the needs identified by the school board, governmental agencies or law;
- alternative ways to provide program services or products;
- program goals and objectives to determine if they are clearly linked to and support department, division and district priorities and strategic goals and objectives;
- benchmarks and comparisons to determine if they have been set for student outcomes, program cost efficiency and cost effectiveness;
- compliance with appropriate policies, rules and laws; and
- the adequacy and appropriateness of goals, objectives and performance measures that are used to monitor, assess and report on program accomplishments.

An example of a school district that has had some success in program evaluation is Spring ISD (SISD). The 1990 *Standard Process for Program Evaluation* describes standards to be applied to the evaluation of all educational programs in SISD. Its intent is "to establish program evaluation as an expected, systematic and continuing process integrated into an organized program development cycle." The plan gathers information that helps improve, revise and determine the worth of programs. Two types of evaluations are included: evaluation designed to improve the implementation of programs in progress and evaluation designed to make judgments about the programs' merit.

A select number of programs are reviewed each year in SISD. These program evaluations identify both strengths and weaknesses. Instructional and administrative staff and the board use evaluation results for program planning and revision. In addition to these evaluations, SISD evaluates programs periodically through surveys of parents, teachers and students. SISD also annually surveys its graduates.

SISD's five-year curriculum evaluation program was created based on the *Standards for Evaluation of Educational Programs, Projects and Materials*, produced by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The program evaluation process includes the following measures:

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

Recommendation 21:

Develop a formal program evaluation plan, process and schedule including use of a consistent report format.

The director of Research, Evaluation and Planning should work with the superintendent, principals and teachers to develop a formal rotating schedule and plan for evaluating programs. A standard report format should be adopted, and a timeframe for completing evaluations should be established.

The district should begin the system for getting mandated documentation in place by carrying out the system described in the 2000-01 WHISD Annual Needs Assessment Report to ensure compliance in all areas.

The district should budget funds to provide contract data programming support for program evaluation. The director of Research, Evaluation and Planning should work closely with the programming support person to ensure that data reports are available for the evaluation of district programs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Research, Evaluation and Planning develops a rotating cycle, a standard report format and a schedule for completing program evaluations during the first year and reviews it with the superintendent, central office staff, principals and teachers.	May - June 2002
2.	The director of Research, Evaluation and Planning modifies the plan to reflect the input of the participants and presents it to the superintendent for approval.	July 2002
3.	The superintendent approves the plan and also asks for board approval on hiring a programmer.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent authorizes the director to begin the process and use a contract programmer as necessary to support the evaluation process.	August 2002 and Ongoing
5.	The director of Research, Evaluation and Planning meets with the superintendent, central office staff, principals and teachers to explain the system for documenting data for all districtwide programs and to discuss the priority in which programs should be evaluated.	August 2002
6.	The director of Research, Evaluation and Planning periodically checks schools and the central office to ensure the documentation system is being implemented as needed.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming that a contract programmer is employed for at least 24 hours a month during six months of the year at a cost of \$100 per hour, the annual cost will be \$14,400 (24 hours x \$100 x 6 months = \$14,400).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop a formal	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)	(\$14,400)

program evaluation plan, process and schedule including use of a consistent report format.					
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FINDING

The district does not provide adequate training for teachers on how all the various components of WHISD's school improvement initiatives should interrelate. Training and information on such initiatives are delivered to WHISD's teachers and schools in a fragmented way and the district has not offered any training to assist its personnel in understanding how all of the components of school improvement should work together.

While many regional education service centers offer training in many areas of curriculum and instruction, they do not offer training to tie together the key components of school improvement. For example, Region 10 offers training in student assessment, TEKS, enrichment curriculum and TAAS data disaggregation. All are vital components of the school improvement process; nevertheless, what is lacking is training that enables principals and teachers to see how all of these components of school improvement fit together and understand the relationships among the TEKS, TAKS, national standards, local benchmarks, curriculum, instruction, data analysis and assessment.

In addition, other districts access information using the Internet to assist them in the area of student performance. Good lesson plans are an important component of delivering to students information that will help them become successful academically.

Although not based on TAKS, **Exhibit 2-26** provides additional resources for sample lesson plans.

**Exhibit 2-26
Sample Lesson Plan Resources**

<p>http://nceet.snre.umich.edu A tremendous amount of information on environmental education.</p> <p>http://www.ed.gov/free A collection of federal resources for educational excellence.</p> <p>http://www.thegateway.org Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM) provides a collection of sample lesson</p>
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plans for various subjects.

<http://youth.net/cec/cec.html>

Provides mini-lesson plans from Columbia Education Center's summer program; some could be useful to teachers from grades K-12.

<http://www.mediaseek.com>

Founded in May of 1996, MediaSeek Technologies Inc. developed a patented technology that matches educational titles to standards and learning needs. This core technology is now used in MediaSeek products such as Curriculum Orchestrator® and ExplorAsource® to help educators and parents obtain the education information they want by finding educational titles that meet their needs and national and state standards.

<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource>

PBS ONLINE's neighborhood for preK-12 educators is the first Web site to correlate its classroom activities to 46 sets of national and state curriculum standards. To locate a specific resource among PBS Teacher Source's extensive inventory of more than 1,200 lesson plans, teachers identify a grade level and topic and are presented with a suggested list of relevant lesson plans and activities, many of which are designed for use with educator-preferred classroom television programs from PBS.

Source: Compiled by TSPR from various Web sites, 2001.

Finally, Florida's Department of Education provides districts with trainer-of-trainers modules called "Connections" that provide this type of training. Although such state-provided training is presently unavailable in Texas, districts can get assistance through their regional service center to design and provide similar training, like Florida's Connections.

Recommendation 22:

Train teachers in the interrelationships among TEKS, TAKS, national and local standards, curriculum guides, school reform initiatives, student assessments and data analysis.

This training should assist teachers and school administrators in understanding how various school improvement components and initiatives interrelate. The training should assist teachers and school administrators in developing their campus improvement plans based on a thorough knowledge of all of the key components of school improvement.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 10 to develop a program that helps teachers understand the interrelationships among the different testing instruments, local standards, curriculum guides, school reforms and data analysis.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent contracts with Region 10 to provide this training.	June 2002
3.	Region 10 trains all teachers at WHISD's during the district's in-service days.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Region 10 has agreed to assist the district in customizing such training for Wilmer Hutchins ISD at no cost since the district already pays a cooperative training fee to Region 10. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

B. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of their handicaps. This law requires the district to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each child with a disability.

The law also requires school districts to educate students with disabilities in the "least restrictive environment." In 1997, the federal government reauthorized and amended IDEA. The reauthorized law states that the IEP must be clearly aligned with the education received by children in general classrooms and that districts must include regular education teachers in the IEP decision-making process. The new law also requires the inclusion of students with disabilities in state and district assessment programs and in setting and reporting performance goals.

Students with disabilities who spend all of their classroom hours in a regular classroom are considered "mainstreamed." Students can also be mainstreamed in a subject area such as mathematics. As each student's needs require, additional instructional and related services are provided, including options for full day services in special education settings. If a student's disability is so severe that satisfactory education cannot take place in a regular classroom, he or she will be served in a separate, "self-contained" classroom.

A director who has been with WHISD since February 2001 leads the district's special education program. The Special Education department includes the director, two secretaries, an audit clerk manager, three diagnosticians and a speech pathologist. The district contracts for one additional speech therapist, and Region 10 provides two occupational therapists and a mobility and orientation specialist. **Exhibit 2-27** compares selected WHISD special education financial statistics with its peer districts and regional and state averages.

Exhibit 2-27
Special Education Budgeted Expenditures
WHISD Versus Peer Districts, Region 10 and State
2000-01

District	Number Students Enrolled	Budgeted Special Education Expenditures	Percent of Budget	Per Student Expenditure
De Soto	785	\$2,089,785	9.4%	\$2,662
Lancaster	525	\$1,376,289	11.5%	\$2,622
La Marque	473	\$1,457,021	11.1%	\$3,080
Wilmer-Hutchins	204	\$969,856	10.3%	\$4,754
Region 10	65,955	\$235,057,470	11.5%	\$3,820
State	483,442	\$1,739,689,310	12.6%	\$3,599

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

In 1999-2000, TEA cited 14 compliance violations with WHISD's special education program out of 19 areas tested. In March 2001, TEA issued an updated Corrective Action Report showing some improvement. **Exhibit 2-28** presents a summary of the compliance violations and the status of those violations as of March 2001.

Exhibit 2-28
WHISD Comprehensive Analysis Process (CAP) - Special Education Compliance
1999-2000 Findings and 2001 Update

Indicator #	Indicator Description	Status as of January 2000	March 2001 Follow-up
S5	Has the district provided the local adult service agencies with information about students with individual transition plans (ITPs)?	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing
S10	Does the district ensure that assistive technology (AT) devices and/or services are made available to a child with a disability if required as part of the child's special education. related services	In Compliance	N/A

	or supplementary aids and services?		
S11	Do the notices of procedural safeguards, assessments, ARD meetings and refusals to provide services in regard to identification, evaluation, placement, or free appropriate public education (FAPE) include appropriate documentation?	Not in Compliance	*WHISD is not fully implementing
S12	Are the requirements for obtaining written parental consent for assessment, placement and release of confidential information and use of Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) met?	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing
S13	Are full and individual evaluations conducted of each student's educational needs before the students begin receiving special education services?	Not in Compliance	*WHISD is not fully implementing
S14	Does appropriate disability eligibility documentation exist for students receiving special education services (auditory impairment, autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, learning disability, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, non-categorical early childhood, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, speech impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment)?	Not in Compliance	*WHISD is not fully implementing
S15	Is an ARD committee meeting held by the appropriate district/school personnel and other required members to decide within federal timelines the student's educational program and to document placement and service decisions agreed upon in the ARD meeting?	Not in Compliance	*WHISD is not fully implementing
S17	Has the ARD/IEP committee	Not in	WHISD is fully

	specified how students receiving special education services will participate in the state's assessment program?	Compliance	implementing
S18	For a student receiving special education services outside the regular classroom, has the ARD committee determined that there is evidence that his/her removal has occurred only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily?	In Compliance	N/A
S21	Has the ARD committee determined the justification of the off-home school placement decision?	In Compliance	N/A
S23	Have districts whose ratio of full-time equivalent students placed in partially or totally self contained classrooms to the number of full-time equivalent students placed in resource room or mainstream instructional arrangements is greater than 25 percent above the state average for two consecutive years appropriately addressed this issue?	In Compliance	N/A
S27	Has the district developed and implemented IEPs annually for student with disabilities?	Not in Compliance	*WHISD is not fullyimplementing
S28	Are the educational services provided to students with disabilities commensurate to those provided to students without disabilities?	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing
S29	Has the district developed and implemented procedures to monitor the effective implementation of the IEP?	Not in Compliance	*WHISD is not fullyimplementing

S30	Has the district developed and implemented policies, procedures and operating guidelines for disciplinary removals of students with disabilities that comply with federal and state law?	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing
S32	Was an ARD committee held for graduating students to determine the method or option for graduation and to determine whether additional services are needed before graduation?	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing
S33	Are faculty and staff qualified (certified/licensed to provide special education or related services)?	In Compliance	N/A
S34	Are the annual special education child counts reported accurately?	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing
S36	The district participated in training in each area identified by the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) monitoring report and implemented appropriate system changes to ensure ongoing compliance and program improvement in each area.	Not in Compliance	WHISD is fully implementing

Source: WHISD Corrective Action Review Report, March 2001.

** The district is not fully implementing all subsections of an indicator in order to be in full compliance with TEA's follow-up audit of March 2001. The district has submitted corrective actions on these subsections but has not heard back from TEA, as of December 2001.*

In July 2001, WHISD submitted a Corrective Action Report to TEA, citing efforts to comply with the outstanding exceptions. The director of Special Education said that most efforts since then have been dedicated to the improvement of special education files, forms and procedures.

However, as of December 2001, TEA has not responded to the district's Corrective Action Report, but district management believes that it is in compliance with all requirements.

FINDING

The district's special education population is extremely low when compared to peer district and state averages, and it is possible that students are not being identified for assessment in early grades. The district has a program called the Student Support Committee (SSC). Each school has an SSC, which consists of an administrator, parent, the referring teacher, school counselor, a special education teacher, and other support staff involved with the student committee. When a teacher has a concern about a student, the teacher submits information to the SSC for review. The SSC can recommend several options, including a referral to special education. The district has recently implemented new procedures and forms for the SSC to use in documenting its evaluation and recommendations.

The director of Special Education believes that there is some under-reporting and under-identification of special education students in the district. The district does not track the number or source of referrals to the SSC, or their disposition. Without this information, the effectiveness of the SSC and the referral process cannot be measured.

Exhibit 2-29 compares the percentages of WHISD special education students and teachers with its peer districts and the regional and state averages.

Exhibit 2-29
Number and Percent of Special Education Students and Teachers
WHISD Versus Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Student Enrollment		Teachers (FTEs)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
De Soto	785	11.3%	35.5	7.6%
Lancaster	525	12.5%	27.2	9.6%
La Marque	473	11.6%	20.9	7.5%
Wilmer-Hutchins	204	6.2%	12.8	7.0%
Region 10	65,955	11.5%	3,860.1	9.6%
State	483,442	11.9%	27,298.5	9.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

These levels are consistent with the percent of funding dedicated to special education in the district. WHISD spends 7 percent of its budget on special education, while the state average is more than 12.4 percent.

In 2000-01, WHISD reported 204 special education students. **Exhibit 2-30** shows that the largest concentration of special education students is in Grades 5 through 8. There are no early education students identified in special education.

Exhibit 2-30
WHISD Special Education Students by Grade
2000-01

Grade	Number of Students
Early Education	0
Pre-Kindergarten	*
Kindergarten	11
Grade 1	6
Grade 2	13
Grade 3	11
Grade 4	14
Grade 5	24
Grade 6	16
Grade 7	20
Grade 8	24
Grade 9	19
Grade 10	15
Grade 11	15
Grade 12	11

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

**Denotes a number equal to or less than five not reported due to privacy reasons.*

Approximately 60 percent of WHISD's special education students are identified as having learning disabilities; 16 percent are considered Mentally Retarded and 15 percent are Speech Impaired. No other disability category represents more than 4 percent of the special education students. Speech impaired students usually represent a significant portion of the special education population; WHISD had 31 Speech-Impaired students in 2000-01, representing 15 percent of its special education population.

Recommendation 23:

Examine special education referral and identification methods and incorporate more effective strategies into the Student Support Committee process.

WHISD should ensure that all students needing special education services are referred to the program. Teachers should receive additional in-service training to increase their ability to detect and act on early indicators of student need.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and director of Special Education draft a plan for developing and implementing a pre-referral intervention.	April 2002
2.	The director of Special Education gathers input on effective interventions from Region 10 special education staff, teachers and principals	May 2002
3.	The director of Special Education and executive director of Human Resources work with principals to set up an early needs recognition training schedule during the schools' in-service days for administrators, teachers and parents.	June 2002
4.	The director of Special Education, the director of Research and Evaluation and the Technology coordinator develop a tracking and evaluation system to evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-referral intervention program.	July 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources, with assistance from Region 10, provides three days of training at each of the district's schools for principals, teachers and parents.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Region 10 has agreed to assist the district in customizing such training for Wilmer Hutchins ISD at no cost since the district already pays a

cooperative training fee to Region 10. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

While district management initiated steps to obtain Medicaid reimbursements pursuant to the review team's onsite visit, the district had not participated in Medicaid reimbursement programs in 2000-01 nor received any funds for services rendered to Medicaid eligible students. In 1999-2000 the district reported \$11,032 in SHARS reimbursement revenue, however, this is the only year in a four year timeframe, from 1995 through 1999, that any Medicaid reimbursement revenue was reported by the district.

As of September 1992, the state's Medicaid program was amended to allow school districts to enroll as Medicaid providers and to apply for Medicaid reimbursement for services they are providing to children with disabilities. This reimbursement program is known as the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program. SHARS are defined as those services determined to be medically necessary and reasonable to ensure that a disabled child under the age of 21 receives the benefits of a free and appropriate public education.

These services include assessment, audiology, counseling, medical services, school health services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, psychological services and associated transportation. School districts need not spend new money, but instead can simply apply for reimbursement for any of the eligible services. Because SHARS reimburses districts for funds already spent, the funding is available for use without restrictions.

Another reimbursement program available to Texas school districts is the Medicaid Administrative Claims (MAC) program. MAC reimburses districts for health-related administrative services that cannot be billed through SHARS. Because public schools play a critical role in helping children and their families receive physical and mental health services, the schools may be reimbursed for referral, outreach, coordination and other related administrative activities.

The district provides some physical and mental health services to the community, but is not applying for reimbursement for its cost to provide or support these services. The district provides or coordinates the following community health services:

- Low Vision Services and Free Eyeglasses;
- Free Immunization Clinics;

- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) notifications to parents;
- Counseling services on pregnancy, parenting and adoption; and
- Mom-Mobile - providing a free ride to the doctor for prenatal or baby care.

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) offers SHARS reimbursement services at a rate of 10 percent of reimbursements claimed. They also provide a tracking system called SMART that electronically tracks Medicaid reimbursements by school. TASB will help districts track all students eligible for Medicaid Services through its SMART database and will provide updates to the district on services provided that are eligible for reimbursement. The SMART system is one way of generating simple reimbursements and electronic appeals for denied claims.

Some large school districts, like Houston ISD, provide Medicaid claim filing services to other districts and file Medicaid claims at a lower cost than private companies. Corpus Christi and Comal ISD each participate in collaboratives set up to collect Medicaid reimbursements more efficiently. The use of varied software packages and shared administrative services has increased Medicaid reimbursement claims for many Texas school districts.

In 1998-99, Bastrop ISD earned \$239 per Medicaid-eligible student, and 14 percent of its student population was Medicaid-eligible. The district also had a 14 percent incidence rate in Special Education.

Recommendation 24:

Fully participate in Medicaid reimbursement programs.

Since TSPR's on-site review, the district initiated steps to begin participation in these programs, and has contracted the services of AMG Services, LLC to file claims under SHARS. The district has also initiated steps to participate in the MAC program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services and the director of Special Education contact the Texas Department of Health and TEA to obtain current information on SHARS and MAC reimbursement procedures to determine the requirements for obtaining reimbursement.	May 2002
2.	The director of Business Services and director of Special Education contact Medicaid claim service providers or	June-August 2002

	consortiums to provide a system for the district to file and maximize reimbursements under SHARS and MAC.	
3.	The director of Business Services and director of Special Education create a formal document detailing procedures for Medicaid claims reimbursements and consider outsourcing the function to TASB or a collaborative.	September 2002
4.	The director of Business Services ensures the Medicaid reimbursement claim procedures are followed and management is handled through the Business and Finance Office.	October 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Using Bastrop ISD as a benchmark for per student reimbursements, WHISD's 209 special education students can conservatively earn Medicaid reimbursements of \$49,951 (209 students x \$239 per eligible student).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Fully participate in Medicaid reimbursement programs.	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$49,951	\$49,951

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

C. TITLE I/COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

In addition to a regular classroom instruction program, other instructional programs provide special support for students at risk of dropping out and those who are not performing on grade level. Funding for these programs includes state and federal compensatory education funding.

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title I), originally enacted in 1965, reauthorized as the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994* and the *Leave No Child Behind Act of 2001* provide funds for programs intended to help students meet performance standards. Title I funds are sent to schools via TEA based on their number of economically disadvantaged students or those eligible for free or reduced price lunches or breakfasts. The students served, however, are selected on educational need rather than economic status. Title I funds are supplemental in nature; in other words, they must be provided additional services to the regular program and not take the place of regular funds.

Federal law allows a school to be designated as a schoolwide Title I program if 50 percent or more of the students on its campus or in its attendance zone are low income. In WHISD, all schools are designated to receive schoolwide Title I funding. **Exhibit 2-31** compares the number of WHISD economically disadvantaged students with its peer districts and regional and state averages.

Exhibit 2-31
Economically Disadvantaged Enrollment
WHISD Versus Peer Districts and Region 10 and State Averages
2000-01

District	Number	Percent
De Soto	2,325	33.5%
Lancaster	1,990	47.3%
La Marque	1,989	49.0%
Wilmer-Hutchins	2,361	71.9%

Region 10	254,520	42.6%
State	2,001,697	49.3%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

In Texas, state funding for compensatory programs began in 1975, with the passage of House Bill 1126. In 1997 during the 76th Legislature session, section 42.152 of the Texas Education Code was amended to include reporting and auditing systems covering the appropriate use of compensatory education allotment funds. House Bill 1126 requires that state compensatory funds, like federal Title I funds, must be supplemental in nature. As with federal funding, state compensatory funding is based on the number of economically disadvantaged students; however, students served with the funding need not be economically disadvantaged.

FINDING

WHISD is not adequately identifying or serving at-risk students through Compensatory Education. No person is assigned the responsibility for managing the compensatory education or Title I programs.

Exhibit 2-32 compares WHISD compensatory education budgeted expenditures and staffing levels with its peer districts and regional and state averages.

Exhibit 2-32
Compensatory Education Staffing Levels and Budgeted Expenditures
WHISD Versus Peer Districts and Region 10 and State Averages
2000-01

District	Compensatory Education Teachers (FTEs)	Percent of Total Faculty	Budgeted Expenditures	Percent of Total Budget
De Soto	9.9	2.1%	\$883,003	4.0%
Lancaster	1.0	0.4%	\$820,764	6.8%
La Marque	5.0	1.8%	\$718,292	5.5%
Wilmer-Hutchins	0.0	0.0%	\$1,112,511	11.9%
Region 10	847.6	2.1%	\$131,237,805	6.4%
State	8,947.2	3.3%	\$911,525,819	6.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

WHISD reported no compensatory education teachers to TEA in its fall 1999 or 2000 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) submissions, even though the district receives more than \$1.7 million in compensatory education funding each year. The TEA Summary of Finances for WHISD reported \$1,721,311 in state compensatory education funding in 2000-01 and an estimate of \$1,700,647 for 2001-02. WHISD actual expenditures reported to TEA under Program Intent Code 24, Accelerated Instruction, ranged from \$2 million in 1996-97 to \$3.2 million in 1999-2000. These levels exceed TEA requirements to spend a minimum of 85 percent of the state allotment under this program intent code. Budgeted expenditures in **Exhibit 2-32** do not accurately present WHISD anticipated expenditure levels for compensatory education.

The district reported 766 students as at-risk in its fall 2000 PEIMS submission. This level represents 22 percent of the student population. Based on WHISD's student performance measures presented earlier in this chapter, WHISD is under-identifying at-risk students.

Additionally, WHISD Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) do not have sufficient details to support accountability for state compensatory education programs. The C.S. Winn Elementary CIP for 2001-02 has four line items in its CIP that mention state compensatory funds, as shown in **Exhibit 2-33**.

Exhibit 2-33
Excerpts from C.S. Winn Elementary Campus Improvement Plan
2001-02

Needs and Goals	Strategies	Funds	Responsibility	Evaluation
READING - 90 percent TAAS passing rate by 2003	Annual evaluation report	Bilingual Comp. Ed.	(none)	Exit form identify criteria used
READING - 90 percent TAAS passing rate by 2003	Extent to which students who have exited from Bilingual / ESL Program	Comp. Ed.	(none)	TAAS results of exited students
MATH - 90 percent TAAS passing rate by 2003	Extended Day Program will increase the amount of time and quality time in math	Comp. Ed.	Selected Teachers	Students improve by five percent

MATH - 90 percent TAAS passing rate by 2003	Manipulatives will be used to help student better understand skill	Comp. Ed. Title I	Teachers, Students	Students improve by five percent
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Source: C.S. Winn Elementary CIP, 2001-02.

By law, the improvement plan must include the comprehensive needs assessment, measurable performance objectives, identified strategies for student improvement, identified resources and staff in summary level detail by campus or organization, specified timelines for monitoring each strategy, and formative evaluation criteria. Each district is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the locally designed program.

Compensatory education resources must be redirected when evaluations indicate that programs and/or services are unsuccessful in producing desired results for students in at-risk situations.

According to the TEA Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), the district/campus plan should explain the goals and objectives of different compensatory education strategies at each school. The plan also should explain budget requirements, staffing formulas, curriculum strategies, specialized needs for supplies and equipment, special programs like tutorials that enhance the regular education program and other items and services. As indicated above, WHISD CIP'S fall short in providing these explanations.

Without adequate accountability for compliance or performance, the district is at risk of failing next year's audit of state compensatory spending based on the new law. In 2001, Senate Bill 702 amended the sections of the Texas Education Code that govern the state's compensatory education funds. The major elements of these changes;

- *Changed* the state criteria for identifying students at risk of dropping out of school;
- *Required* school districts to use student performance to design and implement appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instructional services for students at risk of dropping out of school that will enable these students to perform at grade level at the conclusion of the next regular school term;
- *Allowed* for the use of local criteria for identifying students at risk of dropping out of school; however, the criteria must be approved by the local board of trustees and the number of students served using local criteria is limited to 10 percent of the number of students who met the state criteria for students at risk of dropping out of school and who received services from the district during the preceding school year;

- *Required* each school district to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the state compensatory education program in reducing any disparity in performance; and
- *Stated* that state compensatory education funds, other than the indirect cost allotment that may not exceed 15 percent, may be used only to meet the costs of providing: (1) a supplemental compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction program under Section 29.081; or (2) an alternative education program established under Section 37.008; or (3) support to a program eligible under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, at a school at which at least 50 percent of the students are educationally disadvantaged; and
- *Restricted* the amount of state compensatory education funds that a district may use to fund basic services for disciplinary Alternative Education Programs to 18 percent of the total amount of state compensatory education funds allotted to the school district.

Senate Bill 702 also required an independent auditor's working papers to document the extent and scope of the work performed in connection with tests applied to management's assertions about compliance with state compensatory education requirements. **Exhibit 2-34** shows the audit procedures TEA has suggested be used beginning with the audit period ending 2001-02.

Exhibit 2-34
TEA Recommended Audit Procedures for State Compensatory
Education Funds
July 2001

Recommended Audit Procedures
Determine whether actual expenditures recorded in the district's accounting records that were attributed to state compensatory education (Program Intent Code 24, Accelerated Education, in the General Fund) were in alignment with supplemental FTEs and supplemental financial resources (plus basic services for disciplinary alternative education, as applicable, limited to 18 percent of the state compensatory education allotment - in the context of monitoring by central administration for compliance with the 85 percent expenditure requirement for State Compensatory Education) for each school, in accordance with amounts shown on district/campus improvement plans;
Sample teacher contracts and teaching schedules to determine compliance with standards for attribution of instructional costs to Program Intent Code 24, Accelerated Education, in the General Fund; and
For certain strategies (strategies that did not involve specific intensive, compensatory and accelerated instructional related services provided exclusively

to students at risk of dropping out of school under Section 29.081, Texas Education Code, and under local criteria provisions or the 10 percent rule in this section of the Education Code) which would benefit most of the students at a school, such as smaller class sizes and/or hiring additional staff in other areas, determine that expenditures charged to the compensatory education allotment did not exceed the percent of the total supplemental direct costs, expressed as the percentage of students at the school that were identified as at risk of dropping out of school, in accordance with Section 29.081, Texas Education Code (see additional information in the Supplement/Not Supplant section).

Source: TEA, Financial Accountability and Resource Guide, Update 8, Section 9, Compensatory Education, July 2001.

The district's deteriorating student performance indicates that district efforts to provide supplemental instructional programs are not working.

Recommendation 25:

Restructure the compensatory education program, and incorporate specific plans into district and campus improvement plans.

This will help the district to focus its efforts on student performance and will enhance accountability for spent funds and data accuracy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assigns responsibility for Title I and state Compensatory Education Programs.	April 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources creates a job description for a coordinator position under special programs to be responsible for Title I and state compensatory programs.	May 2002
3.	The district reassigns a qualified member of its instructional administrative staff to fill the position.	May 2002
4.	The new Title I/Compensatory Education coordinator obtains training on the programs and their legal and regulatory requirements.	May 2002
5.	The new Title I/Compensatory Education coordinator works with the Research and Evaluation director and school principals to identify specific alternatives for improving performance of at-risk students.	June - July 2002

6.	The site-based decision making teams incorporate specific compensatory education programs, activities, goals and funding sources into the Campus Improvement Plans and District Improvement Plan.	June - July 2002
7.	The new Title I/Compensatory Education coordinator oversees the implementation, success and compliance of Title I and state compensatory programs and reports quarterly to the new deputy superintendent for Instruction.	December 2002 and Quarterly thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

Region 10 has agreed to assist the district in customizing such training for Wilmer Hutchins ISD at no cost since the district already pays a cooperative training fee to Region 10. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

D. BILINGUAL/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Texas Education Code Chapter 29 requires all school districts with an enrollment of at least 20 limited English proficient (LEP) students in the same grade level to offer a bilingual/ English as a Second Language (ESL) program. A LEP student is defined as one whose primary language is not English and whose English language proficiency limits his or her participation in an English language academic environment.

The law specifies that bilingual education must be provided in pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades and that bilingual education, instruction in ESL, or other transitional language instruction approved by TEA must be provided in post-elementary grades through grade eight. For students in grades nine through 12, only ESL instruction is required.

Bilingual education uses two languages for instructional purposes: the student's native language and English. The amount of instruction in each language is commensurate with students' proficiency in both languages and their level of academic achievement. Students in K-2 receive most of their instruction in their native language, with a designated time for ESL instruction. As a general rule, transition into English instruction takes place in the third grade. Content-area instruction, such as math, science and social studies, is provided in both languages.

ESL instruction is designed to develop proficiency in the comprehension, speaking, reading and composition of both oral and written English. Depending on the student's language ability levels, the amount of time allotted to English instruction may vary from total immersion to instruction in the regular program at the elementary level, and from one to two periods in grades 6-12. Parents may waive Bilingual/ESL instruction. Students on waived status receive no modifications and must take the TAAS test in the year in which they enroll.

WHISD has 294 LEP students, representing 9.0 percent of the student population. This is higher than its peer districts, but lower than regional and state averages, as shown in **Exhibit 2-35**.

Exhibit 2-35
Limited English Proficient Eligible Students and
Bilingual/ESL Program Enrollment
WHISD vs. Peer Districts, Region 10 and State
2000-01

District	Number of LEP Eligible Students	Percent of Enrollment	Number of Students Enrolled in Bilingual/ESL	Percent Enrolled in Bilingual/ESL
De Soto	182	2.6%	152	2.2%
Lancaster	204	4.9%	179	4.3%
La Marque	70	1.7%	69	1.7%
Wilmer-Hutchins	294	9.0%	274	8.3%
Region 10	95,937	16.1%	87,151	14.6%
State	570,453	14.1%	509,885	12.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

A major portion of the district's LEP population is concentrated at Wilmer Elementary and Winn Elementary. Wilmer reported 92 LEP students in 2000-01, and Winn reported 127. There are two certified bilingual teachers in the district at Winn Elementary.

District expenditures for bilingual and ESL education declined from \$170,000 in 1996-97 to \$60,000 in 1998-1999 and then increased to \$150,000 in 1999-2000. **Exhibit 2-36** shows WHISD's bilingual and ESL per student expenditures as compared to its peers.

Exhibit 2-36
Bilingual/ESL Per Student Expenditure
WHISD, Peer Districts, Region 10 and State
2000-01

District	Students Enrolled in Bilingual/ESL	Percent of Total Enrollment	Budgeted Expenditures	Percent of Budgeted Expenditures	Per Student Expenditure
De Soto	152	2.2%	\$137,021	0.6%	\$901
Lancaster	179	4.3%	\$94,112	0.8%	\$526

La Marque	69	1.7%	\$24,638	0.2%	\$357
Wilmer-Hutchins	274	8.3%	\$72,895	0.8%	\$266
Region 10	87,151	14.6%	\$85,701,069	4.2%	\$983
State	509,885	12.6%	\$590,748,041	4.3%	\$1,159

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

FINDING

WHISD does not have enough bilingual teachers to support an effective program. Hispanic students in grades 3 through 8 had a 59.1 percent TAAS passing rate in 2001, 24 percentage points less than the state average for Hispanic students. This was the largest gap among all tests across all ethnic groups, and contributed to the middle school's low performing rating.

A 1999 District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) Audit by TEA showed significant compliance violations in the district's Bilingual and ESL programs. At that time 27 LEP students were not receiving services, and less than five of those students had parent denials. Additional findings stated that the district was not conducting the annual evaluation of the program as required, and that Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meetings were largely ineffective. The LPAC authorizes the identification, instructional placement and reclassification of LEP students at each school. The DEC audit recommended training and recruitment of elementary bilingual teachers and a comprehensive annual evaluation.

A January 2000 follow-up report found the district had established a high school ESL program, but still noted two compliance violations out of five indicators evaluated.

Other than the superintendent, no administrative position at WHISD is responsible for Bilingual Education and ESL, and no additional bilingual teachers have been added. WHISD's shortage of teachers is apparent when compared to its peer districts. **Exhibit 2-37** presents WHISD, peer district and regional and state statistics on bilingual and ESL teachers relative to LEP students. All peer districts have fewer LEP students, but significantly higher teacher-pupil ratios.

Exhibit 2-37
Bilingual/ESL Teacher/Student Ratio
WHISD Versus Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Students	Teachers (FTE's)	Percent of Teachers	Teacher/ Student Ratio
De Soto	152	4.6	1.0%	1:33
Lancaster	179	4.5	1.6%	1:40
La Marque	69	1.2	0.4%	1:58
Wilmer-Hutchins	274	0.6	0.3%	1:457
Region 10*	87,151	3,271.4	8.2%	1:27
State	509,885	20,515.7	7.5%	1:25

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

**Most current data available for Region 10 are for 1999-2000.*

In 2001-02, the district has two certified bilingual teachers. Winn Elementary has 31 LEP students in second grade this year but has no bilingual education for that grade. The school has two ESL teacher assistants budgeted for 2001-02, but no ESL or bilingual teachers are included in the budget. The district repeatedly files exemptions for bilingual education because of the lack of certified bilingual teachers. The district pays a \$1,500 annual stipend for all bilingual teachers.

San Angelo ISD (SAISD) has encouraged the recruitment of certified bilingual and ESL teachers by providing academic and financial support for its classroom teachers who wish to pursue certification or endorsement. The district sponsors study sessions and provides a one-time \$250 stipend when teachers receive their certification. Since the program's inception in 1995, 330 teachers have participated in these study sessions and have received their bilingual/ESL certification endorsement. Teachers who are already certified in another academic area may receive an endorsement in bilingual/ESL education. All program participants must pass an Examination for Certification of Educators in Texas (EXCET) in bilingual/ESL education to receive certification or endorsement.

Recommendation 26:

Implement a high-quality bilingual education program.

The district should adjust the annual stipend for bilingual teachers to \$2,500. WHISD should also add a one-time bonus of \$1,000 for existing teachers who obtain bilingual certification and hire four new, fully-certified bilingual teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent presents the stipend proposal to the board for approval.	May 2002
2.	The board approves the proposal.	May 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources issues announcements to publicize the stipend to its recruiting sources.	May 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources oversees the recruitment and hiring of four certified bilingual teachers.	June-August 2002
5.	The superintendent contacts Region 10 to sponsor study sessions for WHISD teachers seeking to obtain their bilingual certification.	June-August 2002
6.	The executive director of Human Resources evaluates the effectiveness of the stipend policy annually.	September 2002 and Annually thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

It is assumed that four new certified bilingual teachers will be hired at the average teacher salary of \$37,355, plus 13.4 percent benefits, plus the \$2,500 stipend beginning in the 2002-03 school year ($[\$37,355 \times 13.4 \text{ percent}] + \$2,500 \times 4 = \$179,444$). Additional supplies of \$500 per teacher are also included in the fiscal impact ($\$500 \times 4 = \$2,000$).

It is also assumed that four existing teachers at WHISD will obtain bilingual certification and receive a one-time bonus of \$1,000, plus the additional stipend of \$2,500 for a total of \$3,500 for the first year x four teachers = \$14,000 and \$2,500 for the remaining four years x four teachers = \$10,000 per year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement a high-quality bilingual education program.	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)
Provide a one-time	(\$4,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

bonus.					
Net Savings/(Costs)	(\$195,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)	(\$191,444)

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) educational service delivery and student performance measures in the following sections:

E. GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Section 29.122 of the Texas Education Code states that school districts "shall adopt a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students in the district and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level." Section 29.123 of the code requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) to "develop and periodically update a state plan of the education of gifted and talented students" to be used for accountability purposes "to measure the performance of districts in providing services to students identified as gifted and talented." *The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, adopted by the SBOE in 1996 and revised in 2000, provides direction for the refinement of existing services and the creation of additional curricular options for gifted and talented (G/T) students.

WHISD's investment in Gifted and Talented Education declined 16 percent overall from 1998-99 to 1999-2000, and 35 percent on a per student basis, as shown in **Exhibit 2-38**.

Exhibit 2-38
Comparison of Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures
To Gifted and Talented Budgeted Operating Expenditures in WHISD
1998-99 and 1999-2000

	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Increase (Decrease)
Total Instructional Operating Expenditures	\$8,445,427	\$9,266,976	9.7%
Student Enrollment	3,651	3,444	(5.7%)
Expenditure per Student Enrolled	\$2,313	\$2,691	16.3%
G/T Program Expenditures	\$49,608	\$41,608	(16.1%)
G/T Enrollment	202	260	28.7%
Expenditure per G/T Student Enrolled	\$246	\$160	(35.0%)

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

TEA's District Effectiveness and Compliance Audit of 1999 tested the district for compliance with nine indicators required by TEA regulations for Gifted and Talented Education. The audit found that WHISD only met the requirements of one indicator, and failed the remaining eight. A March 2001 Corrective Action Review Report by TEA stated that the district had now met all the requirements.

FINDING

WHISD's Gifted and Talented (G/T) program lacks coordination and program oversight. District staff responsible for the G/T program told the review team that they work independently from one another, often unaware how each campus deals with their G/T program. The district's G/T student participation rate dropped 50 percent in 2001-02 from the previous year and participation by grade levels also varies significantly from year to year. In the middle school, G/T participation is very low, with a total of only 11 students out of 672 participating in the program. Middle school students also are enrolled in the program late. Students new to the district are not screened until October and not placed into G/T programs until after the first six weeks. This causes students in accelerated instruction, especially in middle and high school, to enter the classes late and fall behind academically.

In addition, the middle school staff did not know which sixth graders had been identified as G/T in fifth grade. No seventh grade students are identified as gifted and talented or receiving services in 2001-02. There are less than six eighth graders who are served in a self-contained English, math and science class. At the elementary level, each school has a different pull-out program. At Winn Elementary, students meet with a certified gifted and talented teacher once a month as a group with all grades combined.

The percentage of gifted and talented teachers and expenditure levels are significantly below all peer, state and regional averages. WHISD's G/T Education program is not receiving sufficient investments of financial or staffing resources to achieve a strong, continuous program for its students. The district reported 242 students in the program in 2000-01, representing 7.4 percent of total enrollment. This level is equal to or higher than its peer districts, but less than regional and state averages. **Exhibit 2-39** shows a comparative analysis of WHISD gifted and talented students, teachers and expenditures relative to its peer districts and the state.

Exhibit 2-39 Percentage of Students, Teachers and Budgeted

**Instructional Operating Expenditures in Gifted and Talented Programs
WHISD Versus Peer Districts, Region 10 and State
2000-01**

District	Percentage G/T of Total Student Enrollment	Percentage G/T of Total Teachers	Percentage G/T of Total Budgeted Instructional Expenditures
De Soto	7.0%	1.5%	1.7%
Lancaster	6.1%	1.1%	1.1%
La Marque	5.8%	14.6%	10.2%
Wilmer-Hutchins	7.4%	0.7%	0.4%
Region 10	11.0%	1.7%	2.2%
State	8.4%	2.2%	1.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

A district report for 2001-02 shows 100 students participating in the G/T program in grades K-12, representing 3 percent of total enrollment compared to the state average of 8.4 percent.

Districts across the state that have successfully implemented the recommendations in the state plan for gifted and talented education use creative and innovative programs, and they allocate the necessary staff to implement the state plan's recommendations effectively.

Killeen Independent School District (KISD) increased its commitment to the needs of its gifted students by implementing several programs and advanced placement course offerings for all levels. KISD formally conducts eligibility screening, staffs a full-time G/T coordinator and offers at least 30 hours of training per year to G/T teachers. Parent and student surveys are also used for program evaluation.

Recommendation 27:

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

Full implementation of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* will result in a cohesive program that effectively

addresses the concerns expressed by both parents and teachers. This recommendation can be accomplished in a number of ways. One alternative is to allocate a lead teacher to coordinate the gifted and talented program at each campus. All lead G/T teachers will receive a \$1,500 dollar stipend to assist in this function. Lead G/T teachers will also meet quarterly to coordinate efforts directed at implementing the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. Lead teachers should meet with Region 10 for assistance in developing their plan. The following implementation strategies and fiscal impact are based on that alternative.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent presents a stipend proposal to the board for approval and assigns a lead G/T teacher at each campus.	May 2002
2.	The board approves the proposal.	May 2002
3.	The lead teachers meet with Region 10 to develop a three-to-five year plan for achieving exemplary status as outlined in <i>Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students</i> .	June - July 2002
4.	Lead teachers seek approval from the superintendent for the plan.	July 2002
5.	The superintendent approves the plan.	August 2002
6.	Lead teachers meet quarterly to evaluate the progress of the plan and to communicate their efforts on a unified districtwide G/T program.	Ongoing
7.	Lead teachers implement the state plan and inform other teachers at their campuses about the districtwide G/T program revisions.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would pay an annual stipend of \$1,500 per lead Gifted and Talented teacher. The calculation assumes that 5 teachers will earn a \$1,500 stipend for a total of \$7,500 per year (\$1,500 stipend x 5 teachers = \$7,500 per year).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Fully implement the <i>Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students</i> .	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)	(\$7,500)

Chapter 3

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) human resources management in three sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Hiring, Recruitment, Retention and Staff Development
- C. Policies and Procedures

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

BACKGROUND

Human Resource Department personnel generally are responsible for the following:

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

Some districts maintain payroll, staff development and benefits departments within the human resources department, some districts separate these departments and some districts coordinate these departments with other departments.

WHISD's Human Resources Department manages most of these responsibilities and coordinates payroll and staff development with other district departments.

Chapter 3

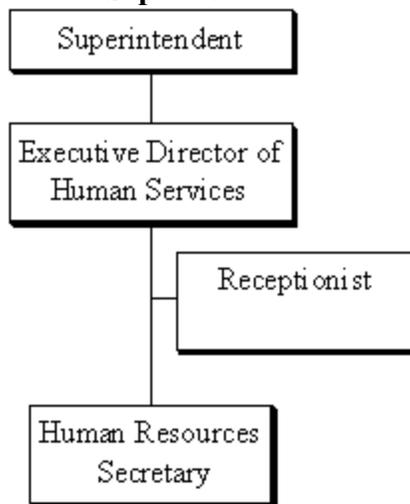
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) human resources management in three sections:

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

WHISD's Human Resources Department is composed of an executive director of Human Resources, a secretary and a receptionist. The executive director of Human Resources is also in charge of risk management, workers' compensation and student health services. **Exhibit 3-1** presents the proposed reorganization plan of the department as of September 2001.

Exhibit 3-1
WHISD's Human Resources Department Organization
September 2001



Source: WHISD Proposed Reorganization Plan, March 28, 2001.

WHISD spends nearly \$15 million on personnel-related costs annually. **Exhibit 3-2** presents payroll expenditures as part of the total budget.

Exhibit 3-2
WHISD Budgeted Expenditures by Object Group
2000-01

Expenditure Category	Budgeted Amount	Percent of Total
Payroll Costs	\$14,819,418	75%

Contracted Services	\$2,417,665	12%
Supplies & Materials	\$1,351,289	7%
Capital Expenses	\$270,013	1%
Other Expenses	\$329,063	2%
Debt Service	\$671,230	3%
Total	\$19,858,678	100%

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

In 2000-01, the Human Resources Department supported 437 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees with a ratio of 218.5 FTE district employees per Human Resources Department employee. The receptionist was not included in this calculation because the direct support provided to the department is limited to reviewing employment applications for completeness.

Exhibit 3-3 presents the number of total staff for each staffing category from 1997-98 through 2000-01. Auxiliary staff has decreased 30.4 percent over the period. The number of educational aides has increased from one in 1997-98 to 82 in 2000-01. District staff stated that the number of educational aides was misreported in Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data in 1997-98 and provided evidence that 38 educational aides were employed. The district did not provide the category in which educational aides were reported. As a percentage of total staff, teachers, professional support and auxiliary staff have decreased, educational aides and central administration have increased.

Exhibit 3-3
WHISD Number of FTE Employees
1997-98 through 2000-01

Classification of Staff	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Teachers	184.7	42.1%	185.0	47.1%	195.0	44.4%	183.4	41.9%
Professional Support	21.8	5.0%	24.1	6.1%	29.1	6.6%	21.1	4.8%
School	14.0	3.2%	16.1	4.1%	15.9	3.6%	13.9	3.2%

Administrators								
Central Administrators	5.0	1.1%	7.0	1.8%	9.0	2.0%	15.0	3.4%
Educational Aides	38.0*	8.7%	6.0	1.5%	52.5	11.9%	82.0	18.7%
Auxiliary Staff	175.3	39.9%	154.7	39.4%	137.9	31.4%	122.0	27.9%
Total Staff	438.8	100.0%	393.0	100.0%	439.4	100.0%	437.4	100.0%

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

*Due to a PEIMS reporting error in 1997-98, the number of educational aides was listed as 1; however, the district provided evidence that it employed 38 educational aides that year.

Note: Totals may not reflect 100 percent due to rounding.

FINDING

WHISD does not use allocation formulas or models when making staffing decisions. WHISD's staffing levels for central administrators and educational aides are significantly above both state and peer averages.

Exhibit 3-4 presents the staff distribution for WHISD and its peers.

Exhibit 3-4
WHISD and Peer District Staff Distribution
2000-01

Professional Staff	De Soto	Lancaster	La Marque	Wilmer-Hutchins	State
Teachers	58.9%	48.8%	52.7%	41.9%	50.8%
Professional Support	6.6%	7.7%	8.9%	4.8%	7.8%
School Administration	3.8%	2.9%	2.6%	3.2%	2.6%
Central Administration	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	3.4%	0.8%
Educational Aides	4.0%	9.2%	9.4%	18.7%	10.2%

Auxiliary Staff	25.7%	30.1%	25.4%	27.9%	27.8%
Percent Minority Teachers	19.4%	20.2%	49.6%	83.1%	26.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

The percentage of central administrators is four times higher than the state average and nearly three times higher than its closest peer. WHISD's percentage of educational aides is nearly double the closest peer district and 8.5 percentage points higher than the state average.

Exhibit 3-5 presents WHISD staffing ratios for teachers, campus administrators and central administrators from 1996-97 through 2000-01. When enrollment increased, the number of teachers declined except for 1999-2000, and the number of educational aides and administrators increased. When enrollment decreased, the number of central administrators continued to increase. With an exception in 1998-99, educational aides also continued to increase when enrollment decreased.

Exhibit 3-5
WHISD Teacher and Administrator Staffing Ratios
1996-97 to 2000-01

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Student Enrollment	3,381	3,495	3,651	3,444	3,283
Teachers	215.9	184.7	185.0	195.0	183.4
Educational Aides	0.0	38.0*	6.0	52.5	82.0
School Administration	17.0	14.0	16.1	15.9	13.9
Central Administration	5.0	5.0	7.0	9.0	15.0
Student to Teacher Ratio	15.7:1	18.9:1	19.7:1	17.7:1	17.9:1
Student to Educational Aide Ratio	0.0:1	92.0:1	608.5:1	65.6:1	40.0:1
Student to School Administrator Ratio	198.9:1	249.6:1	226.8:1	216.6:1	236.2:1
Student to Central Administrator Ratio	676.2:1	699.0:1	521.6:1	382.7:1	218.9:1

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01.
Due to a PEIMS reporting error in 1997-98, the number of educational aides was listed as 1; however, the district provided evidence that it employed 38 educational aides that year.*

Exhibit 3-6 represents changes in student enrollment and staffing. As student enrollment has decreased by 6.1 percent, total staff has increased by 8.9 percent. The ratio of students to total staff of 7.5 to one for 2000-01 is the same as the state average of 7.5 to one; however, the student-teacher ratio of 17.7 to one for 2000-01 is higher than the state average of 14.8 to one.

**Exhibit 3-6
WHISD Student Enrollment versus Staffing
1997-98 through 2000-01**

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change
Student Enrollment	3,495	3,651	3,444	3,283	(6.1%)
Staff	401.8	393.0	439.4	437.4	8.9%
Student/Staff Ratio	8.7:1	9.3:1	7.8:1	7.5:1	(13.8%)
Teachers	184.7	185.0	195.0	183.4	(0.7%)
Student/Teacher Ratio	18.9:1	19.7:1	17.7:1	17.9:1	(5.3%)
Educational Aides	38.0*	6.0	52.5	82.0	115.7%

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.
Due to a PEIMS reporting error in 1997-98, the number of educational aides was listed as 1; however, the district provided evidence that it employed 38 educational aides that year.*

Exhibit 3-7 presents student enrollment and student-to-staff ratios. WHISD has a higher student-to-teacher ratio than any of its peer districts and significantly lower student-to-central administrator and student-to-educational aide ratios than any of its peer districts.

**Exhibit 3-7
Professional Staff and Student Enrollment
WHISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

Professional Staff	Wilmer-Hutchins	De Soto	Lancaster	La Marque
Student Enrollment	3,283	6,941	4,206	4,063
Teachers	183.4	468.1	283.3	279.4
Educational Aides	82.0	31.9	53.5	49.6
School Administration	13.9	30.0	17.0	13.6
Central Administration	15.0	8.0	7.0	6.0
Student to Teacher Ratio	17.9:1	14.8:1	14.8:1	14.5:1
Student to Educational Aide Ratio	40.0:1	217.6:1	78.6:1	81.9:1
Student to School Administrator Ratio	236.2:1	231.4:1	247.4:1	298.8:1
Student to Central Administrator Ratio	218.9:1	867.6:1	600.9:1	677.2:1

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 3-8 presents student performance for 1997-98 through 2000-01. During this period, student performance decreased from 64.2 percent students passing the TAAS to 58.4 percent students passing the test.

Exhibit 3-8
Percentage of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken
Sum of Grades 3-8 and 10
1997-98 through 2000-01

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Wilmer-Hutchins	64.2%	52.8%	50.6%	58.4%
Region 10	77.4%	78.5%	78.2%	80.6%
State	77.7%	78.3%	79.9%	82.1%

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

Spring Independent School District (SISD) distributes staff resources in an equitable manner by maintaining staffing allocations for elementary and secondary schools. Personnel/Support Services develops staff allocations for each school and monitors those allocations each time enrollment figures are developed. These allocations are the basis for the salary portion of the budget each year. Campus site-based teams and principals have

some flexibility to change positions within those allocated dollars. Special staffing allocations exist for special education, the alternative education program, the pyramid program, athletics, occupational/technical education and certain departments with classified employees, such as Food Service.

Recommendation 28:

Implement staffing allocation formulas and reduce the number of central administrator and educational aide positions.

The superintendent should evaluate the roles and responsibilities of each position in central office departments and determine which positions add value in supporting WHISD's instructional program. The superintendent should then eliminate positions that are duplicative and do not add value and specifically define the roles of each remaining position. The superintendent superintendent should review educational aide positions to determine where these positions are most appropriate and effective. A reduction in the number of central administrators by one-third or 33 percent and educational aides by 20 percent would release money to be spent on teacher salaries and recruitment and retention incentives. The reduction amounts are based on bringing WHISD more in line with the staffing ratios of peer districts' central administrators. While the review team recognizes opportunities for larger reductions, the conservative staffing allocation formula for educational aides is based on the district's need to reduce its reliance on these positions while minimally disrupting the student learning process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent evaluates the roles and responsibilities of central administrator and educational aide positions to determine which positions are essential.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent identifies positions to be eliminated or redefined.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent presents position eliminations to the board.	June 2002
4.	The board approves the position eliminations.	June 2002
5.	The superintendent notifies affected employees that their positions will be eliminated due to program changes at the end of the contract year for central administrators or immediately for educational aides.	July 2002
6.	The superintendent uses enrollment projections and staffing allocation formulas to predict staffing needs each year.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

A 33 percent decrease in central administrators would reduce the central administrator staff by five positions. The 2000-01 TEA AEIS report lists 15 central administrators. The district provided a list of the administrators and their salaries. The average administrator salary is \$61,184. The benefits rate is 13.4 percent. Eliminating five administrative positions would result in an annual savings of \$346,915.

Average salary	\$61,184	
Benefits	+ 8,199	(\$61,184 x 13.4%)
Cost per position	\$69,383	
Number of positions	x 5	(15 x 33%)
Annual savings	\$346,915	

A 20 percent decrease in educational aides would reduce the total number of educational aides by 16 positions. The average salary for an educational aide is \$19,232. The benefits rate is 13.4 percent. Eliminating 20 percent of educational aide positions would result in an annual savings of \$348,944.

Average salary	\$19,232	
Benefits	+ \$2,577	(\$19,232 x 13.4%)
Cost per position	\$21,809	
Number of positions	x 16	(82 x 20%)
Annual savings	\$348,944	

The review team assumes that contracts are already signed for 2002-03, thus savings from central administrator reductions are recognized beginning in 2003-04.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement staffing allocation formulas and reduce the number of central administrator and educational aide positions.	\$348,944	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$695,859	\$695,859

FINDING

The job descriptions reviewed by TSPR in September 2001 were last updated in February 2000. Several employees were reassigned with the arrival of the new superintendent. Four reassigned employees from the central office now serve as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

(TEKS)/curriculum coordinators at district schools. In September 2001, these employees were unaware of a job description for this new position.

Employees cannot perform effectively and efficiently if they are unaware of their specific job responsibilities. Unclear assignments involving duties and responsibilities such as updating curriculum guides, finding and applying for grants and developing educational programs result in these tasks not being accomplished. The district is also at increased risk for employee grievances by not providing clear expectations of duties to staff. Teachers cannot ask for help in lesson planning, obtaining grants or addressing unique student needs if they are not aware help is available. The ambiguity in job functions could lead to duplication of efforts, no efforts or haphazard efforts.

United ISD maintains all job descriptions in consistent format and regularly reviews job descriptions to ensure that they are up to date. There are three sections of positions: administrative and professional; clerical and technical; and manual trades. A table of contents is found at the beginning of each section of the descriptions. All of the positions listed have job descriptions consistent in format and cover pertinent position information. Each job description includes the title, administrator to whom the employee reports, qualifications, job goals, performance responsibilities, terms of employment, evaluation process and equipment used (if applicable). Although United ISD is much larger than WHISD, a small staff can maintain job descriptions in this manner.

Recommendation 29:

Update all employee job descriptions.

Updated job descriptions would allow the district to maximize its use of human resources and more efficiently handle the administration of the district. Clearly communicating to all employees of the district the roles of each administrative employee would eliminate confusion over which position is responsible for which functions.

Creating and updating job descriptions can be a time-consuming task. The district can receive sample job descriptions for a variety of positions from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). The district can then modify these descriptions to reflect the specific needs of WHISD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. Department heads create organizational charts for their departments that include all positions within the department and forward to the executive director of Human Resources.	May 2002
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2.	The executive director of Human Resources obtains copies of sample job descriptions from TASB for positions on the charts.	May 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources, with input from the superintendent and other department heads, modifies the job descriptions to meet district requirements.	June 2002
4.	Supervisors meet with employees to review job descriptions and expectations.	July 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources requires job descriptions for new positions, develops a schedule for updating job descriptions and updates job descriptions according to the schedule.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Because the district subscribes to TASB's Human Resources Services, sample job descriptions could be obtained at no additional charge. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD does not use planning tools effectively to manage staff throughout the district as enrollment, revenues and programs change. The district lacks a formal staffing plan, which includes non-teacher staffing formulas, detailed turnover statistics, recruitment plans, applicant tracking reports and employee separation reports. The district provided budget and campus allocation forms for 1996-97. Copies of a proposed staffing reorganization plan from the 2001-02 budget workshop were also provided, but no documentation was provided showing that the reorganization was the result of decreased enrollment, or that the proposed reorganization was in fact approved by the board and carried out.

Without a formal staffing plan and staffing formulas that are tied to enrollment, budget, programs, industry standards and other factors, it is difficult to predict which areas of staff will need to be increased or decreased based on changes in the district. Budgets for salaries for 2001-02 are based on current staffing levels and do not reflect anticipated need, or lack of need, in individual departments.

The district does not forecast retirements, resignations or reassignments and as a result cannot anticipate possible job openings early in the recruiting cycle. While teachers have until 45 days before the beginning of the next school year to inform the district they are not returning, many teachers are able to give more than the required notice. Districts all over the state are encountering teacher shortages. Without knowing who and

what is needed and when they are needed, WHISD is at a disadvantage in targeting and attracting teachers to the district. The district provides a \$1,500 per year stipend to teachers in critical shortage areas such as bilingual/ESL, special education, math, foreign language and science. The district has not identified universities or colleges with high concentrations of students in these areas and targeted these schools.

From June 15, 2000 to June 14, 2001, WHISD attended recruiting events and held one job fair at the district's office. The district also recruits online by using Regional Education Service Center 10 (Region 10). The executive director of Human Resources said that the two biggest recruiting obstacles facing the district are competitive pay and a small pool of qualified applicants. The district does not track applicants from first contact through employment. Without formal tracking, the district cannot determine which recruiting events, or types of events, are most successful in attracting and hiring qualified employees.

Exhibit 3-9 presents WHISD and its peer teacher turnover statistics from 1997-98 to 2000-01. WHISD's teacher turnover rate is significantly higher than one of its peers, La Marque, and the region and state averages.

Exhibit 3-9
WHISD and Peer Districts Teacher Turnover Rates
1997-98 through 2000-01

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Lancaster	26.9%	36.0%	33.0%	35.5%
Wilmer-Hutchins	24.1%	26.7%	26.3%	27.2%
La Marque	20.6%	26.8%	25.1%	19.7%
De Soto	20.5%	25.1%	24.9%	31.6%
Region 10	15.2%	19.6%	16.7%	17.7%
State Averages	13.3%	15.5%	15.0%	16.0%

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

The district conducts formal exit interviews but does not compile the information to identify and track separation trends. The district also does not track turnover by department by year. Because the district does not track separation trends and turnover statistics, it cannot identify possible areas that could be changed or improved to increase retention nor can it accurately identify problem departments or schools.

Human resources planning is important to organizations regardless of size or industry. Planning encompasses the forecasting of the human resources needs of an organization and determining the necessary steps to meet those organizational needs. The planning process consists of developing and administering programs and activities to ensure the availability of the right numbers and types of employees at the appropriate times and places to fill organizational needs.

Ysleta ISD developed a five-year strategic plan that lists strategic initiatives and their projected costs. The plan detailed several strategies to improve teacher employment, increase the educational levels of district teachers and increase the percentage of fully certified teachers. Most strategic plans also include measurable goals and shorter-term plans, called tactical plans, for each strategic goal that detail how to achieve the strategic goal.

Recommendation 30:

Create a formal staffing plan that includes a system for tracking staffing allocation and student enrollment, staff turnover, reasons for leaving and other key measures.

Once this tool is in place, the district can begin to identify staffing and budgetary needs as well as trends and issues and can plan for changes in staffing levels.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources compares district staffing levels to peer districts and determines appropriate staffing allocation formulas for all classes of employees.	April 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources uses the staffing allocation formulas and student enrollment projections to forecast total staffing needs.	May 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources begins tracking turnover by campus and by experience level.	May 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources compiles exit interview information by reason for leaving, campus and experience level.	May 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources begins to track applicants from first contact through hire.	May 2002
6.	The executive director of Human Resources analyzes the information to identify key issues facing the district.	June 2002

7.	Using the data compiled, the executive director of Human Resources develops a formal staffing plan that includes clear, measurable goals, strategies for addressing the key issues identified during analysis and the costs of implementing those strategies.	June 2002
8.	The superintendent reviews and approves the reports and plans.	July 2002
9.	The executive director of Human Resources uses the reports to manage staff and to update staffing, recruitment and retention plans.	July 2002 and Ongoing
10.	The superintendent and the director of Business Services use the staffing forecasts and costs associated with strategies to assist in the budgeting process.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD does not require its Human Resources Department employees to have formal training or experience in the area of human resources. **Exhibit 3-10** presents the district's qualifications and experience required for Human Resources Department employees according to the most recent job descriptions available. The titles in the job descriptions do not match the titles held by the employees serving in the positions that exist in the Human Resources Department.

Exhibit 3-10 Human Resources Department Qualifications and Requirements

Title:	Executive director of Human Resources / Student Services	Human Resource Specialist / Student Services
Date:	January 25, 2000	June 8, 2000
Education / Certification:	Master's in education or management related field Texas mid-management or other appropriate certification	Master's degree in education or management related field PDAS certification
Experience:	Three years successful administrative experience or an equivalent amount of human resource management experience in the private sector	Minimum three years experience in a public school setting. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board may find appropriate

Source: WHISD Job Descriptions, Human Resources Department, October 2001.

With the changing labor market and legal environment, an employer is at a significant disadvantage without a certain level of internal human resources expertise. Many school districts hire Human Resources directors with experience and/or a degree in human resources. Broad experience, training and/or formal education in human resources is important for several reasons. The additional technical expertise exposes individuals to cutting-edge ideas that are covered in the classroom and gives the individuals greater ability to evaluate and resolve problems. The expertise also increases the individual's credibility in interactions with other professionals in the organization. Broad experience and formal training also increases the individual's knowledge of innovative human resource practices, and the additional technical skills transfer to all employees, increasing the skills of the entire staff and reducing the need for external support.

A background in human resources, including either a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a business or education related field with several years experience in human resources, or a Bachelor's or Master's degree in human resource management, is particularly important for the executive director position. Without this background and experience, the district will need to rely more heavily on outside consultants, including its attorney, and cannot maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the office. In addition, without sufficient human resource background and training, the district increases its exposure to employee litigation.

Recommendation 31:

Increase professional requirements for Human Resources Department employees.

The executive director of Human Resources announced her intent to retire at the end of the school year. When the executive director position becomes available, the district should change the executive director job description to require a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a business or education related field and five years of exempt-level human resources experience, or a Bachelor's or Master's degree in human resources management. Because TASB and Region 10 offer training in human resource issues unique to school districts, experience in educational institutions is not a requisite.

The district should also consider changing the requirements for the administrative support position in the department to include some

experience in human resources administration, applicant screening, benefits enrollment or payroll.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Human Resources to change the departments' job descriptions to include the new education and work experience requirements.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources changes the job descriptions to include the new education and experience requirements.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

Chapter 3

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) human resources management in three sections:

B. HIRING, RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

As student enrollment increases and more teachers retire, Texas faces a critical teacher shortage. More than 1,040 Texas school districts are competing for teachers from an ever-shrinking pool. Because teacher recruitment has become a high stakes venture for districts, incentives for teachers have been on the rise. Some strategies employed by Texas school districts have included:

- hiring bonuses/competitive salaries;
- employee referral incentives;
- relocation or moving fees;
- housing;
- reduced-rate mortgages and low-interest loans;
- tuition reimbursement and student loan assistance; and
- professional recruiters.

Recruitment is becoming increasingly competitive and the supply of teachers is shrinking, both of which make retaining staff more important than ever. Retention can reduce the effort and resources necessary for recruitment. **Exhibit 3-11** presents five major reasons employees leave and the five most effective initiatives for retaining employees.

Exhibit 3-11
Threats to Retention and Initiatives for Retaining Employees

Threats to Employee Retention <i>(in order of percentage being offered and general effectiveness)</i>	Most Effective Initiatives for Retaining Employees <i>(in order of importance to employees)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher salaries of competitors • Dissatisfaction with career development • Not being appreciated • Job burnout • Conflicts with supervisors or co- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care • New hire orientation • Open communications policy • Salary increases • Emphasis on career

workers	development
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Source: Society for Human Resource Management, Retention Practice Mini-Survey, 1997.

Exhibit 3-12 presents the district's average salaries for professional employees, by category of professional employee. On average, WHISD pays its teachers more than its peers, but the district pays its professional support and school and central administration staff less than its peers.

**Exhibit 3-12
Average Actual Salaries
WHISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

District	Teachers	Professional Support	School Administration	Central Administration
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	\$37,355	\$40,150	\$50,154	\$51,715
De Soto ISD	\$36,045	\$46,985	\$53,730	\$72,293
La Marque ISD	\$36,436	\$42,062	\$56,334	\$75,665
Lancaster ISD	\$37,131	\$46,105	\$57,861	\$77,887

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Staff development is important for all facets of the district. Staff development and training expose employees to new or better ways to complete tasks or tackle problems. Creating a more efficient workforce has obvious benefits to the employer including increased productivity. Recognizing new ideas and encouraging development are also great ways to build loyalty among staff and retain the employees already on the payroll.

FINDING

WHISD recently raised beginning teacher salaries to be more competitive with districts in the local area. **Exhibit 3-13** presents average teacher salaries for WHISD, its peers and Dallas ISD for 1999-2000. Dallas ISD is included in the comparison because its close proximity to WHISD encourages competition for teachers. La Marque ISD is the only district not located in the Dallas Metroplex. The table shows that WHISD, on

average, paid teachers with zero to five years experience less than any other district in the area in the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 3-13
Average Teacher Salaries
WHISD, Peer Districts and Dallas ISD
1999-2000

District	Beginning	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	Over 20 Years
La Marque	\$26,876	\$30,515	\$33,139	\$39,767	\$44,438
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$28,826	\$30,322	\$34,225	\$39,388	\$44,353
De Soto	\$29,212	\$31,104	\$33,681	\$39,979	\$47,187
Lancaster	\$30,141	\$31,143	\$34,562	\$41,368	\$48,288
Dallas	\$30,627	\$33,309	\$36,185	\$42,043	\$51,447

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-14 presents the teacher salary schedule for 2000-01 and 2001-02 for teachers with a bachelor's degree and does not include any stipends. The table shows that WHISD has significantly raised beginning teacher salaries in response to increased competition.

Exhibit 3-14
WHISD Teacher Salary Schedule
187-Day, Bachelor's Degree
2000-01 and 2001-02

Years of Service	2000-01	2001-02
Beginning	\$29,717	\$34,000
5 Years	\$32,601	\$35,250
10 Years	\$36,376	\$36,570

Source: WHISD Human Resources Department, October 2001.

The increase in teacher salaries from 2000-01 to 2001-02 makes WHISD more competitive in the Dallas Metroplex area and should bolster recruitment efforts and help retain teachers who might have left the district for other local districts with better pay schedules.

COMMENDATION

WHISD raised teacher salaries to remain competitive in the local market.

FINDING

WHISD employs 51 classroom teachers who lack a valid teacher certification or appropriate permits. This represents 24.2 percent of the district's 211 teaching positions. In November 2001, the district applied for emergency permits for 13 of these teachers. Eight teachers were locally renewed, but the renewals are invalid because they were not completed prior to the beginning date of duties for the current school year. **Exhibit 3-15** details the campuses and classroom assignments of those uncertified/non-permitted teachers. Applications for emergency permits have been filed for the positions and assignments in bold.

**Exhibit 3-15
Assignments of Uncertified Teachers in WHISD**

Campus	Assignment	Campus	Assignment
Bishop Heights Elementary	K	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	ISS
Bishop Heights Elementary	K	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Keyboarding
Bishop Heights Elementary	Pre-K3	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Lang. Arts
Bishop Heights Elementary	Pre-K3	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Math
Bishop Heights Elementary	Pre-K3	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Math
Bishop Heights Elementary	Pre-K4	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Computer Lit.
Bishop Heights Elementary	Pre-K4	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	PE
Bishop Heights Elementary	Pre-K4	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	PE
Alta Mesa Learning Center	SPED	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	PE
Alta Mesa Learning	Grade 2	Kennedy-Curry Middle	Reading

Center		School	
Alta Mesa Learning Center	Grade 3	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Science
Alta Mesa Learning Center	Grade 4	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	Soc. Studies
Alta Mesa Learning Center	Grade 5	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	SPED
Alta Mesa Learning Center	Grade 5	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	SPED
Alta Mesa Learning Center	Grade 5	Kennedy-Curry Middle School	SPED Resource
Alta Mesa Learning Center	Grade 5	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Keyboarding
CS Winn Elementary	Pre-K3	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Lang. Arts
CS Winn Elementary	Reading Rec.	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Marketing
CS Winn Elementary	Art	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	ROTC
CS Winn Elementary	Grade 2	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	ROTC
Wilmer Elementary	Early Child.	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	ROTC
Wilmer Elementary	Early Child.	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Science
Wilmer Elementary	K	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Soc. Studies
Wilmer Elementary	Grade 1	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Spanish
Wilmer Elementary	Grade 2	Wilmer-Hutchins High School	Spanish
Wilmer Elementary	Grade 4		

Source: Teacher listing provided by WHISD Human Resources Department, November 2001. Certification verified through the State

Board of Educator Certification website, November 2001.

Note: Positions in bold had emergency permits filed in November 2001.

Having uncertified teachers in the classroom is a violation of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Chapter 21 Section 3 of the TEC states:

- a. A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, or counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.
- b. A person may not be employed by a school district as an audiologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, physician, nurse, school psychologist, associate school psychologist, social worker, or speech language pathologist unless the person is licensed by the state agency that licenses that profession. A person may perform specific services within those professions for a school district only if the person holds the appropriate credential from the appropriate state agency.

Exhibit 3-16 details district administrative and support staff, teacher, and principal and assistant principal survey results on questions regarding teacher recruitment and retention issues. The majority of district administrators and support staff, and principals and assistant principals do not believe the district adequately recruits and retains quality teachers.

Exhibit 3-16
District Administrator and Support Staff, Teacher and Principal and Assistant Principal Survey Results

Survey Questions	District Administrators			Teachers			Principals		
	A/SA	NO	D/SD	A/SA	NO	D/SD	A/SA	NO	D/SD
Teacher turnover is low.	20.6%	16.2%	61.8%	22%	29.4%	48.5%	0%	20%	80%
Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	23.5%	17.7%	58.8%	39.7%	27.9%	32.4%	20%	0%	80%
Teacher openings are filled quickly.	10.3%	22%	67.7%	17.6%	30.9%	51.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A

The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	26.5%	28%	45.6%	20.5%	42.6%	36.8%	0%	40%	60%
The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	25%	23.6%	51.5%	19.1%	44.1%	36.7%	0%	20%	80%

Source: TSPR Surveys, October 2001.

A/SA=Agree/Strongly Agree

NO=No Opinion

D/SD=Disagree/Strongly Disagree

The executive director of Human Resources told the review team that the previous lack of competitive salary was one of the largest retention problems. The executive director of Human Resources also referred to WHISD as a stepping stone district whose employees gain experience needed for jobs in other districts. The district's proximity to the Metroplex and the competitive salaries of large districts like Dallas ISD and Fort Worth ISD also contributed to the high turnover rates seen not only in WHISD, but also in Lancaster ISD and De Soto ISD.

The cost of teacher turnover can be extremely high. The US Department of Labor estimates that costs to replace an employee average 33 percent of the new hire's salary. The beginning teacher salary for WHISD is \$34,000. Each teacher costs the district an estimated \$11,220 to replace. These are financial costs only. Loss of experienced teachers also contributes to decreased student performance.

TASB's *Going, Going, Gone: A Handbook of Practical Responses to the Texas Teacher Recruitment and Retention Problem*, lists several recruitment strategies that have been successful in other districts including: hiring bonuses, employee referral incentives, relocation or moving fees, tuition reimbursement or student loan assistance and reduced rate mortgages and low-interest loans. Fort Worth ISD offers signing bonuses and both Fort Worth ISD and Dallas ISD offer competitive salaries.

Going, Going, Gone also identifies the loss of first year teachers as one of the few attrition factors that districts can control. The handbook states, "The primary reason a new teacher leaves the classroom is lack of a support system. The research supports that providing such support substantially increases new teacher retention."

In Hillsborough County in Florida, the district has a comprehensive teacher induction program that includes intensive new teacher training and the assignment of a support team to each new teacher. The support team includes a campus administrator, a peer and a subject matter expert. The support team is available to the teacher throughout the year to provide information, support and feedback.

Recommendation 32:

Create and implement a recruiting and retention plan to decrease the number of non-certified teachers.

The teacher recruitment problem facing the district is significant. Not only does the district need to recruit teachers to fill vacancies that would normally be created by resignations, retirements and terminations, but the district also needs to recruit 51 more certified teachers to replace those uncertified teachers on staff.

The district should consider each of the recruitment incentives listed in the TASB handbook. Retaining existing certified teachers is also going to be necessary. The district may also want to consider increasing all teacher salaries to exceed the salaries offered by other local school districts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent informs all uncertified teachers who would not qualify for emergency certification or permit that employment will terminate at the end of the school year.	April 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources and the superintendent review exit interview notes and other districts' recruiting strategies to determine which strategies are most appropriate for WHISD.	April 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources and the superintendent review other districts' retention strategies and determine which strategies are most appropriate for WHISD.	April 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources creates a recruitment and retention plan based on the strategies identified. The plan includes a calendar of recruiting events, personnel to	April 2002

	attend each event and the estimated costs per strategy.	
5.	The executive director of Human Resources submits the plan to the superintendent for approval.	May 2002
6.	The superintendent approves the plan.	May 2002
7.	The superintendent submits the plan and associated funding requests to the board for approval.	May 2002
8.	The board approves the plan and funding for the plan.	May 2002
9.	The district implements the plan.	June 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There may be costs associated with the recruiting and retention strategies. However, until the district determines which strategies it will use, the fiscal impact cannot be calculated.

FINDING

The district has no formal process for identifying and addressing staff training needs. Recognizing a need for instructional staff development, the superintendent, with the assistance of TEA, created a staff development program for 2001-02 that includes goals, hours required and a calendar. The plan also includes the agendas from three days of staff development before the beginning of the 2001-02 school year. The plan does not identify how teachers and principals are to achieve the hours required during the school year, and the calendar does not identify which types of training will be offered at each of the sessions. The training and development plan also does not address the training needs of non-instructional personnel.

The district does not offer or require federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety training or sensitivity training and does not provide training for department heads and principals in interviewing or employee management. The superintendent said that the individual departments find or provide their own training, but there is no central coordination or guideline for what types of training and development would best meet the district's goals. No evaluation tools are used to determine the training's effectiveness and there is no oversight to ensure that employees are receiving the training they need.

Waco ISD (WISD) has a comprehensive staff development plan that focuses on new teacher induction, school-based needs and districtwide

staff development opportunities. Staff development activities follow a three-year district staff development plan that is updated annually based on a yearly needs assessment. WISD's staff development programs serve all employees of the district.

Recommendation 33:

Create and implement a staff development plan that includes instructional and non-instructional staff.

The new plan would serve as a resource for department heads in trying to identify what types of training are available and how each type of training supports the district's mission and goals. Staff development goals and strategies for instructional employees should be aligned with curriculum guides and coordinated with the Curriculum and Instruction Department. By requesting input from department heads, the district could also focus training and development on specific areas of deficiency. A comprehensive plan for training and development could also be used as a tool in the budgeting process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources conducts a needs assessment to determine the type of training needed by instructional and non-instructional staff.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources creates a staff development plan that identifies training and staff development needs that support the district's mission and goals and includes estimated costs of training.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources, the director of Business Services and the superintendent review and revise the plan.	July 2002
4.	The superintendent approves the plan.	July 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources distributes the approved plan to supervisors.	July 2002
6.	The Human Resources secretary and supervisors collaborate to identify external training and development programs that meet the objectives and budget of the plan.	July 2002 and Ongoing
7.	The executive director of Human Resources develops training programs to meet staff development needs when external resources are unavailable or inadequate.	July 2002 and Ongoing
8.	The executive director of Human Resources develops	July 2002

	assessment instruments to evaluate training and development programs.	and Ongoing
9.	The executive director of Human Resources updates the plan annually.	July 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) human resources management in three sections:

C. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies are defined by the board and provide guidelines for how the district should be managed. Board policies have specific sections that relate to Human Resources and can include policies about contracts, terminations, leaves, compensation and employee rights. Procedures are the processes used by the department to complete tasks.

WHISD's employee handbook is meant to serve as a guide to a brief explanation of district policies. The handbook provides information on the following:

- Employment
- Reassignments and Transfers
- Workload and Work Schedules
- Performance Evaluation
- Employee Involvement
- Staff Development
- Compensation and Benefits
- Leaves and Absences
- Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)
- Employee Relations and Communications
- Complaints and Grievances
- Employee Conduct and Welfare
- General Procedures
- Termination of Employment

The handbook also includes an appendix that contains the student dress code, code of ethics for Texas educators, board policies, acceptable computer use guidelines, acceptable computer use agreement and an employee handbook acknowledgement form.

FINDING

WHISD does not review its Human Resources policies on a regular basis. Some of the policies included in the employee handbook do not reflect updates and changes made by the board. The review team also found policies that could be changed to reduce the district's employer liability and

still meet the requirements of state and federal law. These policies include the local leave policy and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

WHISD's policy on local leave gives district employees five days of local leave in addition to the five days of state personal leave. The district's policy states that local leave does not accumulate and requires that employees use all local leave before using state sick leave accumulated before 1995-96 and state personal leave.

Dallas ISD's policies require all state sick leave accumulated before 1995-96 be exhausted before local leave can be used. Reducing cumulative leave balances before non-cumulative leave balances lessens the district's liability for outstanding leave, while still providing the same benefits to the employee. WHISD's superintendent said that by allowing non-cumulative leave to be taken first, employees receive five "free" days of vacation.

WHISD's FMLA policy allows employees to take inappropriate advantage of the law. The district's FMLA policy states, "For purposes of an employee's entitlement to family and medical leave, the 12-month period shall be July 1 through June 30." This definition would allow an employee to take 12 weeks of job-protected leave that ended on June 30 and an additional 12 weeks of job-protected leave that begins on July 1, for a total of 24 weeks of job-protected leave for the same qualifying event. This definition unnecessarily provides employees with the opportunity to take 24 weeks of job-protected leave for the same qualifying event. The district must keep the same or a similar position available for employees on FMLA leave. Duties normally performed by staff on FMLA leave still need to be performed and the district has to find other personnel, whether regular or temporary, to perform those tasks.

De Soto ISD's FMLA policy states, "The 12-month period within which employee shall be eligible for 12 weeks of family and medical leave shall be defined as a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses family and medical leave." Many businesses also use the rolling 12-month period to reduce the risk of having to provide more than 12 weeks of job-protected leave in any 12-month period.

Recommendation 34:

Review and update personnel policies.

Personnel policies should be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the law and with best practices. The district's local policies should be compared to other school districts in the region and in the state and where applicable with local industry policies on the same issues. Region 10's

personnel services cooperative has resources available to assist the district in the review of its local personnel policies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources reviews personnel policies for WHISD and compares the local district's policies to local policies in other school districts.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources determines which policies should be updated to protect the best interests of the district.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources drafts changes to the personnel policies.	June 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources presents the draft changes to the superintendent for review.	June 2002
5.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Human Resources to make any necessary changes and approves the updated policies.	July 2002
6.	The superintendent presents the proposed changes to the board.	July 2002
7.	The board approves the proposed changes.	July 2002
8.	The executive director of Human Resources creates a schedule to review all policies and forms annually.	August 2002
9.	The executive director of Human Resources reviews personnel policies annually.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

The district is a member of the Region 10 personnel services cooperative. The director of the personnel services cooperative offered to provide assistance and training to the district as necessary. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD's job applications request information prohibited by law. Three of the four applications used by the district request potentially discriminatory information including: gender, ethnicity and health-related information. The applications also request copies of the applicant's birth certificate, driver's license and social security card.

While employers can ask applicants to provide information about gender, race, age and other protected class information for purposes of reporting applicant flow data to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the request must be clearly marked as voluntary and must be separate from the application. Employers generally provide applications to supervisors and other hiring decision makers, and protected class information should not be provided to persons making hiring decisions. Requesting copies of a driver's license, birth certificate and social security card is acceptable when completing the Immigration and Naturalization Service form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, but those documents can provide potentially discriminatory information about age, race and national origin, and must not be included with the application. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is only after a job offer that the employer can pose questions about health and request a physical examination, not at the time of application. Asking for information about ethnicity, gender, health, age and national origin on the application exposes the district to discriminatory hiring practices litigation.

Recommendation 35:

Remove illegal requests for information from all applications.

The review team immediately brought this to the attention of the superintendent who said he would correct the problem.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Human Resources to remove requests for illegal information from all job applications.	Completed
2.	The executive director of Human Resources revises all applications and submits them to the superintendent for approval.	Completed
3.	The superintendent approves the new job applications.	Completed
4.	The executive director of Human Resources requests that all applicants on file complete the new job applications.	April 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources destroys all applications on file that contain potentially discriminatory information.	May 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD issues more than 25 employment contracts that are not required by the Texas Education Code (TEC). According to the TEC, a district must employ classroom teachers, principals, librarians, nurses and counselors under a probationary, a continuing or a term contract. The TEC does not require any other categories of school district employees to be employed by contract, although most districts contract with superintendents. Even though it is not required by law, WHISD employs all professionally certified personnel and the superintendent's secretary by contract.

The WHISD board contract policy states, "The board may employ, by a written contract, administrators and other professionals whose positions do not require certification." The board's at-will employment policy states "the board delegates to the Superintendent authority to hire and dismiss the following categories of employees, who shall serve on an at-will basis: paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel."

The existence of contracts beyond the legal requirements limits the district's ability to reassign and adjust staffing levels based on declining student enrollment and/or revenues, or for poor employee performance. The contracts also increase the district's liability for employment related litigation and increase the administrative duties of the Human Resources Department and the superintendent of preparing for, and participating in, grievance proceedings and employment lawsuits.

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

Recommendation 36:

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

The at-will policy should be expanded to include all categories of personnel whose positions do not require contracts under Chapter 21 of the TEC or when necessary to hire and retain key personnel in strategic positions. Positions designated as key personnel should include the superintendent, and might also include the director of Business Services and the director of Curriculum and Instruction or any assistant superintendent positions the district might create. The revision to board policy should be made immediately and communicated to all district employees. All new hires in positions that do not require a contract under the new policy should be employed at-will. As contracts for positions that

would become at-will positions under the new policy expire, they should not be renewed, but the district should notify these employees that their positions, if merited, would continue as non-contract/at-will positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board changes the at-will policy to include all categories of personnel not governed by Chapter 21 of the education code or designated as key personnel.	Immediately
2.	The board and the superintendent designate positions considered key personnel.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent notifies all affected personnel of the change in policy.	July 2002
4.	The district enters into employment contracts with only key personnel and instructional personnel governed by Chapter 21 of the education code.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) facilities use and management function in four sections:

- A. Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Management
- B. Plant Maintenance
- C. Custodial Services
- D. Energy Use and Management

A comprehensive facilities planning department, including maintenance, housekeeping and energy management, should effectively coordinate all physical resources in the district. The program's objective is to provide a safe and clean environment for students and to integrate facilities planning with other aspects of school planning. Facilities personnel should be involved in design and construction activities and be knowledgeable about operations and maintenance activities. Finally, facilities departments should operate under clearly defined policies and procedures that can be adapted to changes in the district's resources and needs.

BACKGROUND

WHISD's facilities management functions are under the responsibility of the director of Business Services who reports to the superintendent. Within the Maintenance Department, the maintenance supervisor reports directly to the director of Business Services and is responsible for all building trades, grounds and delivery personnel. The custodians are assigned to schools based upon decisions made by each of the school principals who then supervise those employees.

Chapter 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) facilities use and management function in four sections:

A. FACILITIES PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

The mission of an effective facilities planning, design and construction management function is to plan for and provide facilities that meet the needs of students at the lowest possible cost. The specific goals of a facilities planning, design and construction management department are:

- to establish a policy and framework for long-range facilities planning;
- to provide valid enrollment projections on which to base estimates of future needs for schools and facilities;
- to select and acquire proper school buildings and to time their acquisition to precede actual need while avoiding wasted space;
- to determine the student capacity and educational adequacy of existing facilities and to evaluate alternatives to new construction;
- to develop educational program specifications from which the architect can design a functional facility that matches the needs of the curriculum while enhancing and reinforcing student education;
- to secure architectural services to assist in planning and constructing facilities;
- to develop a capital planning budget that balances facility needs, expenditures necessary to meet those needs and how expenditures will be financed;
- to successfully translate the approved architectural plans into a quality school building and to do so within the budget and time scheduled; and
- to establish and carry out an orientation program so that the facility's users can better understand the design rationale and become familiar with the way the building is supposed to work.

FINDING

The district lacks a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan. The superintendent is informally evaluating facility options for the district, but no methodology is being applied to determine short- and long-range facility needs.

Since 1993 the district has seen enrollment decline from 4,017 students to 3,283 students. Declines occurred in all but two years during this period. The superintendent attributed this decline to students transferring to private schools as opposed to area population changes. District management expects enrollment to rebound in the near future. **Exhibit 4-1** illustrates the district's decline in enrollment from 4,017 students in the 1993-94 school year to 3,283 students enrolled the 2000-01 school year. WHISD does not maintain any enrollment projections either districtwide or on a school-by-school basis. Having some reasonable method of estimating student enrollment for at least five years in the future would enable the district to plan financially and operationally in terms of facilities.

Exhibit 4-1
WHISD Student Enrollment History

School Year	Enrollment
1993-94	4,017
1994-95	4,007
1995-96	3,837
1996-97	3,381
1997-98	3,495
1998-99	3,651
1999-2000	3,444
2000-01	3,283

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1993-94 through 2000-01.

The district lacks a facility inventory, or a detailed listing of facilities reflecting square feet of space, capacity, occupancy and date of construction. An inventory and an accurate analysis of the facilities' condition are essential in managing existing schools. Each school inventory should identify the use and size of each room enabling planners to accurately set the capacity of each school. Record of modifications to schools should be noted and kept up to date in the facility inventory. WHISD net square footage data was handwritten on several diagrams of facility layouts. Based on the configuration of the schools, this data is inaccurate. The review team attempted to reconstruct gross square footage data, which is the more common measure for managing facilities. Gross square feet measures from outer wall to outer wall, while net square feet relates to usable floor space within a facility. The gross square footage of building space is generally 40 percent more than net square footage. **Exhibit 4-2** presents a compilation of district gross square footage data by facility based on the district's floor plans.

Exhibit 4-2
WHISD Facilities

Description	Year Constructed	Gross Footage
Alta Mesa Learning Center	1954	33,180
Bishop Heights Elementary	1961	32,808
Wilmer Elementary	1947	32,701
C.S. Winn Elementary	1954	62,965

Kennedy-Curry Junior High	NA*	64,282
Wilmer-Hutchins High	1982	159,748
Hutchins Academic Center	NA*	18,775
Total		404,459

Source: Square footages provided by WHISD were net. A 1.4 multiplier factor was used to generate gross square footage figures in table. Amounts include portables.

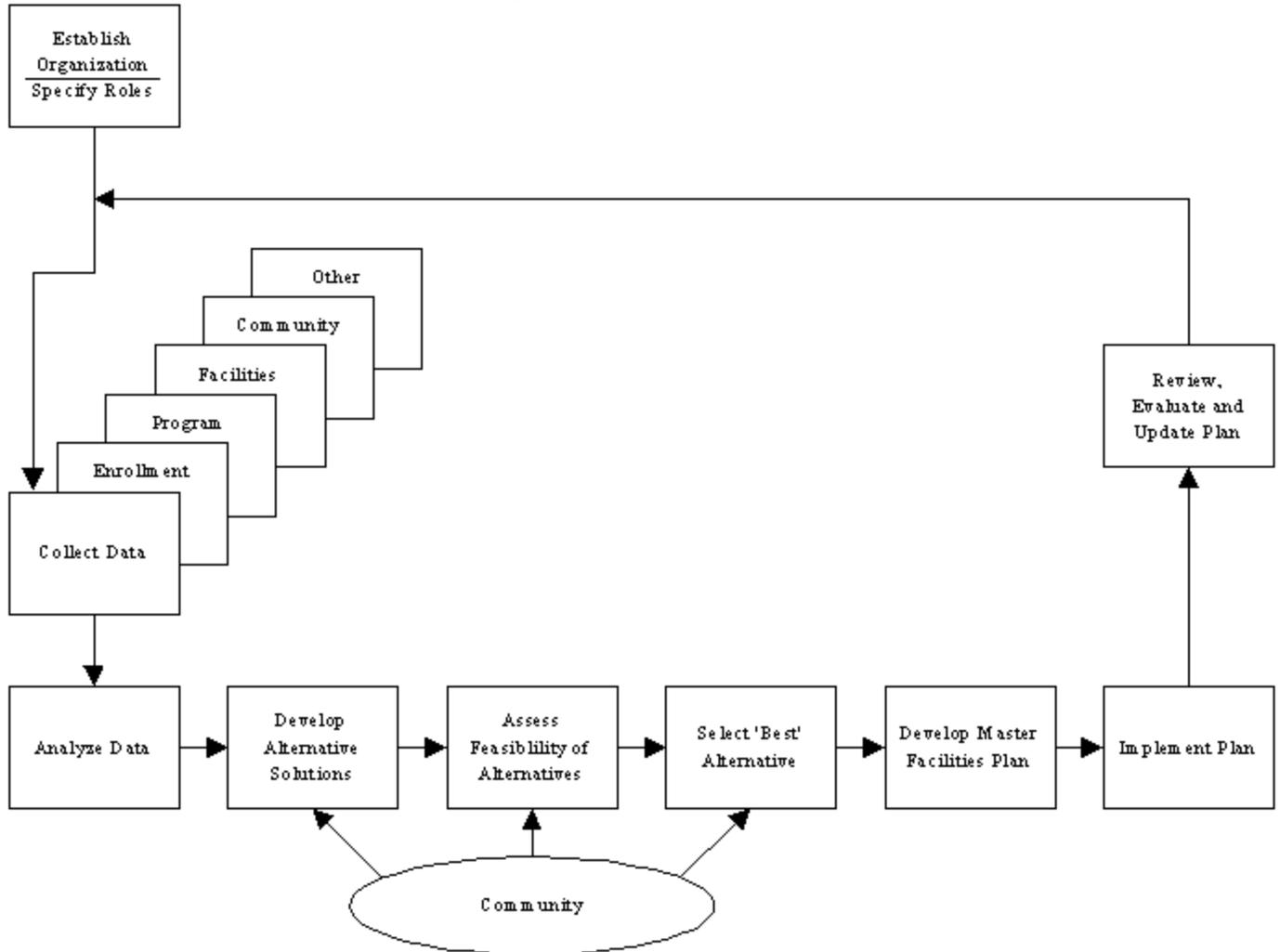
**NA=Not Available*

In October 2001, WHISD took an important first step toward conducting a comprehensive facilities audit to provide the district with an objective inventory and detailed assessment of all facilities. At the advice of the review team, the superintendent contacted several organizations in an effort to receive proposals for a facilities audit. The superintendent reported that he had received a proposal from the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) and subsequently placed the proposal and the issue of a facilities audit before the board. As of February 11, 2002, the WHISD board approved a facilities audit for the district.

The lack of a long-range planning function is preventing the district from meeting facility needs. The district's permanent and portable facilities are in poor condition and no formal plans to renovate or replace them exist. Further, educational needs for facilities are not defined. With the exception of the high school, most schools would likely be rated unacceptable in a facilities audit.

Exhibit 4-3 shows the facilities planning process recommended by the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International (CEFPI).

**Exhibit 4-3
Facilities Planning Process Recommended by CEFPI**



Source: Council of Educational Facility Planners International, Guide for Planning Educational Facilities, 1991.

School districts with effective planning functions, such as the one described in **Exhibit 4-3**, identify and meet district facility needs. These plans also include analysis of current and historical operations and maintenance costs for schools, as well as consideration of enrollment figures. Crystal City Independent School District (CCISD) developed a facilities master plan using a contracted architectural firm for the needs assessment and a citizens committee of staff and parents for further recommendations and community support. CCISD discovered several funding alternatives and completed needed renovations including energy-efficient lighting upgrades and replacement of heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment.

Recommendation 37:

Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan.

The district should form a long-range facilities planning committee consisting of teachers, administrators, maintenance and operations personnel, parents, members of the business community, members of the community at large. This committee should be involved in the development of the comprehensive long-range facilities master plan and should review and monitor the plan annually.

As part of the development of the long-range facilities master plan, the district should work with a consultant to review the condition of their existing facilities, develop enrollment projections for the next 10 years, establish criteria for educational and facilities standards, develop alternatives the district might pursue to address deficiencies identified, and look at different funding mechanisms available to the district to address their needs.

The facilities master plan should include opportunities for consolidation since the cost per student for operation and maintenance of the school is considerably higher for a 300-student school than for a 600-student school. The facilities master plan should include a range of factors critical for an adequate education, such as access to technology, ceiling height, lighting levels, square feet per student, student to teacher ratio, access to water and restrooms, as well as other issues the district identifies as important in educating students. In addition, the master plan should address how specific educational programs or changes in educational delivery systems will affect facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board creates a facilities planning committee and solicits volunteers to serve on the committee.	April 2002
2.	The board appoints additional committee members, establishes committee goals and sets a timetable for results.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent solicits bids for a facilities planning study and recommends a vendor to the committee and board for approval.	Complete
4.	The facilities planning committee reviews the facilities audit results, oversees the planning study and incorporates results into a long-term facilities master plan.	October 2002
5.	The facilities planning committee updates the master plan annually.	Ongoing Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact assumes that a facilities consultant will be hired to develop the master plan under the direction of the district committee. Based on costs of similar studies, the consultant fees are expected to be \$11,550.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan.	(\$11,550)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

Existing elementary school facilities are in poor condition and have a high percentage of portable classrooms, which are also in poor condition. **Exhibit 4-4** presents a profile of the district's permanent and portable instructional spaces.

**Exhibit 4-4
WHISD Elementary School Portable Analysis**

School Name	Total Instruction Spaces	Instruction Spaces Housed in Portables	Percentage of Instruction Spaces in Portables
Alta Mesa Elementary	28	17	61%
Bishop Heights Elementary	31	5	16%
Wilmer Elementary	21	8	38%
C.S. Winn Elementary	30	9	30%

Source: WHISD Maintenance Department, October 2001.

Each of the WHISD elementary schools has 16 percent or more of instructional spaces housed in portables. Three schools have more than 30 percent of their classrooms in portables, and Alta Mesa Elementary has more than 60 percent of its classrooms in portables. This situation illustrates one of the greatest problems excessive use of portables poses to schools. The additional student load of portables puts tremendous strain on existing core facilities by overtaxing restrooms, libraries and lunchrooms. The continued use of portables is particularly troubling in light of declining enrollment. Portables are generally used to accommodate temporary facility needs, such as when student populations are increasing rapidly. When the needs lessen via declining enrollment, portables should be sold.

Temporary classrooms are a common feature of American schools, but they are usually erected to meet enrollment fluctuations or to house temporary programs. Nationally, the average square footage of portable classrooms is 10 percent of the total gross square feet at the elementary level and 5 percent at the middle and high school level. WHISD has no district policy on the use, placement or removal of portable classrooms.

The student enrollment at each school is too low to operate efficiently. **Exhibit 4-5** provides an analysis of existing student capacity at the elementary schools. TEA acknowledges that it is impractical for a school to have every classroom completely full. A 90 percent use ratio is considered the optimum capacity that can be reasonably expected based on TEA guidelines.

**Exhibit 4-5
WHISD Elementary School Capacity Analysis**

School Name	Overall Capacity (based on No. of Instruction Spaces)	Permanent Capacity (not including Portables)	Enrollment	Over/(Under) Existing Capacity
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Alta Mesa Elementary	554	218	417	(137)
Bishop Heights Elementary	614	515	463	(151)
Wilmer Elementary	416	257	398	(18)
C.S. Winn Elementary	594	416	373	(221)
Total	2178	1406	1651	(527)

Source: WHISD and TSPR field investigation.

Note 1: Elementary School capacities are based on 22 students per instruction space multiplied by a utilization factor of 90 percent.

Note 2: Number of instruction spaces = gross number of instruction spaces minus instruction spaces used for programs that add no capacity such as music, title programs, content mastery, ESL, etc.

Many Texas school districts adjust facility use according to fluctuations in student enrollment and consider enrollment projections when considering new construction or renovations to existing buildings. Many districts have also built new, larger schools instead of continuously renovating older, smaller schools. Districts plan for these newer facilities to be more energy efficient, better equipped to meet technology and wiring requirements and better meet the educational needs of students.

Recommendation 38:

Combine four existing elementary schools into three and adjust attendance boundaries.

The district should combine the four relatively small elementary schools into three moderately sized schools. As part of the facilities planning process, the district should evaluate whether it is more feasible to provide major renovations to the existing facilities or provide three new replacement elementary schools phased in over several years. Given the district's declining enrollment and the poor condition of the facilities as observed by the review team, renovating the existing elementary schools may prove to be less cost effective for the district than replacing facilities.

After the district has decided which school will close, the district should review the possibility of selling the building and/or property. The ability of the district to sell the property will depend on many factors including the location of the building within the district, the condition of the building or buildings and real estate market conditions. Since it is not possible to determine if the school is marketable, the proceeds from any such sale are not included in the fiscal impact of this recommendation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	After the facilities master plan is complete, the superintendent brings a proposal to the board to consolidate the four elementary schools into three.	November 2002
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2.	The superintendent directs the director of Facilities, director of Business Services and director of Purchasing to determine the cost of new facilities for three new elementary schools and to explore funding options.	December 2002 - February 2003
3.	The board holds public meetings to discuss the consolidation proposal and facilities issues and receives information from the community.	March 2003 - April 2003
4.	The board approves the proposal.	April 2003
5.	The superintendent incorporates this information into the district's long-range facilities plan and develops a schedule for closing one of the elementary schools and relocating students. Principals provide information to parents and determine individual placement needs.	May 2003 - July 2003
6.	The director of Facilities, director of Business Services and director of Purchasing prepare a request for bids for vendors to build the facilities.	August 2003 - November 2003
7.	The superintendent brings the bids to the board for review to determine if the board will place a bond on the ballot in the next election and discusses options for financing construction.	December 2003
8.	Students are reassigned for the forthcoming school year.	May 2004

FISCAL IMPACT

Estimates reflect savings from closing one school resulting in reduced maintenance costs and the elimination of the administrative staff (principal, secretary, counselor, library aide and health aide) at one of the elementary schools. The administrative staff at the three existing facilities should be sufficient to support the three new schools. Consolidation should not lower student enrollment, so teaching positions will most likely not be eliminated.

The anticipated savings are shown in **Exhibit 4-6**. Dollar amounts associated with staff positions are calculated using 2001-02 administrative staff salaries (plus 13.4 percent for benefits) from the school with the lowest enrollment. Maintenance savings are based on WHISD's 2001-02 budgeted maintenance expenditures, district square footage and square footage of the smallest of the four elementary schools. WHISD's budgeted maintenance expenditures per square foot is \$1.74 (\$703,654 divided by 404,459 square feet). The resulting savings is \$56,900 (\$1.74 X 32,701 square feet).

Exhibit 4-6 Estimated Administrative Costs Including Benefits to Operate a WHISD Elementary School

Position or Expenditure	Cost
Principal	\$57,925
Secretary	\$22,429
Counselor	\$21,978

Library Aide	\$20,076
Health Aide	\$23,016
Maintenance	\$56,900
Total Cost Per Year	\$202,324

Source: WHISD Budget, 2001-02, WHISD Payroll, September, 2001 and WHISD Proposed Salary Schedule, 2001-02.

Based on the implementation steps and timeline for this recommendation, the district would achieve these cost savings during fiscal year 2004-05.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Combine four existing elementary schools into three and adjust attendance boundaries.	\$0	\$0	\$202,324	\$202,324	\$202,324

FINDING

WHISD is not taking full advantage of available facilities funding sources to provide replacement facilities or make needed renovations. WHISD has never applied for the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program, a federally funded program created by the federal Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. It provides federal tax credits to lenders purchasing bonds from issuing school districts with more than 25 percent of their student population categorized as economically disadvantaged. The tax credits allow the authorized district to obtain interest-free funding. Consequently, the district does not pay interest, but only repays the amount borrowed.

TEA accepts and reviews applications for the QZAB program on an ongoing basis. Beginning in 2002 QZAB funds may be used for new construction. In 1998, 1999 and 2000, the State of Texas received QZAB allocations for \$32.8 million, \$34.8 million and \$32.5 million, respectively. In 1999, Congress extended the program through 2001 to support an additional \$400 million in school improvements. There is an \$8 million limit per QZAB application with repayment due within 12 years. A district is entitled to only one application per calendar year. Any funding not allocated by December 31 of each year rolls over into the next year for new applications.

Exhibit 4-7 provides an example of a district obtaining approval for an \$8 million loan. The district would repay only \$8 million over 12 years and would not pay the \$2.6 million in interest that would be required if using conventional financing.

**Exhibit 4-7
Estimated Amortization Schedule for \$8 Million QZAB Allocation**

Issue	Principal	Interest	Annual	Tax Credit
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Year	Payments	Rate*	Interest	Granted By QZAB To Bondholders
1	\$666,666	5.06%	\$404,800	\$404,800
2	\$666,666	5.06%	\$371,067	\$371,067
3	\$666,666	5.06%	\$337,333	\$337,333
4	\$666,666	5.06%	\$303,600	\$303,600
5	\$666,666	5.06%	\$269,867	\$269,867
6	\$666,666	5.06%	\$236,134	\$236,134
7	\$666,666	5.06%	\$202,400	\$202,400
8	\$666,666	5.06%	\$168,667	\$168,667
9	\$666,666	5.06%	\$134,934	\$134,934
10	\$666,666	5.06%	\$101,200	\$101,200
11	\$666,666	5.06%	\$67,467	\$67,467
12	\$666,674	5.06%	\$33,734	\$33,734
Totals	\$8,000,000		\$2,631,203	\$2,631,203

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., 2001.

Note: Calculations based upon maximum allocation and maturity available through the QZAB program administered by the TEA.

**Rate for 10-year bonds as reported December 19, 2001 on the SmartMoney.com web site.*

Many school districts, such as Kenedy ISD (KISD), apply for QZAB funds to finance facilities projects. The districts' superintendent completes an application and includes written assurance from a business partner designating a contribution of 10 percent of the total project costs to create a new academic program at the qualified school. The 10 percent contribution includes either cash, property, equipment, professional services or volunteer services. Many schools either collaborate with a single private entity or with several entities to reach the 10 percent threshold. Bond proceeds benefit an individual school located within a federally designated Empowerment Zone, a federally designated Enterprise Community or any other school with at least 35 percent of its student population eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch programs. WHISD qualifies as part of the latter category since the district has more than 35 percent of its students classified as economically disadvantaged.

The QZAB application is for permission to issue a bond or to obtain a personal property lease purchase agreement or a time warrant (loan). The authorization and issuance of bonds are under the authority of Texas Education Code Chapter 45 subchapter A. A lease purchase must be qualified under Local

Government Code section 271.005 pertaining to personal property. A time warrant must meet the requirements under Texas Education Code section 45.103.

To achieve QZAB designation, a district must meet the program's proof of eligibility, provide an assurance of a private business contribution and submit the district's program intent. The application requires filing and the facilities design requires approval before the district issues its QZAB debt. The application process takes approximately 30 days from the date of submission to TEA to final approval. Upon receipt of QZAB designation, the district will have 180 days to issue bonds. Failure to issue the bonds within the allotted time will result in a lapse of the QZAB designation.

QZAB has no deadline-if the TEA has money, districts can apply at any time, on a first come first serve basis. During calendar year 2001, eight of 14 applications were approved exhausting the annual allocated funds. Districts may apply for up to \$8 million through the QZAB program. Districts who applied and did not receive funds in 2001 have first priority in 2002.

Kenedy ISD (KISD) received QZAB funding to renovate its schools in 1999. The local community assisted the school district by providing the required pledge, and KISD obtained a \$350,000 loan to repair the roof on a school building.

Recommendation 39:

Apply for the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program to enable renovations at existing schools and for new school construction.

The QZAB program effectively lowers the cost of new schools and provides a strong selling point in getting voters to approve a bond issue. QZAB funding could help WHISD save 26 percent or more of the cost of a construction project.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services identifies repairs and renovation projects that will qualify for the QZAB loan.	April 2002
2.	The director of Business Services obtains pledges from one or more corporate sponsors for matching requirements or coordinates compilation of volunteer hours.	April - June 2002
3.	The director of Business Services completes the loan application and obtains approval from the superintendent and the board.	June 2002
4.	The director of Business Services submits QZAB application to TEA for approval.	June 2002
5.	TEA approves the application and WHISD receives QZAB designation.	July 2002
6.	WHISD issues QZAB bonds and initiates facilities projects funded.	October 2002
7.	The director of Business Services oversees the project and reports progress to the superintendent and the board.	October 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

WHISD must issue a bond within 180 days of QZAB approval. Consequently, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) facilities use and management function in four sections:

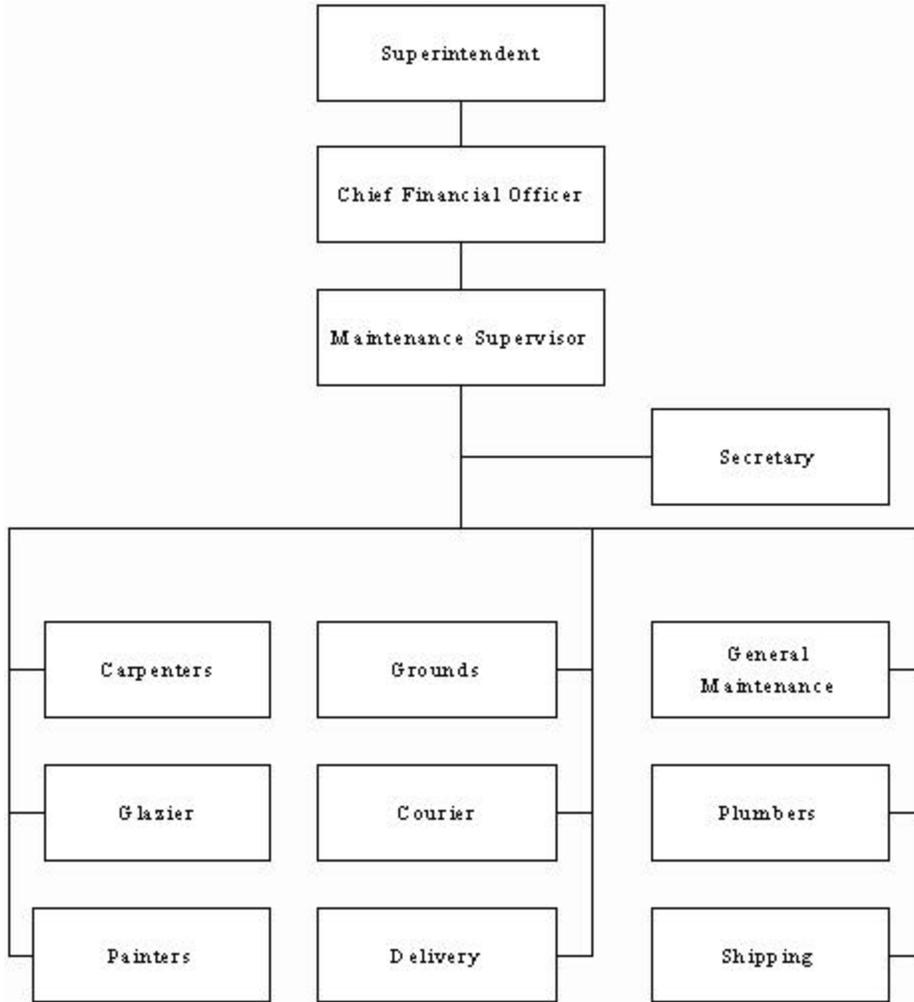
B. PLANT MAINTENANCE

A typical school district facilities management department provides a physical environment that enhances teaching and learning. Maintenance and operations is the major ongoing activity in facilities management. An effective maintenance and operations department's goals are to:

- extend the life of facilities and maximize their potential use;
- increase facilities staff productivity;
- select the most cost-effective methods for operations;
- improve and maintain the aesthetics of facilities;
- implement programs to conserve energy and
- ensure the safety and security of people and buildings.

Efficient and effective maintenance operations in a school district require well-defined processes, including adequate information to plan and manage daily maintenance operations, a good work-order system that helps maintenance workers respond quickly to repair requests, a preventive maintenance system that ensures that maintenance workers regularly service equipment to minimize equipment down-time, and a mechanism to monitor maintenance service levels and obtain periodic feedback about functions that need improvement. **Exhibit 4-8** shows the organizational structure of WHISD's Maintenance Department.

**Exhibit 4-8
Maintenance Department Organization**



Source: WHISD Maintenance Department, September 2001.

The WHISD Maintenance Department, which includes maintenance and grounds keeping functions, has a staff of 20 and a budget of \$703,654 for fiscal 2001-02. The department is responsible for maintaining four elementary schools, one junior high school, one high school, one alternative school and various administrative and support facilities with a total of about 404,459 square feet.

Exhibit 4-9 shows the expenditure history of all maintenance related expenditures, including utilities and custodial services.

**Exhibit 4-9
WHISD Actual and Budgeted Plant Maintenance and Operations
Expenditures
1996-97 through 2000-01**

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	(Budgeted) 2000-01	Percent Change
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,093,224	\$1,237,498	\$1,284,561	\$1,517,053	\$1,351,743	23.6%
Contracted Services	\$1,102,849	\$1,153,172	\$1,515,490	\$2,401,702	\$1,407,418	27.6%
Materials & Supplies	\$224,128	\$185,086	\$251,928	\$199,541	\$151,938	(32.2%)
Other Operating Costs	\$101,125	\$59,638	\$77,313	\$53,052	\$57,600	(43.0%)
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$11,900	\$0	\$35,164	\$0	0.0%
Totals	\$2,521,326	\$2,647,294	\$3,129,292	\$4,206,512	\$2,968,699	17.7%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, Plant Maintenance and Operations, 1996-97 through 2000-01.

In 1999-2000, the district allocated an additional \$1 million to renovation projects and repairs out of its general fund. Budgeted expenditure levels in 2000-01 reduced to historical levels. **Exhibit 4-10** presents the trades and number of personnel in the Maintenance Department.

Exhibit 4-10
WHISD Maintenance Department Number of Personnel
2001-02

Shop/Trade	Number of Personnel
Glaziers	1
Carpenters	3
Painters	2
Shipping/Receiving	2
Delivery	1
Plumbers	2
General Maintenance	1

Courier	1
Grounds	5
Secretary	1
Supervisor	1
Total	20

Source: WHISD Maintenance Department, September, 2001.

FINDING

The Maintenance Department has high per student expenditures and ineffectively maintains the district's facilities for this cost. **Exhibit 4-11** compares the maintenance and operations cost per student for WHISD with its peer districts. WHISD maintenance and operations expenditures were 28 percent higher on a per student basis than the average of its peer districts in 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-11 WHISD and Peer Districts Actual Plant Maintenance and Operation Cost per Student 2000-01

District	2000-01
DeSoto	\$615
La Marque	\$752
Lancaster	\$753
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$904
Peer District Average	\$707

Source: TEA, Data Central, Financial Data Mart Reports, 2000-01.

Even though the district incurs high costs for maintenance and operations, the district's facilities continue to be in a state of disrepair. For example, conditions reported or observed by the review team include the following:

- Leaking valves at the water service connections had created a large mosquito infested puddle on school grounds. School personnel advised that the puddle had been there for months.
- The walls had tape to cover holes.

- A window needing repairs had silicone glue with a new piece of glass slightly larger than the hole, rather than replacing the broken windowpane.
- Door closers are broken or missing.
- Loosely hung, exposed electrical wiring was in areas where students frequent.
- Piles of discarded furniture are located next to buildings.
- In many portable buildings, the heating and ventilation equipment is not functioning.
- Unkempt grounds, weeds and tall grass were present at all school facilities.
- Fresh paint covered areas of buildings that are obviously deteriorated and have rotted wood.
- Elementary school property adjacent to a railroad right of way lacks a fence to enclose the playground.
- Unsanitary conditions following rain accumulation causing plumbing failures and necessitating portable toilets and bottled drinking water at Winn Elementary School.

TSPR surveys of teachers and parents also reflect the poor condition and maintenance of facilities. In a survey of WHISD teachers, 62 percent commented that repairs to the school were not made in a timely manner.

The combination of extraordinarily high cost per student and the extremely poor conditions of the facilities indicate that WHISD's maintenance and operations department is applying a "fix it when it breaks" strategy to facilities management.

WHISD uses outside vendors for several core maintenance services. The district has established contracts for HVAC maintenance, facility maintenance and pest control.

Midland ISD's maintenance department performs maintenance operations with relatively few staff members, avoiding significant amounts of staff downtime. A small core maintenance staff meets ongoing facilities repair and maintenance needs, and unexpected peak workloads and special projects are contracted to private companies. By using this management practice, Midland ISD's maintenance department is more cost effective while meeting or exceeding the schools' needs.

Other districts, such as Santa Gertrudis ISD, do not maintain an in-house maintenance department. Instead, the district contracts with local vendors to provide maintenance services while controlling costs.

WHSD should evaluate its facilities support functions against the suggested performance criteria outlined in the recent *American School & University* study. These performance criteria are outlined in **Exhibit 4-12**.

Exhibit 4-12
Suggested Facilities Support Performance Criteria

Category	Performance Criteria
Custodial	Custodial payroll cost per student Custodial supply cost per student Average square feet of space maintained per custodian Quality of service delivered Quality of training for supervisors and employees Overall cost of service delivered
Maintenance	Maintenance payroll cost per student Maintenance supply and material cost per student Effectiveness of preventive maintenance Quality of service delivered Quality of training for supervisors and employees Overall cost of service delivered
Grounds	Grounds maintenance staff per acre of land Overall cost of service delivered
Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Maintenance	Payroll cost per student Average cost per year Effectiveness of preventive maintenance Overall cost of service delivered

Source: American School and University Publication, April 1999.

WHISD's existing facilities' support employees will be the most affected by a decision to outsource facilities-related functions. The transition from performing facilities support services in-house to outsourcing these services typically creates a stressful situation for employees concerned about their job, pay, benefits, and working conditions. Innovative approaches to support a smooth transition applied by school districts around the country include:

- Keeping payroll and benefits of facilities support services employees under the responsibility of the district;

- Initially keeping employees on the district payroll until the management company becomes known and trusted;
- Making the management company responsible for only newly hired personnel;
- Providing a one-time financial incentive to employees for transferring to the management company;
- Implementing outsourcing on a pilot basis to get a better view of results without a complete conversion, making the decision easier to reverse, if needed.

Recommendation 40:

Privatize the maintenance and grounds functions with the exception of a few multi-purpose maintenance staff.

The district should eliminate virtually the entire maintenance and operations department with the exception of a director's position and two multi-purpose maintenance staff to respond to minor situations within the district.

If WHISD chooses to outsource its facilities maintenance and operations services, the district should develop an employee transition plan that best fits its needs.

After an initial period of one to two years, the district should review these contracts annually to determine if the contracted services are more cost effective than if done in-house. The district should put these services to the Comptroller's "Yellow Pages test." A Yellow Pages test means that government should perform no service if an existing vendor, as found in the Yellow Pages, could produce these services more efficiently and for less cost. The result at other districts such as Santa Gertrudis ISD has been maintenance contracts that provide the district with services at a reasonable price without increasing district staff or straining budgets.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services solicits proposals from vendors to provide comprehensive maintenance services for the district.	May - June 2002
2.	The director of Business Services selects the most appropriate proposals and presents it along with an employee transition plan to the board for approval.	July 2002
3.	Upon approval by the board the superintendent implements maintenance services by the selected vendor.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent eliminates all maintenance positions except a	August

maintenance supervisor and two multi-purpose maintenance workers.	2002
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Maintenance Department work order system is not organized. Work orders are not filled out properly, and proper records of completed work are not kept. All work orders are prepared manually.

Review of the work order system revealed that there was not an accurate record of completed past work. In addition, the work order forms were incomplete concerning materials used or the labor hours spent on each task.

Many work requests do not have work orders, are not subject to an approval or priority designation process, are not filed and are not submitted to the accounting department. There is no accounting system differentiating outstanding work orders from completed work orders. Work estimates are not prepared, so there is no comparison between actual effort and such estimates. There is a lack of estimated completion times, preventing a comparison to the actual completion date.

A physical observation of the maintenance and warehouse facilities showed piles of work orders stacked on various tables and cabinets.

Many districts use automated systems to manage maintenance work orders. Facility managers can use these systems to control maintenance resources effectively. Such a system makes it easier to fill work orders, schedule preventive maintenance, control inventory and track equipment. Several school districts also use these systems to track information about work orders that is not usually tracked in manual systems including:

- work order number;
- location requesting the work;
- date received;
- personnel assigned;
- description of work;
- priority ID number;
- warehouse supplies used;
- supplies purchased;
- labor to complete request;
- vehicle driven;

- miles driven;
- action taken; and
- authorized signature.

Exhibit 4-13 lists sample priority codes used by Fort Bend ISD.

**Exhibit 4-13
Sample Work Order Priority Codes**

Code	Definition	Description
1	Emergency	Danger to life or property
2	Priority	Possible danger
3	Routine	Daily maintenance/repairs
4	Improvement	Changes to facility
5	Summer work	Summer request
6	Rejected	Request Rejected
7	Deferred for study	Future consideration

Source: Fort Bend ISD Maintenance Department.

With an automated system, maintenance managers, supervisors and requestors can track work orders through stages of completion based on prioritization.

Recommendation 41:

Implement an automated system to manage work orders.

The district can develop a simple work order tracking system using an Excel spreadsheet. Having a simple tracking system and priority codes will improve maintenance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Maintenance supervisor, coordinator of Technology and school principals define requirements for a work order management system and develop a spreadsheet that will track required information.	May 2002
2.	The Maintenance supervisor, director of Business Services and coordinator of Technology define work order priority codes and implement the work order system.	June 2002

3.	The Maintenance supervisor trains maintenance staff and requestors to use the system.	July 2002
4.	The Maintenance supervisor generates management reports and uses them to manage the quality and efficiency of maintenance.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) facilities use and management function in four sections:

C. CUSTODIAL SERVICES

WHISD custodians are school based and school managed. The district centrally purchases and distributes custodial supplies to the schools once a week.

FINDING

The district provides custodial staffing for schools within the district at levels that are higher than industry standards of square footage per custodian.

The industry standard is 20,000 square feet per custodian, but the age and poor condition of WHISD facilities will prevent the district from achieving this level. **Exhibit 4-14** compares the custodial staffing at each school against a modified industry standard of 17,000 square feet per custodian.

Exhibit 4-14
Analysis of Custodial Staffing Levels
2000-01

School Name	Total Gross S.F.	Full-Time Custodial Staff	S.F. per Custodian	Custodial Staff at Industry Standard (GSF/17,000)	Over/(Under) Industry Standard
Alta Mesa Elementary	33,180	2	16,590	2	0
Bishop Heights Elementary	32,808	4	8,202	2	2
Wilmer Elementary	32,701	4	8,175	2	2
C.S. Winn Elementary	62,965	3	20,988	4	(1)

Kennedy-Curry Junior High	64,282	4	16,070	4	0
Wilmer-Hutchins High	159,748	9	17,750	9	0
Hutchins Academic Center	18,775	2	9,388	1	1
Total	404,459	28		24	4

Source: WHISD Maintenance Department, September 2001.

Most school districts are able to meet industry standards without sacrificing the quality of service.

Recommendation 42:

Apply a modified industry standard of at least 17,000 square feet per custodian across all schools.

Reducing staffing levels to a modified industry standard will support a more efficient operation of custodial services at WHISD. Until new or renovated facilities are in place, the district should not be held accountable for the industry standard of 20,000 square feet per custodian.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent develops and recalculates the projected staffing levels at each school using the modified industry standard formula.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the staffing formula and staffing level projections to the board to approve the adjustments.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent notifies affected employees and the maintenance supervisor implements the new staffing levels.	June 2002 - October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The elimination of four custodial positions will result in a minimum savings of \$65,104 annually (\$7.57 an hour x 8 hours x 237 days (\$14,353) + 13.4 percent benefits (\$1,923) = \$16,276 x 4 positions =

\$65,104). An entry level custodian at the district's step 1 makes \$7.57 an hour.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Apply a modified industry standard of at least 17,000 square feet per custodian across all schools.	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$65,104	\$65,104

FINDING

WHISD does not have a formal regularly scheduled training program for its custodial staff. Custodians report to school principals and apply cleaning procedures based on school needs. There are no standard cleaning procedures applied across the district.

The lack of formalized training programs and cleaning standards negatively affect custodial productivity producing an inequitable allocation of custodians among schools.

Tyler ISD (TISD) developed a formal custodian training and operations program that has resulted in better service with fewer custodians. The development of formal cleaning standards and training programs was instrumental in achieving productivity objectives. TISD's program addresses the following areas:

- efficient cleaning methods;
- kitchen cleaning and sanitation;
- restroom cleaning;
- proper use of cleaning supplies and equipment;
- time management;
- hazardous materials;
- district policy review;
- indoor environmental quality;
- safety and health;
- blood borne pathogen precautions;
- repetitive stress injury prevention;
- harassment and discrimination; and
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Recommendation 43:

Develop a comprehensive and mandatory training program for custodial staff.

Training programs provide custodial staff with the skills they need to increase efficiency and performance. Only when people know how to do their jobs will they be able to achieve the modified industry standard of 17,000 square feet per custodian.

The district should implement a comprehensive training program of eight hours each year of off-site training and eight hours each year of onsite training (16 hours annually) for the entire custodial staff so that best practice levels are achievable for efficient cleaning methods and the efficient use of cleaning supplies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the executive director of Human Resources develop a comprehensive custodial training program and a budget to implement the program.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the training program and budget to the board for approval.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources institutes the training program and monitors effectiveness with input from the maintenance supervisor.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation results from hiring substitute custodians to cover for employees attending off-site training sessions and the cost of the training itself. This would cost the district about \$1,696 annually (28 custodians x 8 hours training annually x \$7.57 an hour for substitute custodians), plus an estimated \$2,800 (28 custodians x \$100 per course).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop a comprehensive and mandatory training program for custodial staff	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)	(\$4,496)

Chapter 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) facilities use and management function in four sections:

D. ENERGY USE AND MANAGEMENT

Typically, an energy management department is responsible for monitoring and managing energy use throughout all of the district's facilities. A district's energy manager should monitor utility use by entering monthly utility bills into a computer database and generating utility consumption/cost reports that help identify spikes in usage or utility rates. An energy manager should also perform building walk-through energy audits to identify utility waste and work with school personnel to reduce utility costs.

FINDING

WHISD has no energy management program or strategy. This violates a state requirement to provide this function. **Exhibit 4-15** shows WHISD's utility expenditures on a square foot basis for 1996-97 through 1999-2000. Utilities cost per square foot is calculated using WHISD's district square footage total of 404,459 square feet.

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) suggests that energy costs per square foot on average should range from 70 cents to 85 cents in an efficient facility. As seen in **Exhibit 4-15** WHISD's utilities expenditures are more than twice the recommended level.

Exhibit 4-15
WHISD Utilities Cost per Square Foot
1996-97 through 1999-2000

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Utilities Expenditures	\$760,070	\$761,743	\$817,644	\$796,453
Utilities cost per Square Foot	\$1.88	\$1.88	\$2.02	\$1.97

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

SECO administers a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs that can significantly reduce energy consumption in school districts. For example, the Energy Management Partnership Program has

identified more than \$10 million in energy savings for school districts in Texas. The LoanSTAR program has a reputation as the nation's largest and longest-running energy efficient, government-operated loan program. The program has helped public entities save more than \$94 million through energy efficiency and has recommended additional measures that could save more than \$500 million by 2020.

SECO has engineering firms under contract that will, at no cost to the district, conduct a preliminary energy use audit of a district's facilities and identify deficiencies in maintenance and operations procedures as well as projects for energy saving retrofits. These audits often find low-cost or no-cost projects that districts can undertake immediately to save energy. Many districts know the billing process for energy, how much energy per square foot each building is using and how much it costs per square foot. Some districts understand that this data enables them to compare their usage and cost with local and state data in order to flag excessive energy consumption. If one elementary school costs 54 cents a square foot to operate and another of comparable size costs 94 cents, district officials should know so they can find out why the disparity exists and address it.

Energy retrofits are a means of upgrading facilities and equipment and generally pay for themselves through energy savings and reduced maintenance and operation costs. These might include heating and air conditioning systems that may be running inefficiently and/or are at the end of their useful lives or the installation of mechanical or digital energy management controls that could yield excellent paybacks.

Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPCs) are authorized by Texas law and allow school districts to use energy and water savings to pay for retrofits. The work is performed by an Energy Services Company (ESCO), which guarantees the savings. The ESCO is paid directly from the savings enabling districts to fund needed projects. With an ESPC, energy savings pay for capital improvements.

ESCO will generally perform a Preliminary Energy Audit at no cost to the customer. If there are viable projects, the ESCO will then conduct a detailed audit identifying the savings to be guaranteed. The savings are realized from decreased utility use, less system maintenance and more efficient system operation. Some districts need energy retrofits and lack either the needed manpower or the expertise to oversee these projects. Projects funded through an ESPC are done on a turnkey basis, without the need of district resources. The district needs no additional personnel to oversee the projects.

Recommendation 44:

Use the LoanSTAR program to identify and finance energy retrofits.

The district should utilize the LoanSTAR program run by the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) to determine whether any cost-effective measures are possible. This program provides a low interest financing option to school districts for improving energy efficiency.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assigns the energy management function to the maintenance supervisor.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent contacts SECO to update its energy management audit.	April 2002
3.	SECO updates the audit and revises recommendations and estimated savings for energy efficiency.	June - August 2002
4.	The superintendent requests approval from the board to issue debt to finance the energy conservation measures recommended.	September 2002
5.	The superintendent tracks and reports energy use and cost statistics based on square feet.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

It is assumed that the cost to implement energy conservation measures through the SECO program will be offset by savings achieved over the life of the loan. Accordingly, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD is not capitalizing on many small but effective ways to reduce energy consumption in their facilities. Some small but effective things, like planting trees around buildings, can be done with the help of parent and community volunteers. This will prevent heat from reaching the building, provide shade and help improve the environment.

Checking door and window weather-stripping is another effective way to stop energy dollars from leaking through the cracks, as is checking outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioner filters and replacing old or broken caulking and weather-stripping. Maintenance schedules can be used to monitor the condition of these items.

Sound maintenance and operations procedures need to be in place to recoup savings associated with turning off lights in unoccupied areas,

sensibly reducing equipment run times during the summer months, enforcing standard operation and maintenance practices for air conditioning equipment and attending to caulking and weather-stripping problems to lower infiltration.

Savings generated from these actions may offset the cost of more expensive retrofits. It does little good to design or retrofit a building for energy efficiency if the building and its energy systems are not properly operated and maintained. The bottom line for most energy management programs is getting the people who control the energy-using equipment to understand how they are involved in the overall conservation of energy.

By developing policies and programs to promote and reward student and staff participation in energy conservation, Spring ISD achieved energy savings. Spring ISD developed a rebate program that rewards each school for efficient energy use by sharing savings with any school that reduces its usage below the budgeted amount. The school receives a check for 50 percent of the savings amount. Spring ISD's office of Construction and Energy reviews actual energy costs against budgeted amounts and sends a monthly report to each school. Principals encourage students and staff to participate in activities such as turning off lights and closing doors when leaving a room to retain conditioned air in the classrooms. Some principals have encouraged operation staff by sharing cost savings with the mechanics. The district has saved from 7 to 14 percent a year during the five years of the rebate program.

In addition, SECO has a school-based program called Watt Watchers or Watt Team. SECO provides materials, training and support all at no cost to the district. Student councils, science clubs, activity clubs and grade levels from first through twelfth can participate in the program. Students gain self-esteem, learn about energy resources and take an active role in teaching others the importance of energy efficiency. This program will not only save money at the schools, but students will learn how to develop a habit of saving energy in their homes as well.

A program for high school students is available through SECO's Texas Energy Education Development (TEED) project. Students conduct school-year long energy projects that promote energy conservation awareness. The projects can range from designing posters containing energy-saving reminders to mentoring elementary and middle school students on energy-saving projects, to weatherizing low-income homes in the community.

The Watt Watchers program also involves starting an Energy Patrol at individual schools. The Energy Patrol consists of teachers, students, parents and community volunteers who work together to implement energy conservation practices, such as:

- planting trees around the building to provide shade and improve the environment;
- checking door and window weather stripping to stop energy dollars from leaking through cracks;
- checking outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioning filters;
- replacing old or broken caulking and weather stripping; and
- developing maintenance schedules for monitoring energy conservation.

Recommendation 45:

Institute an energy awareness campaign at each school.

WHISD should implement SECO's "Watt Watchers" program at individual schools. In addition, to reinforce sound energy conservation practices, WHISD should send principals monthly reports of energy use compared to the same month of the previous year, prepare an annual energy report for each school and submit it to the board. Incentives and suggestions, such as the vending machine light example, should be included with the reports to show principals what they can do to conserve energy at their schools.

Program support for *Watt Watchers* is available from the State Energy Conservation Office.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The maintenance supervisor contacts SECO for assistance with developing and implementing a "Watt Watchers" program at individual schools.	May 2002
2.	The maintenance supervisor helps individual schools implement the "Watt Watchers" program.	June - August 2002
3.	The maintenance supervisor sends monthly reports including suggestions for energy conservation to principals.	June 2002 and Ongoing
4.	The maintenance supervisor visits each school and meets with the principals and custodians to walk through each building.	August 2002 and Ongoing Quarterly
5.	The maintenance supervisor prepares and submits an annual report to the board.	August 2002 and Ongoing Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

A WHISD energy management team consisting of the maintenance supervisor, SECO and staff at individual schools can accomplish the actions outlined in this recommendation. Energy savings from school conservation measures could result in significant savings to the district, but are conservatively limited here to the savings achievable through disconnecting the lights in the vending machines as mentioned above.

Disconnecting lights in schools' vending machines can also save energy. The average soft drink machine uses two fluorescent bulbs, which total 80 watts, in addition to the energy required to operate the ballast, a component required to alter the electricity when using fluorescent bulbs. Using a conservative estimate of only 2 kWh per day usage, a soda machine uses an annual total of 730 kWh just for lights. At an average rate of \$0.10 per kWh this amounts to \$73 a year for just one machine. WHISD has more than 20 vending machines operating districtwide. By disconnecting the lights in these machines alone, the district could save an estimated \$1,460 annually.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Institute an energy awareness campaign at each school.	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,460

Chapter 5

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report addresses asset and risk management by Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in the following three sections:

- A. Cash and Investment Management
- B. Insurance Programs
- C. Fixed Assets

Texas school districts have a fiduciary responsibility to protect publicly financed assets provided to educate children. An effective asset and risk management program controls costs by ensuring that the district is adequately protected against all significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums. Fixed asset management should account for district property efficiently and accurately and safeguard it against theft and obsolescence. The district's insurance programs for employees' health, workers' compensation and district assets should be sound and cost effective to protect the district from financial losses.

BACKGROUND

The director of Business Services oversees the cash management, property risk management and fixed asset management for WHISD. The executive director of Human Resources manages employee health insurance. The accountant oversees all daily cash management and investment activities for the district under the direction of the director of Business Services and the superintendent.

Chapter 5

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report addresses asset and risk management by Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in the following three sections:

A. CASH AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

For a school district to achieve its instructional goals and objectives, cash and investments must be managed daily. Effective cash and investment management involves establishing and maintaining beneficial banking relationships; forecasting cash requirements accurately and on a timely basis so that funds are available when needed; and maximizing returns on assets deposited in appropriate, approved and safe investment vehicles.

The district has recently revised its written investment policy (entitled "CDA - Legal") and its investment strategies to be more in line with the district's unique needs and requirements. Details from the revised investment policy are as follows:

Written Policies

Investments must follow written policies approved by the board. The investment policies must primarily emphasize safety of principal and liquidity and must address investment diversification, yield and maturity and the quality and capability of investment management. The policies must include:

- A list of the types of authorized investments in which the district's funds may be invested;
- The maximum allowable stated maturity of any individual investment owned by the district;
- For pooled fund groups, the maximum dollar-weighted average maturity allowed based on the stated maturity date of the portfolio;
- Methods to monitor the market price of investments acquired with public funds.

Investment Strategies

As part of the investment policy, the board shall adopt a separate written investment strategy for each of the funds or group of funds under the board's control. Each investment strategy must describe the investment objectives for the particular fund under the following priorities in order of importance:

- Understanding the suitability of an investment to the financial requirements of the board;
- Preservation and safety of principal;
- Liquidity; and
- Marketability of the investment if the investment needs to be liquidated before maturity.

The main goals of the WHISD investment program are to ensure the safety of the district's resources and to maximize financial returns within current market conditions. Any investments on behalf of the district should ensure the preservation of capital in the overall portfolio. The policy restricts any individual investment transaction that jeopardizes the total capital position of the overall portfolio.

Exhibit 5-1 shows the positions and reporting relationships of the district's cash management function.



Source: WHISD, Administrative Interviews, October, 2001.

The accountant develops and implements controls to properly manage the district's cash and cash equivalents. In addition, the accountant supervises the cash posting to the general ledger.

Until September 1, 2001, WHISD maintained its bank accounts at Bank of America N.A. Initially, the district intended to remain with Bank of America to reduce the time involved in setting up new accounts. However, the board of trustees overruled the district staff and made the decision to change depositories. Despite the fact that there is no comparable difference between the contract with Bank of America and the new contract, no one could give the reason for the board's decision to change depositories. The district's new depository agreement is with Wells Fargo National Bank, N.A. The agreement is for a two-year term from September 1, 2001 through August 31, 2003.

The district maintains and follows a procedures manual for its activity funds. Activity funds are monies associated with student groups or extracurricular activities. In October 1999, WHISD's external audit firm, Dodd & Associates, Ltd. prepared a manual including all the rules about the use of student activity funds, including what is and is not allowed and identifying multiple "what-if" scenarios. Also included in the manual are instructions for principals and clerks as to what can be accepted from sponsors, and a summary of the activity accounts for each school with outlines and procedures for dealing with receipts and expenditures. There are also instructions for how to maintain records. By using this manual, the campuses have been able to maintain control over the activity accounts. It has provided the district with a valuable tool to use when training campus staff. In addition, [it helps ensure that adequate cash controls are being followed and is a readily available resource.

COMMENDATION

The district has detailed procedures in place for maintaining its school activity accounts.

FINDING

The district has recently changed its investment strategy to improve its earnings. Historically, the district has used a conservative investment strategy of depositing excess funds into a six-month certificate of deposit earning an interest rate of 3.6 percent annually. As of August 31, 2001, the market value of the fund was \$943,568.

According to district policy CDA (Local), the following are approved investment instruments:

- Obligations of the U.S. or Texas or its agencies and instrumentalities and political subdivisions including collateralized mortgage obligations directly issued by a federal agency or instrumentality of the United States as permitted by Government Code 2256.009;
- Certificates of deposit as permitted by the Acts of the 74th Legislative Session, Chapter 32;
- Fully collateralized repurchase agreements permitted by Government Code 2256.011;
- Banker's acceptance as permitted by Government Code 2256.012;
- Commercial paper as permitted by Government Code 2256-013;
- Two types of mutual funds as permitted by Government Code 2256.014, money market mutual funds and no-load mutual funds; and

- Public funds investment pools as permitted by Government Code 2256.016-2256.019.

Subsection seven of the district's local investment policy allows the district to invest its funds in collective investment pools such as TexPool and LoneStar. Funds deposited in these public investment pools are relatively secure and can be withdrawn on short notice, unlike investments with specified maturities. In November 2001, the district opened two LoneStar Liquidity Plus Funds. **Exhibit 5-2** presents the balance in these accounts as of November 30, 2001.

Exhibit 5-2
WHISD Lone Star Liquidity Plus Funds
As of November 30, 2001

Fund	Balance
WHISD Interest & Sinking	\$1,400,000
WHISD General Fund	\$2,000,000
Total Investment	\$3,400,000

Source: TASB Lone Star Liquidity Plus Fund, November, 2001.

COMMENDATION

The district modified its investment strategy to increase its interest income by diversifying its investment portfolio.

FINDING

Although the five primary checking accounts are interest bearing, the district is not taking full advantage of its interest earning potential on these checking accounts. As shown in **Exhibit 5-3**, on August 31, 2001, the district had more than \$5.3 million on deposit in five accounts that earn an average of 1.85 percent interest annually.

Exhibit 5-3 summarizes funds held in checking accounts as of August 31, 2001, and describes each account's purpose and whether it is interest bearing.

Exhibit 5-3
WHISD Checking Accounts
Bank of America National Bank
As of August 31, 2001

Financial Institution	Account Name	Interest Earning Account	Purpose of Account	Balance at August 31, 2001
Bank of America National Bank	General Operating Account	Yes	Accounts payable	\$3,411,928
Bank of America National Bank	Payroll Account	Yes	Payroll clearing account	\$521,169
Bank of America National Bank	Interest & Sinking Fund	Yes	Insurance funding account	\$1,025,539
Bank of America National Bank	Food Service	Yes	Food services	\$355,041
Bank of America National Bank	Workers' Compensation Fund	Yes	Workers' Comp. Claims	\$37,914
Bank of America National Bank	Title I Designated Purpose Fund	No	Activity account	\$4,495
Bank of America National Bank	Title 6B Handicapped Students	No	Activity account	\$34,406
Bank of America National Bank	Wilmer Elementary Activity Fund	No	Activity account	\$4,975
Bank of America National Bank	C.S. Winn Elementary Activity Fund	No	Activity account	\$479
Bank of America National Bank	Hutchins 5th Grade Center Activity Fund	No	Activity account	\$332
Bank of America National Bank	Bishop Heights Elementary Activity Fund	No	Activity account	\$14,274
Bank of America National Bank	Alta Mesa Elementary Activity Fund	No	Activity account	\$6,338

Bank of America National Bank	Kennedy-Curry Middle School Activity Fund	Yes	Activity account	\$3,287
Bank of America National Bank	Wilmer Hutchins High School Activity Fund	Yes	Activity account	\$20,947
Total Account Balance				\$5,441,124

Source: WHISD Business Office, October 2001.

The district maintains five primary interest-bearing checking accounts at Wells Fargo National Bank: general operating, payroll, interest and sinking, food service, and workers' compensation. **Exhibit 5-4** summarizes the balance in these accounts as of September 13, 2001.

Exhibit 5-4
Wells Fargo National Bank
WHISD Checking Accounts
As of September 13, 2001

Financial Institution	Account Name	Interest Earning Account	Purpose of Account	Balance at August 31, 2001
Wells Fargo National Bank	General Fund	Yes	Accounts payable	\$190,220
Wells Fargo National Bank	Payroll Account	Yes	Payroll clearing account	\$148,135
Wells Fargo National Bank	Interest & Sinking Fund	Yes	Interest and sinking fund account	\$210
Wells Fargo National Bank	Food Service	Yes	Food services	\$47,387
Wells Fargo National Bank	Workers' Compensation	Yes	Workers' comp insurance funding account	No balance provided
Total Account Balance				\$385,952

Source: WHISD Business Office, October 2001.

Title 1, Title 6B and student activity fund checking accounts are each deposited into nine separate accounts by school and department. The Title

1 and Title 6B accounts contain federal monies dedicated to these specific federal programs. The activity funds support school-based activities such as student clubs, bake sales, student councils and soft drink machines and are maintained at the schools. The district is not earning interest on all of their activity accounts. The activity account balances constantly fluctuate.

Ysleta ISD's (YISD) depository agreement with its bank provides that excess fund balances not invested in other authorized investments be swept nightly into overnight investments. Repurchase agreements are the primary way government securities finance their government securities inventory. Every week the Treasury Department issues several billion dollars worth of securities. Most securities trading is between dealers. Securities dealers might buy securities valued at a sum greater than their net worth. For example, a bond dealer might purchase \$1 billion worth of government securities. The dealer would pay several million dollars at the onset of the transaction and enter into a repurchase agreement for the balance. Essentially, the bond dealer has agreed to sell the unpaid balance back to the government with the understanding that the securities can be repurchased in the future. When the dealer buys the securities back from the government, the dealer pays the government interest. After the auction, and after the repurchase agreement is initiated, the bond dealer begins selling the bonds. As the bonds sell, they are removed from the government inventory and the proceeds are used to pay off the remaining bonds. Usually, these repurchase agreements are overnight. The funds are returned to the district's accounts first thing each morning so the district is able to meet the day's cash obligations.

Generally an overnight investment will yield a higher interest rate than an interest-bearing account. Many interest-earning accounts are established so the interest earned is based upon the average balance.

Many school districts earn a higher rate of interest by combining multiple account balances into one aggregate balance. A nightly sweep of all their accounts into one overnight investment vehicle yields a higher return because the aggregate balance is higher than a number of individual accounts with lower balances. This also ensures that all district funds are invested and earning the highest rate of return available.

Recommendation 46:

Restructure the bank depository agreement and sweep combined daily balances into overnight investments.

The district should revise its depository contract with the bank to include a nightly sweep of all funds remaining in the district's accounts at the close of business each day. By combining multiple account balances, the district

could earn a higher rate of interest on its aggregate balance. A nightly sweep of all accounts into one overnight investment vehicle will yield a higher rate given the higher aggregate balance than a number of accounts with lower balances would yield. This step should provide the district with additional interest income without sacrificing its ability to meet daily cash obligations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services contacts the district's account representative at Wells Fargo National Bank.	April 2002
2.	The director of Business Services proposes restructuring the accounts to maximize interest by sweeping all accounts each night into one investment vehicle.	April 2002
3.	The director of Business Services and the Wells Fargo National Bank account representative draft a proposed modification of the depository contract to sweep all cash balances into one combined overnight investment vehicle.	May 2002
4.	The director of Business Services presents the proposal to the superintendent.	May 2002
5.	The superintendent presents the proposal to the board.	June 2002
6.	The board approves the new account structure.	June 2002
7.	The superintendent and director of Business Services meet with the Wells Fargo National Bank account representative to execute the restructured agreement.	June 2002
8.	The superintendent, upon receiving board approval, signs the agreement. The superintendent's secretary files a copy of the revised agreement in a contract file and provides one copy for the Business Office.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

To calculate the fiscal impact of this recommendation, the district's balance at September 13, 2001 for the four primary checking accounts was added to the August 31st balance (of the remaining 10 accounts \$385,951 + \$37,914 + \$4,495 + \$34,406 + \$4,975 + \$479 + \$332 + \$14,274 + \$6,338 + \$3,287 + \$20,947 = \$513,398). The district currently earns 1.85 percent on its five interest earning accounts. Therefore, the district can expect to earn \$9,498 (\$513,398 x 1.85 percent) in annual interest. If these

funds are swept each night and invested in a repurchase agreement that averages

5 percent interest, the district could expect to earn \$25,670 (\$513,398 x 5 percent). By implementing this recommendation, the district could increase its annual interest income by \$16,172 (\$25,670 - \$9,498).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Restructure the bank depository agreement and sweep combined daily balances into overnight investments.	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$16,172	\$16,172

FINDING

The district maintains eight separate, non-interest bearing activity fund accounts at Wells Fargo National Bank, which are monitored and reconciled by various district staff. These accounts were maintained at Bank of America National Bank prior to September 1, 2001. Each school and department is responsible for its own activity accounts with each principal's secretary maintaining the records and making deposits. The secretaries send deposit slips to the accounting office the day after the deposit has been taken to the bank. The Accounts Payable clerk issues checks once a check request has been received.

The bank statements are sent to the central office on a monthly basis to be reconciled by the accountant. Reconciling the numerous accounts is time consuming. In addition to the time it takes to reconcile so many accounts, maintaining several accounts is costly, since the district is charged \$15 per month per account in maintenance fees.

In San Antonio ISD (SAISD), accounting for student activity funds is centralized. All school activity funds are deposited into a single checking account that is reconciled each month at the central office. Each school's account receives a credit for interest earned. A number of Texas school districts either combine school activity or district student activity accounts depending upon the number of schools and student groups served to reduce the probability of reconciliation errors and repetition of work effort. In addition, the districts earn additional interest on the higher aggregate balances.

Recommendation 47:

Combine all activity fund bank accounts into one interest bearing account.

The activity funds should be consolidated into one bank account with the director of Business Services designated as the authorized signer. Deposit slips and the related receipts and/or copies of checks should be forwarded to the Business Office the first business day following the deposit. By combining these accounts, the reconciliation process can be streamlined, and the district can earn additional interest on the combined balances. It would also consolidate the accountant's effort to reconcile one account rather than have to track nine accounts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services contacts the account representative at Wells Fargo National Bank to obtain information about combining the activity accounts into one interest bearing account.	April 2002
2.	The director of Business Services and the accountant meet with the superintendent and school principals to discuss combining the accounts.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent requests board approval to combine all school activity fund accounts into one account.	June 2002
4.	The board approves the account combination.	July 2002
5.	The director of Business Services contacts the account representative at Wells Fargo National Bank to merge all activity funds into a Wilmer-Hutchins School Activity Fund and to close the existing accounts.	August 2002
6.	The accountant orders new check stock and deposit slips.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

By closing these accounts, the district would save \$1,440 a year (\$15 maintenance fee x eight accounts x 12 months), less \$250 for supplies, which equals \$1,190. In the first year, all deposit slips and check stock would have to be replaced at a cost of \$500.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Replace all deposit slips and check stock.	(\$500)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Combine all all activity fund bank accounts into one interest	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190

bearing account.					
Net (Costs)/Savings	\$690	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190	\$1,190

Chapter 5

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report addresses asset and risk management by Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in the following three sections:

B. INSURANCE PROGRAMS

The district's insurance programs consist of group health care and employee benefit plans, workers' compensation insurance and property and casualty insurance. WHISD's executive director of human resources oversees the employee health insurance and benefits and workers' compensation insurance. The director of Business Services manages the property and casualty insurance.

Exhibit 5-5 summarizes the employee benefits offered by WHISD.

Exhibit 5-5
WHISD Employee Benefits
2000-01

Benefit	Eligible Employee	Description of Benefit	Paid By
Credit Union Payments	All employees	As requested by employee for savings accounts and loan repayments to Dallas Credit Union.	District
Workers' Compensation Insurance	All employees	Benefits payable to any employee who has been injured in an on-the-job accident or has been disabled by an occupational disease.	District
Cancer Insurance	All employees	Rates vary according to benefit desired.	Employee
Group Term Life Insurance	All employees	Rates vary according to age and desired benefit.	Employee
Medicare	All employees hired after March 1986, including substitutes	.0145 of gross wages .0145 of gross wages	District Employee

	and temporary employees.		
Unemployment Compensation	All employees, including substitutes and temporary employees.	.001 of gross wages	District
Health Plan	All full time employees	\$144.33 a month EO \$213.76 a month E&C \$231.14 a month E&S \$294.65 a month Family	District
Teacher Retirement	All employees (except employees who work less than full-time), including bus drivers who drive at least one route approved by TEA.	.065 of gross wages .064 of gross wages	District Employee
State Personal Leave	All employees	Work day for 18 days of employment and accumulates (Maximum 5 days each year)	District
Local Sick Leave	All employees working 30 hours or more a week.	1/2 work day for every 18 days of employment and accumulate (Maximum 5 days each year)	District
State Sick Leave	All employees who earned state sick leave before September 1, 1995, and have carried a balance forward	The number of days carried forward at daily rate of pay.	District

Source: WHISD Personnel: Employee Benefits Department, October 2001.

Employee Health Insurance

The district has a contract with Aetna U.S. Healthcare of North Texas Inc. (Aetna) to provide its employees with health insurance coverage. **Exhibit 5-6** outlines the plan benefits.

Exhibit 5-6
WHISD Health Insurance Plan Benefits
2000-01

FLEX HMO/ Quality Point of Service Schedule of Benefits	TX Referred	TX Nonreferred
General Provisions: Calendar Year Deductible: Coinsurance: Coinsurance Limit Lifetime Maximum Benefit:	N/A N/A N/A N/A	\$500 Single/\$1,500 Family 50% \$5,000/\$15,000 \$1,000,000
Physician Services: Office Hours: After Hours/Home Visits	\$20 co-payment \$25 co-payment	50% after deductible 50% after deductible
Specialty Care: Office Visits: Diagnostic Outpatient Testing: PT, OT or Speech Therapy:	\$25 co-payment \$25 co-payment \$25 co-payment	50% after deductible 50% after deductible 50% after deductible
SPU Surgery	No co-payment	50% after deductible
Hospitalization	\$500 co-payment	50% after deductible
Skilled Nursing Facility	\$500 co-payment	50% after deductible
Emergency Room	\$50 co-payment (waived if admitted)	\$50 co-payment (waived if admitted)
Home Care	No co-payment	50% after deductible
Maternity:		

First OB Visit: Hospital	\$25 co-payment \$500 co-payment	50% after deductible 50 % after deductible
Mental Health: Inpatient: Outpatient:	\$500 co-payment \$500 co-payment	Not covered 50% after deductible
Substance Abuse: Detoxification: Inpatient Rehabilitation: Outpatient Rehabilitation:	\$500 co-payment \$500 co-payment \$500 co-payment	50% after deductible 50% after deductible 50% after deductible
Preventive Care: Routine Eye Exam: Routine Physicals: Immunizations: Routine Mammography: Routine GYN Exam: Pediatric Preventive Dental Exam:	\$25 co-payment \$20 co-payment \$20 co-payment \$25 co-payment \$25 co-payment \$15 co-payment \$15 co-payment	Not covered Not covered 100% to age 6 then not covered 50% after deductible 50% after deductible Not covered
Prescription Lens Reimbursement	\$100 every 24 months	No Benefits
Prescription Drugs: Contraceptives: 31 - 90 Day Supply (mail order)	\$10/\$15/\$30, 30 Day Covered \$20/\$30/\$60	No Benefits

Source: WHISD Employee Benefit Packet, October 2001.

The district pays a substantial portion of its employees' health insurance premiums depending upon the plan each employee has chosen. In 2001-02, the district's health insurance costs increased by 36 percent. **Exhibit 5-7** compares the health premiums paid by the district and the employees for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

Exhibit 5-7
WHISD Aetna Insurance Premiums
2000-01 through 2001-02

# of Employees	Coverage	2000-01 District Costs	2000-01 Total Premium	2001-02 District Costs	2001-02 Total Premium	Percent Change in District Cost	2001-02 Percent Funded by District
145	Employee Only	\$144.33	\$203.80	\$195.92	\$276.20	35.7%	70.9%
31	E&C	\$213.75	\$407.70	\$290.78	\$552.50	36%	52.6%
17	E&S	\$231.14	\$458.70	\$314.49	\$621.70	36.1%	50.6%
11	Family	\$294.65	\$645.50	\$401.65	\$874.90	36.3%	45.9%

Source: WHISD New Employee Package, October 2001.

FINDING

The district's health insurance costs continue to increase without any increase in benefits. The 2001 Legislature established a statewide school employee health insurance plan for teachers and other employees of school districts. School districts with fewer than 500 employees, including WHISD and more than 80 percent of the state's districts, are required to participate in the new state insurance plan beginning fall 2002. Districts with between 501 and 1,000 employees were required to join the plan before September 30, 2001. Districts with more than 1,000 employees may join in 2005, unless the Teacher Retirement System Board (TRS), who will be administering the plan, determines that an earlier opt-in is feasible. Districts not joining the state insurance plan will still receive state support to continue their locally determined insurance programs.

There are some special provisions to the plan that deal with risk pools and self-insurance programs. If a district had a risk pool in existence on January 1, 2001, and less than 501 of the district's employees were in the pool, the district may elect not to participate in the state pool. Also, districts that had less than 501 employees individually self-insured on or before January 1, 2001, and have continued a self-insured program since may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Furthermore, the statewide health insurance plan provides that districts that are parties to a health insurance contract in effect on September 1,

2002, are not required to participate until the expiration of the contract period.

All full-time employees and those part-time employees who are members of TRS are automatically covered by the basic state plan, which is considered catastrophic coverage. Receiving higher levels of coverage will require additional district and employee contributions. To assist with these costs, the state will send each district \$75 a month, for each covered employee and will give each employee an additional \$1,000 annually (\$83 a month) to pay for additional employee coverage, dependent coverage, compensation or any combination of the above. Part-time employees who are not TRS members may participate if they or the district pays the full cost.

Districts are required to make a minimum contribution of \$150 per employee each month. If they are not doing so, the state will help them pay the local district share over the next six years, but the state will phase out this aid over the next six years. Districts reaching the Maintenance and Operations tax cap of \$1.50 per \$100 of assessed property value will also be held harmless for any tax effort more than \$1.50 required to reach their minimum district effort of \$150 a month. Districts contributing more than \$150 a month per employee may use the amount in excess of the required \$150 a month to provide additional insurance coverage or other employee compensation.

Because the Legislature was concerned about the effect that the termination or bidding of insurance contracts during this final year of coverage would have on a district's ability to obtain competitive bids for health insurance, the state exempted smaller school districts from the competitive bid requirements for health insurance coverage for 2001. Since WHISD employs less than 501 employees, it falls under the category of smaller districts.

Recommendation 48:

Establish a committee to manage the transition to the state health plan.

The district will be required to join the plan beginning September 2002. The best way to effectively plan for the transition to the state plan, budget the associated costs, and examine the impact of the new plan is to establish a transition committee. The committee should include the following people:

- three board members;
- the superintendent;

- the director of Business Services;
- the Payroll supervisor;
- the executive director of Human Resources;
- one elementary principal;
- the middle school principal;
- the high school principal;
- two elementary teachers;
- two middle school teachers;
- two high school teachers;
- the director of Nutrition Services;
- the Technology coordinator;
- the Coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security;
- a custodian;
- a bus driver;
- an administrative secretary and
- an accounting clerk.

By including this cross section of the district, the majority of issues facing all employee groups can be considered. It is extremely important that the board members are aware of the plans and how the plans will affect the district financially. This will be especially true as the district begins its next budget planning process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent selects committee members.	April 2002
2.	The committee meets for the first time to discuss the new plan. Each committee member acts as the liaison between their individual department and the committee.	May 2002
3.	The committee prepares a memo to distribute districtwide that explains the details of the state plan.	June 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources and director of Business Services prepares the 2002-03 budget item for health insurance.	June 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources presents the budget item to the board for approval.	August 2002
6.	The executive director of Human Resources conducts workshops for returning and new employees.	August 2002
7.	The district joins the state health plan.	September 2002
8.	The committee disbands.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Texas is one of the few states that does not require employers to provide workers' compensation insurance. However, district employees are eligible for coverage under Chapter 501 of the Texas Labor Code. WHISD provides workers' compensation insurance to its employees as part of the district's employee benefit plan. The district has just begun a three-year program with Midwest Employers Casualty Company. The estimated premium for 2001-02 is \$20,509.

Workers' compensation insurance is heavily regulated by the state legislature. The 2001 Legislature made significant changes to the existing law. The changes improve the quality of care for injured workers, increase the accountability of doctors and insurance carriers and reduce the overall medical costs in the Texas workers' compensation system. The new changes include:

- Improving the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission's (TWCC) ability to regulate and sanction doctors who do not provide quality medical care;
- Allowing the state to establish regional health care delivery networks with the guidance of a network advisory committee;
- Promoting return-to-work programs by requiring employers to report whether they offer modified duty and by requiring insurance carriers to provide return-to-work services to employers;
- Improving injured employees' ability to receive prescriptions filled for the first seven days after their injury and giving preference to generic drugs;
- Revising the process for seeking an independent medical opinion for impairment rating and data of maximum medical improvement issues. A TWCC designated doctor, not an insurance carrier-selected doctor, will examine the injured employee first. If the insurance carrier disputes the designated doctor's opinion, the carrier can request the TWCC to order the injured employee to attend a required medical exam conducted by a doctor selected by the insurance carrier;
- Expanding the definition of lifetime income benefits to include workers with third-degree burns;
- Allowing injured workers with multiple jobs to calculate their income benefits based on all of their wages, not just the wages of the job where they were injured. Insurance carriers can seek

reimbursement for these additional benefits from the states
Subsequent Injury Fund and

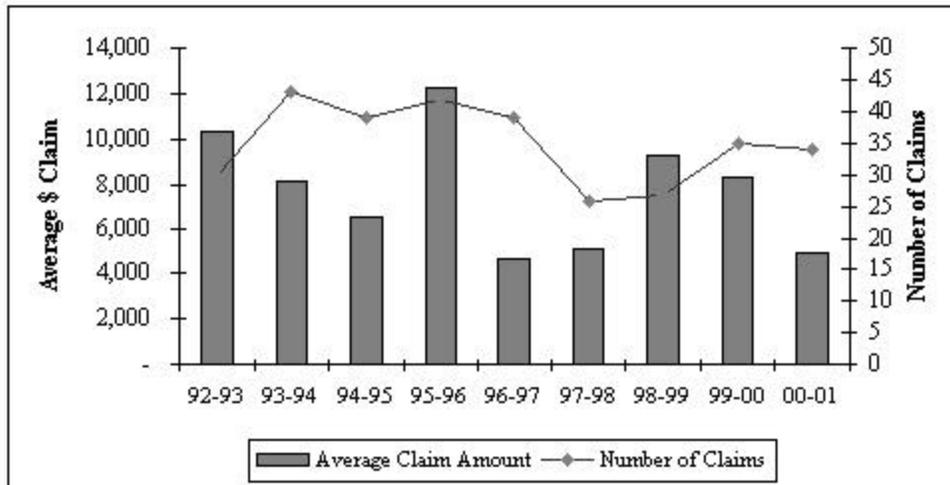
- Prohibiting non-subscribers from asking their employees to waive their right to sue for damages for on-the-job injuries.

FINDING

WHISD has a high number of Worker's Compensation claims and does not identify the employees making the claims by worker classification. Therefore, the district is unable to determine if there is a specific problem with a particular classification of workers, such as bus drivers. A hazardous situation could exist that could be readily addressed if the number of claims in that area prompted investigation.

The district has had a varied claim history from 1992 through 2001. In reviewing the data, no true pattern can be seen. **Exhibit 5-8** illustrates the number of claims versus the average incurred cost for each claim between 1992-93 and 2000-01. The data does not provide the district with any direction to control its workers' compensation claims. The number of claims has ranged from a low of 26 to a high of 43. In a district the size of WHISD, this comprises between 5.9 and 9.8 percent of the full-time employees. This is a significant number of claims being filed.

Exhibit 5-8
WHISD Workers' Compensation Claims
1992-93 through 2000-01



Source: WHISD Business Office, October 2001.

Ysleta ISD (YISD) has implemented a number of strategies to reduce workers' compensation claims, including: reporting workers' compensation claims by worker category, adding safety accountability standards to job

descriptions and encouraging employees to provide input about job tasks that could result in non-accident related injuries.

By classifying the reported claims by worker classification, the district can target specific problems.

Workers' compensation insurance premiums are based on the experience rating of the group being insured. As claims increase, the experience rating for the group increases which results in an increase in premiums. Districts often try to limit the number and extent of claims to control premiums.

Recommendation 49:

Identify workers' compensation claims by worker classification and develop strategies to reduce claims.

The district should establish the following worker classifications and track their claims within each group:

- professional;
- building maintenance;
- food services;
- custodial;
- drivers and
- others.

Tracking claims by work class will enable the district to determine if a specific pattern exists and focus attention on a specific course of action that will address the problem and provide meaningful solutions. The district should also add safety accountability standards to job descriptions and develop a means of gathering employee input regarding job safety such as an employee suggestion box.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources creates the recommended worker classifications.	April 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources prepares a historical summary of claims by worker classification to identify any claim trends.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent, executive director of Human Resources and coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security review the historical results and brainstorm to identify appropriate claim reduction strategies.	June 2002

4.	The director of Human Resources adds safety accountability standards to job descriptions.	June 2002 and Ongoing
5.	The director of Human Resources establishes an employee suggestion box or another staff information gathering medium.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Property & Casualty Insurance

The director of Business Services is responsible for obtaining and maintaining the district's property and casualty insurance coverage. Property and casualty insurance includes coverage for facilities, vehicles, equipment, personal injury and professional and general liability. **Exhibit 5-9** provides a detail of property and casualty policies in force.

Exhibit 5-9 WHISD Property and Casualty Coverage

Type of Coverage	Insurer	Description of Limits and Deductibles	Policy Expires	Premium Amount
National School Leaders Errors & Omissions	Hanover Insurance Company	Liability: \$1,000,000 Deductible: \$15,000 a claim	09/01/02	\$11,575
Auto	Old American Insurance Company	Liability: \$400,025 Specified Perils/Comprehensive Stated Amount Collision: Stated Amount Deductibles: \$25 Specific Perils \$247 Comprehensive \$497 Collision	09/01/02	\$104,849
Property - Blanket Coverage	Royal Surplus Lines Insurance	Deductible: \$10,000 an Occurrence Limits: \$36,718,102	09/01/02	\$77,704.74

	Company			
Comprehensive Boiler & Production Machines	Travelers Insurance Company	Limit an Accident: \$25,000,00 Expediting Expense: \$100,000 Business Income: N/A Extra Expense: \$25,000 Spoilage: N/A Deductible: \$5,000	09/01/02	\$5,497
Crime & General Liability Insurance	Wausau Business Insurance Company	Crime (Employee Dishonesty): \$25,000 \$500 Deductible General Aggregate: \$2,000,000 Products/Completed Operations: \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence: \$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury \$1,000,000 Fire Legal Liability \$100,000 Medical Expense Limit: \$5,000 Employee Benefits: \$1,000,000/\$1,000,000 Claims Made	09/01/02	\$24,387

Source: WHISD's Business Office, October 2001.

FINDING

The district is paying unnecessary finance charges by financing its insurance premiums. WHISD finances its insurance premiums through Alamo Insurance Group and Canawill Inc. Although financing can leave the district with more cash on hand, the interest charged is an unnecessary expense. The district has adequate cash flow to pay the entire premium. The finance company charges an annual interest rate of 3.9 percent. The

30-day treasury rate is 2.2 percent. Therefore, the district is not benefiting from financing its premiums.

Recommendation 50:

Cancel the premium finance agreement and pay insurance premiums in full when they are due.

The district is not in a dire cash position. Therefore, it should invest its resources more effectively. The amount of interest the district would earn on the cash deposited is less than the finance fees being charged in the financing agreement. This is not fiscally responsible.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services modifies the cash flow projections to include full payment of insurance premiums.	June 2002
2.	The director of Business Services does not renew the premium financing agreement.	August 2002
3.	The district pays insurance premiums in full.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The district will save the finance charges and lose whatever interest would have been earned by leaving the cash in the operating account. The district makes three quarterly payments of \$55,256, including a total finance charge for 2001-02 of \$2,703. Assuming that the district earned the average 1.85 percent on the cash it left in the bank to make the quarterly payments, the district would have earned \$1,533 in interest each year ($\$55,256 \times 0.0185$ percent divided by 12 month \times 3 months) + ($\$55,256 \times 0.0185$ percent divided by 12 month \times 6 months) + ($\$55,256 \times 0.0185$ percent divided by 12 months \times 9 months). The total savings generated by implementing this recommendation is \$1,170 ($\$2,703 - \$1,533$) each year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Cancel the premium finance agreement and pay insurance premiums in full when they are due.	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170

Chapter 5

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report addresses asset and risk management by Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) in the following three sections:

C. FIXED ASSETS

In governmental fund accounting used by school districts, fixed assets are purchased with money available within a given fund. TEA defines fixed assets as purchased or donated items that are tangible in nature, have a useful life longer than one year, have a unit value of \$5,000 or more and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. The district must maintain control and accountability for these items. Fixed asset management involves purchasing and accounting for assets and maximizing the disposal of surplus or obsolete equipment so that it is turned back into productive channels.

According to the TEA's *Financial Accountability System and Resource Guide* (FASRG), the emphasis in governmental accounting for fixed assets is on control and accountability. Accordingly, a school district must accumulate a variety of data relating to fixed assets to maintain this control and accountability. These data include: quantity, location, condition and life expectancy.

Fixed asset records are necessary to designate who is responsible for the custody and maintenance of individual items and to assist in estimating future requirements. School districts generally acquire fixed assets by using a well-defined authorization procedure. Separate accountability for fixed assets is a specific legal requirement of many federal programs.

The most important reasons for keeping and maintaining accurate accounting records of fixed assets are:

- furnishing taxpayers with information about their investments in the district for operations;
- providing the basis for adequate insurance coverage;
- allowing the district to assess the need for repair, maintenance or replacement of assets;
- establishing a system of accountability for custody of individual items;
- determining future budgeting requirements and

- identifying lost or stolen items so that insurance claims can be filed, additional controls instituted and accounting records adjusted to reflect the losses.

School districts should maintain detailed subsidiary records to help manage fixed assets. These records should include the following information as a minimum:

- the item purchased;
- the date of purchase;
- the purchase price;
- the life expectancy of the asset;
- the location of the asset;
- the inventory number assigned to the asset;
- the fund from which the asset was purchased and
- any other information that may be useful for control.

The subsidiary record should at least provide a complete description of the item to permit positive identification and contain cost and purchase data and its location so that it can be easily tracked.

Adequate accounting procedures and records for fixed assets are essential to protecting school property. An appropriate fixed asset system should designate responsibility for custody and proper use, provide data for financial control include financial reports and ensure adequate insurance coverage.

The way the district records how fixed assets are distributed or disposed of is a financial matter that is decided by the district's administration. The administration must impose discipline throughout the district to maintain an appropriate level of internal control to ensure adequate protection of fixed assets at all times.

Schools should periodically inventory certain fixed assets, such as furniture and equipment. Districts should take an annual fixed asset inventory at the end of each school term before staff members leave for the summer. Any discrepancies between the fixed asset inventory list and what is on hand should be settled as quickly as possible. Any missing items should be dealt with in accordance to district policy.

TSPR has found that the most successful districts perform the following fixed asset functions:

- tagging of all valued assets when they are received using a bar code system;

- using accounting codes to track capitalized fixed assets as well as expensed assets;
- inventorying all assets annually;
- using the annual inventory results to set insurance rates and
- identifying inventory shrinkage and tightening controls when necessary.

TEA defines fixed assets as purchased or donated items that are tangible in nature, have a useful life longer than one year, have a unit value of \$5,000 or more and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. TEA's FASRG requires assets costing \$5,000 or more be recorded in the Fixed-Asset Group of Accounts. Items costing less than \$5,000 are recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund under TEA guidelines.

WHISD defines fixed assets similarly to TEA as all non-consumable items that have a useful life of at least one year, a unit cost of \$5,000 or more and can be identified and reasonably accounted for. The policy further states that the district's superintendent will be accountable for ensuring that the district annually conducts fixed asset inventories.

FINDING

The district does not have written policies and procedures for fixed asset accounting and the related systems required in maintaining a proper fixed asset inventory. According to GASB 34, any asset with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more must be reported as a fixed asset and depreciated over the life of the asset.

WHISD had total fixed assets of \$25 million as of August 31, 2000. **Exhibit 5-10** shows a summary of WHISD's fixed assets.

**Exhibit 5-10
Fixed Assets
As of August 31, 2000**

Description	Balance 09/1/99	Additions	Deletions	Balance 8/31/00	08/31/00 Balance as a Percent of Total
Land	\$947,809	\$0	\$0	\$947,809	3.8%
Buildings	\$17,201,922	\$62,687	\$0	\$17,264,609	68.7%
Furniture &	\$6,705,787	\$203,389	\$0	\$6,909,176	27.5%

Equipment					
Total	\$24,855,518	\$266,076	\$0	\$25,121,594	100%

Source: WHISD's Financial Report for the period ending August 31, 2000.

Effective September 1, 2001, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's (GASB) Statement 34 requires school districts to depreciate their assets. GASB issues accounting and financial reporting rules for state and local governments throughout the United States. GASB Statement 34, issued in June 1999, requires government entities to report capital assets in the financial statements after depreciation. The statement requires that organizations depreciate assets each accounting period. Depreciation is a periodic expense recognized on the accounting records of an organization, and to properly estimate this expense, the organization must determine the useful life of an asset. This means that government entities must maintain fixed asset systems that will calculate and account for asset depreciation amounts. Before the issuance of GASB 34, governments expensed all their assets at the time of acquisition, rather than recognizing a portion of expense each accounting period during the asset's useful life.

Without proper staffing in the fixed asset control function, however, the district will not be able to adequately perform any of these functions.

Recommendation 51:

Establish policies and procedures to classify items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more as fixed assets and those with a unit cost of \$500 or more as inventory items.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services meets with the Purchasing agent and the accountant to develop policy and written procedures to distinguish between purchases that should be recognized in inventory and those that should be classified as fixed assets.	June 2002
2.	The director of Business Services meets briefly with the external auditor to evaluate whether the policy is in compliance with GASB 34.	July 2002
3.	The superintendent presents the proposed policy to the board for approval.	August 2002
4.	The board adopts the new policy.	August 2002

5.	The director of Business Services provides written procedures to all departments and campuses.	September 2002
6.	The director of Business Services monitors the department to ensure the policy and procedures are being followed and makes any necessary adjustments.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD does not assign individual accountability for fixed assets. As a result, the district does not have adequate records regarding their fixed assets and is not able to easily track assets that have been moved from one location to another, have been discarded due to obsolescence or damage or are missing or stolen.

Best practice examples in other Texas school districts have shown that the districts that have control over fixed assets are those that assign responsibility to specific individuals and then hold those individuals accountable for any missing assets or other discrepancies. For instance, Broward County Public School System in Florida specifically assigns fixed asset responsibility to department heads and principals. The annual evaluations of these individuals in Broward County assess their adequacy in protecting and accounting for district assets. In addition, the Broward County board of trustees reviews a quarterly report that shows a detailed listing of any missing or stolen assets and who was responsible for the custody of those assets. As a result of assigning individual responsibility and holding individuals accountable, Broward County has a very low percentage of fixed assets that are missing or stolen each year.

Recommendation 52:

Assign individual accountability for fixed asset custody to principals and department heads in WHISD.

WHISD should amend the district's fixed asset policy to assign principals and department heads responsibility for fixed assets. Principals or department heads should assign actual asset tracking to another individual under his or her supervision, but ultimately he or she will be held accountable.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services, Purchasing agent and accountant meet with the principals to present accounting procedures.	May 2002
2.	Each principal conducts inventory of all fixed assets located in their school.	June 2002
3.	The director of Business Services compares the inventory counts conducted at each school to the master list of fixed assets. If any item from the signed list is missing without documentation of sale, donation or obsolescence, the director of Business Services deducts from the next year's budget request from that school.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district has not performed a physical inventory since 1996. At that time a consulting firm, Resource Cost Inc. of San Antonio, conducted a thorough inventory of the district's fixed assets. However, the district has not updated the 1996 report or tracked assets against the comprehensive listing. In its 2000 audit, Dodd & Associates, Ltd., the district's external auditor cited a lack of clear procedures related to maintaining a comprehensive fixed asset inventory. During this review, the director of Business Services requested and received vendor proposals for annual inventory services.

Although WHISD policy states that the district's superintendent is accountable for conducting an annual fixed asset inventory, no one is assigned the task of maintaining the fixed asset base in the district. The director of Business Services was unaware of the prior study until early October 2001. Best practices suggest that this listing be downloaded into either the accounting software or a separate spreadsheet that would require minimal general ledger entries to update.

Recommendation 53:

Hire a consultant to update the district's fixed asset database and perform an annual physical inventory.

The district is planning to enlist the assistance of a vendor to overhaul its fixed asset inventory and perform a physical inventory for the next three years. Once the inventory has been completed, the district must institute procedures to maintain this listing. In addition, the district must make it known to all employees and students that the district will track fixed

assets. An employee should be assigned to maintain the district's fixed asset database.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services requests that the board approve hiring a consulting firm to update the fixed asset base.	April 2002
2.	The board approves hiring a consultant.	April 2002
3.	The director of Business Services requests cost proposals for services.	Completed
4.	The director of Business Services selects the consulting firm.	July 2002
5.	The consulting firm conducts a comprehensive physical inventory throughout the district.	August 2002
6.	The accountant updates the database.	September 2002
7.	The director of Business Services meets with staff to inform them that there is a comprehensive listing of the district's property and that any items that are missing will be reported to the police and the responsible individual will be prosecuted.	October 2002
8.	Any purchases are immediately added to the database.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

According to a quote received by the district, a vendor will perform the fixed asset inventory for the next three years at a cost of \$3,500 per year. In subsequent years, the district should be able to receive the same service for the same price assuming that the district's asset base remains unchanged.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Hire a consultant to update the district's fixed asset database and perform an annual physical inventory.	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)	(\$3,500)

FINDING

The district does not keep completed police reports on file when district property is lost or stolen. There is no mechanism for tracking lost property or ensuring that police reports have actually been filed. In the past, recovering stolen district property has not been a priority.

There are some indications that the district is ignoring the theft or loss of some items. Some equipment shipments were received intact, but by the time deliveries were made to departments, some items were no longer present. While in the district, the review team heard comments such as "If I don't get paid what I'm worth, I'm going to get my money's worth." On April 4, 1996, the district's CPA firm, Dodd & Associates prepared an "Agreed Upon Procedures" report that discussed the district's lack of procedures to safeguard equipment. Item number 14 in the report addressed allegations regarding missing TVs, VCRs, computers and other equipment from the junior high school. The auditors were not allowed to examine the equipment.

By ignoring property loss or theft, the district is tolerating fraud against the taxpayers. In addition, the district has no means to recover the cost for these items if it does not have the proper documentation for an insurance claim. The district told the review team that police reports are being filed but failed to provide copies for review.

In Hillsborough County Florida, the district has instituted strong asset control measures. The principal of every school is given an asset listing at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year, the district performs a physical inventory, and the results are compared to the asset listing from the beginning of the year. If there are any items missing, the district checks to see if proper paperwork was filed. This paperwork includes either a transfer form indicating that the asset has been transferred to another site or a Property Loss/Damage Report (PDR). The PDR requires the following information:

- Site number;
- Date discovered missing;
- Name of facility reporting loss;
- Type of loss (vandalism, fire, storm, theft/burglary, theft/missing, disappearance, money, or other);
- If the item was stolen:
 - Date reported to police;
 - Is there visible evidence of forced entry? (Y/N);
 - Was the building protected with burglar alarms? (Y/N);
 - Did alarm detect entry? (Y/N);
 - Was building occupied at the time of loss? (Y/N);
 - How was building entered;
 - Describe what happened;
 - Describe damage/loss to premises/equipment;
 - Name of witness/informant and
 - Action taken to prevent recurrence.
- Name of principal or site supervisor;
- Sender;

- Date;
- Title of sender; and
- For school-district owned items:
 - Description;
 - Asset number;
 - Date purchased;
 - Serial number;
 - Original cost;
 - Estimated repair/replacement cost and
 - Reason for the loss.

If the proper paperwork is not filed for any missing assets, the principals are held accountable for replacing the items.

Recommendation 54:

Establish board policy addressing accountability for district property and prosecute persons found with stolen district property.

In order to be effective, the district must hold people accountable for property and prosecute theft. It should be standard policy to immediately file a police report when any item is noted missing. Once the police report has been filed, the director of Business Services should determine if it would be appropriate to file an insurance claim based on the amount of the loss.

The board must assign accountability for district property. On campuses, the principals should be held accountable for maintaining their inventories and reporting losses. Department heads should be responsible for maintaining the department's inventories. Losses that have not been properly reported should be reimbursed from the school or department budget for the next fiscal year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security compiles a listing of all police reports filed for lost equipment over the past five years.	April 2002
2.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security reports the results of the study to the superintendent and the board.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent requests that a representative of the Dallas Police Department present local crime statistics to the board and outline punishment for theft.	May 2002

4.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security develops a Property Loss/Damage Report form incorporating line items like those used by Hillsborough County.	May 2002
5.	The board establishes a policy that a police reports be filed immediately when an item is reported missing and that any individual found with stolen property will be prosecuted.	May 2002
6.	The board establishes a policy that assigns accountability to department heads and campus administrators for the fixed asset inventory at their site.	June 2002
7.	The superintendent informs all district staff that any items missing from the district's property listing will be reported to the police and the responsible individual will be prosecuted.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD's) financial management functions in five subsections:

- A. Fiscal Operations
- B. Budgeting
- C. Fund Balance
- D. Tax Collections
- E. External and Internal Audit

Effective financial management involves careful planning, budgeting and control of the district's financial resources. A district's ability to perform these tasks involves solid relationships with its employees, vendors, funding agencies and the local community.

Financial management is most effective when resources are spent based on the district's strategic goals and objectives. Internal controls must be established and operate as intended. Financial information should be provided in a timely manner and presented in a format that is easily understood by all audiences.

BACKGROUND

School districts must manage their finances within the context of a highly regulated environment, including numerous requirements established by federal and state laws, rules and regulations. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG) outlines the accounting and reporting requirements placed on Texas school districts. Internally developed policies and procedures, generally accepted accounting principles and guidelines set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) also affect school districts' financial management activities.

The state's contribution to public education is allocated through a system of statutory formulas known as the Foundation School Program (FSP). According to the Texas Education Code, the FSP is designed to "provide substantially equal access to similar revenue per student at a similar tax effort, considering all state and local tax revenues of districts after acknowledging all legitimate student and district cost differences." To compensate for wide variations in local property wealth among school districts, the state allocates funding to districts in inverse relation to their property wealth.

The FSP consists of two components or "tiers": Tier I and Tier II. These two tiers provide state aid to supplement local property taxes and limit the total amount of local funding per student that some districts can spend on education.

Tier I "foundation" funding is intended to ensure that each district can provide its students with a basic instructional program. The state bases Tier I allotments on student attendance, as measured by weighted average daily attendance (WADA). WADA provides additional "weight" or funding for special-needs students participating in programs such as special education, compensatory education, bilingual education and gifted and talented programs. Tier I formula funding also provides some support for school transportation services. The state adjusts Tier I allotments for individual districts' property tax bases. Therefore, a district's property wealth factors significantly into the state funding formula. A district that cannot generate local revenue equivalent to the entire Tier I allotment receives state aid to make up the difference.

Tier II funding, also known as the "guaranteed yield" program, is designed to provide additional funding beyond the basic Tier I program. District property wealth determines the amount of state aid received in Tier II. For districts with property wealth of less than \$258,100 per weighted student in 2001-02, the state will provide Tier II funding to bring them up to that level. Chapter 41 of the Texas Education Code requires districts with property wealth above \$300,000 per weighted student to transfer any local revenue exceeding that amount to the state, for redistribution to "property-poor" districts. "Gap" districts (those with property wealth at or above \$258,100 but below \$300,000 per weighted student) will generate the Tier II funding level entirely with local funds and will receive no Tier II state funding, but can retain all of the local funds they collect. Tier II funds can be used for any legal purpose other than capital outlays or debt service.

The 1999 Legislature added a new component, Tier III funds, to the education funding formula. Tier III funds provide partial state funding for debt service requirements on bonds previously issued by local school districts.

The Texas Constitution authorizes local governments including school districts to levy property taxes. School property taxes represent nearly 60 percent of all property taxes levied in the state. School districts levy two categories of property taxes: maintenance and operations (M&O) and interest and sinking (I&S). Districts use M&O taxes to cover routine operating costs and I&S taxes to pay debt service for financing building programs.

WHISD receives revenue from local, state and federal sources. **Exhibit 6-1** summarizes the district's budgeted revenue breakdown over the last five years. Overall, total revenues rose by 4.8 percent. Local revenues increased by 9.6 percent and state revenues by 3.4 percent; federal revenues decreased by 6.4 percent.

Exhibit 6-1
WHISD Total Budgeted Revenue by Source
1996-97 through 2000-01

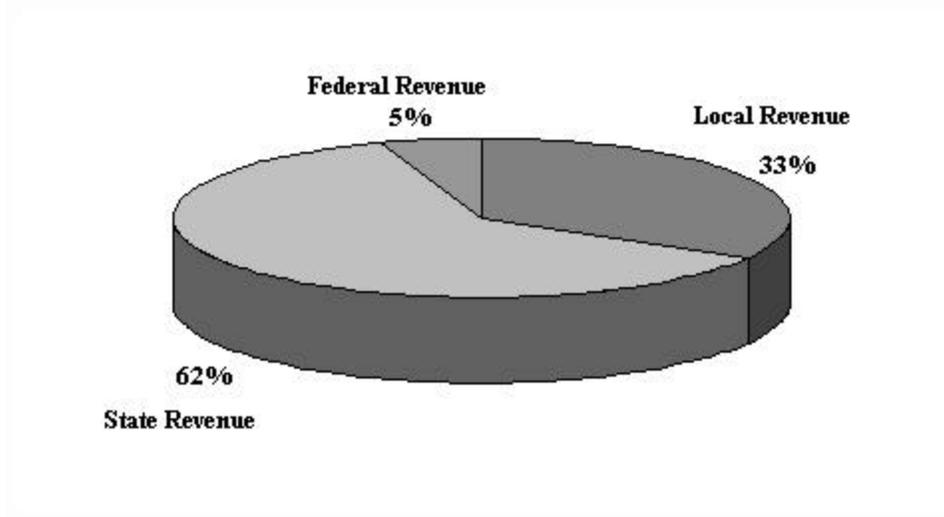
Revenue Source	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change over Period
Local and Intermediate	\$5,948,090	\$5,709,194	\$6,263,406	\$6,264,825	\$6,519,878	9.6%
State	\$11,658,822	\$10,327,369	\$10,669,535	\$12,178,418	\$12,053,689	3.4%
Federal	\$1,094,727	\$981,074	\$1,089,279	\$1,129,664	\$1,024,278	(6.4%)
Total	\$18,701,639	\$17,017,637	\$18,022,220	\$19,572,907	\$19,597,845	4.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 1996-97 through 2000-01.

On average, Texas school districts receive about 53.1 percent of their revenues from local property taxes, 43.6 percent from the state and 3.4 percent from federal sources. WHISD receives the majority of its revenue, 62 percent, from state sources. **Exhibit 6-2** illustrates budgeted revenue by source for the district in 2000-01.

Exhibit 6-2
WHISD Budgeted Revenue Sources
as a Percentage of Total Revenues

2000-01



Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

WHISD receives a significantly higher percentage of its total revenues from the state and federal government than its peer districts. WHISD receives a much lower percentage of its total revenue from local sources than its three peer districts. **Exhibit 6-3** presents 2000-01 revenues by source for WHISD and its peers. The peer districts' totals are similar to the state averages. WHISD exceeds the state averages for federal and state funding and is substantially below the state average in its share of total revenues received from local sources.

Exhibit 6-3
WHISD versus Peer Districts and Statewide Average
Revenue Sources as a Percentage of Total Revenues
2000-01

District	Local/Other Revenue	Percentage of Total	State Revenue	Percentage of Total	Federal Revenue	Percentage of Total
De Soto	\$22,984,176	54.1%	\$18,705,811	44%	\$795,000	1.9%
Lancaster	\$12,722,607	54.1%	\$9,994,320	42.5%	\$788,237	3.4%
La Marque	\$21,072,661	76.1%	\$5,592,360	20.2%	\$1,023,751	3.7%
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$6,519,878	33.3%	\$12,053,689	61.5%	\$1,024,278	5.2%
State	\$13,853,942,376	53.1%	\$11,377,498,894	43.6%	\$884,281,086	3.4%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

As noted above, the state sends revenue to each district based on its property values. Districts with greater property wealth per pupil receive less from the state because they generate more property taxes, while districts with lower property values per pupil receive more from the state.

Exhibit 6-4 compares WHISD's property value per pupil with those of its peer districts between 1997-98 through 2000-01. Although WHISD's property values rose by 36.8 percent over the timeframe reviewed, it remains the poorest district among its peers in terms of property value per pupil.

**Exhibit 6-4
Property Value Per Pupil
WHISD versus Peer Districts
1997-98 through 2000-01**

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change over Period
De Soto	\$158,459	\$170,429	\$178,609	\$193,686	22.2%
Lancaster	\$166,305	\$173,662	\$192,698	\$198,337	19.3%
La Marque	\$271,827	\$274,146	\$288,741	\$297,873	9.6%
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$92,450	\$95,153	\$109,083	\$126,513	36.8%
Region 10	\$238,068	\$251,954	\$268,395	\$291,348	22.4%
State	\$182,154	\$190,769	\$198,090	\$215,232	18.2%

Source: TEA, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1997-98 through 2000-01.

Enrollment in WHISD has declined over the past two years (**Exhibit 6-5**).

**Exhibit 6-5
WHISD Student Enrollment
1997-98 through 2000-01**

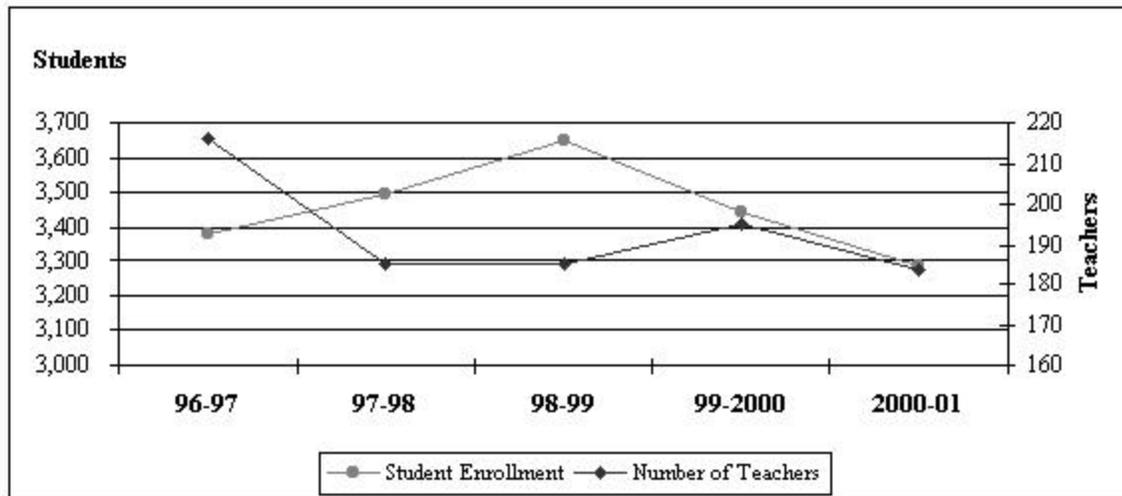
Year	Enrollment	Percent Increase/ (Decrease) From Previous Year
1997-98	3,495	NA
1998-99	3,651	4.5%

1999-2000	3,444	(5.7%)
2000-01	3,283	(4.7%)

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

While student enrollment has fallen, the district's staffing levels have increased. TEA describes districts showing this pattern as "Circling the Drain" districts. **Exhibit 6-6** contrasts WHISD's five-year student enrollment trend with its teaching staff. The student-teacher ratio fell from 25:1 in 1999-00 to 17:1 in 2000-01.

Exhibit 6-6
WHISD Student Enrollment versus Number of Teachers
1996-97 through 2000-01

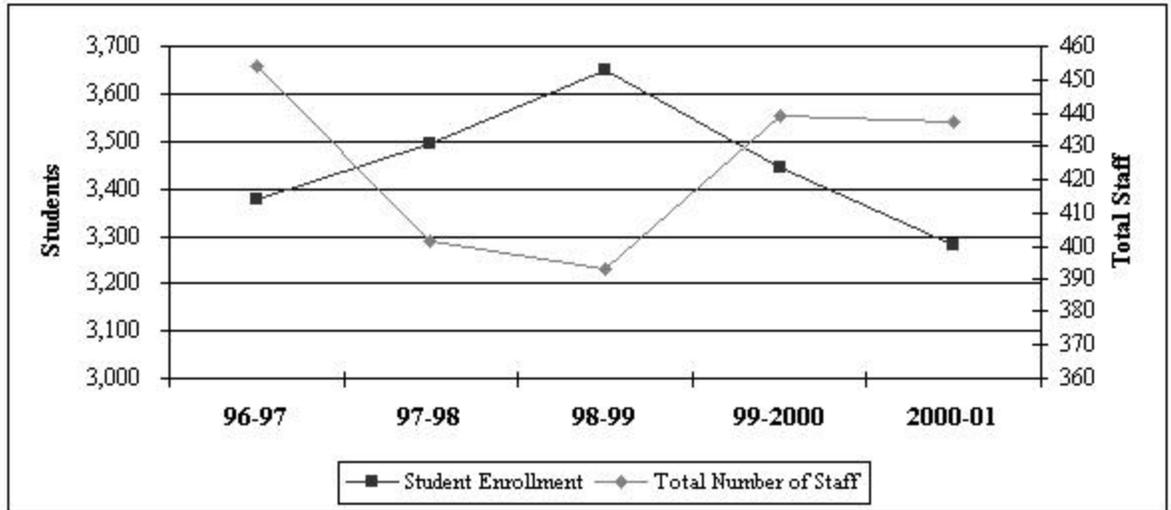


Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1996-97 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 6-7 illustrates the five-year trend in student enrollment versus the total number of staff employed by the district. The student-staff ratio decreased slightly, from 7.8:1 in 1999-00 to 7.5:1 in 2000-01. TEA recommends a 6:1 student to staff ratio for small districts.

Exhibit 6-7
WHISD Student Enrollment versus Total Staff

1996-97 through 2000-01



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

Exhibit 6-8 describes WHISD's expenditures by function. "Instruction" includes teacher salaries and all activities dealing directly with the interaction between teachers and students, including computer-assisted instruction. The amount of funds WHISD devotes to instruction rose by 9.6 percent between 1996-97 and 2000-01. Plant maintenance and operating expenditures rose by 25 percent over the same period, while total budgeted operating expenditures increased by 8.8 percent.

Non-operating expenditures include spending dedicated to community service, facilities acquisition and construction, capital outlay and debt service. From 1996-97 though 2000-01, non-operating expenditures fell by 34.1 percent.

Total budgeted expenditures increased by 5.3 percent between 1996-97 and 2000-01. This increase occurred despite a 2.9 percent drop in enrollment. Per-pupil expenditures rose by 8.4 percent, from \$5,580 to \$6,049.

Exhibit 6-8
WHISD Budgeted Total Expenditures by Function
1996-97 through 2000-01

Function	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change Over 5 Years
Instruction	\$8,553,615	\$8,103,982	\$8,445,427	\$9,266,976	\$9,371,099	9.6%

Instructional Related Services	\$517,554	\$557,441	\$448,526	\$506,497	\$485,593	(6.2%)
Instructional Leadership	\$477,270	\$239,549	\$240,626	\$325,288	\$308,315	(35.4%)
School Leadership	\$833,015	\$1,091,279	\$1,018,965	\$1,039,255	\$1,087,444	30.5%
Support Services Students	\$650,214	\$804,364	\$817,768	\$758,738	\$955,832	47.0%
Student Transportation	\$996,073	\$613,362	\$649,795	\$678,947	\$755,552	(24.1%)
Food Services	\$1,161,208	\$1,126,760	\$1,044,229	\$1,266,339	\$1,206,487	3.9%
Co-curricular/ Extracurricular Activities	\$199,278	\$274,594	\$270,234	\$288,903	\$288,585	44.8%
Central Administration	\$1,310,274	\$868,498	\$891,481	\$955,695	\$1,079,839	(17.6%)
Plant Maintenance and Operations	\$2,375,328	\$1,746,360	\$2,669,724	\$3,085,582	\$2,968,699	25.0%
Security and Monitoring Services	\$71,937	\$249,486	\$200,708	\$181,673	\$166,372	131.3%
Data Processing Services	\$171,395	\$241,500	\$155,366	\$155,366	\$163,926	(4.4%)
Total Budgeted Operating Expenditures	\$17,317,161	\$15,917,175	\$16,852,849	\$18,509,259	\$18,837,743	8.8%
Community Services	\$11,050	\$11,050	\$11,050	\$11,050	\$79,692	621.2%
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%

Capital Outlay and Debt Service	\$1,537,029	\$884,848	\$910,510	\$934,131	\$941,243	(38.8%)
Total Budgeted Non-Operating Expenditures	\$1,548,079	\$895,898	\$921,560	\$945,181	\$1,020,935	(34.1%)
Total Budgeted Expenditures	\$18,865,240	\$16,813,073	\$17,774,409	\$19,454,440	\$19,858,678	5.3%
Student Enrollment	3,381	3,495	3,651	3,444	3,283	(2.9%)
Total Expenditures Per Student	\$5,580	\$4,811	\$4,868	\$5,649	\$6,049	8.4%

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

Exhibit 6-9 compares the district's total budgeted expenditures to those of its peer districts in terms of percent of total expenditures by function. WHISD dedicates the lowest percent of its budgeted expenditures to instruction, at 47.2 percent. Across the state, instructional expenditures average about 52 percent of total expenditures.

Exhibit 6-9
Total Budgeted Expenditures by Function
WHISD versus Peer Districts
Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 2001

Function	Wilmer-Hutchins		DeSoto		Lancaster		La Marque	
Instruction	\$9,371,099	47.2%	\$22,174,628	52.5%	\$12,083,324	52.0%	\$13,129,429	47.7%
Instructional Related Services	\$485,593	2.4%	\$1,011,342	2.4%	\$839,846	3.6%	\$862,607	3.1%
Instructional Leadership	\$308,315	1.6%	\$579,660	1.4%	\$314,054	1.4%	\$326,726	1.2%
School Leadership	\$1,087,444	5.5%	\$2,139,653	5%	\$1,614,036	6.9%	\$1,512,244	5.5%
Support	\$955,832	4.9%	\$2,011,633	4.8%	\$791,127	3.4%	\$1,247,071	4.5%

Services - Students								
Student Transportation	\$755,552	3.8%	\$279,858	0.7%	\$99,007	0.4%	\$956,200	3.5%
Food Services	\$1,206,487	6.1%	\$1,932,790	4.6%	\$1,203,329	5.2%	\$1,592,735	5.8%
Co-curricular/ Extracurricular Activities	\$288,585	1.5%	\$970,818	2.2%	\$498,462	2.1%	\$922,993	3.4%
Central Administration	\$1,079,839	5.4%	\$1,823,857	4.3%	\$1,021,907	4.4%	\$1,355,932	4.9%
Plant Maintenance and Operations	\$2,968,699	14.9%	\$3,992,058	9.5%	\$3,102,632	13.3%	\$3,052,858	11.1%
Security and Monitoring Services	\$166,372	0.8%	\$101,670	0.2%	\$315,854	1.4%	\$316,338	1.1%
Data Processing Services	\$163,926	0.8%	\$452,433	1.1%	\$627,995	2.7%	\$171,212	0.6%
Total Operating Expenditures	\$18,837,743	94.9%	\$37,470,400	88.7%	\$22,511,573	96.8%	\$25,446,345	92.4%
Non- Operating Expenditures	\$1,020,935	5.1%	\$4,750,556	11.3%	\$742,996	3.2%	\$2,096,463	7.6%
Total Budgeted Expenditures	\$19,858,678	100%	\$42,220,956	100%	\$23,254,569	100%	\$27,542,808	100%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD's) financial management functions in five subsections:

A. FISCAL OPERATIONS

School district financial managers collect, analyze and provide information for district decision makers. Successful financial operations require qualified personnel with an adequate separation of duties; an accounting system that provides timely and useful information on which to base operating decisions; and comprehensive policies and procedures that ensure proper management of the district's financial resources.

A district's fiscal operations include the collection, disbursement and accounting of local, state and federal funds. An effective fiscal operation establishes detailed policies and internal controls to process the district's daily business transactions efficiently while providing accurate, complete and timely information to the administration and board.

WHISD's director of Business Services oversees the district's finance and accounting functions under the superintendent's direct supervision. The director of Business Services has been with the district since July 2001 and is responsible for the daily management of the district's finances and the preparation and monitoring of the district's budget. The director oversees a number of district departments, including Business Services, Food Services, Transportation, Safety and Security, Maintenance and Technology. Business Services itself comprises three departments: Tax, Accounting and Purchasing.

The district accountant is responsible for accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, bank reconciliations, bank deposits, cash management and posting to the general ledger.

WHISD uses an accounting system provided by the Region 10 Education Service Center. This system includes all the modules necessary to allow the district to track its critical financial components, including: accounts payable and receivable, budget control, fixed assets, general ledger maintenance, payroll processing and purchasing.

The district's system generates accurate and current financial data; it is well-supported by Region 10 staff. WHISD's staff, however, has not been trained in the use of the purchasing module. Instead, the district uses a manual purchasing system.

FINDING

The district's accountant reconciles all 13 of WHISD's bank accounts within 10 business days following receipt of the district's bank statements. The district receives its bank statements between the fifth and tenth of the following month. The review team reviewed copies of the district's August 31, 2001 bank statements and reconciliations; all of these statements were reconciled by September 18, 2001.

By ensuring that the bank accounts are reconciled on a timely basis, the district can discover and correct errors in a timely manner, protect the integrity of its general ledger and allow for the safe investment of excess cash.

COMMENDATION

WHISD reconciles its bank accounts within 10 business days of the receipt of bank statements.

FINDING

The director of Business Services is responsible for many district activities and cannot focus sufficient attention on the district's core business functions. Although the staff is proficient at its tasks, the department structure is unnecessarily fragmented.

Department Leadership

The Business Services Department has been unstable for many years. During 1995, the department functioned without a director for several months. A TEA management team oversaw the district's business operations from June 1996 until November 1998. Since then, TEA and the Dallas County District Attorney's Office have reviewed the district a number of times. Each review identified a lack of management structure and accountability as a serious issue.

Dodd & Associates, Ltd., the district's external auditor, attached management letters noting internal control issues to its 1998-99 and 1999-2000 audits.

Inter- and Intra-Department Functions

The payroll clerk's job description does not accurately reflect the position's responsibilities. The payroll clerk handles the entire payroll function for the district. This involves entering salary information into the Region 10 accounting system and making any changes that are needed. The clerk also

pays benefit providers and ensures that the proper deductions are made from employee paychecks. Finally, the payroll clerk must ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the payroll. The clerk has been in this position for the last 10 years without any elevation in job title or pay. Yet, the clerk's role is vital and should be treated as such.

WHISD's Payroll Department and Human Resources Department do not communicate effectively concerning shared functions. The Payroll Department receives paperwork from Human Resources for payroll deductions and makes the appropriate changes to employee pay records to begin making the deductions. The Human Resources Department, however, often fails to complete the paperwork properly before sending it to Payroll.

For instance, the superintendent discovered that Human Resources failed to enroll him in the district's health plan although he was paying health insurance premiums regularly. While Payroll ensures that the district makes appropriate deductions from employee checks, the payroll clerk lacks the authority to ensure that Human Resources completes and files the necessary paperwork with the benefit providers. The Payroll Department also lacks the personnel needed to follow up and reconcile these transactions. The district could face major liability if it regularly deducts insurance premiums from an employee's paycheck and the employee becomes seriously ill only to find out that the district never enrolled him or her in the plan.

WHISD does not have an employee responsible for accounting for its fixed assets, nor does the district maintain a strong asset management program. Dodd & Associates noted the lack of a fixed-asset inventory in its 1999-2000 audit. The firm was unable to substantiate the status of the district's property and equipment. GASB 34 requires school districts to begin depreciating all fixed assets with a value in excess of \$5,000. This new reporting requirement makes it extremely important for school districts to have the procedures in place it needs to accomplish this task.

Recommendation 55:

Establish clear lines of responsibility and institute internal control procedures in the Business Services Department.

To establish clear lines of responsibility and internal control procedures, the district should develop detailed procedures for each functional area of the department. The district also should create three new positions: a Payroll supervisor, a benefits/payroll clerk and a fixed assets clerk.

The director of Business Service should be responsible for overseeing the department's daily operations and should report directly to the assistant superintendent of Administration, a new position recommended in Chapter 1. The director of Business Service also should prepare financial statements for the district's senior managers and the board, and prepare and amend the district budget.

The Accounting supervisor should be responsible for cash management, under the direct supervision of the director of Business Services. The position should be responsible for reconciling district bank statements and preparing cash flow forecasts.

A fixed asset clerk/cashier position should report directly to the Accounting supervisor. This position should be responsible for maintaining the district's fixed-asset files, both electronically and in hard copy. All inventories should be kept on file and reconciled against the general ledger. This position also should be responsible for receipting bank deposits for the central administration office. This individual should have at least two years of accounting experience.

The present payroll clerk should be promoted to a supervisory position, with a clerk reporting directly to the position. The Payroll supervisor should be responsible for ensuring that the payroll is processed properly. This position should be responsible for researching any payroll differences to ensure the district's records are correct. The supervisor also should be responsible for all payroll-related tax payments and filings. In addition, the Payroll supervisor should have direct control over benefit deductions.

To ensure that the proper deductions are being made, the district should create a checklist for each employee's file specifying:

- effective date of deduction;
- employee authorization for deduction;
- itemized list of employee deductions;
- total deductions being taken each pay period;
- enrollment form has been sent to provider;
- deductions have been entered into payroll system;
- signature of employee;
- signature of deductions/payroll clerk;
- signature of supervisor of Payroll.

A benefits/payroll clerk should be responsible for completing this checklist for every employee. This position should act as the liaison between Payroll and Human Resources Department. Before entering deduction information into the payroll system, the benefits clerk should ensure that the employee has been enrolled properly. This position also

should be responsible for entering payroll information into the system, documenting all changes and maintaining payroll files. Finally, this position should be responsible for reconciling vendor invoices each month. The benefits/payroll clerk should have at least two years of payroll and/or benefit experience.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent requests that the board approve three new positions; a Payroll supervisor, a fixed asset clerk/cashier and a deductions/payroll clerk.	May 2002
2.	The board approves the new positions.	May 2002
3.	The director of Business Services develops detailed procedures for each functional area of the department.	May 2002
4.	The director of Business Services creates job descriptions for each position.	June/July 2002
5.	The Human Resources Department advertises for the new positions.	July/August 2002
6.	The director of Business Services interviews the candidates.	August 2002
7.	The director of Business Services upgrades the payroll clerk position to Payroll supervisor.	September 2002
8.	The director of Business Services hires the best candidates.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would create three new positions: a Payroll supervisor, a benefits/payroll clerk and a fixed asset clerk. A Payroll supervisor would cost \$43,092 (annual salary of \$38,000 x 13.4 percent benefits rate). Because the benefits/payroll clerk would earn the same salary as the existing payroll clerk, the district only would incur new costs for a fixed asset clerk at \$29,484 (annual salary of \$26,000 x 13.4 percent benefit rate) annually.

The total annual cost of this recommendation, then, is \$72,576 (\$43,092 + \$29,484). The first year costs are prorated one month.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Establish clear lines of responsibility and institute internal control	(\$66,528)	(\$72,576)	(\$72,576)	(\$72,576)	(\$72,576)

procedures in the Business Services Department.					
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FINDING

In the Accounts Payable Department, the review team found vendor files stacked in piles on tables around the office. While the district maintains orderly paid invoice files with the appropriate purchase orders attached to check receipts, unpaid invoices are simply placed in stacks throughout the office.

The accounts payable clerk was out of the office on the day the review team visited the department. The team found signed, blank purchase orders on a table by the door and vendor checks in unmailed envelopes. The office was not secured and any staff member could enter the office without supervision. Such practices create a risk that unauthorized personnel could take signed purchase orders and generate phony invoices.

Best practices for accounts payable call for separate filing systems for paid and unpaid invoices. These files should allow the Accounts Payable clerk to track the status of every invoice through every step of the payable process.

Recommendation 56:

Establish an organized accounts payable filing system.

The accounts payable clerk should print a current vendor list and an accounts payable aging report verifying that an unpaid invoice exists and that a pink copy of a purchase order has been filed alphabetically for all vendors on the aging report. The clerk should file all unpaid invoices alphabetically by vendor name, matched with a pink copy of the purchase order in a "ready for payment" file, until a check has been processed and mailed to the vendor. The clerk also should file paid invoices by vendor with the pink purchase order and check stub. This practice would allow the accounts payable clerk to easily track the status of a vendor's account when questions arise. It also would allow authorized personnel to track the status of accounts payable should the clerk be absent from work.

The district should lock all blank requisition orders in a supply cabinet. The accounts payable clerk should create a log to track requisition numbers. When requisition orders are requested, the clerk should issue a block of numbers to the requesting department head and authorized by signature.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The accounts payable clerk prints a current vendor list and aging report.	April 2002
2.	The accounts payable clerk reconciles the accounts payable aging report to the unpaid invoices to ensure that all vendors have been accounted for in the system.	April 2002
3.	The accounts payable clerk sets up an unpaid invoice file, alphabetized by vendor name, and files all outstanding unpaid invoices.	May 2002
4.	The accounts payable clerk files invoices, purchase orders and copies of checks by vendor name into a paid invoice file after paying the invoices.	June 2002 and Ongoing
5.	The accounts payable clerk develops a log for all blank purchase order forms that records the purchase order number, the department receiving the purchase order form, the authorized signature of the department representative receiving the purchase order form and the date the purchase order forms are sent to the department.	July 2002 and Ongoing
6.	The accounts payable clerk repeats steps 1 through 4 at the start of each month.	May 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Business Services does not cross-train its staff to perform routine accounting functions. An accountant oversees the accounting function, which comprises accounts payable, payroll processing and financial reporting. Three employees handle these functions. Should any one of them face a long-term illness or leave the district, the transition period would be very difficult. These activities simply remain unfinished if one of the three employees becomes ill or is otherwise unavailable, because only the staff member responsible for each function knows how to perform the tasks needed to complete it.

Both payroll and accounts payable are critical if routine functions of Business Services.

Recommendation 57:

Cross-train accounts payable and payroll processing personnel.

At least two district employees should be able to perform the accounts payable and payroll processing functions at any given time. Between payroll runs, the payroll clerk should train the accounts payable clerk to process a payroll and assist with the next payroll under his/her supervision. The accounts payable clerk should train the payroll clerk to process a vendor check run under his or her supervision. To maintain competency, they should perform each other's roles once each quarter on an ongoing basis.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services sets up a schedule for the accounts payable clerk and payroll clerk to train one another in the processing of vendor checks and district payrolls, respectively.	June 2002
2.	The payroll clerk documents the procedures used to process a payroll.	July 2002
3.	The accounts payable clerk documents the procedures used to process a vendor check run.	July 2002
4.	The payroll clerk and accounts payable clerk perform each other's role once each quarter.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD's) financial management functions in five subsections:

B. BUDGETING

A school district's budget should ensure that the district is maintaining and controlling its financial resources adequately. It is most effective when a variety of parties have been involved in its development. School administrators, department heads, teachers and community members should be involved in the budgeting process, as well as central administrators and the school board. The budget should reflect the overall goals and objectives of the district's long-range strategic plan.

In the budget planning process, districts should consider general educational goals, specific program goals and alternatives for achieving these goals. Budget planning and evaluation should be a continuous process and should constitute a part of each month's activities. Ideally, the budget should have the following uses:

- to present a comprehensive forecast of all district expenditures and receipts, based on the district's specific educational needs and plans;
- to serve as a guide to the overall school program; and
- to depict the district's educational, spending and financial plans including:
 - educational plans, with a definite statement of goals, policies and curriculum plans;
 - spending plans that translate educational plans into dollars and cents; and
 - finance plans, including proposed means and sources for securing adequate revenue to meet school program needs.

The budget process should be a cyclical activity involving three separate and identifiable phases (**Exhibit 6-10**).

Exhibit 6-10
General Budget Cycle

Phase	Schedule	Activity
Planning	Fall 2001	Define the goals and objectives of each school and of the district as a whole.

Preparation	Spring/Summer 2002	Identify expenditures needed to further district goals; establish budgetary allocations.
Evaluation	Fall 2002	Determine the effectiveness of the budget in meeting the district's goals. Repeat cycle.

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

A formal budget document provides a detailed presentation of pertinent financial information that can be used as a management and operations tool. The district should present the document in a way that allows any layperson to easily understand how the district will spend money in the coming school year. For instance, general fund expenditures should be separated from food service expenditures and debt service funds.

The budget also should provide some means of comparing actual-to-date amounts with budgeted-to-date amounts. This allows variances to be identified as they occur so that action can be taken to adjust spending as needed. In addition, a budget worksheet should convey how much money remains for each budget item at any given time in the school year.

FINDING

WHISD does not develop multi-year budgets to assist the district in furthering long-term goals. As such, the district cannot ensure that adequate resources are available to finance the district's needs both annually and into the future.

WHISD's 2001-02 budget was prepared very quickly. The superintendent brought in a consultant in April 2001 to help with the process. When the district hired the director of Business Services in July 2001, the director's first task was to help in developing the budget, which must be approved and adopted by the board by August 31st. The district based its 2000-01 budget on prior years' actual revenue, tax collections, state funding and average daily attendance.

WHISD's budget presents revenues and expenditures by department; however, it is extremely difficult to reconcile expenditures for a particular program. Expense items listed are too general and difficult to track. The budget groups salaries in several different ways, such as separating principal salaries from campus administration for one school while grouping all campus administrative salaries together for another. Such arbitrary groupings provide little meaning to anyone attempting to follow the budget.

The budget also lacks adequate detail. Given the fact that a consultant and the director of Business Services put together the 2001-02 budget so quickly and with no real knowledge regarding the district's inner workings, it cannot be considered an accurate representation of the district's fiscal operation.

The district did not follow a formal budget calendar when developing its 2000-01 budget. WHISD's budget process does not allow for cooperative interaction among departments and schools so that everyone understands how the district spends its resources. Consequently, some principals believe that the district did not have a budget and none of the department heads interviewed by the review team stated that they had contributed to the budget process.

WHISD provided the review team with its newly created budget calendar in early December 2001 (**Exhibit 6-11**).

**Exhibit 6-11
WHISD Budget Calendar**

Scheduled Date	Activity	Responsible Person
February 1-27	Revise budget packets Advise administration on budget timelines	Director of Business Services
March 4-15	Student projections to Superintendent Distribute budget packets to directors, principals and program supervisors	Director of Business Services
April 1-15	Preliminary drafts due to Business Services Department (must include teacher forecasts by program) Summarize preliminary drafts by program Summarize draft to directors, principals, program supervisors	Directors, principals and program supervisors Director of Business Services
May 3-31	Edited program drafts due back to Business Services Department Composite draft preparation and review Meetings with principals and directors Composite draft revision	Directors, principals and program supervisors Superintendent and Director of Business Services
June 12-24	First draft to Board of Education Study session with Board of Education	Superintendent and director of Business Services Superintendent. cabinet

		and superintendent.
July 25-30	Revenue projections to Board of Education Present revised budget to Board of Education	Superintendent and director of Business Services
August 5-15	Present final budget to Board of Education Adoption of budget	Superintendent and director of Business Services Board of Education
September 9-20	Establish and conduct the first meeting of the Budget Planning Committee Prepare a preliminary budget calendar Present recommended budget calendar and guidelines to the board for approval	Superintendent Budget Planning Committee Superintendent
January 21	Meet with staff to review budget procedures and release of preliminary allocations, and to distribute forms and printouts.	Principals, department heads

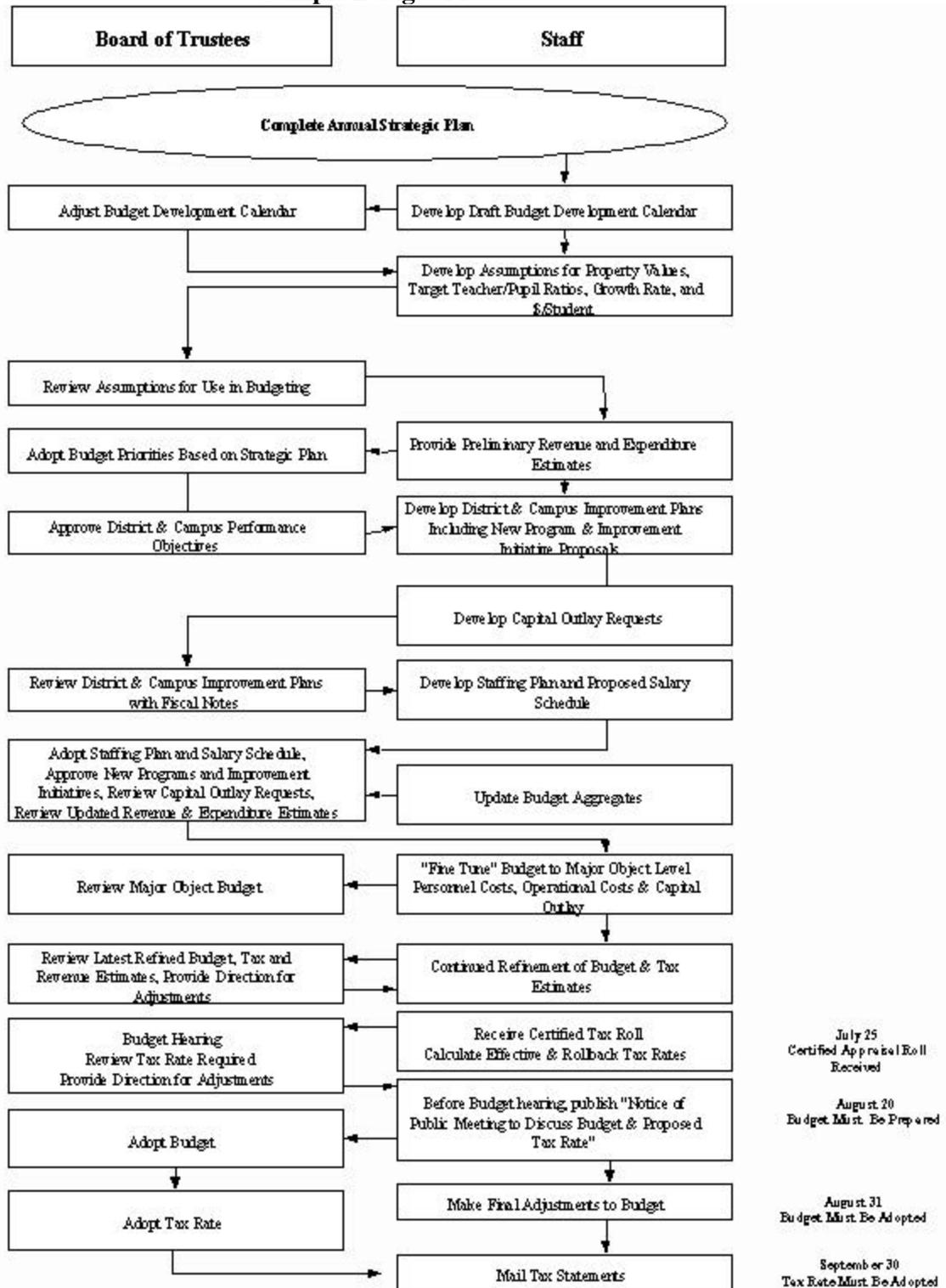
Source: WHISD Superintendent, December 2001.

A formal budget calendar is an important planning tool used by many districts to detail specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines for all committee members, central and school-level staff. It provides, at a glance, all the steps required to develop and adopt a budget within the time frame established by law. Although a formal budget calendar is modified each year to give the actual dates, districts can develop a general guide to use year-to-year, to ensure that the process moves forward. Without a formal budget calendar, important dates may be omitted and important tasks be overlooked or performed out of sequence, thus endangering the entire process.

Exhibit 6-12 presents a budget process recommended by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).

Exhibit 6-12
TASB

Sample Budget Process



Source: Texas Association of School Boards, 2001.

Recommendation 58:

Identify the district's financial constraints and budgetary goals for the next five years.

WHISD recently established a Budget Planning Committee that will meet during the first week of the new school year. This committee should include the superintendent, the director of Business Services, the school principals, the athletic director, the Technology coordinator, the director of Transportation, the director of Child Nutrition Services and two board members.

The first task of this committee should be to identify the financial constraints the district expects to face over the next five years, such as a continued decrease in enrollment and estimated tax revenues. In addition, the committee should identify what, if any, grants should be sought. Finally, the committee should prepare a summary of the district's budgetary goals for the next five years and draft any necessary revisions to district policy for board approval.

Principals should be responsible for enrollment projections for their campuses, as well as for identifying potential grants. The athletic director should identify any special programs the district may have to pay for over the next five years. Each department head should identify any program plans that may require a cash outlay during the same period. Board members should evaluate the district's current policy regarding the budget.

During this meeting, the superintendent determines what information should be presented to the board and assigns team members to prepare a formal presentation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent determines if any additional district employees or staff members need to be assigned to the committee.	August 2002
2.	The Budget Planning Committee holds its first meeting.	September 2002
3.	The superintendent assigns each committee member with a research task.	October - December 2002
4.	The Budget Planning Committee meets to discuss the results of its research.	December 2002
5.	The Budget Planning Committee meets to review the presentation materials and make any necessary revisions.	January 2003
6.	The superintendent presents the findings to the board and requests that the board adopt any new policy that may be	February 2003

	necessary.	
7.	The Budget Planning Committee meets at the beginning of each school year to revise the five-year plan as needed.	September 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD's Board of Trustees does not take an active role in monitoring the district's budget. TSPR attended a board meeting while at the district. Although financial statements were included in the board packets, the board did not discuss the district's finances at the meeting.

The board moved the finance agenda items to a consent agenda during the meeting. Doing so eliminated any opportunity to discuss each item individually. Board members told the review team that they did not *understand* the budget or the financial statements. Neither the board members nor district staff attempted to clearly present this material or solicit input or questions. The director of Business Services made no report regarding the district's financial activity since the last board meeting, its cash position or whether district spending was within budget. It is impossible for the board to make well-founded decisions without a clear understanding of such factors.

Many boards have a Finance Committee that focuses on the budget and presents a financial summary at each board meeting. This committee meets directly with the district's finance and accounting staff and regularly examines the district's transactions.

Recommendation 59:

Establish a Finance Committee to provide the board with detailed financial reports that compare actual versus budgeted revenues and expenditures every month.

The district should establish a Finance Committee including three board members, the director of Business Services, the accountant and the executive director of Human Resources. Each month, district staff should prepare detailed financial reports that can be easily understood by a lay person. **Exhibit 6-13** presents sample financial reports that should be developed by the Finance Committee and presented to the board each month.

Exhibit 6-13
WHISD Finance Committee
Sample Financial Report Presentation
For the Month Ending MM-DD-YY

Report Name	Description	Report Components
Budget vs. Actual	Compares actual revenue and expenditures to budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual revenue to date • Budgeted revenue to date • Variance • Explanation/Summary
Cash Flow (General Fund)	Summarizes the district's cash position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning balance • Receipts during month • Expenditures for month • Additional encumbrances • Ending balance
General Fund Balance	Summarizes the district's general fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning general fund balance • Changes during the period • Ending general fund balance • Target general fund balance
Investment Report	Summarizes the district's investments and interest earnings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of account • Beginning Balance • Interest Earned • Ending Balance
Extraordinary Items	Presents any non-budgeted items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of item • Purpose of item • Function • Impact on general fund balance

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

Where possible, the Finance Committee should incorporate bar charts and graphics to further clarify its reports. The committee should meet to discuss all financial issues before every board meeting. A representative from the Finance Committee should present a summary to the board as a monthly agenda item. This will help identify problem areas immediately so that the board can take action as soon as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent requests that the Board of Trustees create a Finance Committee.	May 2002
2.	The board creates the committee and schedules its first meeting.	July 2002
3.	The accountant prepares a draft of the reports to be presented at the first Finance Committee meeting. The director of Business Services reviews the reports and any necessary revisions are completed three days before the committee meeting.	September 2002
4.	The report packet goes to the board members that serve on the Finance Committee to review two days before the committee meeting.	September 2002
5.	The Finance Committee meets for the first time.	September 2002
6.	A representative from the Finance Committee presents the committee's report to the board.	September 2002 and Ongoing
7.	The superintendent and board president create a recurring agenda item for the Finance Committee monthly report.	September 2002
8.	The director of Business Services addresses any questions from the board or the public about the Finance Committee report.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

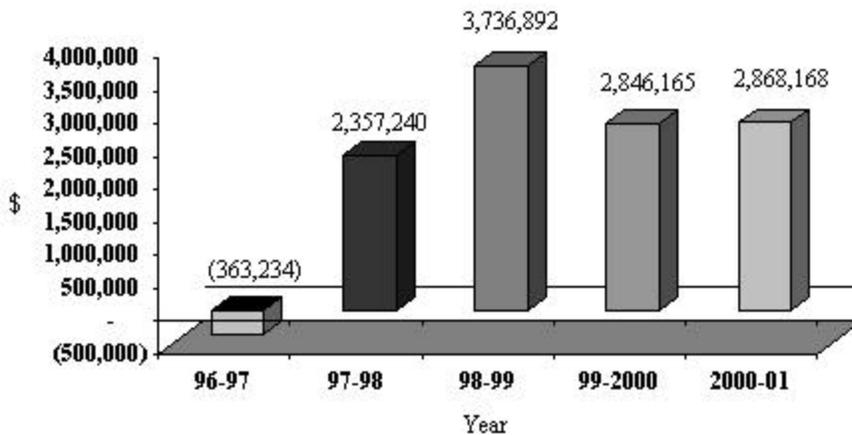
This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD's) financial management functions in five subsections:

C. FUND BALANCE

Government funds, such as WHISD's General Fund, report equity as a "fund balance." A fund balance is the difference between assets and liabilities as reflected on the balance sheet. It is the measure of the district's financial resources available for future use after payment of all obligations.

Over the past five years, WHISD's general fund balance has varied from a high of \$3,736,892 in 1999 to a low of negative \$363,234 in 1997 (**Exhibit 6-14**). The 2000-01 ending fund balance was estimated by adding budgeted revenues and subtracting budgeted expenditures to the ending August 31, 2000 balance. The district anticipates a very small increase in the fund balance of 0.8 percent over the 1999-2000 balance.

Exhibit 6-14
WHISD General Fund Balance
1996-97 through 2000-01



Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98; Dodd & Associates, Inc. 1998-99 and 1999-2000 External Audit Reports; and 2000-01 estimates using budgeted revenues and expenses from TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 6-15 summarizes the district's total revenues and expenditures over the past four years. Revenues grew by 17.9 percent over the period. Expenditures rose by 19.4 percent during the same period.

Exhibit 6-15
WHISD Total Budgeted Revenues and Expenditures
General Fund
1997-98 through 2000-01

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Revenues	\$15,093,690	\$16,129,702	\$17,700,768	\$17,802,964
Expenditures	\$14,889,126	\$15,881,891	\$17,317,261	\$17,780,961

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

Exhibit 6-16 summarizes the annual contribution to the general fund balance for every student dollar of revenue collected and spent over the past four years. During this period, the district contributed one cent of every dollar collected to the general fund.

Exhibit 6-16
Per Student Dollar Contribution to Fund Balance
1997-98 through 2000-01

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
General Fund Revenues per Student	\$4,319	\$4,418	\$5,140	\$5,423
General Fund Expenditures per Student	\$4,260	\$4,350	\$5,028	\$5,416
General Fund Contribution per Student	\$0.01	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0

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

FINDING

While WHISD appears to have a fund balance in excess of state optimum levels, the district is not properly accounting for existing or potential liabilities. According to Dodds & Associates, LTD, unreserved undesignated fund equity for governmental funds indicates available amounts for the budgeting of future operations. The unreserved designated fund equity for governmental funds indicates unreserved funds that have been earmarked by Board Resolution for specific purposes and are therefore not available for general expenditures to be appropriated in the following period unless amended by future board action. Reserved fund

balance is that portion of fund equity that is not available for appropriation or that has been legally separated for specific purposes.

According to the district's 2000-01 audit, WHISD established its self-funding Workers' compensation program on September 1, 1993. The program is fully funded by the district's General Fund. WHISD elected to treat the program as part of the General Fund in lieu of a separate Internal Service Fund. All activity of the program is included with those of the General Fund as of August 31, 2001. At the end of the fiscal year, Pinnacle Claim Services out of Dallas administered the Workers' Compensation program.

Dodd & Associates noted in its 1999-2000 management letter accompanying its audit report that WHISD had failed to set aside any reserves to cover its self-funded workers' compensation insurance liability. The auditors recommended that the district determine the amount of possible expense on anticipated losses or risk associated with workers' compensation. While the district responded that it would "reestablish the reserve for Self-Insurance in the Workers' Compensation Fund...", the 2000-01 annual financial report indicates otherwise.

Dodd & Associates reported that the district's reserve fund balance in 2000-01 included \$45,709 for inventories; \$137,195 of reserve for encumbrance; \$819,780 of capital expenditures reserve; and \$402,862 of reserve self insurance. The district paid \$350,516 in total claims. Consequently, WHISD's General Fund had no reserves for its self-insured workers' compensation program as of August 31, 2001.

By not reserving funds for self-insurance programs, the district's fund balance must cover all liability associated with this self-insurance. Further, the district does not accrue liabilities out of the fund balance for pending workers' compensation claims, thereby inflating the amount payable for this purpose. This has led to the district's superintendent and the director of Business Services not knowing the financial position of WHISD as was the case, per the superintendent, when the review team arrived on-site.

TEA has developed a formula to estimate a school district's "optimum" fund balance. This optimum is assumed to equal the estimated amount needed to cover cash flow deficits in the general fund for the fall period in the following fiscal year, plus estimated average monthly cash disbursements from the general fund for the nine months following the fiscal year. **Exhibit 6-17** summarizes WHISD's general fund balance over the past three years.

Exhibit 6-17
Analysis of WHISD General Fund Balance
1998-99 through 2000-01

	8/31/1999	8/31/2000	8/31/2001
Ending Fund Balance	\$3,736,892	\$2,846,165	\$2,868,168
Total General Fund Expenditures	\$16,531,877	\$20,606,143	\$17,802,964
Number of Months Covered (Fund Balance) / (Expenditures/12)	2.7	1.7	1.9
Optimal Fund Balance	\$1,960,289	\$1,528,206	\$1,504,121
Excess/(Deficit)	\$1,776,603	\$1,317,958	\$1,364,047

Source: TEA, Dodd & Associates, Ltd, Audited Financial Statements, 1998-99 through 2000-01, WHISD 2000-01 Budget and WHISD 2001-02 Budget.

If the district fails to account for potential liabilities and does not know the actual amount of its fund balance reserves, the district will not be able to appropriately plan for the future or maintain financial stability.

Recommendation 60:

Conduct actuarial studies to determine potential liabilities and appropriate reserve levels.

Once WHISD determines its potential liabilities through an actuarial study, this amount should be designated as reserves and the fund balance recalculated so that the board has an accurate picture of the district's financial condition.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent or director of Business Services requests proposals from actuarial firms for determining the appropriate reserve levels for the district's workers' compensation claims.	May 2002
2.	The board approves an actuarial firm for these purposes.	July 2002
3.	Based on the results of the actuarial studies, the board approves changes in appropriate funding levels for inclusion in the 2002-03 budget.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on discussions with an actuarial consulting firm, studies such as these typically cost between \$6,000 and \$8,000.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Conduct actuarial studies to determine potential liabilities and appropriate reserve levels.	(\$8,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD's) financial management functions in five subsections:

D. TAX COLLECTIONS

The assessment and collection of school district property taxes are functions involving different entities with distinct responsibilities. WHISD's board sets the rate after the adoption of the district budget in accordance with state law. The local appraisal district is responsible for setting property values and certifying tax rolls. In May of each year, the appraisal district provides an initial revenue estimate, but does not supply certified appraisal rolls until July. Tax bills are mailed in July, and the WHISD Tax Office collects property taxes on the district's behalf. The district uses an outside law firm to collect its delinquent taxes.

In 2000-01, local property taxes and other locally generated funds accounted for 33.3 percent of the district's total revenue. Tax receipts are deposited in the district's general operating account at Wells Fargo National Bank, N.A.

The district's Tax Office is located in the central administration building and is supervised by the tax assessor-collector. Two employees, the tax assessor-collector and a tax clerk, staff the office and are responsible for generating and mailing tax notices and collecting payments. The district uses computer software to download appraisal rolls from the appraisal district.

Exhibit 6-18 presents a five-year history of WHISD's adopted tax rates. In August 2001, the board increased the district's adopted tax rate by 1.67 percent, from \$1.503 (\$1.468 maintenance and operations plus \$0.035 debt service) to \$1.528 (\$1.465 maintenance and operations plus \$0.063 debt service) per \$100 of valuation for 2001. WHISD is very close to this state mandated maximum M&O rate of \$1.50, at \$1.465.

Exhibit 6-18
WHISD's Historical Tax Rates Per \$100 of Assessed Value
1996 through 2001

Calendar Year	Tax Rate	Percent Increase/(Decrease) from Prior Year
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	Maintenance and Operations	Interest and Sinking Fund	Total	
1996	\$1.396	\$0.367	\$1.763	NA
1997	\$1.465	\$0.273	\$1.738	(1.4%)
1998	\$1.465	\$0.178	\$1.643	(5.5%)
1999	\$1.468	\$0.035	\$1.503	(8.5%)
2000	\$1.465	\$0.063	\$1.528	1.7%

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

The district's Tax Office provided the review team with different historical tax rates and projected tax revenues during the course of the review and the district had also reported somewhat different numbers to the comptroller's Property Tax Division, which are reported annually in the *Annual Property Tax Report*. The reported rates and projections were all sufficiently different for a variety of reasons, including timing differences, consequently, the review team chose to use the numbers reported to TEA to be consistent and to allow for comparison to other data reported through TEA that was not available through these other sources.

Exhibit 6-19 compares the past two fiscal years of WHISD's projected tax revenue. The projected property tax revenue for 2001 represents an increase of 12.4 percent over 2000. WHISD's net taxable value has increased by 10.6 percent over the two-year period. The 40 largest commercial accounts will contribute \$1,120,650 in school property taxes during 2001-02, according to the tax assessor-collector.

Exhibit 6-19
WHISD's Property Tax Revenue Projections
1999-2000 through 2000-01

	Calendar Year 1999	Calendar Year 2000	Percent Change
Total Tax Rate	\$1.503	\$1.528	1.7%
Net Taxable Value	\$375,680,256	\$415,343,663	10.6%
Projected Revenue	\$5,646,474	\$6,346,451	12.4%

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

WHISD's property value per student has risen steadily over the past three years (**Exhibit 6-20**).

Exhibit 6-20
WHISD Property Value Per Pupil
1997-98 through 2000-01

Tax Year	Property Value Per Pupil	Percent Change
1997-98	\$92,450	N/A
1998-99	\$95,153	3%
1999-2000	\$109,083	15%
2000-01	\$126,513	16%

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

The per-pupil property value for 2000-01 is at its highest level of the four-year period reviewed.

FINDING

The Tax Office does not effectively collect property taxes. According to the district's tax office, the district's total collection rate was approximately 105 percent, 87 percent for current tax collections and 18 percent for delinquent taxes. Some in the district said that the reason the current collections were low was due to the fact that the district has a large percentage of its population over 65 years of age and on a fixed income. According to the tax assessor-collector, some of these taxpayers have mistakenly assumed that they are exempt and do not pay their school taxes.

When taxes become delinquent, however, the taxpayer must pay penalty and interest in addition to the amount of taxes owed, therefore it is important to for low-income and fixed-income taxpayers to pay the taxes on a timely basis to keep the total dollar amount paid to a minimum. Higher delinquencies also can impact the district's cash flows, since payments are delayed, and can impact the amount of state funding sent to the district since the amount of tax effort directly impacts the state's funding formulas. **Exhibit 6-21** presents a schedule of the district's delinquent taxes receivable, exclusive of penalties and interest. According to the 2000-01 audited financial statement, as of August 31, 2001, the district had outstanding property taxes totaling \$3,640,539.

Exhibit 6-21
WHISD's Schedule of Delinquent Taxes Receivable
Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2001

Tax Year	Beginning Balance @ 9/1/2000	M&O Collections	Debt Service Collections	Ending Balance @ 8/31/2001
1992 and prior	\$977,711	\$106,079	\$18,010	\$853,622
1993	\$140,159	\$5,202	\$1,203	\$133,753
1994	\$191,308	\$13,059	\$3,622	\$174,627
1995	\$280,763	\$16,352	\$3,971	\$260,440
1996	\$64,748	\$21,431	\$5,673	\$37,644
1997	\$307,047	\$28,473	\$6,603	\$271,971
1998	\$246,276	\$39,880	\$7,421	\$198,975
1999	\$477,616	\$71,692	\$8,709	\$397,215
2000	\$681,172	\$189,756	\$4,483	\$486,933
2001	-	\$5,365,217	\$225,593	\$825,358
Totals	\$3,366,800	\$5,857,142*	\$285,287*	\$3,640,539*

** Total is \$1 off due to rounding differences.*

Source: Dodd & Associates, Ltd. Certified Tax Accountants, Audited Financial Statement, 2000-01.

The Property Tax Code allows school districts to contract out collections to a public entity in accordance with the Interlocal Cooperation Act. School districts that contract for their tax collection operations rely on the contractor to perform all technical and day-to-day operations on the district's behalf.

In August 2000, Dallas ISD entered into an interlocal agreement with Dallas County. Each taxpayer receives a single tax bill from the county, incorporating both county and school district taxes. The district estimated that the new arrangement would save it collection fees of \$500,000. In addition, DISD anticipates that this newer and more efficient system will save about \$1.85 on each account. Dallas County has been collecting taxes for local governments for the past ten years with an average collection rate of 96 percent. The county has approached WHISD during the district's budget preparation and offered to collect taxes for the district. To date, the district has not elected to use Dallas County as its tax assessor-collector.

The Aransas County Independent School District's (ACISD) Board of Trustees authorized the Aransas County Tax Assessor Collector, the district's external tax collector, to post delinquent taxpayers in the local newspaper. In May 2001, the board passed a resolution to allow the Aransas Tax Assessor the authority to post an advertisement of the top 100 delinquent taxpayers. The resolution stipulated that the Tax Assessor would run two advertisements in the newspaper. The district's delinquent tax attorney also sent letters to the past due taxpayers warning them of the pending advertisement that would appear if they did not pay their taxes. Forty written installment agreements were entered into with delinquent taxpayers as a direct result of this campaign.

Recommendation 61:

Close the Tax Office and enter into an interlocal agreement with Dallas County to collect the district's property taxes.

This agreement should address all pertinent WHISD tax policies, such as frequency and method of fund transfers, calculation of the effective and roll-back tax rates, mail-out and payment schedules, reporting requirements and tax refunds. Agreement provisions should include consideration for special contingencies such as the cost of mailing corrected bills when necessary. The agreement also should specify who will be the delinquent tax attorney.

WHISD should strive to achieve a 94 percent collection rate of "current" property taxes. WHISD also should evaluate the programs implemented by Aransas County ISD and other higher tax collecting districts to determine if they could succeed in WHISD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and director of Business Services seek board approval to close the Tax Office and to develop an interlocal agreement between WHISD and Dallas County.	May 2002
2.	The director of Business Services develops a transition plan for transferring tax functions from the WHISD Tax Office to Dallas County.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent brings an interlocal agreement to the board for approval.	July 2002
4.	The superintendent, board president and Dallas County work together to develop strategies to ensure that collections increase to meet stated goals.	July 2002
5.	The superintendent asks the board to approve any policy changes	August

	necessary to encourage high collection rates according to strategies developed by Dallas County, the superintendent and board president.	2002
6.	Dallas County begins assessing and collecting taxes for WHISD.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Closing WHISD's Tax Office would allow the district to eliminate the tax assessor/collector (annual salary \$41,288 x 13.4 percent benefit rate) and tax clerk (annual salary \$23,990 x 13.4 percent benefit rate) positions at annual savings of \$74,024.

Dallas County currently charges a collection fee of \$1.15 per account. WHISD has 10,231 taxable accounts; therefore, the annual cost of using Dallas County to collect the district's taxes would be \$11,766 (10,231 accounts x \$1.15 per account). The district would realize net annual savings of \$62,258 (\$74,024 minus \$11,766) by closing its Tax Office and contracting with Dallas County.

For 2000-01, per AEIS, tax revenues were projected at \$6,346,451. Assuming tax revenues remain fairly constant for the next five years, and Dallas County increases the collection rate in WHISD to 90 percent in 2002-03 and 94 percent thereafter, it would net an additional \$190,394 ($[\$6,346,451 \times 90 \text{ percent}]$ minus $[\$6,346,451 \times \text{current } 87 \text{ percent}]$) and \$444,252 ($[\$6,346,451 \times 94 \text{ percent}]$ minus $[\$6,346,451 \times \text{current } 87 \text{ percent}]$), respectively.

Total savings from this recommendation would be \$252,652 (\$62,258 savings from closing the tax office + \$190,394 in increased tax revenues) in the first year and \$506,510 (\$62,258 + \$444,252) for at least two years thereafter. At that point, when current tax collections rise, the amount of delinquent taxes available for collection will automatically decline, consequently the revenue stream will level off, with the only remaining savings coming from the closing of the Tax Office of \$62,258.

As noted earlier, however, as tax collection rates rise, WHISD could increase its share of state funding, therefore, additional revenues could continue to flow into the district. This number could not, however, be estimated at this time.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Close the Tax Office and enter into an interlocal	\$252,652	\$506,510	\$506,510	\$62,258	\$62,258

agreement with Dallas County to collect the district's property taxes.					
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FINDING

The district does not have a contract with the delinquent tax collection attorney and consequently could be over-collecting and paying delinquent attorney fees. Further, the lack of a contract has resulted in some deposits being held that could be producing interest earnings for the district.

Property Tax Code Section 6.30 states that if a school district decides that it will not collect its own delinquent taxes, it may enter into a contract for the services of a delinquent tax collection attorney. The total amount of compensation for that attorney may not exceed 20 percent of the amount of delinquent tax, penalty and interest collected.

Prior to September 1, 2002, Section 33.07 of the Property Tax Code allowed a taxing unit to charge a delinquent taxpayer up to 15 percent of taxes, penalty and interest that are owed as of July 1, if the school district has:

1. entered into a valid contract with the delinquent tax attorney according to the provisions of Section 6.30 of the Property Tax Code, and
2. the taxing unit delivers a notice of delinquency and penalty to the property owner at least 30 days but not more than 60 days before July 1.

The percentage allowed under Section 33.07 was changed during the last legislative session effective with the taxes that are delinquent on or after July 2002. The percentage amount is the amount set in the contract with the delinquent tax attorney (not to exceed 20 percent).

Section 33.08, Property Tax Code, contains provisions for collection of delinquent tax attorney costs on other collection efforts, yet the same two provisions noted in Section 33.07 apply.

According to invoices examined from the delinquent tax attorney and interviews with district staff, WHISD pays the delinquent tax attorney 15 percent of any delinquent taxes, penalty and interest collected by that attorney.

While there is evidence that delinquent tax notices are being sent at the required intervals, neither the district nor the delinquent tax attorney had record of any contract for the collection of delinquent taxes, as required in

Section 6.30. While some may argue that a verbal contract is sufficient, most authorities agree that a written and well-defined contract is preferred. Invoices from the firm were submitted monthly to the district from 1998-99 to 2000-01. Each invoice is identical in format, listing the amount of taxes collected and the 15 percent commission that was due. The invoices contain no further detail regarding the taxes collected.

The absence of a contract invalidates the provisions of Sections 33.07 and 33.08 and makes the collection of these additional fees questionable. Attorney General Opinion No. JM-857 (1988) found that a taxing unit may not apply any of the Section 33.07 penalty to cover costs of collection that it incurs; it must use all of the penalty solely to compensate the attorney *with whom they have contracted*.

Exhibit 6-22 shows the amount of delinquent or prior year taxes collected with the associated penalties, interest and other fees.

Exhibit 6-22
WHISD Prior Year Actual Taxes Penalties, Interest
and Other Tax Revenues Collected
Fiscal 1998 to 2000

	Prior Year Taxes	Penalties, Interest and Other Tax Revenues	Total	Amount of Collection Fees Possible at 15%
FY00	\$ 463,542	\$ 245,124	\$ 708,666	\$ 106,300
FY99	\$ 470,426	\$ 289,979	\$ 760,405	\$ 114,061
FY98	\$ 491,272	\$ 256,528	\$ 747,800	\$ 112,170

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

While most delinquent taxes, penalties and interest are sent directly to the district, some taxpayers still remit their payments to the attorney's office. Delinquent tax payments received by the attorney are not being deposited immediately upon receipt into the district's bank account. At the beginning of each month, the delinquent tax attorney prepares a memorandum to the district listing all delinquent tax payments received during the previous month, with instructions to post the payments to that month's collections. The payments are not deposited into the district's bank account, however, until the month *after* they have been received from taxpayers. For

example, if a taxpayer submits a delinquent payment to the attorney's office on March 2nd, the district will not receive this payment until April. Consequently, the district loses up to one month of interest income.

In Tom Green County, the county tax-assessor has an interlocal agreement to collect delinquent taxes for a number of entities in the county. The county tax-assessor directly deposits all collections received on behalf of the school districts into the districts' bank accounts and forwards a copy of the deposit slip to the district so that the deposits can be posted.

Recommendation 62:

Execute a written contract with the delinquent tax collection attorney.

The district should execute a contract with the delinquent tax attorney. The terms of the contract should include provisions for the timely depositing of all taxes collected as well as safeguards to ensure that appropriate collection efforts are made on behalf of the district. Should the district decide to contract with Dallas County to do their regular tax collections, the execution of a contract with the delinquent tax attorney will need to be coordinated.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services and the superintendent draft a contract for approval by the board and execution with the delinquent tax collection attorney, with consideration given to the possible contract with Dallas County.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent and director of Business Services work with Dallas County, if that contract is undertaken, to ensure that the drafted contract for delinquent tax collection is appropriately coordinated.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent presents the contract to the board and the board approves it prior to execution with the delinquent tax collection attorney.	April 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD's) financial management functions in five subsections:

E. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT

External Audit

TEC Section 44.008 requires school districts to undergo an annual external audit of their financial statements. The code specifies that external audits must be performed by a certified public accountant (CPA), and must comply with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

FINDING

WHISD has no procedures in place to ensure that external audit findings are addressed and corrected. Dodd & Associates, Ltd is the CPA firm hired to conduct the district's external audit. In reviewing the last three audits, TSPR's review team noted repeated internal control and board policy noncompliance issues each year. In addition to issuing an opinion on the financial statements, the external audit firm provides an annual management letter. **Exhibit 6-23** details the findings of management letters since 1998.

Exhibit 6-23
WHISD's Audit Findings
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Fiscal Year Ending 8/31/98
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The district has not established written and detailed procedures for administering student activities. In addition, record maintenance of group activities is not sufficient to support the expenditures being paid. Controls over student activity fund receipts and disbursements approval are not sufficient to ensure that funds are being used for the intended purpose.• The district's tax office does not have written and uniform procedures developed for administering and processing tax payments. The filing system should be more centralized. The security for the Tax Department is open and allows anyone behind the counter from other departments. Although the receipts collected are maintained in a key money bag, it is not locked and in maintained in an unlocked drawer until deposited. Petty cash is kept in the drawer overnight and is not regularly replenished.• The district does not have an adequate system of internal controls to

ensure that the assets of the district are properly safeguarded and recorded. Specifically, an accurate physical count of fixed assets cannot be substantiated and is not reconciled to the general ledger. In addition, the status of items sold, stolen, obsolete, disposed and foreclosed properties is not readily identifiable.

Fiscal Year Ending 8/31/99

- The district's procurement procedures are not adequately defined and are outdated given the level of purchases processed and these processes do not ensure that contracts for goods and services are competitively bid and the best contract or vendor obtained.
- The district's Accounts Payable Department does not have updated written and uniform procedures developed for administering and processing payments. The accounts payable records and department maintenance appear to be less organized than it should be. The filing system should be more centralized. The security for the Accounts Payable Department is open and allows anyone from other departments to enter unauthorized.
- A blanket adjustment totaling \$805,725.12 was made to the General Ledger 550 Report in order to reconcile the inventory to the general accounts. In addition, no instances regarding supporting documentation and /or adjustment regarding the district's foreclosed properties were noted.
- The food service fund balance shows what appears to be an excess balance of \$622,647.24. There was an increase from the balance at August 30, 1997.
- During the examination of expenditures of the district's funds for the period ended August 31, 1999, several instances were noted where individual checks were paid in excess of \$5,000 without board approval. In addition, there were several instances where the same vendors were paid just under \$5,000 on the same day for two or more requisitions. It appeared that the requisitions and checks were issued to circumvent the board policy. In addition, there were some vendors paid on numerous occasions for services not in accordance with their contract agreement, which is in violation of the board policy of requiring board approval prior to disbursement. Continued use of the above mentioned practices seems to circumvent the disbursement procedures and the board policy.

Fiscal Year Ending 8/31/2000

- An inventory was not maintained and/or available for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2000.
- The food service fund balance shows what appears to be an excess balance of \$586,009. There was a slight decrease from the balance at August 31, 1999 but did not sufficiently address the issue.
- The Minutes of the Board Meeting dated March 23, 2000 were not

available for review and could not be located in written or recorded form.

- During the examination of expenditures of the District's funds for the period ended August 31, 2000, a sample of checks were selected based on the bank accounts and related funds for the General Fund, Food Service, Title I Fund, Student Activities Fund and Payroll Account. In reviewing the transactions, it was noted in most instances interfund disbursements were made from the General Fund and reimbursed by the fund requesting the disbursements. However, the record keeping and original supporting documentation and related invoices were not properly filed and or easily available or identifiable as to the nature of the transactions.
- There were no reservations made for items ordered but not received. The encumbrances account does not represent an expenditure for the period, only a commitment to expend resources. Therefore, the account reserve for encumbrances is not synonymous with a liability account since the liability is recognized only when goods are received or the services are actually performed. When outstanding encumbrances are allowed to lapse at year end but the district intends to honor the commitment, the encumbrances should be disclosed either as a reservation of the fund balance or in a note to the financial statements, and authorization for the eventual expenditure should be included in the following year's budget appropriation.
- The district did not have any reserves for workers' compensation, which is self-insured, made as of August 31, 2000.
- An accounts payable detail by vendor with the related balances payable was not available for review.
- During the review of Contract Services from the 550 general ledger report, there were several instances noted where the bid and related contract for the vendor selected for review were not available.
- The district has not established written and detailed procedures for administering student activities. In addition, record maintenance of group activities is not sufficient to support the expenditures being paid. Controls over student activity fund receipts and disbursements approval are not sufficient to ensure that funds are being used for the intended purpose.
- The district's tax office does not have written and uniform procedures developed for administering and processing tax payments. The filing system should be more centralized. The security for the Tax Department is open and allows anyone behind the counter from other departments. Although the receipts collected are maintained in a key money bag, it is not locked and is maintained in an unlocked drawer until deposited. Petty cash is kept in the drawer overnight and is not regularly replenished.
- The district does not have an adequate system of internal controls to ensure that the assets of the district are properly safeguarded and recorded. Specifically, an accurate physical count of fixed assets cannot be substantiated and is not reconciled to the general ledger. In addition, the status of items sold, stolen, obsolete, disposed and foreclosed properties is

not readily identifiable.

Source: Dodd & Associates Certified Public Accountants, Management Letters for the years indicated.

The auditors continue to address many of the same issues each year. WHISD has not taken the actions needed to correct these findings. By continuing to ignore them, the district has missed opportunities to improve the Business Services Department, the district's business practices and its internal controls.

Recommendation 63:

Establish written procedures to monitor the district's responses to the external auditor's recommendations.

The district should revise its accountant's job description to include overseeing corrective actions related to findings found in the audit report. The accountant should document each finding and prepare a corrective action to address the issue. Periodically, the accountant should report progress to the superintendent and the school board. Immediately before the beginning of the next audit, the accountant should meet with the external auditor, review each previous finding and report on the progress of the district's corrective action. Any findings that have not been corrected appropriately should be reviewed in detail to determine what continuing action would deal with the concern effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The accountant reviews the preliminary findings from the audit report.	April 2002
2.	The accountant drafts corrective action to address each finding and reviews with the superintendent.	May 2002
3.	The accountant presents the corrective action plan to the board.	June 2002
4.	The board approves the corrective action plan.	June 2002
5.	The accountant begins to implement the corrective action plan.	July 2002
6.	The accountant provides the board with a progress report every second meeting.	August 2002
7.	The accountant meets with the external auditor to review progress.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Internal Audit

FINDING

WHISD does not have a formal internal audit function. The external audit firm identifies the areas lacking internal controls and provides the district with its recommendations to resolve these issues. The director of Business Services stated that the district has budgeted an internal auditor position but has not filled the position due to the hiring freeze currently in place.

Internal auditing involves the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's system of internal controls and the quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities. The Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO's) Report No. 3-010 recommends that all school districts with annual operating expenditures of more than \$20 million and more than 5,000 students have an internal audit function. Some districts that have experienced a multitude of internal control problems have found that an internal auditor can provide a valuable service even if their annual expenditures and enrollment numbers do not meet SAO's recommended criteria.

An internal auditor usually coordinates the district's internal and external audit activities and provides a direct link to the board. An internal auditor should:

- Periodically review all areas of the district that are high risk;
- determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the district's operations;
- assure that controls and safeguards are in place to protect the district's assets;
- assist with budget preparation and analysis;
- coordinate and assist with the external audit;
- review the reliability of the district's financial information; and
- suggest policy and procedural changes that could protect the district's assets.

In many school districts, the main purpose of the internal audit function is to evaluate the manner in which the district's organizational units conduct their activities and whether they comply with board and administrative policies and procedures as well as federal, state and local government laws and guidelines.

Recommendation 64:

Hire an internal auditor to report directly to the Board of Trustees.

The district should fill this position as soon as possible. An internal auditor can objectively evaluate the district's financial operations and ensure that the board is aware at all times of their state.

An internal auditor should develop an internal audit plan that ensures the district complies with GAAP. In addition, this position should provide an ongoing review of internal controls that are examined by an external auditor only once every year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent seeks and receives approval from the board to hire an internal auditor.	April 2002
2.	The director of Business Services writes the job description, posts the position and hires an internal auditor for the district.	April - May 2002
3.	The internal auditor and the Finance Committee conduct a risk assessment and develop an audit plan that identifies the key areas to be reviewed during 2002-03.	June - August 2002
4.	The internal auditor develops internal audit procedures for the district to be reviewed by the director of Business Services and incorporated into the district's board and administrative policies.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This position is already budgeted; therefore, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 7

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) purchasing and warehousing in three sections:

- A. Purchasing and Warehousing Services
- B. Contract Management
- C. Textbooks

Efficient purchasing and warehousing requires management processes that ensure supplies, equipment and services vital to the school's mission are purchased from a competitive source, in the right quantity, delivered to the correct location in a timely manner and are stored in a secure location. These criteria should be met for each purchase without sacrificing quality.

Chapter 7

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) purchasing and warehousing in three sections:

A. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING SERVICES

In 1995, the Texas Education Code (TEC) was revised to expand school district purchasing options by adding three new methods of competitive procurement: design-build contracts, competitive sealed proposals and request for proposals for personal property and construction contracts. In 1997, the Texas Legislature included two additional methods: job order contracts and contracts using construction managers. In 2001, the Legislature added yet another method of competitive procurement, the reverse auction procedure. With these additions, school districts can select among nine methods for competitively purchasing goods valued at \$25,000 or more, or multiple like items with a cumulative value of more than \$25,000 in a 12-month period (**Exhibit 7-1**).

For purchases valued between \$5,000 and \$25,000, school districts are required to obtain quotations from at least three suppliers including a formal written and sealed bid if the purchase is between \$10,000 and \$24,999. Purchases of less than \$5,000 can be made if quotations are acquired from one to three vendors.

Exhibit 7-1
Competitive Procurement Methods

Purchasing Methods	Method Description
Competitive bidding	Requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms and conditions contained in the request for bids, bid prices offered by suppliers and pertinent factors affecting contract performance. Forbids negotiation of prices of goods and services after the proposal opening.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding, but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after the proposal opening.
Request for proposals	Generates competitive sealed proposals and involves several key elements, including newspaper advertisement, notice to proposers, standard terms and conditions, special terms and conditions. a scope-of-work statement. an acknowledgment

	form/response sheet, a felony conviction notice and a contract clause.
Catalog purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software and services only.
Interlocal contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity for both the design and construction of a project. (The "single entity" is usually a team of firms including a general contractor, architect and sometimes an engineer. One firm rarely does both the design and the construction.)
Job order contracts	Provides for the use of a particular type of contract for jobs (manual labor work) for minor repairs and alterations.
Construction management contracts	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter or repair facilities using a professional construction manager.
Reverse auction procedure	Outlines a bidding process that involves submission of bids by multiple suppliers, unknown to each other, in a manner that allows the suppliers to bid against each other.

Source: Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Financial Accountability System Resource Guide, 2000 and Legislative Briefing Book, 2001.

In 1999, the Office of the Attorney General issued an opinion (Op. JC-37) stating that school district procurement through an interlocal agreement or a cooperative purchasing arrangement satisfies competitive bidding requirements. Under an interlocal agreement, a district can contract or agree with another local government, including a nonprofit corporation that is created and operated to provide one or more governmental services, to purchase goods and services reasonably required for the installation, operation or maintenance of the goods.

School districts must advertise bids for purchases worth \$25,000 or more at least once a week for two weeks in any newspaper published in the county in which the district is located. Those between \$10,000 and \$25,000 must be advertised in two successive issues of any newspaper in the district's county. The TEC requires advertisements to specify the categories of property the district will purchase and to solicit vendors who are interested in supplying them.

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

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

To properly use the sole-source arrangement, a school district is responsible for obtaining and retaining documentation from the vendor that clearly states the reasons the purchase requires a sole-source. Sole-source exceptions do not apply to mainframe data processing equipment and peripheral attachments with a single item purchase price of more than \$15,000.

Exhibit 7-2 presents a summary of state-mandated purchase and bid approval processes based on purchasing guidelines included in the TEC.

**Exhibit 7-2
Bid and Purchasing
State-Mandated Approval Process**

Purchase Levels	Bid Requirements (if no bid or contract exists)	Approval Requirements
\$25,000 and more	Formal sealed bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User department/school approvals • Purchasing director • Superintendent or designee board of trustees
\$10,000 to \$24,999	Formal quotations from three vendors (written and sealed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User department/school approvals • Purchasing director • Superintendent or designee
\$.000 to	Quotations from three vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User department/school

\$9,999	(telephone, fax or written)	approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing agent
\$0 to \$4,999	Quotations from one to three vendors (telephone, fax or written)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User department/school approvals • Purchasing clerk

Source: Texas Education Code 44.031(a); (b).

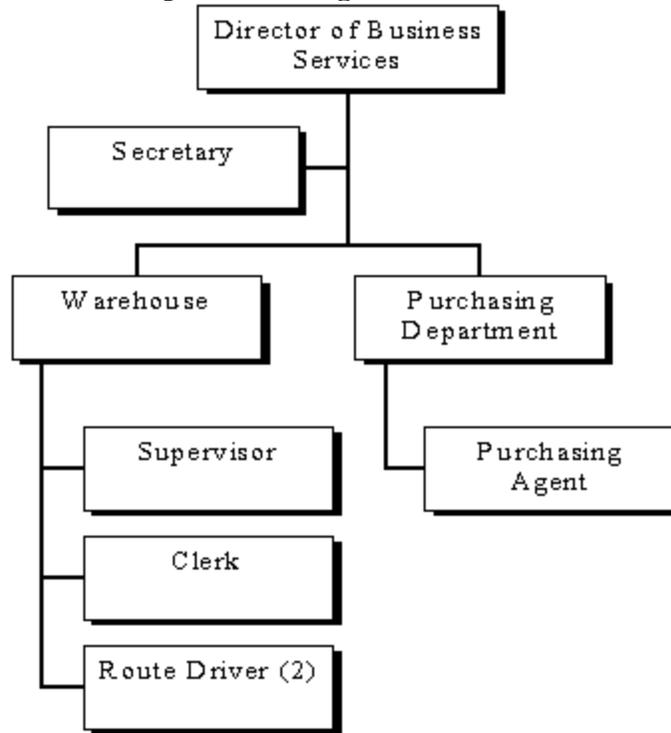
An efficient warehouse operation should ensure that all purchases and deliveries to schools and departments are complete and timely; inventory levels are sufficient to meet requests for supplies from individual schools and departments; property and equipment are accounted for properly and controlled; and surplus or obsolete property is disposed of properly and removed from district records.

The WHISD Purchasing Department falls under the direction of the director of Business Services. The department has one full-time purchasing agent. The district's warehouse also falls under the direction of the director of Business Services, and the warehouse has four full-time employees.

Exhibit 7-3 shows the organizational structure of purchasing and warehousing in WHISD.

Exhibit 7-3
WHISD Purchasing and Warehouse

Department Organization Chart



Source: WHISD Purchasing Department, October 2001.

The Purchasing Department is located in the district's main administration building at 3820 E. Illinois Avenue. The warehouse, located at 1701 Millers Ferry Road in Hutchins, is the district's old high school facility, which has been converted to an elementary school, transportation and maintenance facility and warehouse. Because the warehouse formerly served as high school classrooms, the facility is divided into several different sections. The main supply, food and textbook warehouses are each separate rooms located in a single building. Each room has approximately 1,520 square feet of space. In addition to these rooms, the district maintains a supply of surplus equipment in a separate, nearby building.

The district's warehouse stocks a variety of items including paper, pens, pencils and art supplies. The food warehouse stores dry goods including rice, cereal and canned goods. The food warehouse also has a walk-in freezer and refrigerator for frozen and refrigerated goods.

In addition to receiving all goods and supplies in the district, stocking shelves and delivering goods to schools and departments, warehouse staff is responsible for the district's fixed assets inventory and ordering textbooks.

The Purchasing Department is responsible for procurement, with two exceptions:

- the director of Nutrition Services orders food items through the Texas Building and Procurement Commission's (TBPC) cooperative purchasing program; and
- the Technology coordinator handles computer hardware and software.

The Purchasing Department also oversees the purchase of items bought with student activity funds.

Computer hardware and software can be purchased several ways in accordance with TEA regulations:

- districtwide bids for computer hardware, software and printer needs. Vendors can be contacted directly by school and department personnel for pricing and technical guidance;
- purchases made through the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR). Schools and districts can purchase a variety of software through DIR's Web site at competitive prices; and
- purchases made through the TBPC-Qualified Information Systems Vendors (QISV) catalog purchases. The QISV Purchasing Program uses methods such as rotation of qualified vendors and limiting proprietary specifications to allow schools to purchase products and services in a cost effective and efficient manner. Purchases of computers, software, technology services and peripherals not available through a district bid are made through QISV catalog solicitations.

WHISD makes purchases through vendors on the DIR system or through a QISV catalog listing. WHISD also uses cooperative purchasing agreements for the procurement of many items.

The district uses a financial and student accounting system developed and maintained by the Regional Education Service Center Region X (Region 10). WHISD does not use the automated purchasing and warehousing features of this system, instead relying on a manual process for procurement and warehouse requisitioning.

All schools and departments are required to type purchase requisitions when ordering goods and supplies. These requisitions are approved by a principal or department head and then forwarded to the Purchasing Department. Once received in the Purchasing Department, the purchasing agent reviews each requisition to ensure that adequate budget funds are available. The requisition is then forwarded to the director of Business

Services for approval. After the director of Business Services reviews and approves the requisition, the purchasing agent:

- reviews the selected vendor to ensure that the appropriate vendor is being used;
- reviews items for correct prices;
- reviews cooperative catalogs to determine whether the items can be purchased through cooperatives;
- assigns a purchase order number to the requisition;
- encumbers the funds;
- submits the purchase order to the vendor or orders the goods from the cooperative; and
- submits purchase order copies to the originating school or department, the warehouse and to the Accounting Department.

WHISD's purchasing policies require that all purchases valued at \$25,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period, except purchases of produce or vehicle fuel, be made by competitive bidding, competitive sealed proposals, requests for proposals, catalog purchases or through interlocal agreements. Board policy further requires that all purchases that cost or aggregate to a cost of \$500 or more must have board approval.

Warehouse staff receives all goods ordered in the district, which they log, count and sign for. They then distribute the ordered goods to the appropriate school or department. Warehouse staff forward receiving information through Internal mail to the Accounting Department so invoices can be paid.

FINDING

WHISD uses cooperative purchasing agreements that help eliminate the need for competitive bids. This practice allows the district to obtain a variety of goods and equipment at reasonable prices while eliminating the effort and expense associated with the bidding process.

WHISD participates in three cooperative purchasing agreements for district procurement. Food items come from the TBPC's cooperative purchasing program, and office, instructional and custodial supplies come from either the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN) or the Texas Association of School Board's (TASB) BuyBoard.

TCPN and the Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4) formed an alliance to provide cooperative purchasing opportunities to school districts and other public entities. Participation in the TCPN provides the legally required competition for contracts for commonly purchased items.

This provides a savings to school districts by eliminating some aspects of the competitive bid process.

The TASB's BuyBoard is a fairly new mechanism that allows Texas school districts to "piggyback" off of purchasing contracts maintained by TASB. The BuyBoard bids out products and provides a product listing to school district members. Just like the TCPN, purchasing from the BuyBoard satisfies the legal competitive bidding requirements for schools.

COMMENDATION

The district makes efficient use of cooperative agreements that save time and money in the procurement process and ensure that the district conforms to the competitive bidding requirements required by law.

FINDING

Despite board policies and internal procedures, WHISD does not have adequate controls in place to ensure compliance with these policies and procedures. A review of documentation and observations made during on-site visits of the district revealed several deficiencies in district procurement practices.

TSPR reviewed district invoice files that showed that some purchases do not have a completed purchase order before the district orders and receives the items. This review compared invoice dates to purchase order dates; many items lacked proper authorization before an order was placed. Only after goods are received and the invoice is submitted for payment is a purchase order prepared and routed to Purchasing Department staff for approval. This practice circumvents the district's local purchasing policy, which states that all purchases must have proper authorization before acquisitions are made. Purchasing Department staff stated there is no corrective action taken against school and departmental staff who either knowingly or unknowingly violate district policies and state laws.

Because the district's purchasing processes are largely manual, there are no automated controls. For instance, a number of purchase orders had been re-used because these numbers are not tracked in an automated system.

In the district accounts payable files, a stack of blank purchase orders containing a manager's signature were found. Obtaining blank, pre-signed purchase orders would make it easy for someone in the district to make unauthorized purchases.

The WHISD Board of Trustees is not following its own policies when approving purchases. The October 1999 local purchasing policy requires all checks for more than \$500 to have school board approval. This threshold was informally lowered from \$5,000 due to some questionable items that were procured in 1999. The board reviews and approves checks for more than \$5,000, but there was no amendment to the policies to reflect this change. The district stated that the school board had subsequently voted to raise the threshold back to the previous \$5,000 level; however, no school board minutes could be found to reflect this change and policy states that the school board approval level is \$500.

The Purchasing Department has no formal review or monitoring procedures to ensure the district is following state laws and district policies.

Purchasing Department staff do not understand purchasing laws. When questioned about obtaining bids, purchasing staff said that only single purchases exceeding the \$25,000 threshold require a bid. State law requires, however, that items totaling \$25,000 or more taken together must be competitively bid. District staff responsible for purchasing lack adequate training in laws and policies that govern school district purchasing. In fact, Purchasing Department staff said they often request training sessions regarding state requirements for purchasing and bidding, but that management denies these requests.

Organizations that have strong internal controls in place have fewer problems complying with purchasing laws and regulations. Internal controls are an organization's policies and procedures that protect its assets and the integrity of financial records from error, disaster or fraud. Internal controls ensure that transactions are authorized by those with the proper authority to do so; that records of the assets accurately reflect actual assets in place; that financial transactions are accurately and properly recorded; and that assets are properly safeguarded.

In a purchasing environment, internal controls take several forms. For example, purchasing controls should specify which hierarchical levels must approve purchase orders and contracts, with a specific dollar limitation for each level. Good controls also specify requirements that must be met before a payment can take place, such as having a properly approved purchase order in place in a timely manner, and having properly approved receiving documents.

Finally, good purchasing procedures require a system for monitoring purchasing practices and for taking corrective action when necessary.

Recommendation 65:

Develop and implement purchasing procedures that include a system of internal controls.

The district should implement procedures for detecting improprieties within the purchasing system. When such instances are detected, Purchasing Department staff should bring them to the attention of the superintendent and the school board, who will immediately address the improprieties with the appropriate district personnel.

The Purchasing Department should implement procedures to compare invoice dates to purchase order dates to detect purchases made without proper approval or budgetary control. A procedure should also be implemented to review a proposed vendor before issuing purchase orders to ensure that the district's purchasing policy is followed. Another procedure is needed for monitoring purchasing volume to determine which items reach the \$25,000 threshold and therefore must be bid and presented for board approval.

Providing training to Purchasing staff will help to eliminate the misunderstandings involving state purchasing laws.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of Business Services to develop purchasing procedures that include a system of internal controls. The procedures outline steps to be taken when district staff is violating policies. Steps should include a progressive system of addressing violations such as counseling the offending employee upon the first occurrence of a violation, notifying the employee's immediate supervisor upon the second instance of a violation and revoking purchasing authority upon a third violation.	April 2002
2.	The director of Business Services develops a system of internal controls for purchasing. This process includes a review of all district procurement policies, with recommended changes when necessary.	June 2002
3.	The director of Business Services and the Purchasing agent develop a training program on the new procedures for all employees.	July 2002
4.	The purchasing agent conducts the training for all employees.	August 2002
5.	The purchasing agent begins putting the new controls in place, including taking corrective action when policy violations occur.	August 2002
6.	The director of Business Services and the purchasing agent review	Annually

	the procedures annually, make any necessary adjustments and conduct training.	
7.	The director of Business Services directs the purchasing agent to attend training classes to stay informed of purchasing laws and regulations.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

Purchasing training is provided by TASB, the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) and from Region 10. TASBO offers a variety of training classes with prices from \$70 to \$100 per class. The purchasing agent should take one to two classes annually. In order to take TASBO classes, the district must become a member of the association, which costs \$110 a year. Annual costs for training, including travel, will total approximately \$500.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop and implement purchasing procedures that include a system of internal controls.	(\$500)	(\$500)	(\$500)	(\$500)	(\$500)

FINDING

WHISD does not competitively bid all items or categories of items that exceed the \$25,000 threshold established by state law. Although the use of purchasing cooperatives significantly reduces the number of items needing to be bid, a review of vendor files identified a number of items or groups of items that exceeded the \$25,000 threshold that were not purchased through a cooperative and were not bid. In addition, the district does not consistently obtain quotes for items valued between \$10,000 and \$24,999.

WHISD has bids on file for 2000-01 for athletic equipment, pest control services, roofing, school buses, track resurfacing, electrical, property insurance and student insurance. However, there are many items exceeding the \$25,000 threshold that were not bid. Purchasing Department staff said that it is difficult to enforce the district's bidding requirements with some department managers. If managers choose to ignore district policy, the Purchasing Department has no authority to hold department managers accountable.

In 2000-01 the district obtained bids for roof repair projects at C.S. Winn Elementary School, C.S. Winn gymnasium, C.S. Winn cafeteria, and Bishop Heights Elementary School. The contractor selected to perform

this work bid a total of \$226,595 for all four projects. However, a review of vendor payments shows that \$458,270 was paid to this vendor, a difference of \$231,675. Vendor invoices show that the vendor provided several other services for the district including electrical and air conditioning/heating services, but there is no evidence that these items were bid.

WHISD uses Office Depot for office, art and some instructional supplies. Office Depot is the vendor available through the TCPN Co-op, so obtaining bids and quotes is not necessary. During 2000-01 the district paid \$94,971 to Office Depot. However, the district also purchased office supplies from other vendors for which bids were not obtained. Quill Office Products, for example, provided the district with \$44,563 worth of office supplies in 2000-01.

District records show that King Roofing received payments of \$33,160 in 2000-01, yet no bids from this vendor were on file.

Many school districts and other governments use commodity codes to track purchases to help in making analytical decisions on purchasing quantities and when items need to be bid. Standardized commodity codes were developed by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing to bring efficiency to the automated purchasing program.

WHISD does not use commodity codes to track their purchases, thus it was not possible to test bidding practices by commodity item. However, TSPR reviewed purchases by vendor for 2000-01. The analysis is shown in **Exhibit 7-4**. This exhibit presents two categories of vendors: those paid between \$10,000 and \$24,999 where no quotes were found on file, and those paid \$25,000 or more where no bids were on file.

Exhibit 7-4
WHISD Selected Vendor Purchases
2000-01

Vendor Name	Purchases \$10,000 to \$24,999	Vendor Name	Purchases \$25,000 and Greater
ABC Pest Control	\$18,821	C.A.B. A/C Refrigeration	\$148,707
Academic Warehouse	\$11,200	Charles Randall	\$526,793
American Telecom Network	\$10,746	Follett Library Books	\$28,839
Arrow Magnolia International	\$15,141	King Roofing & Home	\$33,160

		Repair	
Brake & Clutch Service Co.	\$16,885	Leap Frog School House	\$25,190
Charles F. Williams Co.	\$11,474	Pearson Education Learning	\$47,034
Home Depot	\$11,419	Protective Services	\$77,443
Lightspan	\$13,535	Quill Office Products	\$44,563
L.L. Gardner Plumbing	\$13,347	Sentinel- The Alarm Company	\$31,064
Avaya (formerly Lucent Technologies)	\$14,118	Trane Service Group	\$37,517
Microware House	\$15,306		
Mony	\$23,812		
Page Boiler Works	\$13,300		
Pinnacle Claims Services	\$20,750		
PR Printing and Office Supplies	\$13,413		
Pure Telecom	\$10,091		
Riverside Publishing	\$10,815		
Southwestern Bell Wireless	\$12,442		
Texas Task Management	\$20,780		
The Letter People	\$23,640		
Transportation Services LLC	\$24,360		

Source: WHISD selected transactions from Vendor Transactions Report, fiscal year ending August 2001.

School board members, district staff and community members have stated their perception that the district is not conducting its business in accordance with state laws and regulations. In addition, the district has been the subject of several audits and investigations involving its purchasing practices. **Exhibit 7-5** below shows a summary of the most recent audits.

Exhibit 7-5
Summary of WHISD Audits Involving
Purchasing Practices

Date Audit Complete	Audit Performed By:	Summary of Significant Findings Relating to Purchasing
April 1996	Dodd and Associates, Ltd.	Awarding duplicate contracts for electrical work; lack of security of the district's computer system; purchasing practices that violate state laws; unapproved/unsupported purchases; circumventing board approval for purchases.
November 1999	Dodd and Associates, Ltd.	Board policies circumvented; vendors being paid before work inspected and approved; vendors performing work above and beyond what was contracted for.
May 2001	Texas Education Agency	Competitive bidding laws not followed.

Source: Reports of special audits conducted by Dodd & Associates, Ltd., April 1996 and November 1999; TEA, Special Report, May 2001.

In addition, the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service investigated the district's business practices in 1996. Neither of these two investigations resulted in any charges, penalties or action taken against the district.

Section 44.032 of the TEC contains criminal and civil penalties for violating the purchasing procedures of Section 44.031. In addition, the courts are given jurisdiction to enjoin the performance of any contract made in violation of the purchasing procedures contained in the TEC.

To comply with law, many Texas school districts use a bidding process approved by their board and hold the Purchasing Department accountable for any subsequent violations of regulations.

Killeen ISD made its bid process more efficient by establishing an annual calendar that identifies when specific items should be bid during the year. The calendar was based on historical experience and allowed the district to purchase items on an as-needed basis as well as spread the bid process out over the full year, rather than trying to bid multiple items at the same time. Based on prior experience, the Purchasing Department worked with other departments to develop the calendar. Anticipating when purchases would

occur also allowed KISD to manage their Purchasing Department staff growth efficiently.

Recommendation 66:

Develop procedures to comply with state purchasing laws and hold department managers and purchasing staff responsible for compliance.

WHISD should develop procedures for identifying purchases that are expected to exceed the \$25,000 threshold in any single fiscal year. Identifying purchases requiring competitive bidding should be a collaborative effort. Purchasing and ordering departments must work together to identify such purchases.

The key to ensuring that the district conducts its procurement practices in accordance with board policy and with Texas law is to hold individuals responsible for violations. To this end, any violations of the purchasing policies should be reported to the superintendent and the school board so that corrective action can be taken.

The first step to improving accountability for district procurement activities is providing training to all employees on purchasing laws, board policies, and district procedures. Following initial training, any purchasing violations that occur will need to be reported to the superintendent.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of Business Services to coordinate all district bidding and develop procedures to monitor bidding requirements and review purchase orders.	May 2002
2.	The director of Business Services establishes procedures to monitor bidding requirements and review purchase orders to ensure all purchases are made through approved vendors with valid contracts on file.	June 2002
3.	The director of Business Services communicates the review procedures to the purchasing agent.	July 2002
4.	The purchasing agent puts the new procedures in place.	August 2002
5.	The purchasing agent holds training sessions for all district personnel involved in the purchasing process.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's purchasing and warehouse procurement processes are performed manually, resulting in slow order processing and a lack of audit trails and controls. The Region 10 student and financial system used by the district includes a purchasing and warehousing module, but the district has not implemented it. District management and staff told TSPR that they were implementing the purchasing and warehousing module, but had placed their plans on hold because of the performance review. TSPR requested formal implementation plans and training schedules but the district did not provide any of these documents. The only planning that the director of Business Services has done is to say that they will send employees to the training conducted by Region 10. The district plans to send employees to training in phases: district level staff will be trained first and then school and departmental staff.

The district has not conducted a formal review of purchasing processes or procedures to determine what changes will be necessary when the automated system is implemented.

Port Arthur ISD has a highly effective computerized system that transmits purchase orders from each school and department. For example, the district's system allows the purchase order to be initiated at a school by the school secretary after approval by the principal. The purchase order then is electronically transmitted to the appropriate assistant superintendent for approval. After approval, it is transmitted to the Purchasing Department for processing. The entire purchasing process usually takes

one day to complete. In contrast, more labor-intensive manual purchase order systems require three to five days to accomplish the same task.

Recommendation 67:

Develop an implementation plan for the conversion to the Region 10 automated purchasing system.

Implementing an automated purchase order system would allow WHISD to process purchase orders in a more timely and efficiently manner, and with a higher level of control.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of Business Services to review purchasing practices and develop an implementation plan for the	April 2002
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	automated conversion.	
2.	The director of Business Services develops an implementation plan.	May 2002
3.	The director of Business Services contacts Region 10 to set up a training schedule.	May 2002
4.	The director of Business Services directs the appropriate staff to attend training on the automated purchasing system.	May 2002
5.	The purchasing agent trains all appropriate district staff to use the automated purchasing system.	June 2002
6.	The director of Business Services oversees the implementation of the automated purchasing system.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's warehouse procurement system is slow, cumbersome and inefficient. It creates delays for departments and campuses in obtaining the goods and supplies needed. In addition, a physical inspection of the warehouse revealed that the facility is deficient for several reasons, including:

- evidence of rats and insects;
- bags of dry food showing evidence of rat infestations;
- dry food found on the floors of the warehouse;
- water intrusion into the warehouse during a rain;
- water marks up to three inches high were found along many walls and the bottoms of wooden pallets;
- a thin film of dried mud covering almost all floors throughout all the rooms of the warehouse as a result of frequent flooding;
- textbooks piled in heaps approximately 10 feet high on the floors;
- holes in walls;
- wet boxes stored in the food services warehouse;
- soda cans, discarded cellophane wrap, paper and other trash on floors;
- outside rain gutters lying on the ground; and
- insulation hanging from holes in the ceilings.

The district requires that all goods received in the district be received at a central location where employees accept and process the goods before delivering them to schools or departments. This receiving process can be a

lengthy one, requiring schools and departments to wait several days before receiving their orders.

Almost all of the supplies stocked at the central warehouse are readily available through just-in-time (JIT) delivery mechanisms. Most items stocked in the warehouse are available from local vendors where they can be purchased as needed and delivered directly to the location needing the items.

WHISD selected three other Texas school districts for comparison purposes. The peer districts for WHISD are Lancaster ISD (LISD), De Soto ISD (DISD) and La Marque ISD (LMISD). A telephone survey of these peer districts showed that none of the peers maintain and operate a central supply or food warehouse, with the exception of De Soto ISD, which maintains a small area for paper storage in its Plant Services building.

Recommendation 68:

Close the district's supply warehouse and order supplies on a just-in-time basis.

Eliminating the warehouse stock will save the district more than \$100,000 a year. The district should store minimal amounts of bulk paper and custodial supplies, but all other types of supplies should be ordered on a JIT basis.

Closing the district's warehouse will allow the district to reduce the cost of carrying inventories and eliminate warehouse staff salaries. The district can also reallocate the vehicles used for warehouse deliveries.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent directs the warehouse supervisor to liquidate all warehouse stock.	April 2002
2.	The warehouse supervisor oversees the liquidation of all warehouse stock.	May 2002
3.	The purchasing agent establishes JIT contracts for the district to acquire supplies and materials.	July 2002
4.	The superintendent eliminates the four warehouse positions and closes the warehouse.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementing this recommendation will save the district \$113,003 annually. This fiscal impact estimate is calculated below:

Warehouse supervisor salary	\$35,146
Warehouse clerk salary	\$24,774
Warehouse delivery/maintenance worker salary	\$21,550
Warehouse delivery/maintenance worker salary	\$18,180
Total salaries	\$99,650
Benefits rate	1.134
Total salaries and benefits	\$113,003

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Close the district's supply warehouse and order supplies on a just-in-time basis.	\$113,003	\$113,003	\$113,003	\$113,003	\$113,003

Chapter 7

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) purchasing and warehousing in three sections:

B. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

A contract is a legally enforceable agreement between two or more competent parties, is mutually binding and obligates an exchange of value between or among the parties to it. School districts should have a contract management process that covers contract negotiation and compliance. The contract negotiation process ensures that contracts awarded to bidders are for the best available goods and services at the best prices with terms that are favorable to the district. The negotiation process should also ensure the proper evaluation of terms and conditions by district finance or purchasing staff and ensure that the school board members receive adequate information before voting to accept a contract.

After the establishment of a contract, school districts should have a process for evaluating the services rendered or products provided under the contract. The monitoring process should also ensure that the district has someone to represent the district as a final authority for disputes that may arise. In addition, the monitoring process should have a mechanism for evaluating a vendor's performance, providing feedback and initiating corrective action when warranted.

FINDING

WHISD has no formal contract negotiation or contract monitoring processes. As a result, the district has entered into contracts that, based on comparison to comparable agreements and relevant studies, the review team believes impose a number of unfavorable terms upon the district, including excessive fees for services. In an audit conducted by Dodd & Associates, Ltd. in November 1999, auditors found the following contracting problems:

- agreements with various vendors that required the district pay the vendors' invoices immediately upon receipt rather than allowing for a period of time in which the district should have been allowed to inspect the quality of work;
- allowing vendors to provide services other than the services for which they were contracted to perform;
- paying for services rendered by a vendor that appeared to be inconsistent with normal installation work. For example, the

vendor submitted invoices for the installation of screens in a school, and on a subsequent date submitted an invoice for the installation of the windows at this same school. The audit notes that, "It appears unreasonable for the screens to be installed before the windows are built and installed." The auditor also noted that this vendor was allowed to perform work that was not the company's line of expertise. The auditor attempted to obtain and review the bid award or contract for this vendor, but the district said nothing could be found;

- allowing a vendor to submit separate invoices describing the same work performed at the same location. The audit report noted that although there was evidence that a district accounting employee questioned the validity of at least one of the invoices, they were both paid anyway; and
- paying a vendor for work before it was done and before the school board approved payment for the services.

In addition, a board member said that one of the vendors discussed in the 1999 audit is related to another school board member, as mentioned in the *District Organization and Management* chapter of this report.

Upon arrival in the district in July 2001, the current director of Business Services began reviewing all contracts and payment arrangements in the district. The director of Business Services has found one instance of the district receiving unfavorable contract terms that have now been remedied, and one instance of a vendor overcharging for services by \$13,000.

The district's internal procedures state "all contracted services must have a contract on file with the district. A copy of that contract must be in the vendor's file. A copy of each contract should also be on file in the accountant's office." However, upon request, copies of the district's contracts could not easily be produced. The district was not able to provide a list of current contracts. Upon further inquiry, the district provided contracts for a copier lease, roofing services, electrical services and pest control services. Missing contracts include depository (banking) services, attorney services, telephone leases, delinquent tax collection services and auditing services.

Well managed school districts and other governmental entities have rigid contract management and compliance procedures to ensure that contracting processes are efficient and effective and that they avoid legal, ethical, and conflict-of-interest problems. A sound set of procedures and practices for contract management ensures:

- the district obtains value from its contracts;
- all requirements of law and regulations are met prior to purchase;

- all contractor and vendor references, licensures or professional affiliations are verified;
- sufficient funds are available;
- contractors receive impartial, fair and equitable treatment; and
- all parties comply with contract terms.

Neglecting to verify whether an individual held a license in good standing to practice law in Texas has led the district to award contracts to an unlicensed attorney.

Recommendation 69:

Establish a contracting process and assign a staff member in the Business Office to monitor vendor compliance.

Establishing and enforcing contracting procedures and processes will help the district improve the services it receives from contractors and vendors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	Superintendent directs the director of Business Services to develop a contracting process and associated procedures for district staff to follow.	April 2002
2.	The director of Business Services works with department managers to develop specific criteria for performance measures to include in contract requirements based on best practices of other school districts and WHISD's needs.	May 2002
3.	The director of Business Services develops a contract negotiation and monitoring process and associated procedures that includes input from all applicable department managers and the district's legal counsel.	June 2002
4.	The director of Business Services reviews each contract prior to awarding to ensure appropriate performance measures are included.	Ongoing
5.	The director of Business Services and the appropriate department manager monitor the process to ensure its implementation. The director of Business Services provides corrective action to employees who are not following the process.	Ongoing
6.	The director of Business Services makes regular reports to the school board regarding contracts under negotiation and contract monitoring issues for contracts in place.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district lacks policies defining contracting standards for hiring construction contractors, including the scope of services to be performed and acceptable fee schedules. In addition, there is insufficient supervision and accountability for capital improvement projects. Since 1996, facilities have remained in disrepair, despite a significant increase in maintenance expenditures. Contracted services for WHISD facilities maintenance have grown from \$300,000 in 1996-97 to nearly \$1.6 million in 1999-2000.

In 2000, the district executed a contract totaling \$150,000 for roofing repair work. District management personnel conducted no oversight of this work, despite concerns that the work was substandard and portions were not complete.

In addition, the district solicited bids for roofing projects in late 2000. Construction drawings and specifications were prepared detailing required materials and installation to facilitate competitive contractor bidding. These documents are necessary to ensure that all contractors are bidding on the same scope of work and to ensure the work is of high quality. A district employee said a representative of the district told the contractors to disregard the bid documents and prepare their bids based on providing the school district with a 10-year warranty. The district representative told the bidders that since they were professionals, the needs of the district were the contractor's decision.

By disregarding the construction drawings and specifications the district opened itself up to additional liability, poor quality materials and workmanship with no mechanism to provide oversight. The district was also left vulnerable to litigation by bidders who were not provided a fair bidding process.

Recommendation 70:

Develop contracting standards for construction contracts.

The district should contract with an outside construction project management firm as part of any capital improvement project. The district should develop procedures that define how construction project management consultants are selected and a standard scope of services and range of fees. These procedures should reference district policy and should identify what services the district expects the construction manager to perform. The district should reference documents from the American Institute of Architects for descriptions of typical services performed by

construction managers. The procedures should also contain a range of fees for the services the district anticipates receiving that the district personnel will use during negotiations. The district should include the requirement for on-site observation of construction work to protect the interests of the district. The fee structure is typically a percentage of construction cost for the project.

The district should use architects, engineers and reputable vendors to develop construction documents for capital projects to ensure the work is in accordance applicable building codes and will meet the intended purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent authorizes the director of Maintenance and the director of Purchasing to develop procedures that define the selection, the standard scope of services and range of fees of consultants for construction project management.	April 2002
2.	The directors of Maintenance and Purchasing develop procedures that meet state law for obtaining professional services and protect the district's interests with regard to scope and fee and submits to the superintendent for approval.	April - May 2002
3.	The superintendent submits the procedures to the board for approval.	May 2002
4.	The director of Maintenance implements the new procedures.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 7

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) purchasing and warehousing in three sections:

C. TEXTBOOKS

Chapter 31 of the TEC spells out the rules and regulations for acquiring and distributing state textbooks. Section 31.001 of the code states that "textbooks selected for use in public schools shall be furnished without cost to the students attending those schools."

The Textbook Administration Division of the TEA is responsible for coordinating the review, adoption, purchase and distribution of textbooks and other instructional materials for all Texas public schools and open-enrollment charter schools. After adopting suggested textbooks each year, TEA produces a recommended text list that is distributed to all Texas school districts. The TEA then loans books upon request to school districts. The TEA calculates the number of books allowed to each school district based on enrollment data by subject and grade. Districts submit enrollment data to the TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting system. The TEA spends about \$200 million annually on textbooks and instructional materials. School districts that require more textbooks than their enrollment data allows are required to purchase the additional books with district funds.

TSPR found it difficult to obtain a complete history of WHISD's textbook procedures. Because of staff turnover and a process that is not documented or monitored, no one in the district was able to explain exactly how this process has functioned in the past. A warehouse clerk was called upon in March of 2001 to order textbooks for the upcoming school year, and in July 2001 the district contracted with an outside consultant to develop and implement a textbook process.

Outdated and surplus textbooks are stored in the district's warehouse. Current textbooks are stored at each individual school when not issued to a student. Upon receiving new textbook shipments, warehouse staff receives and process the books in the warehouse and then delivers them to school locations.

FINDING

The district has no coordinated textbook ordering and management system. Since the reading specialist, who formerly handled the ordering of

textbooks, left the district in April 2001, no one in the district is certain how the textbook ordering and management processes work. The warehouse clerks said that although they assisted in the ordering process in 2001, they are unclear as to who is responsible for the process.

The lack of a defined process with clearly assigned responsibilities has resulted in many high school and middle school classes continually having problems obtaining textbooks. TSPR discovered that some textbooks had not been ordered, even though school had been in session for nine weeks. Comments received from parents and students during public forums and submitted in a survey reveal that the lack of textbooks at the start of the school year has been a problem for several years.

Outdated textbooks that should have been picked up by TEA at no charge to the district are sitting in piles in the warehouse because no one in the district coordinated their pick-up. A tour of the district's warehouse facility showed several hundred outdated books stored in piles on the floor.

After TSPR's visit, the superintendent said a teacher had been assigned to coordinate the district's textbook functions. The teacher is provided a \$5,000 a year stipend to perform these duties that are in addition to her normal teacher's responsibilities.

The Kenedy ISD developed a detailed textbook manual with procedures that provides guidance on how to manage the district's textbook needs. The manual also allows the district to maintain compliance with applicable textbook rules and regulations.

Recommendation 71:

Develop a textbook ordering and management system.

The new textbook coordinator should contact Kenedy ISD and review their textbook manual to use as a guide in developing one for WHISD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The textbook coordinator reviews district needs and Texas Education Agency guidelines for management of textbooks.	April 2002
2.	The textbook coordinator develops procedures, creates a textbook manual and coordinates the draft procedures with principals.	May - June 2002
3.	The textbook coordinator submits the manual to the superintendent for approval.	July 2002

4.	The textbook coordinator distributes the procedures and provides instruction on the use of the manual to principals and teachers.	July 2002
5.	The textbook coordinator evaluates textbooks procedures periodically to make sure the procedures are working effectively.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

WHISD does not have a coordinated districtwide system of accounting for lost or missing textbooks. It is up to individual schools to account for books. Some schools use automated software to issue and track textbooks, but all WHISD schools are not required to do this. **Exhibit 7-6** shows the amount of textbooks purchased by WHISD and by its peers. Since TEA provides all textbooks to Texas school districts, excessive textbook purchases are an indication that students are not reimbursing the district for lost textbooks.

Exhibit 7-6
Amount of Purchased Textbooks for
WHISD and Peer Districts

District	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	\$61,684	\$24,348*	\$41,598
Lancaster ISD	\$14,830	\$6,703	\$3,625
De Soto ISD	\$362	\$637	\$3,789
La Marque ISD	\$6,320	\$3,240	\$340

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1998-99 through 2000-01.

** This amount was provided by the district in October 2001 since WHISD's PEIMS reporting for 1999-2000 was incorrect. The amount reported to PEIMS was \$20.*

Schools that have adequate mechanisms for tracking and accounting for textbooks, and that hold students and parents accountable for textbook

losses have fewer books to replace each year. In Wimberley ISD, each teacher is assigned a specific number of textbooks and is required to sign for them at the beginning of each school year. At the end of the school year, the teacher returns the textbooks to the principal. The textbooks are then compared to the beginning-of-the-year assignments.

Wimberly ISD teachers are also required to perform textbook verification at least once every six weeks. This task is accomplished by requiring students to bring their textbooks to class on a specific day and then checking them to ensure that the textbook is the same that was assigned to them at the beginning of the school year. Students are charged for any textbooks not returned.

Recommendation 72:

Develop and implement a districtwide textbook accountability system and hold all schools accountable for lost textbooks.

The establishment of a district policy that holds principals and teachers accountable for lost textbooks will help reduce the amount spent annually on textbooks.

The district should require all schools to use software to track textbooks, and to report missing textbooks regularly.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent develops a policy for districtwide textbook accountability.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the policy to the school board for approval.	May 2002
3.	The board approves the policy.	May 2002
4.	The superintendent designates a staff person to develop procedures to implement the policy.	June 2002
5.	The designated staff person reports the status of textbooks in all schools districtwide to the superintendent.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementing this recommendation would require an initial investment of \$6,475 for all of the district's schools to have access to automated software (software costs of \$1,295 per site x five campuses). By providing better accountability for textbooks, the district could save \$34,157 annually.

Estimated savings are derived by taking a three-year average of Lancaster (LISD), the peer district with the annual textbook expenditures closest to WHISD. If WHISD could attain textbook returns equal to LISD's average ($[\$14,830 + \$6,703 + \$3,625] / 3 \text{ years} = \$8,386$), the district would save \$34,157 per year ($[\$61,684 + \$24,348 + \$41,598] / 3 \text{ years} = \$42,543 - \$8,386$).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop and implement a districtwide textbook accountability system and hold all schools accountable for lost textbooks.	\$34,157	\$34,157	\$34,157	\$34,157	\$34,157
One-time initial investment for software.	(\$6,475)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net (Costs)/Savings	\$27,682	\$34,157	\$34,157	\$34,157	\$34,157

Chapter 8

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) computers and technology function in three sections:

- A. Organization, Staffing and Budgeting
- B. Policies, Procedures and Planning
- C. Infrastructure, Software, Hardware and Operations

The responsibilities of technology services operations in Texas public school districts vary. Some offices support administrative workers only, while others, like WHISD's, are responsible for supporting both administrative and instructional technology. To achieve its technology-related goals, a school district must have an organizational structure that encourages using and supporting new technologies. A well managed technology department is guided by a clearly defined mission plan, based on appropriate goals and organization; clearly assigned responsibilities; well defined procedures for developing new applications and maintaining older applications; and a customer service orientation to meet and anticipate user needs.

BACKGROUND

The WHISD Technology Department primarily supports administrative and instructional technology for the district. The Technology Department has three staff members: a Technology coordinator, a Technology specialist and a secretary. The Technology coordinator heads the department and reports directly to the superintendent. The Technology coordinator handles all major functions such as infrastructure, technical support, instructional technology and technology training. The Technology specialist reports to the Technology coordinator and handles informational technology (IT) technical support, network and hardware maintenance.

Each school in the district has a lab technician that supports the technology function for the school. Lab technicians deal with minor technology issues at the school level. The lab technicians report directly to their principals and are assigned at the discretion of the principal. Issues that are beyond the technical knowledge of the lab technicians are directed back to the Technology Department.

The district has a technology committee consisting of the Technology coordinator, Technology specialist, Wilmer-Hutchins High School (WHHS) lab technician, district attendance and Public Education

Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator, WHHS aide for document reproduction, administrative secretary, director of Transportation, WHHS attendance clerk, director of Career and Technology and instructional specialist.

Chapter 8

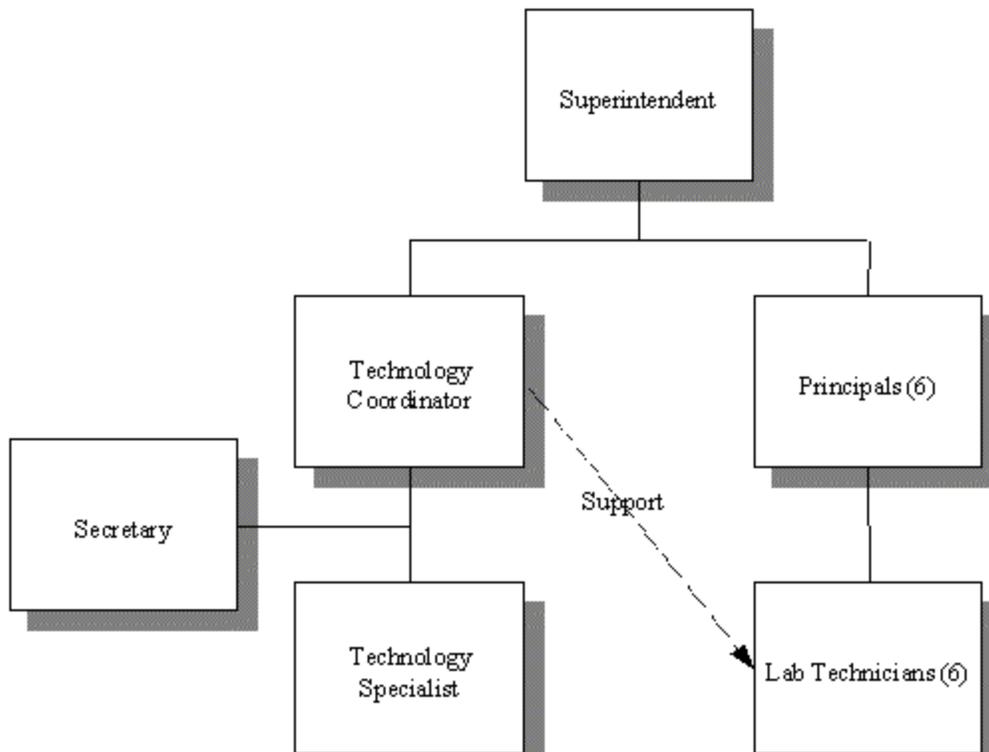
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) computers and technology function in three sections:

A. ORGANIZATION, STAFFING AND BUDGETING

Exhibit 8-1 illustrates the organizational chart for the Technology Department at WHISD.

Exhibit 8-1
Technology Department Organization
2001-02



Source: WHISD Technology Department, October 2001.

FINDING

The district does not take full advantage of grant opportunities and other external funding opportunities for school technology. Without sufficient funding, the district cannot adequately maintain, update and acquire new computers and software. This will limit the district's ability to:

- use technology such as instructional software to improve student performance;
- provide technology training for administrative and instructional staff;
- provide IT technical support; and
- provide and maintain technical infrastructure.

The Telecommunication Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant helps schools develop ways to integrate the Internet into school curriculum and instruction. In order to receive this grant, schools are required to submit an approved technology plan, create a technology task force, provide 10 percent in matching funds, purchase items from the TIF-suggested configuration list, participate in the TIF Tech training program and build a homepage on the Internet.

WHISD has not applied consistently for the full range of TIF grants. During 2000-01 the district sent letters of intent for the Public School 9 (PS9) TIF grant program, a non-competitive grant process to provide technology advancement and distance learning, but did not receive the grant. The district did not apply for any other TIF grant program during 2000-01. Under a TIF special grant program that targets campuses that previously have not received TIF funds, each eligible campus may receive \$44,000 to develop additional technology capacity at the school level. During 2001-02, three WHISD schools are eligible for the TIF Special Projects grants. The district sent its notice of eligibility and the technology infrastructure assessment forms to the TIF grant program.

WHISD also has not applied consistently for the federal E-Rate program, another resource for districts to obtain technology funding. The federal E-Rate discount provides 20 to 90 percent of the cost of purchasing telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections. The level of discount is based upon the percentage of students eligible for participation in the federal free and reduced-price school lunch program. To be eligible to participate in the E-Rate program, schools must have an approved technology plan. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the official approving agency for public schools in Texas.

During the 1999-2000 school year, with more than 70 percent of its students eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program, WHISD received a 75 percent discount and a \$168,536 grant from the E-Rate program. The following school year, however, the Technology Department did not apply for the E-Rate although the district again was eligible for the same E-Rate discount program with 72 percent of the students eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program. Any application would have required signatures of the director of Business Services, the superintendent and the Technology coordinator, positions

that were vacant at the time the grant applications were due. WHISD did, however, have an interim superintendent who could have signed the applications.

The only line item related to technology in the districts 2001-02 budget corresponds to the TEA's technology allotment. No additional local funds are allocated to the district's technology program in the current budget. **Exhibit 8-2** summarizes the technology grant funds that the district received during the past two years.

Exhibit 8-2
Technology Grant Funds Received by WHISD for
1999-2000 through 2000-01

Type of Funds	1999-2000	2000-01
Public School TIF Grant	\$127,377	Sent letters of intent but did not receive the grant
Library TIF Grant	Did not apply	\$69,925
E-Rate	\$168,536	Did not Apply
Total	\$295,913	\$69,925

Source: The Technology Infrastructure Fund Web site; E-Rate, School and Library Division (SLD) Web site; TEA, Summary of Finances, 1999-2000 through 2000-01.

On June 2, 2001, the district received a letter from The John C. Ford Program, Inc. (Ford Program) proposing that WHISD serve as the first district in its Prototype Urban Tele-Communities. The Ford Program establishes Prototype Urban Tele-Communities across the 200 square miles of inner cities in the southern sector of Dallas. The program provides grant funding to obtain a minimum of 21 Pentium III computers and advanced video conferencing equipment for each of the six schools in the district. In September 2001, the superintendent said Kennedy-Curry Middle School was the only school participating in the program, but said the district plans to expand the program to other campuses in the future.

Although the Ford Program initiative is a positive step, the district continues to fall behind when compared to its peer districts with respect to attaining technology grants. **Exhibit 8-3** compares the amount of technology grant funds received by the WHISD and its peers.

Exhibit 8-3
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD and Peer Districts Technology Grant Funds
1999-2000 through 2000-01

District	Types of Funds	1999-2000	2000-01
Lancaster ISD	TIF	\$160,004	\$199,877
	E-Rate	\$113,195	Did not apply
	Total	\$273,199	\$199,877
De Soto ISD	TIF	\$158,491	\$599,911
	E-Rate	\$61,758	\$101,482
	Total	\$220,249	\$701,393
La Marque ISD	TIF	\$100,000	\$200,000
	E-Rate	Did not apply	Did not apply
	Total	\$100,000	\$200,000
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	TIF	\$127,377	\$69,925
	E-Rate	\$168,536	Did not apply
	Total	\$295,913	\$69,925

Source: The Technology Infrastructure Fund Web site; E-Rate, School and Library Division (SLD) Web site; TEA Summary of Finances, 1999-2000 through 2000-01 for years presented.

Because the district does not have a formal process in place for pursuing additional technology funds, WHISD continues to miss opportunities to improve its technology programs throughout the district.

Recommendation 73:

Develop a coherent plan to pursue outside funding sources including federal, state and local grants and funds from local businesses and private foundations.

The plan should identify potential funding opportunities and individuals responsible for applying for funds, and should be incorporated into the overall technology plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Technology coordinator researches federal grants, foundations and other possible funding sources for technology investments, and submits a plan to the Technology Committee.	April - May 2002
2.	The Technology Committee reviews and collaborates with the Technology coordinator to apply for the grants.	June 2002
3.	The Technology coordinator completes applications for grants and monitors the progress.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the average award per student for both TIF and E-Rate funds for WHISD and its peer districts, WHISD should be able to increase technology-related funding by \$216,415 per year. The average TIF and E-Rate awards for WHISD and peers based on a per student calculation is \$40.94 and \$24.98 respectively. Because enrollment projections are an unknown, the calculation is based on the current enrollment.

$$\begin{aligned}
 &3,283 \text{ (enrollment)} \times \$40.94 \text{ (TIF per student calculation)} = \\
 &\$134,406 \\
 &3,283 \text{ (enrollment)} \times \$24.98 \text{ (E-Rate per student} \\
 &\text{calculation)} = \$82,009 \\
 &\$134,406 + \$82,009 = \$216,415
 \end{aligned}$$

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop a coherent plan to pursue outside funding sources including federal, state and local grants and funds from local businesses and private foundations.	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$216,415	\$216,415

Chapter 8

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) computers and technology function in three sections:

B. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PLANNING

Adequate planning is critical to the success of any venture. Planning for new technologies is particularly important to education because of the factors listed below:

- **Equity.** The level of technological resources available to each school in a district can vary unacceptably. Unfortunately, poorly planned introductions of new technology can widen the gap between the "haves" and "have nots." Careful planning at the district level can ensure that all schools receive adequate support.
- **Rapid Change.** The pace of technological change continues to accelerate. If planning the implementation of new technology does not cover an adequate span of time (three to five years), the district risks failing to take full advantage of this rapid change.
- **Funding.** Funding can be the greatest barrier to the effective use of technology in the classroom. Unless planning addresses how projects will be funded, limited funding can have a greater impact than it should.
- **Credibility.** The public is eager to see its tax dollars spent effectively. Thorough planning makes it possible to demonstrate that proposed strategies have been well thought out, acquisitions of technological resources have been carefully considered and that every aspect of the implementation is cost-effective.

To implement information technology effectively in administrative offices or schools, a district must have:

- an extensive computer network connecting modern computers;
- a comprehensive administrative and instructional software and up-to-date operating systems;
- effective, ongoing training;
- adequate technical support;
- a professional staff capable of implementing and administering a technology-rich environment;
- and
- a means to provide the community access to school information through technology.

FINDING

WHISD has neither a disaster recovery plan nor complete written backup procedures in place. The technology plan states, "the district is not truly prepared to deal with a major disaster that would cause long-term disruption." The lack of a plan exposes the district to an unacceptable risk in the event of a catastrophe. If the district has a fire, tornado or other catastrophic event that destroyed the hardware, there is no alternate location from which to operate its computer systems until the hardware is replaced.

Although the Technology coordinator backs up the administrative servers once every two weeks, there is no written policy, procedures or training to formalize this activity. Current backups are stored at the district office in a non-fireproof storage area. All 20 of the central office computer users have network folders to save their work to the district's server. However, the remaining 283 computer users in the district do not have network folders set up to save their work. More than 90 percent of the users save their work on their hard drives, which are not backed up and can potentially be damaged.

Exhibit 8-4 lists some of the key elements of an effective disaster recovery plan that the National Center for Education Statistics identified.

**Exhibit 8-4
Key Elements of a Disaster Recovery Plan**

Step	Details
Build the disaster recovery team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a disaster recovery team that includes key policy makers, building management, end-users, key outside contractors and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the district. • Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inventory of all MIS technology assets, including data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. • Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organizations to share each other's equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the district to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. • Make plans to procure hardware, software and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations resume as soon as possible. • Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. • Locate support resources that are necessary, such as equipment repair, trucking and cleaning companies. • Arrange with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details within the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so that everyone knows exactly what is necessary. • Define actions in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. • Define actions at the onset of an undesirable event to limit damage, loss and compromised data integrity. • Identify actions necessary to restore critical functions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define actions to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the plan frequently and completely. • Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Consider other significant issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make a plan unnecessarily complicated. • Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that other authorized personnel are prepared to implement it if needed. • Update the plan regularly.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology." (Modified by Texas School Performance Review (TSPR)).

Many school districts enter into a reciprocal agreement with a neighboring district or area business to use its equipment until the district's hardware is replaced. Region 10 does not offer this service but does allow school districts to use its facilities in case of a disaster.

Recommendation 74:

Develop and test a disaster recovery plan and create written backup procedures.

The district should provide network folders for all administrative staff and teachers to use as a data backup storage mechanism. Staff and teachers also need to be trained in using network folders. Backup tapes need to be stored off-site and in a fireproof vault.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Technology coordinator develops a disaster recovery plan with assistance from Region 10 and attempts to find a neighboring district to secure a reciprocal agreement.	May 2002
2.	The board president of each district sign the reciprocal agreement.	July 2002
3.	The Technology coordinator develops a daily backup and alternate location storage procedure.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent and board approve the disaster recovery plan and reciprocal agreement.	September 2002
5.	The Technology coordinator trains staff and implements the backup and alternate location storage procedures.	October 2002
6.	The Technology coordinator tests the disaster recovery plan, documents recovery procedures and implements the agreement.	November 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's technology plan is incomplete and lacks accountability measures. The document does not include necessary elements, such as:

- a timeline for each objective;
- a responsible party for each objective;
- resources for each objective;
- evaluation measures for each objective; or
- budgeted costs of each objective.

The technology plan recommends that teachers should be part of the Technology Committee, but no teachers serve on the committee.

Without a budget tied to the plan, district officials cannot know the true cost of implementation or whether the timeline is appropriate. Virtually every activity related to the plan will have some cost, either in dollars or staff time. Without a budget, the plan is little more than a collection of goals and objectives.

Exhibit 8-5 shows sample objectives from a three-year, long-range Technology Plan from one of WHISD's selected peer districts, Lancaster ISD.

**Exhibit 8-5
Sample Objectives from Lancaster ISD's Three-Year,
Long-Range Technology Plan**

Implementation Process				Evaluation Process		
Item	Timeline	Staff Involved	Resources	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Cost
Upgrade 25% of the district workstations (170) with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processors • Motherboards • Drives • Memory (64MB) • Video Cards 	2000-01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Superintendent • Coordinator for Technology Services 	Technology Budget	Coordinator for Technology Services	June 2001	\$90,100

Graphing calculators with enhancement components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 Junior High • 100 High School • 25 CBR each campus (50) • 25 CBL each campus (50) 	2000-01	Coordinator for Mathematics	Grants	Coordinator for Mathematics	June 2001	\$33,900
Purchase presentation equipment for the East Campus Board Room: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced workstation • projector • presentation TV • VCR • Elmo • sound system • printer 	Spring 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Superintendent • Coordinator for Technology Services • Technicians 	To Be Determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Superintendent • Coordinator for Technology Services 	June 2001	\$14,750

Source: Lancaster ISD's Three-Year, Long Range Technology Plan, November 2001.

According to TSPR's *Helping Schools Make Technology Work*, "the most effective technology plans contain clear goals, objectives and action plans for technology projects. They assign individual responsibility for implementation steps and set deadlines."

Recommendation 75:

Reorganize the Technology Committee to develop and implement a formal technology plan.

The Technology committee should include the following elements in the technology plan:

- a clear timeline for each goal;
- a specific responsible party for each objective;
- a budget figure for each objective; and
- clear and well-defined evaluation measures for each objective.

In addition, district schools should select an elementary, middle school and a high school teacher to serve on the Technology Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent authorizes the district's schools to select teachers to attend the Technology Committee meetings.	April 2002
2.	The Technology coordinator and the new committee meet to define their roles and responsibilities and decision-making authority, subject to superintendent and board approval.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent approves the committee structure.	June 2002
4.	The Technology Committee reviews and revises the technology plan.	July 2002
5.	The Technology Committee submits the revised plan to the superintendent and board for their approval.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

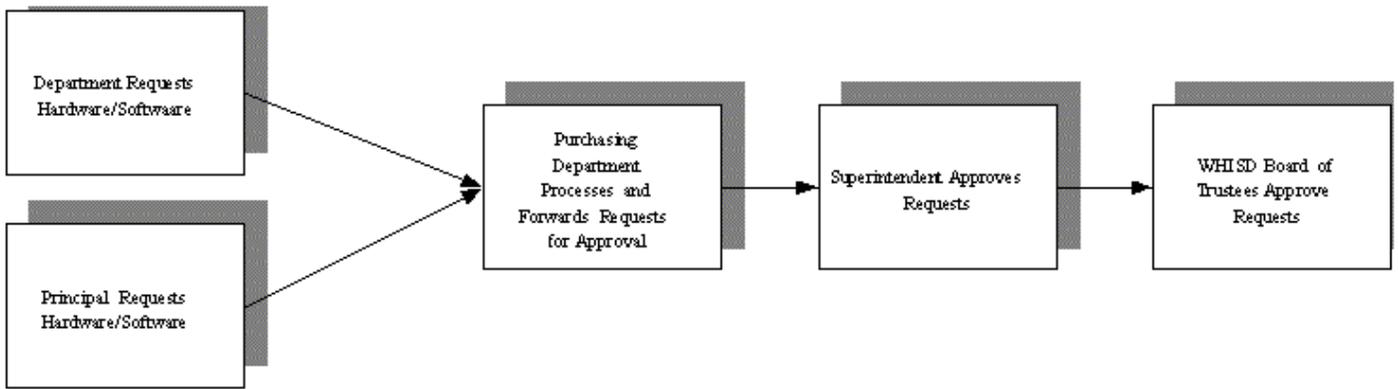
The Technology Department does not provide input about technology purchases made by other departments in the district. The district allows individual departments to control their own technology purchases rather than taking advantage of the expertise of the Technology Department staff.

For example, the Child Nutrition Services Department purchased software called Nutrikid. The software has not been completely installed because the Child Nutrition Services does not have the necessary technical expertise. While the Technology Department and Child Nutrition Services said they since have improved their communication regarding technology purchases, potential similar problems remain districtwide. When technology is purchased outside of the purview of the Technology Department, hardware, installation, compatibility, training and maintenance issues cannot be properly addressed. This can lead to any number of potential problems, including incompatibility of data transfer between programs across the district, difficulty managing multiple platforms and software environments, and inability to properly upgrade programs.

Exhibit 8-6 shows the current approval process for purchasing technology at WHISD.

**Exhibit 8-6
WHISD's Technology Purchasing Approval Process**

2001-02



Source: Interview with the WHISD Technology Department's Technology coordinator, October 2001.

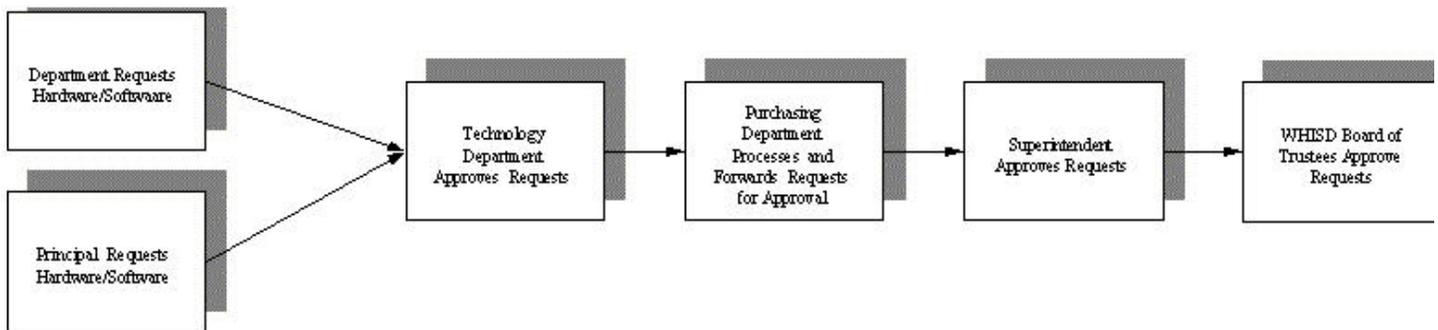
Software purchased without input from the Technology Department may not work or not interact properly with the existing software systems of the district. This lack of coordination results in productivity losses and higher maintenance costs for the district.

Recommendation 76:

Establish districtwide policies and procedures that require all technology purchase requisitions to have the written approval of the Technology Department.

Exhibit 8-7 proposes the purchasing process that the district should adopt.

**Exhibit 8-7
Proposed Technology Purchasing Approval Process**



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

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent drafts a policy stating that all technology-related purchases require prior approval by the Technology coordinator.	April 2002
2.	The board adopts a technology policy requiring requisition approval by the Technology	May 2002

	Department.	
3.	The superintendent sends a memo to all district employees informing them of the new policy.	June 2002
4.	The Technology coordinator reviews the district's technology-related purchases.	Ongoing
5.	The Purchasing Department ensures that the Technology coordinator reviews the district's technology related purchases.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) computers and technology function in three sections:

C. INFRASTRUCTURE, SOFTWARE, HARDWARE AND OPERATIONS

School districts, due to limited budgets and technical expertise, find it difficult to choose and buy technology. Often, districts lack adequate information about the newest technologies and how to use them effectively, or they do not take into account the level of training and staff development needed to use the technology.

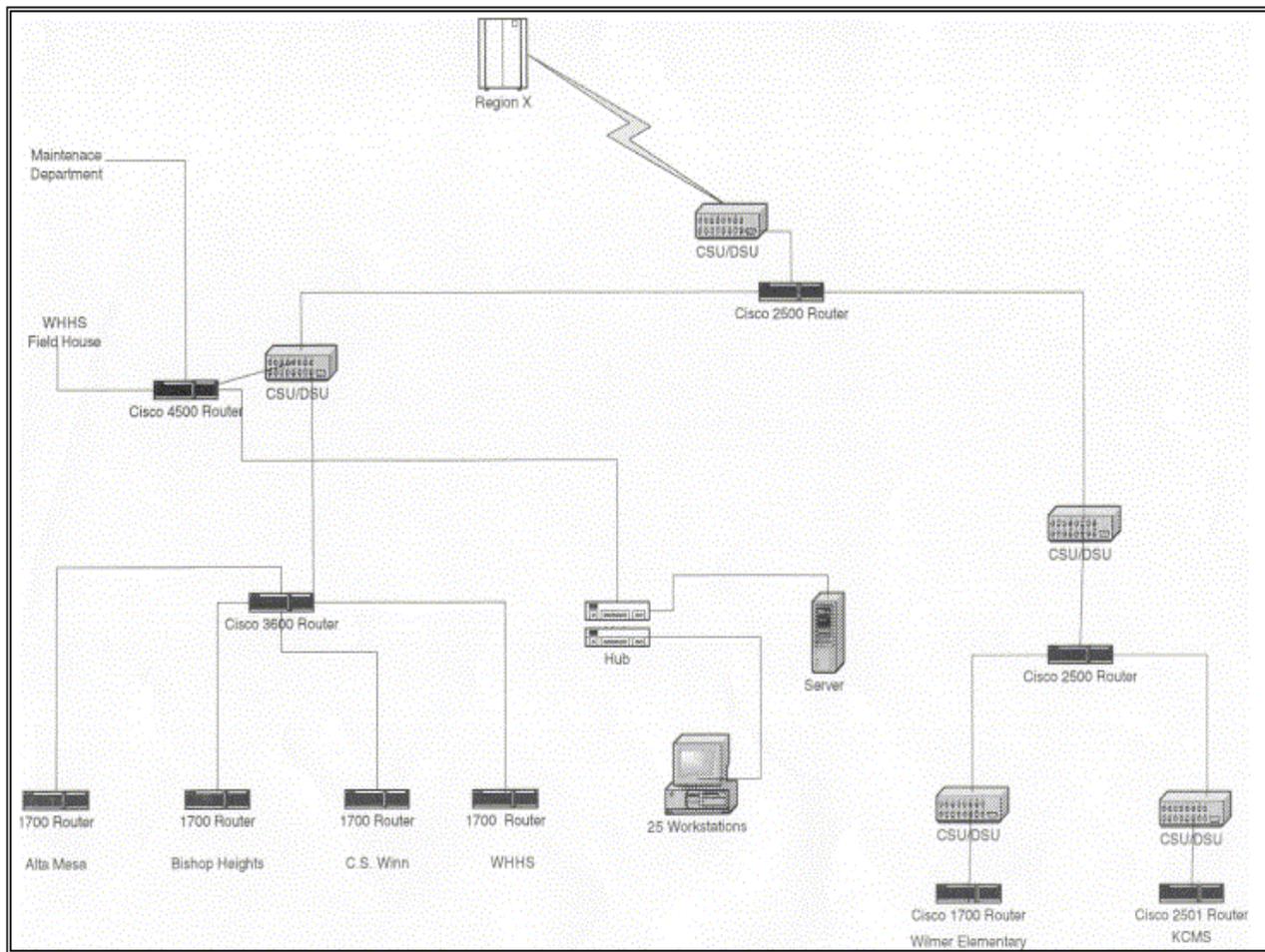
Technology planners need to make informed decisions about hardware and software, or they place districts at a disadvantage. Planners must take a broad view of technology and educate staff about current and emerging technologies and their benefits. Implementing technology is an ongoing and continuous process that requires a supportive infrastructure flexible enough to deal with the rapid pace of technological change.

While a telecommunication infrastructure provides the connections that permit communications, and hardware provides the capability to retrieve, process and disseminate information, software makes these tools truly powerful resources. Productivity software such as spreadsheets and databases make it possible for people with limited technical capabilities to perform sophisticated data manipulation.

Exhibit 8-8 displays the WHISD's telecommunication infrastructure.

Exhibit 8-8 **WHISD's Telecommunication Infrastructure**

2001-02



Source: WHISD Technology Department's Technology coordinator, October 2001.

FINDING

The Technology Department does not control the district's hardware inventory. The review team received a number of different answers when it requested documentation supporting the number of computers owned by the district. Three sources, the Technology coordinator, the technology plan and Wilmer-Hutchins High School (WHHS) staff provided three different numbers. For instance, according to the high school lab technician, WHHS should have 272 computers. However, the inventory list in the technology plan places 111 computers at WHHS. In addition, the district does not count 60 486 MHz processor computers donated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the technology plan's inventory lists. When the IRS computers are included, the WHHS computer count is 171, which is still 101 computers short of the count provided by the high school lab technician. The computer/student ratio document provided by the Technology coordinator lists 175 computers at WHHS.

Exhibit 8-9 presents the computer inventory from two different source documents.

Exhibit 8-9
WHISD Computer Inventory by Facility
2001-02

School	Total Computers According to the Technology Plan Inventory Lists	Total Computers According to Computer/ Ratio Document
Wilmer-Hutchins High School	171	175
Kennedy-Curry Middle School	153	81
CS Winn Elementary	53	69
Alta Mesa Learning Center	0	50
Hutchins Academic Center	20	0
Wilmer Elementary	103	83
Bishop Heights Elementary	43	59
Grand Totals	543	517

Source: WHISD Technology Committee plan; WHISD computer/student ratio document, October 2001.

According to the technology plan, the district has more than 850 working computers. This number does not match the total number of computers from the technology plan inventory count sheets and the computer/student ratio document.

Accurate inventory information is critical for planning equipment purchases, providing a deterrent for theft and properly allocating computing resources.

Recommendation 77:

Develop a districtwide process for managing the hardware inventory.

The district needs to conduct a physical inventory of computers. The inventory should include the item, brand name, model number, serial number, bar code number, date of purchase, type of equipment, an indicator that the item meets minimum specifications, an indicator that the equipment is being used and a description of the item's primary use. All untagged equipment inventoried should be tagged.

Each school and department should be held accountable for technology equipment. There should be an inventory list in each principal's office, and every department head should maintain an updated list of technology equipment within the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The principals and Technology coordinator develop a physical inventory plan and	April 2002
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	schedule.	
2.	The principals and Technology coordinator direct the lab technicians at each school to conduct a physical inventory of all technology equipment, showing configuration, age and other required data elements.	May 2002
3.	The director of Business Services participates in selected counts and verifies school inventories.	May 2002
4.	The Technology coordinator schedules and conducts a physical inventory of all technology equipment annually.	September 2002 and Ongoing Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not track the status or cost of technical support requests, which limits its ability to manage technical support. The Technology Department uses a manual form for technical support requests. The district administrative staff may use the form and fax or email it, or they may call the Technology Department for the support request. If administrative staff calls in the request, the Technology Department completes the form. Once the Technology Department resolves support requests, it keeps the completed forms in a file cabinet. The school-based lab technicians receive technical support requests from school staff. They forward the support request forms to the Technology Department only if they are unable to resolve the issue. If the lab technicians resolve the issue, the Technology Department receives no record of the request.

The Technology Department must review a large number of forms to determine the status of a single technical support request because the support forms do not have numeric or other types of identification markings on them. This time-consuming process lengthens the Technology Department's response time to its users. The district does not have any reporting or measurement procedures in place to monitor the progress of the technical support requests.

Tracking the response times and outstanding support requests are essential practices for monitoring the effectiveness of the technical support function for a district. Without reporting and measurement tools, the Technology Department lacks the means to identify emerging trends, problem areas and staffing needs for the technical support area.

Recommendation 78:

Electronically track all technical support requests and response times to improve efficiency and effectiveness of technical support.

Technical support request tracking is common in larger school districts, but can be applied inexpensively in smaller districts through the development of a spreadsheet or simple database. Technical support request tracking could be achieved through stand-alone software or the in-house

development of a database or spreadsheet. The relatively low volume of technical support requests does not justify a significant investment. The quality and timeliness of technical support should improve with the availability of this information.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Technology coordinator develops a technical support request tracking system using a simple database application.	July 2002
2.	The Technology coordinator tracks technical support forms and reports outstanding forms by number of days past the request date.	September 2002 and Ongoing
3.	The Technology coordinator generates reports at the end of each school year to show the average response time.	May 2003 and Ongoing Annually
4.	The superintendent uses the technical support request tracking information to evaluate the effectiveness of technical support.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have written minimum standards for computer equipment and continues to use outdated equipment. The district's informal minimum hardware standards include Pentium II 233 MHz processor, 32MB ram, 2GB hard drive and 15-inch color monitor. However, WHISD does not publish these standards in any training document or other district documentation. Without the published standards, district schools and departments risk acquiring substandard hardware. The substandard hardware could be incompatible with the district's existing hardware and software. Substandard hardware also increases the cost of hardware maintenance as a result of having both PC-based and Macintosh platforms to support.

Because the district's inventory list does not contain adequate detailed information about the district's hardware, such as the processor, the memory and the storage capacity, there is not sufficient information for the district to set and maintain minimum standards. Detailed information is critical not only for the minimum standards, but also for upgrading software and monitoring computer performance.

Recommendation 79:

Develop written standards for personal computers.

Published minimum hardware standards for the district will help the schools and departments acquire compatible technology, which will make it easier to provide support.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Technology coordinator develops written minimum hardware standards for the district.	May 2002
2.	The Technology coordinator publishes the minimum hardware standards on the district Web site and as a written procedure to be distributed to all schools and departments of the district.	June 2002
3.	The school-based lab technicians and the Technology coordinator expand the inventory to include additional hardware information.	July 2002
4.	The Technology coordinator allocates and retires computer equipment based on periodic updates to, and analysis of, the district's computer inventory.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) student transportation operations in the following five sections:

- A. Outsourcing
- B. Organization and Management
- C. Routing and Scheduling
- D. Safety and Training
- E. Maintenance

The primary goal of every school district's transportation department is to transport all students to and from school and approved extracurricular activities in a timely, safe and efficient manner.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Education Code authorizes, but does not require, Texas school districts to provide transportation for students in the general population between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires a school district to provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to receive special education services.

Eight of the school districts in Dallas County contract their student transportation operations to Dallas County Schools (DCS). WHISD is one of seven school districts in Dallas County that directly operates student transportation.

In 1999-2000, the most recent year for which complete data is available, the WHISD Transportation Department transported an average of 1,588 students a day between school and home on regular routes, 48 students a day on special education routes and 70 students a day on career and technology (CATE) routes. WHISD owns, operates and maintains a fleet of 26 regular school buses and four special school buses. In 1999-2000, WHISD operated a total of 206,280 reimbursable route miles of regular program transportation, 35,460 reimbursable route miles of special program transportation and 12,060 reimbursable CATE route miles in 1999-2000. The district's expenditures were \$758,820 for regular program transportation and \$101,007 for special program transportation.

Texas school districts are eligible for reimbursement from the state for transporting regular program, special program and CATE program students. The Texas Legislature sets funding rules, and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers the program. State funding for regular program transportation is limited to transportation for students living two or more miles from the school they attend. The state does not reimburse districts for transporting students living within two miles of the school they attend unless they face hazardous walking conditions on the way to school, such as the need to cross a four-lane roadway without a traffic signal or crossing guard. The state will reimburse districts for transporting students on hazardous routes within two miles of school; however, the reimbursement for transporting students on hazardous routes may not exceed 10 percent of the total annual reimbursement for transporting only two-or-more-mile students. A school district must use local funds to pay for transportation costs the state reimbursement does not cover. WHISD began including hazardous miles for reimbursement in 2000-01.

For the regular program, the state reimburses districts for qualifying transportation expenses based on linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily on standard routes to the number of route miles traveled daily for those standard routes. TEA uses this ratio to assign each school district to one of seven linear density groups. Each group is eligible to receive a maximum per mile allotment.

Exhibit 9-1 shows the linear density groups and the related allotment per mile.

**Exhibit 9-1
Linear Density Groups**

Linear Density Group	Allotment Per Mile
2.40 and above	\$1.43
1.65 to 2.40	\$1.25
1.15 to 1.65	\$1.11
0.90 to 1.15	\$0.97
0.65 to 0.90	\$0.88
0.40 to 0.65	\$0.79
Up to 0.40	\$0.68

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Handbook on School Transportation Allotments, revised May 2001.

In 1999-2000, WHISD was in the third highest linear density group, which entitled the district to a reimbursement of \$1.11 each route mile for regular program miles. The district's actual operations cost (total annual costs less debt service and capital outlay) was \$2.75 each odometer mile in 1999-2000. **Exhibit 9-2** shows the linear densities for WHISD and a peer group of Texas school districts. The peer districts used for transportation are different than the peers used in other chapters of this report. The transportation operations of the peer districts used in other chapters are outsourced, and TEA data are either unavailable or do not separate costs in a manner conducive to analysis. The school districts chosen as peers for transportation are similar to WHISD in size, operating environment, annual expenditures and linear density.

Exhibit 9-2
WHISD and Peer Districts Linear Density
1999-2000

District	Standard Regular Riders*	Standard Regular Miles	Linear Density	Allotment Per Mile
Aransas County	245,700	151,299	1.624	\$1.11
Hallsville	355,680	348,264	1.021	\$0.97
Calallan	252,180	137,052	1.840	\$1.25
Peer Average	284,520	212,205	1.495	\$1.11
Wilmer-Hutchins	235,080	153,000	1.536	\$1.11

Source: TEA, School Transportation Route Services Report 1999-2000.

** Annual riders calculated by multiplying average daily riders by 180 school days.*

Compared to the transportation peer districts, WHISD has the third highest linear density after Calallan (CISD) and Aransas County ISD (ACISD). Dallas County Schools, which provides transportation for eight districts in Dallas County, has a linear density of 1.816 and receives a state reimbursement of \$1.25 per regular program route mile.

Reimbursement for special program transportation is not based on linear density. The per mile allotment rate for special program transportation is

set by the Texas Legislature. All transportation for special program students, except certain field trips, is eligible for state reimbursement at \$1.08 each route mile. In 1999-2000, WHISD's actual cost for special program transportation was \$1.63 per odometer mile.

The reimbursement per mile for the CATE program is based on the cost for regular program miles for the previous fiscal year as reported by the district in the TEA School Transportation Operation Report. In 1999-2000, WHISD received an allotment of \$2.60 each CATE route mile.

Reimbursable miles are the miles driven on routes (with students on board) and do not include miles driven to or from a route, which is called deadhead, or miles driven for maintenance purposes.

Exhibit 9-3 shows a comparison of reimbursable route miles for WHISD and the transportation peer group of Texas school districts.

Exhibit 9-3
WHISD and Peer Districts Odometer Miles by Category
1999-2000

District	Regular Program Miles			Special Program Miles		
	Route	Extra-curricular	CATE	Route	Extra-curricular	CATE
Aransas County	168,363	113,362	16,488	80,310	2,388	0
Hallsville	348,264	49,293	0	48,820	2,998	0
Calallen	208,922	34,705	0	39,816	856	6,562
Peer Average	241,850	65,787	5,496	56,315	2,081	2,187
Wilmer-Hutchins	206,280	69,378	12,060	35,460	26,669	0

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 1999-2000.

In 1999-2000, the state allocated a total of \$298,624 in transportation funding to WHISD, including \$31,356 for CATE routes. The state reimbursed 35 percent of the total annual operations cost (excluding debt service and capital outlay). **Exhibit 9-4** provides a comparison of total annual operations cost and the state allotment for regular and special

transportation in 1999-2000 for WHISD and the transportation peer districts.

Exhibit 9-4
WHISD and Peer Districts State Allotment
1999-2000

District	Regular Program			Special Program		
	Operations Cost*	State Allotment	Percent State	Operations Cost*	State Allotment	Percent State
Aransas County	\$713,147	\$186,883	26%	\$96,634	\$86,735	90%
Hallsville	\$637,925	\$337,816	53%	\$88,420	\$52,726	60%
Calallen	\$566,288	\$261,153	46%	\$96,952	\$56,978	59%
Peer Average	\$639,120	\$261,951	41%	\$94,002	\$65,480	70%
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$758,820	\$228,971	30%	\$101,007	\$38,297	38%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports 1999-2000.

**Operations cost excludes capital outlay and debt service.*

Exhibit 9-5 shows the annual riders, total annual odometer miles and number of total buses for WHISD compared to transportation peer districts for 1999-2000.

Exhibit 9-5
WHISD and Peer Districts Operating Statistics
1999-2000

District	Regular Program			Special Program		
	Annual Riders	Total Odometer Miles	Total Buses	Annual Riders	Total Odometer Miles	Total Buses
Aransas County	253,620	315,640	37	16,920	82,728	8
Hallsville	355,680	397,557	51	8,820	51,818	5
Calallen	326,340	221,501	34	19,980	40,477	4

Peer Average	311,880	311,566	41	15,240	58,341	6
Wilmer-Hutchins	285,840	275,658	26	8,640	62,129	4

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 9-6 compares transportation cost efficiency and cost effectiveness indicators for 1999-2000 for WHISD and the transportation peer districts based on TEA data. Cost per mile is determined by dividing total annual operations cost (less debt service and capital outlay) by total annual miles. The number of miles used to calculate the cost per mile is taken from the TEA School Transportation Operation Report. These miles include deadhead and maintenance miles and other sources of added miles. Cost per rider is determined by dividing total annual operations cost (less debt service and capital outlay) by total annual riders. Total annual riders are determined by multiplying average daily riders by 180 school days.

Exhibit 9-6
WHISD and Peer Districts Cost Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness Indicators 1999-2000

District	Regular Program		Special Program	
	Cost/Odometer Mile	Cost/Rider	Cost/Odometer Mile	Cost/Rider
Aransas County	\$2.26	\$2.80	\$1.17	\$5.71
Hallsville	\$1.60	\$1.79	\$1.71	\$10.02
Calallen	\$2.56	\$1.74	\$2.40	\$4.85
Peer Average	\$2.14	\$2.11	\$1.76	\$6.86
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$2.75	\$2.54	\$1.63	\$11.69
Percent Different from Average	29%	20%	-7%	70%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 9-7 compares service effectiveness or productivity indicators for WHISD and its transportation peer districts based on TEA data. The rider per route mile is determined by dividing total annual riders by total annual route miles. The riders per bus are determined by dividing average daily riders by the total number of buses.

**Exhibit 9-7
WHISD and Peer Districts Service Effectiveness Indicators
1999-2000**

District	Regular Education		Special Education	
	Riders/ Route Mile	Riders/Bus	Riders/ Route Mile	Riders/Bus
Aransas County	1.51	38	0.21	12
Hallsville	1.02	39	0.18	10
Calallen	1.56	53	0.50	28
Peer Average	1.36	43	0.30	17
Wilmer-Hutchins	1.39	61	0.24	12
Percent Different from Average	2%	42%	-20%	-29%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 9-8 documents a five-year history of the total miles of transportation service provided by WHISD by category of service.

**Exhibit 9-8
WHISD Annual Miles of Service
1996-97 through 1999-2000**

	1996- 97	1997- 98	1998- 99	1999- 2000	Percent Change 1996-2000
Regular Program Transportation					
Route Miles (with deadhead)	226,181	210,240	203,700	206,280	(9%)
Extracurricular Miles	9,397	30,771	61,361	69,378	638%

Other Miles*	400	900	0	0	(100%)
Annual Regular Miles	235,978	241,911	265,061	275,658	17%
Special Program Transportation					
Route Miles (with deadhead)	69,228	32,940	35,280	35,460	(49%)
Extracurricular Miles	1,577	2,179	1,729	26,669	1,591%
Other Miles*	150	200	0	0	(100%)
Annual Special Miles	70,955	35,319	37,009	62,129	(12%)
Total	306,933	277,230	302,070	337,787	10%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

** "Other" miles consist of all miles other than route miles, mileage to and from routes and extracurricular miles.*

WHISD experienced a significant drop in special program route miles from 1996-97 to 1997-98. Special program route miles have remained steady from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. Extracurricular miles for both the regular and special programs have increased significantly from 1996-97 to 1999-2000.

Exhibit 9-9 compares the total and extracurricular transportation miles of transportation peer districts with WHISD. Extracurricular miles include student transportation for field trips and extracurricular activities such as athletics, band and University Interscholastic League (UIL) events.

Exhibit 9-9
WHISD and Peer Districts Extracurricular Miles
1999-2000

District	Total Odometer Miles*	Extracurricular Miles*	Percent Extracurricular
Aransas County	315,640	113,362	36%
Hallsville	397,557	49,293	12%
Calallen	261,978	35,561	14%
Peer Average	325,058	66,072	20%

Wilmer-Hutchins	275,658	69,378	25%
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Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report, 1999-2000.

*Includes both regular and special education transportation.

Exhibit 9-10 compares the transportation cost of the transportation peer districts with WHISD as a percentage of total district expenditures.

Exhibit 9-10
WHISD and Peer Districts Cost as a Percent of
Total Budgeted Operating Expenditures
1999-2000

District	Total District Expenditures	Transportation Operations Cost*	Percent of Total Expenditures
Aransas County	\$24,570,717	\$809,781	3%
Hallsville	\$21,783,736	\$726,345	3%
Calallen	\$26,357,697	\$663,240	3%
Peer Average	\$24,237,383	\$733,122	3%
Wilmer-Hutchins	\$19,454,440	\$859,827	4%

Sources: Total expenditures from TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000; Transportation operations cost from TEA, School Transportation Operation Report, 1999-2000.

*Includes both regular and special education transportation.

A four-year history of transportation performance data for WHISD, provided by TEA, is shown in **Exhibit 9-11**.

Exhibit 9-11
WHISD Regular and Special Program Transportation Historical Data
1996-97 through 1999-2000

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change 1996-2000
Operations Cost*					
Regular Program	\$735,174	\$433,746	\$606,154	\$758,820	3%

Percent Change	n/a	(41%)	40%	25%	n/a
Special Program	\$77,433	\$72,759	\$82,023	\$101,007	30%
Percent Change	n/a	(6%)	13%	23%	n/a
Total	\$812,607	\$506,505	\$688,177	\$859,827	6%
Annual Odometer Miles					
Regular Program	235,978	241,911	265,061	275,658	17%
Percent Change	n/a	3%	10%	4%	n/a
Special Program	70,955	35,319	37,009	62,129	(12%)
Percent Change	n/a	(50%)	5%	68%	n/a
Total	306,933	277,230	302,070	337,787	10%
Cost per Mile					
Regular Program	\$3.12	\$1.79	\$2.29	\$2.75	(12%)
Percent Change	n/a	(43%)	28%	20%	n/a
Special Program	\$1.09	\$2.06	\$2.22	\$1.63	50%
Percent Change	n/a	89%	8%	(27%)	n/a
Annual Riders					
Regular Program	455,400	271,440	284,940	298,440	(34%)
Percent Change	n/a	(40%)	5%	5%	n/a
Special Program	8,100	8,460	8,820	8,640	6%
Percent Change	n/a	4%	4%	(2%)	n/a
Total	463,500	279,900	293,760	307,080	(34%)
Cost per Rider					
Regular Program	\$1.61	\$1.60	\$2.13	\$2.54	58%
Percent Change	n/a	(1%)	33%	19%	n/a
Special Program	\$9.56	\$8.60	\$9.30	\$11.69	22%
Percent Change	n/a	(10%)	8%	26%	n/a

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 1996-2000.

**Operations cost exclude capital outlay and debt service.*

The WHISD Transportation Department experienced significant drops in regular program operating costs (41 percent) and regular program ridership (40 percent) from 1996-97 to 1997-98. The regular program operation costs increased 75 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. Since 1997-98, regular program ridership has grown only 10 percent. Odometer mileage has grown steadily by 17 percent over the four-year period. Costs, ridership and mileage generally have grown in proportion to each other; however, the increase in regular program costs exceeded the growth in mileage and ridership from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. Costs grew 30 percent overall for the four-year period. Special program ridership has increased a modest seven percent during the four-year period, with no unusually large increases or decreases during any one-year. The large increase in mileage is not consistent with the small increase in ridership.

Exhibit 9-12 summarizes WHISD transportation operations cost for each of four years by object of expenditure as defined by TEA in the instructions for the annual School Transportation Route Services Report.

Exhibit 9-12
WHISD Transportation Operations Cost by Type of Expenditure
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Object	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent of Total 1999-2000	Percent Change
Salaries & Benefits	\$617,929	\$387,085	\$502,047	\$659,573	77%	7%
Percent Change	n/a	(37%)	30%	31%	n/a	n/a
Purchased Services	\$12,858	\$10,784	\$22,740	\$16,593	2%	29%
Percent Change	n/a	(16%)	111%	(27%)	n/a	n/a
Supplies and Material	\$101,054	\$58,930	\$92,345	\$116,599	14%	15%
Percent Change	n/a	(42%)	57%	26%	n/a	n/a
Other Expenses	\$80,766	\$49,706	\$71,045	\$67,062	8%	(17%)
Percent	n/a	(38%)	43%	(6%)	n/a	n/a

Change						
Total Cost	\$812,607	\$506,505	\$688,177	\$859,827	100%	6%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Route Services Reports, 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Salaries and Benefits dropped 37 percent from 1996-97 to 1997-98 and increased 70 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. Supplies and Materials decreased by 42 percent from 1996-97 to 1997-98 and increased 98 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000.

Chapter 9

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) student transportation operations in the following five sections:

A. OUTSOURCING

A school district may operate student transportation in-house or choose to contract with a commercial transportation company, mass transit authority or county transportation system, to provide some or all of its transportation services. Eight of the school districts in Dallas County contract their student transportation to Dallas County Schools (DCS). WHISD is one of seven school districts in Dallas County that directly operates student transportation.

FINDING

The WHISD Transportation Department does not rate favorably against key success factors, as seen in **Exhibit 9-13**. Costs have increased while student ridership has decreased. The school district is not managing student transportation to provide safe and reliable service.

Exhibit 9-13
Comparison of WHISD Transportation Services to Key Success Factors

Success Factor	Status
Transportation Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transportation Department has experienced unusual fluctuations in its operating costs from 1996-97 to 1999-2000. • Regular program operating costs fell 41 percent and regular program ridership fell 40 percent from 1996-97 to 1997-98. • The regular program operation costs increased 75 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. • Ridership and mileage have not grown proportionate to costs from 1997-98 to 1999-2000 (10 percent and 17 percent respectively).
Management Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to use vehicle maintenance information system. • The Transportation Department has experience

	<p>unusual fluctuations in its cost of supplies and material from 1996-97 to 1999-2000. From 1996-97 to 1997-98, the cost of supplies and materials fell 42 percent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of supplies and material then increased 98 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and benefits increased 70 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000, but the department does not have enough drivers to cover daily routes. • Two maintenance staff must drive every day.
Management of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance personnel drive school buses daily.
Overtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance supervisor works significant unpaid overtime.
Routing and Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routes and schedules are not regularly evaluated for efficiencies. Buses accrue a low number of miles per bus annually, indicating short routes that may not maximize bus capacity. • Turn-by-turn route descriptions are not kept as required by TEA. • Until 2000-01 school year, hazardous route miles were not claimed for reimbursement by the state, resulting in a loss of \$1,998 in state reimbursement.
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers receive only the state-mandated 20 hours of driver training and no annual retraining. • Monitors receive little or no training.
Preventive Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the 7,000 preventive maintenance schedules, buses only receive a preventive maintenance inspection an average of once a year (1.18 average); breakdowns are frequent.

Source: Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) Team, November 2001.

Transportation costs are rising without a corresponding increase in service provided. Between 1997-98 and 1999-2000, regular program operation costs increased 75 percent; however, odometer mileage increased only 14 percent and ridership increased only 10 percent during the same period. The cost of supplies and material in WHISD increased 98 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. The Transportation Department cannot specifically explain the apparent contradictions in the trend lines for key performance statistics.

The Transportation Department experienced a 70 percent increase in salaries and benefits from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. However, the department does not have enough drivers to operate daily routes. Two members of the maintenance staff drive routes every day. Both the maintenance supervisor and the director of transportation say the maintenance supervisor works over eight hours per day, but is not paid overtime wages.

The district does not collect and report sufficient management information to monitor performance indicators for cost-effectiveness (cost per route and cost per rider) and service-effectiveness (riders per route and riders per mile). Without useful management information, the director of the Transportation Department is unable to explain trends and changes in performance indicators. For example, there are no data to explain the 75 percent increase in regular program operation costs from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. Costs are not reported and monitored.

Routes and schedules are not regularly evaluated for efficiencies. Mileage per bus is low, which indicates routes are very short and may not maximize bus capacity. However, ridership data (riders per trip, bus capacity, trip length in minutes) were not provided that would allow the review team to accurately determine if bus capacity is maximized on a per-trip level and whether trips or routes could be combined.

TEA requires districts to maintain an official turn-by-turn round-trip route description for each reported route that documents eligible total daily mileage. The Transportation Department has not provided turn-by-turn route descriptions to the review team despite multiple requests.

Until the 2000-01 school year, the Transportation Department did not report hazardous route miles to TEA for reimbursement by the state. Based on the 2000-01 TEA School Transportation Route Services Report for WHISD, the district lost \$1,998 per year in funding from the state by not reporting hazardous route miles (1,800 miles x \$1.11 reimbursement).

Safety is the most important aspect of student transportation; however, training and field supervision of WHISD drivers is not adequate. Driver

training consists only of the 20-hour state-mandated bus driver certification course. Drivers receive state-mandated retraining to renew their certification every three years, but do not receive annual retraining. The only training monitors receive is how to secure a wheelchair. No procedures exist for use of the radios on school buses to deal with operations problems and emergencies. In addition, the Transportation Department does not have a dispatcher.

The district is not effectively using available management information systems. The district has access to a vehicle maintenance information system (VMIS) through the Regional Education Service Center Region X (Region 10), but does not use the system. The director of Transportation cited the "learning curve" as the reason the program was not in use. VMIS systems allow management staff to track the cost of maintenance and allow maintenance staff to easily track vehicle histories, preventive maintenance and the parts inventory.

The Transportation Department does not have an effective preventive maintenance inspection program. Based on the 7,000-mile inspections conducted, buses receive an average of only one inspection per year. The director of Transportation and the maintenance supervisor said that buses breakdown frequently, but they did not provide documentation to verify the number of breakdowns. At the time of the review team's site visit during the last week of September 2001, the director of Transportation estimated that five or six breakdowns had occurred since the beginning of the school year.

Many districts in Texas outsource their Transportation operation. As noted above, eight of the school districts in Dallas County contract their student transportation to DCS. DCS is a government agency authorized by the Texas Legislature to offer services for the 15 independent school districts in Dallas County. Texas Education Code chapters 17 and 18 originally authorized county schools. County-unit agencies are now authorized by Education Code 11.301(a) to "continue to operate under the applicable chapter [17 and 18] as that chapter existed on May 1, 1995." DCS provides services to school districts in media and technology, psychological services and student transportation. DCS is funded by a property tax levied in Dallas County and user fees paid by the school districts that purchase DCS services. DCS also receives reimbursement from TEA for student transportation provided for each of the school districts. The reimbursement per mile paid to DCS for regular program transportation is \$1.25.

Private transportation companies also provide student transportation for school districts in Texas. La Marque ISD and Waco ISD are examples of districts that contract with private providers.

Industry standards usually estimate savings of 10 percent of operations cost for districts that privatize the transportation department. Martin County school district in Florida awarded a contract to a private provider based on an expectation of 10 percent savings.

Recommendation 80:

Issue Request for Proposals to outsource student transportation.

DCS or a private transportation company could provide student transportation for WHISD. There are several reasons for WHISD to contract student transportation services to an outside vendor:

- DCS or a private company may be able to provide student transportation at a lower cost. DCS can apply property taxes collected in Dallas County to purchase school buses for WHISD.
- Contractors often have a broad range of experience dealing with the challenges of providing student transportation in numerous school districts. This experience may allow a contractor to solve district student transportation problems more quickly and effectively.
- Performance clauses can be included in the contract to ensure improved quality of services. For example, the contractor can be required to meet a standard for on-time performance.
- WHISD could incorporate incentive clauses in the contract to increase efficiency. For example, the district can include a clause that allows cost savings resulting from route reductions proposed by the contractor to be shared with the district and the contractor.
- The contractor can be required to implement an appropriate cost accounting system to monitor cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness and to better monitor and control cost by service category.
- A contractor may be more flexible in implementing personnel management practices to recruit and retain drivers.
- The contractor can react quickly to market conditions to set competitive wage rates and conduct a more aggressive recruitment program to fill vacant driver positions.
- The contractor may provide better fleet management, driver safety training and automated routing and scheduling programs. A contractor may offer these services more cost-effectively due to economies of scale.
- By outsourcing the ancillary function of school transportation, district administrators can re-focus attention on core educational functions.

- If the contractor provides the district with school buses, the district is no longer faced with large capital outlays to replace the school bus fleet.

There are also possible disadvantages to outsourcing student transportation that must be considered by the district.

- The district may have less control of day-to-day operations and procedures with outsourced transportation services.
- If a private contractor provides the district with school buses, the school district will amortize the cost of the vehicles as operating costs over the term of the contract. The annual impact of the cost of vehicles will vary by the length of the contract and the required average age of the school bus fleet.
- If competition is not adequate, the contractor's price may not reflect the cost savings targeted by the district.
- If the contract terms are not complete (for example, do not address all the services the district will need during the length of the contract), the cost of additional services can result in higher than expected student transportation expenditures.
- Student transportation services could be in jeopardy if the contractor defaults or if there are contract disputes.
- Existing employees of the district will feel uneasy about the transition to a new employer.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of reducing student transportation costs and improving service quality by contracting with DCS or a private company, WHISD will need to take each of the following steps:

- **Determine the full cost of student transportation.** In order to decide if outsourcing would save costs, WHISD will need to determine the full cost of in-house services, including the cost of buses and facilities, depreciation on these assets and administrative overhead costs. Administrative overhead will include WHISD costs that can be avoided if transportation services are contracted, costs that can be reallocated to another essential district function and costs that cannot be avoided and will remain a district expense in addition to the outsourced contract. This information is necessary when comparing the costs of in-house student transportation services to the costs of contracted services including contract administration costs. Decisions about transferring employees will materially affect this analysis.
- **Prepare comprehensive contract specifications.** The specifications must be carefully prepared to be comprehensive and specific, covering all of the services provided by the contractor

during the length of the contract. The specifications should include standards to measure and monitor contractor performance.

- **Include incentives for performance.** The contract for services should contain incentive clauses that encourage the contractor to find ways to reduce costs while maintaining high quality services in accordance with performance standards. The contract should also allow the district to levy penalties against the contractor if performance does not meet standards.
- **Determine employee status.** Transportation Department employees would be most affected by a decision by the district to contract student transportation to an outside contractor. The transition will create concerns about employment status, pay, benefits and working conditions. Employees who have been with the district several years will have additional concerns about loss of seniority and protection of retirement benefits. WHISD will need to develop an employee transition plan for implementation, involving the employees and their representatives as much as possible. The district should keep employees informed and listen to concerns. The communication process should start before the request for proposals is actually advertised.
- **Evaluate options to own or contract for school buses.** The district may elect to retain title for the school buses, and then lease the vehicles to the contractor. If the contractor provides the district with school buses, the district is no longer faced with large capital outlays to replace school buses. On the other hand, the amortized cost of equipment will be reflected in higher contract operating costs. WHISD should incorporate provisions into the contract for buying back buses at market value if they wish to resume in-house service.
- **Decide the contract term.** The district should contemplate a contract with a relatively short term with the option for extension year by year. Decisions about the length of the contract term and the options of owning or contracting for school buses should be considered together.
- **Require the contractor to provide a complete transition plan.** Successful outsourcing requires sufficient time for transition to new management. The contractor should provide a detailed plan for the transfer of responsibilities from the district to the new management team. The transition period can be difficult if attempted in mid-year. The district should consider the value of starting the contractor with a new school year.
- **Establish performance measures.** WHISD will need to closely monitor services provided by a contractor and measure performance against agreed upon standards. (Suggested performance measures are set forth in **Exhibit 9-14**).

- **Plan to closely monitor contractor performance.** A qualified district employee should be assigned duties to administer the contract and to monitor contractor performance. The district employee should report to the director of Business Services.

Exhibit 9-14
Suggested Performance Measures for Outsourced Student Transportation

Category	Performance Measures
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student riders per mile • Student riders per bus route
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per route • Cost per mile • Cost per student rider • Percent state reimbursement
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents every 100,000 miles of service • Student incidents every 1,000 students transported • Training curriculum for new drivers • Hours of in-service training for each driver • Hours of training for student discipline management and special needs children
Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-time performance • Maximum length of student time on school bus • Average bus occupancy each trip • Number of regular routes cancelled
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of route driver positions vacant • Number of attendant positions vacant • Absentee rate for route drivers and attendants • Number of available relief drivers • Annual turnover rate
Customer Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual user survey of parents, school administrators • Referrals per route • Response time per referral
Vehicle Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of preventive maintenance inspections completed on time

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miles between in-service breakdowns • Reported incidents of air-conditioning failure • Cost per bus for maintenance labor, parts and fuel
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Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., November 2001.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services prepares a request for proposals with the assistance of other department directors as appropriate.	May 2002
2.	The director of Business Services enters into discussions with Transportation Department employees about their concerns and the implications of outsourcing student transportation and begins developing an employee transition strategy.	May 2002
3.	The director of Business Services conducts an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing or contracting for school buses.	June 2002
4.	The director of Business Services develops a fully allocated analysis of the costs of providing student transportation services.	June 2002
5.	The director of Business Services recommends a procurement methodology and scope of services, including policy recommendations for employees and capital purchases of school buses, to the superintendent and school board for approval.	June 2002
6.	The superintendent obtains approval from the board to issue the request for proposals. Selection criteria and evaluation methodology are defined.	July 2002
7.	The superintendent presents the analysis of the various proposals submitted by school transportation companies, and an employee transition plan and school bus procurement plan to the board.	August 2002
8.	The board determines if outsourcing the WHISD student transportation program is in the best interest of the district.	August 2002
9.	If the decision is to outsource student transportation, the school board awards a contract to the company with the best proposal.	August 2002
10.	The contractor begins the transition plan.	August 2002
11.	The contractor assumes full responsibility for student transportation.	June 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the history of outsourcing transportation services, industry experts usually estimate a savings of 10 percent of operations cost for districts that privatize their transportation functions. WHISD could save about \$86,000 (10 percent of the \$859,827 annual operations cost in 1999-2000) beginning in June 2003, assuming the district adheres to a timetable allowing the contract to begin in June 2003.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Issue Request for Proposals to outsource student transportation.	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$85,982	\$85,982

Chapter 9

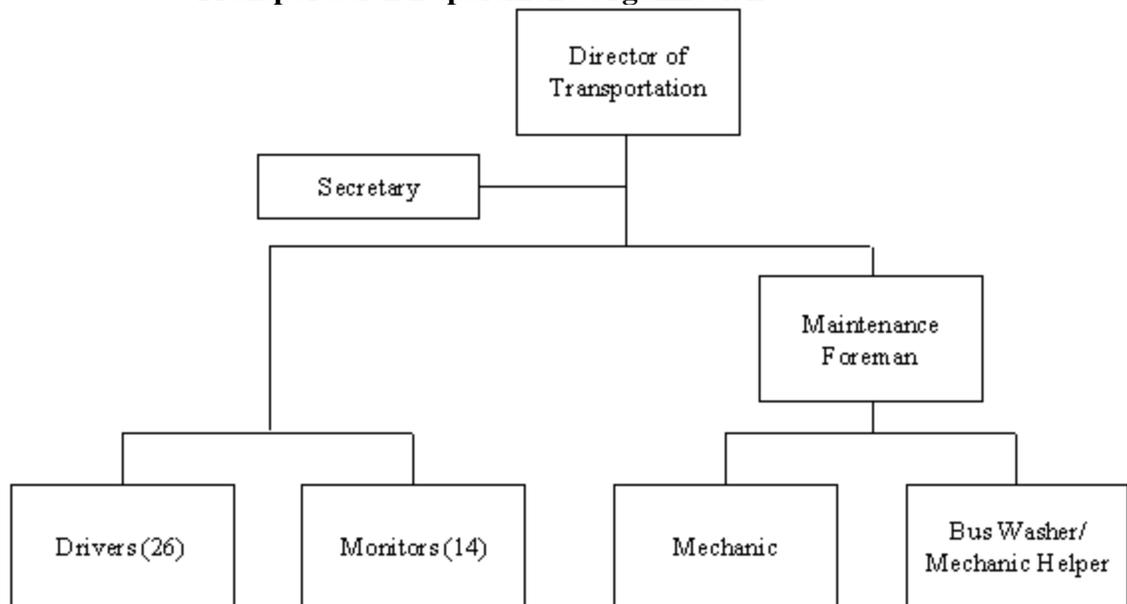
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) student transportation operations in the following five sections:

B. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Transportation Department is responsible for providing student transportation between home and school and for extracurricular trips. The staff of the Transportation Department includes the director of Transportation, 26 drivers, 14 monitors, the maintenance foreman, a mechanic, a bus washer/mechanic helper and a secretary. The maintenance foreman and bus washer/mechanic helper also drive a school bus route every day. **Exhibit 9-15** presents the organizational structure of the Transportation Department.

Exhibit 9-15
Transportation Department Organization



Source: WHISD Transportation Department, October 2001.

FINDING

The Transportation Department has goals and objectives, but it does not have a performance-monitoring program including data and records maintenance. While the Transportation Department identified budget reports as a means of tracking, basic transportation-related data, such as

miles, riders and cost are not collected and reported on a regular basis. TEA reports show significant fluctuations in regular program costs, which may be the result of poor record keeping or cost accounting. Basic information requested of the department, such as ridership by route and turn-by-turn route descriptions, are not easily accessible.

Documentation provided to the review team shows that evaluation of success of many of the Transportation Department objectives will not be conducted until projects are completed. Further, no documentation has been provided showing how evaluation will be conducted, what factors will be evaluated, what data will be collected and what targets will be reached. For example, the district has an objective to revise bus routes for greater efficiency. The district's document states that the objective will be evaluated based on "comparative results from the beginning to the end of the fiscal year." The document does not list specifics as to what results will be compared, how information to evaluate these results will be collected, what target results are anticipated from the revisions, or intervals during the year, such as monthly or quarterly, for evaluating the results.

Exhibit 9-16 shows reported district performance figures.

**Exhibit 9-16
WHISD Performance Measures**

Performance Indicator	WHISD 1999-2000 Actual
Safety	
Accidents every 100,000 miles	Not tracked
Student referrals every 1,000 students bused	Not tracked
Annual hours of driver retraining	0
Costs	
Operations cost per mile - Regular	\$2.75
Operations cost per mile - Special	\$1.63
Operation cost per rider - Regular	\$2.65
Operation cost per rider - Special	\$11.69
Service	
Riders per route mile - Regular	1.39
Riders per route mile - Special	0.24
Riders per bus - Regular	61
Riders per bus - Special	12
Route miles per bus - Regular	8,397
Route miles per bus - Special	8,865

Service Quality	
On-time performance	Not tracked
Driver absenteeism	Not tracked
Maintenance	
Preventive maintenance (PM) scheduled	6,000 miles
Percent PM completed on time	Not tracked
Turnover time per bus repair	Not tracked
Miles between road calls or breakdowns	Not tracked

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report, 1999-2000; TEA, School Transportation Route Services Report, 1999-2000.

**Costs exclude capital outlay and debt.*

Improvements in cost-efficiency, cost-effectiveness and service-effectiveness can all be measured with performance evaluation measures. Many public transit agencies and private fleet managers use performance measures to:

- determine the level of training employees need;
- improve preventive maintenance programs;
- reduce repeat failures, road calls and unscheduled maintenance;
- improve employee and customer satisfaction; and
- reduce costs.

Tracking and monitoring performance indicators can help recognize achievements in areas that are performing well and can support and sustain continuous improvements in goals that have already been achieved. They can also help staff to recognize weaknesses and establish goals for improvements.

Recommendation 81:

Implement a performance-monitoring program to measure accomplishments and identify areas for improvement.

Performance measures monitor cost effectiveness, cost efficiency, service effectiveness and service quality/safety.

Targets for performance indicators can be selected based on levels that can be achieved and the experience of other school districts and fleet operators. For example, targets can be based on transportation peer experience and industry standards, such as the maintenance performance indicators and on-time performance. Once WHISD establishes its

measures, the targets may be adjusted annually to ensure continual improvement. **Exhibit 9-17** sets forth suggested performance indicators and improvements in targets.

**Exhibit 9-17
Recommended Performance Goals**

Performance Indicator	Target
Safety	
Accidents every 100,000 miles	1.0
Student referrals every 1,000 students bused	1.0
Annual hours of driver retraining	8
Costs	
Operations cost per mile - Regular	\$2.47
Operations cost per mile - Special	\$1.47
Operation cost per rider - Regular	\$2.38
Operation cost per rider - Special	\$10.52
Service	
Riders per route mile - Regular	1.53
Riders per route mile - Special	0.26
Riders per bus - Regular	67
Riders per bus - Special	13
Route miles per bus - Regular	9,236
Route miles per bus - Special	9,751
Service Quality	
On-time performance	95%
Driver absenteeism	5%
Student time on bus	45 minutes
Maintenance	
Preventive maintenance (PM) scheduled	90 days
Percent PM completed on time	95%
Turnover time per bus repair	8 hours
Miles between road calls or breakdowns	8,500

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

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops and adopts key indicators to assess the department's performance.	April 2002
2.	The director of Transportation makes public the indicators and	May 2002

	targets.	
3.	The director of Transportation monitors the performance indicators and disseminates the results to all Transportation personnel and school administrators.	Ongoing Monthly
4.	The director of Transportation annually adjusts performance targets to reflect experience.	Ongoing Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) student transportation operations in the following five sections:

C. ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

FINDING

WHISD management of the routing and scheduling does not track performance and results in potentially inefficient routing and poor customer service to school administrators and the public.

The Transportation Department does not have a systematic program in place for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of routes and schedules. Continuous route evaluation and implementing necessary changes enhances student service and maintains transportation efficiency. Mileage per bus is low in WHISD, which indicates routes are very short and may not maximize bus capacity. Ridership data (riders per trip, bus capacity, trip length in minutes), however, were not provided that would allow the review team to accurately determine if bus capacity is maximized on a per-trip level and whether trips or routes could be combined.

The director of Transportation does not track basic route data such as length of student time on buses and reasonableness of schedules. Data that are collected, such as mileage and riders per route, are not used for performance monitoring. Without regular performance monitoring, management does not have the information needed to make knowledgeable changes to routes and schedules.

The Transportation Department could not provide basic information about routes and schedules, such as turn-by-turn route descriptions that TEA requires all districts or their contractors to maintain. Route descriptions are an important component in providing safe, efficient bus service. Route descriptions are a transportation department's method of providing information to students, drivers, school administrators and parents. The director of Transportation said that if a parent called and asked him what time a student should be waiting at a bus stop, he could not give them a specific time.

The Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) offers a training class in routing and scheduling of regular and special program transportation. The class covers student demographic analysis, bus stops,

types of routes, creation of routes, route descriptions, route assignment, monitoring of routes, driver training and operations and state reporting.

Recommendation 82:

Develop a procedure for evaluating routes and schedules on a periodic basis and redesign routes and schedules where indicated.

The director of Transportation should attend the TASBO training course in routing and scheduling to learn basic routing and scheduling techniques for improving management of the routing and scheduling. The director of Transportation should evaluate all routes using the routing, scheduling and bus stop guidelines outlined in the TASBO course. Routes should be reevaluated each year based on student demographics and performance indicators to look for improvements and efficiencies. The director of Transportation should use enrollment projections to help plan routes each year. The director of Transportation should redesign routes and schedules to increase route productivity and maximize bus capacity. Route redesign may include route realignments and creating multiple runs per route.

The director of Transportation should begin collecting and documenting standard route and schedule data and monitoring route performance. On-time performance can show whether schedules are reasonable, student counts show if buses are being used to their fullest capacity, costs per student and per mile show cost efficiency and effectiveness and students per bus and per mile show productivity.

The director of Transportation should develop and maintain accurate, up-to-date route descriptions for each route. These descriptions should be made available to drivers and be easily accessible to school administrators or the public upon request. Route descriptions should include turn-by-turn descriptions of the route, exact bus stops and stop times, distance between stops and hazards located along the route, such as railroad crossings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation attends the TASBO routing and scheduling training class.	As soon as available
2.	The director of Transportation creates detailed route descriptions for each route for the new school year.	July 2002
3.	The director of Transportation updates and maintains route descriptions as needed.	Ongoing
4.	The director of Transportation begins collecting and analyzing performance data to evaluate routes.	Quarterly

5.	The director of Transportation evaluates and redesigns routes as needed, based on guidelines set out in the TASBO class and performance.	Annually
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FISCAL IMPACT

The TASBO transportation class costs \$100. TASBO generally tries to hold the class at a local Education Service Center. Assuming the class will be held at Region 10, no travel costs will be necessary and this cost can be absorbed in the existing budget.

Given the low mileage per bus, it is reasonable to assume that costs can be reduced by 10 percent, or \$86,000 of the 1999-2000 annual operation costs of \$859,827, the same savings that could be derived from outsourcing.

Chapter 9

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) student transportation operations in the following five sections:

D. SAFETY AND TRAINING

FINDING

School bus drivers in WHISD and monitors are not adequately trained. This lack of training resulted in poor student management and a reduction in safety for students. The superintendent told TSPR that a bus driver was suspended with pay in May 2001 for overly aggressive behavior toward a child. Drivers do not have the skills needed to properly handle student discipline problems. A school bus driver may not discipline a student other than reassigning a seat or reasonable verbal reprimand. Discipline is the responsibility of the student's principal or the principal's designee.

The Transportation Department does not offer any in-house driver training. New drivers receive an initial 20 hours of training provided by Region 10 as required by the State of Texas for bus driver certification. The certification course includes instruction in each of the 10 units comprising the Course Guide for School Bus Driver Training in Texas as developed by Southwest Texas Quality Institute (SWTQI). The Texas Administrative Code in Title 37, Part 1, Chapter 14, Subchapter C, Rule §14.32, "Curriculum," recommends the following hourly allocations for each unit: TITLE 37.

- Introduction-one hour;
- Student Management-two hours;
- Know Your Bus-two hours;
- Traffic Regulations-1.5 hours;
- Responsible Driving- four hours;
- Emergency Evacuation-two hours;
- First Aid-1.5 hours;
- Procedures for Loading and Unloading Students-2.5 hours;
- Special Needs Transportation-1.5 hours;
- Awareness of the Effects of Alcohol and Other Drugs-1.5 hours;
- and
- Summary and Written Test-1 hour.

While this training is adequate for new drivers, current drivers do not receive annual retraining to reinforce their initial training or to correct

driver problems. All drivers receive state-mandated retraining every three years to renew their certification.

Monitors who work on regular routes to maintain discipline receive no training. The director of Transportation said monitors on special program routes receive about an hour of training to learn how to secure wheelchairs. The director said some of the monitors are teacher aides that are already familiar with how to handle students with special needs.

The director of Transportation would like to increase the maintenance supervisor's job description to include safety and training, but has not considered the effect that added responsibilities might have on the supervisor's time to maintain buses.

Other school districts provide a program of continuing professional driver training. The Martin County, Florida school district provides 16 hours of professional driver training each year for each driver and sponsors a monthly safety meeting with drivers. Martin County drivers are also scheduled for an annual ride check with a lead driver to evaluate performance and student management techniques.

Drivers are not formally evaluated at WHISD to test their driving and student management skills. San Angelo ISD (SAISD) implemented a driver evaluation program in the 2000-01 school year. The purpose of the SAISD program is to identify performance problems with individual drivers and common problems experienced by many drivers. SAISD driver trainers ride with the drivers and fill out an evaluation form. After the evaluation, the results are discussed with the driver. The drivers are supportive of the program because they feel it helps improve safety. WHISD bus drivers are paid \$13.26 per hour plus a 13.4 percent benefits rate. WHISD bus monitors earn \$8.86 per hour plus benefits of 13.4 percent.

An expanded driver-training program can provide several advantages. First, increased training can result in improved safety. An inadequately trained driver is a hazard, whereas a well-trained driver is an asset. Implementing a driver-training program that emphasizes safety will create a secure environment in which to transport students.

Second, training ultimately improves quality control by the department due to improvements in driver performance, and service-effectiveness.

Third, training helps policy enforcement. When policies have been communicated, management can expect a high standard of performance. When management takes the time to train employees properly and

effectively, more employees understand what is expected of them and how the duties are to be carried out.

Recommendation 83:

Expand the driver and monitor training programs, and perform annual driver evaluations.

The driver-training program should include annual retraining for all drivers. Areas of focus in retraining should include student management, defensive driving and safety and emergency procedures, as well as any areas observed by the director of Transportation as being common driver problems. Monitors should also be trained on an annual basis on conflict resolution strategies and logistical issues.

To complement the driver and monitor training, annual ride-along evaluations should be conducted of each driver to review their performance. The evaluations will help improve individual driver performance, as well as identify common driver problems that could be improved with a retraining class for all drivers.

The retraining and evaluation program can begin for the 2002-03 school year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops a training curriculum based on the Department of Public Safety manual, other existing training resources and observed driver performance problems.	May 2002
2.	The director of Transportation submits for approval the expanded driver training curriculum to the director of Business Services for the additional hours required for driver professional training.	June 2002
3.	The director of Business Services authorizes the director of Transportation to expand the training program for new drivers.	June 2002
4.	The director of Transportation develops a format for conducting driver ride-alongs and conducting evaluations.	July 2002
5.	The director of Transportation introduces drivers to the new driver evaluation program.	July 2002
6.	The director of Transportation conducts annual ride-along evaluations of each driver.	Ongoing
7.	The director of Transportation conducts annual training of drivers and monitors.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

To conduct eight hours of retraining each for 26 drivers and 14 monitors annually would require the cost of the time of the drivers and monitors. Drivers make \$13.26 an hour plus 13.4 percent benefits. Eight hours of retraining each for 26 drivers will have an annual cost of \$3,128 ($[\$13.26 \times 13.4 \text{ percent}] \times 26 \text{ drivers} \times 8 \text{ hours}$). Monitors make \$8.86 per hour plus 13.4 percent benefits. Eight hours of retraining each for 14 monitors will have an annual cost of \$1,125 ($[\$8.86 \times 13.4 \text{ percent}] \times 14 \text{ monitors} \times 8 \text{ hours}$). Total annual retraining costs will be \$4,253 ($\$3,128 + \$1,125$).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Expand the driver and monitor training programs, and perform annual driver evaluations.	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)	(\$4,253)

FINDING

WHISD school buses are vandalized regularly, resulting in a high cost of repairs to the district. The maintenance supervisor reported that in past years the department hired a contractor during the summer to repair all torn seat covers, but the past two summers the seat covers were not repaired. A bid provided to the review team by the district for the most recent repair of seat covers totaled \$13,944. The bid was not dated. The director of Transportation and the maintenance supervisor did not say where the vandalism took place (such as while students were on the bus or when the buses were parked overnight at the Transportation building).

All buses are equipped with Silent Witness video cameras and VCR systems. WHISD spent more than \$30,000 to have the cameras and VCRs installed on every bus in 1999. Videotapes are only pulled and reviewed when a problem has occurred on a bus.

As listed in their job descriptions, drivers are required to conduct pre- and post-trip inspections of their vehicles each time they drive their buses and report any maintenance problems to the maintenance supervisor through a maintenance invoice form. Based on the director of Transportation's job description, the director is responsible for ensuring these inspections take place.

Cameras can be used to help reduce vandalism on buses. If a driver finds damage during a post-trip inspection, he or she could pull the tape to identify which students were sitting in the damaged seats. Either WHISD'S cameras are not used in this manner, pre- and post-trip inspections are not conducted effectively, or neither is taking place.

Recommendation 84:

Develop and implement a procedure to identify vandals and recover damage costs.

The director of Transportation should develop procedures for identifying vandals. The plan should incorporate the use of pre- and post-trip inspections and video cameras and include retraining drivers on conducting pre- and post-trip inspections to ensure they are being done correctly. The director of Transportation should emphasize that part of the purpose of the retraining is to crack down on vandalism. Drivers should also be required to create and enforce seating charts on buses to help identify vandals. Drivers should be instructed to pull tapes when they identify damage during their post-trip inspections.

In addition to retraining, the director of Transportation should ensure that inspections are actually taking place. In addition to the daily inspection form, the director of Transportation should create a form to specifically track damage from vandalism for each bus. The director of Transportation should ensure that the inspection forms are filed daily. The director of Transportation or the maintenance supervisor should do periodic spot-checks on buses to compare the actual condition of the buses with the daily and vandalism inspection forms. Drivers found negligent in filing daily inspection forms or reporting actual damage should be disciplined.

Students should be held responsible for the damage that they cause. The Transportation Department and school and district administrators should work together to ensure students that cause damage are disciplined appropriately. Without the support of administrators, students will go unpunished and continue to think that vandalism is acceptable.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation and the director of Business Services develop a policy for disciplining students who vandalize buses.	June 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the proposed policy for disciplining students who vandalize buses to the board.	July 2002
3.	The school board approves the policy for disciplining students who vandalize buses.	July 2002
4.	Students, parents and school administrators are informed that students caught vandalizing buses will be held responsible for the cost of the damage to the buses.	July 2002
5.	The director of Transportation develops a new form to track	August

	vandalism on each bus.	2002
6.	The director of Transportation provides retraining to drivers on conducting pre-trip and post-trip inspections. The training includes setting up and enforcing seating charts on all buses and using the vandalism tracking forms.	August 2002
7.	Drivers pull and review tapes when they identify new damage on buses.	Ongoing
8.	The director of Transportation ensures that daily inspection forms are filed each day.	Ongoing
9.	The director of Transportation or maintenance supervisor performs spot-checks of buses to ensure drivers are recording actual damage.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

A bid to repair damaged seat covers totaled \$13,944. Assuming vandalism could be decreased by 50 percent, the district could save an estimated \$6,972 each year.

Retraining drivers on pre- and post-trip inspections will not have a fiscal impact.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop and implement a procedure to identify vandals and recover damage costs.	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$6,972	\$6,972

FINDING

No procedures exist for use of the radios on school buses to manage operations problems and emergencies, even though all buses have two-way radios. The Transportation Department does not have a formal dispatch method to help supervise drivers while they are in the field, such as to monitor on-time performance. Most transportation operations in the public sector use dispatching to communicate with drivers. Dispatching allows the transportation staff to talk to drivers at all times, to be aware instantly of problems in the field and to monitor field operations. Conversely, in the event of an emergency, drivers can request assistance immediately.

In surveys conducted by the review team, 39 percent of students and 40 percent of principals and assistant principals surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that buses arrive and depart on time. Thirty-nine

percent of students surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that buses arrive early enough to eat breakfast at school. The Transportation Department does not use its two-way radios to track on-time performance. Radios are a common method in the transit industry to track whether or not vehicles are on time. Drivers report when they are running late or have encountered a problem that has put them off schedule. In a school district transportation operation, drivers report when they have arrived at schools. Radios could also assist in supervision of drivers and tracking driver performance since the Transportation director's time to directly observe drivers on the street is limited. Radio dispatch capabilities supplement on-street supervision of drivers.

The director of Transportation said the department uses the radios when necessary and that he is developing emergency codes for use on the buses. The use of emergency codes is typical in dispatch operations. Codes allow drivers to discreetly report a problem without alarming students. A WHISD Transportation Department procedures handbook indicates emergency codes and radio policies may have been in use at one time in the district as emergency codes and other radio policies are specified, but the director of Transportation said the handbook needs to be updated.

Recommendation 85:

Use dispatch and radio equipment to track driver performance and on-time performance and develop procedures for radio use in emergencies.

The director of Transportation should update and reinstate the codes and policies documented in the procedures handbook. The district should create a dispatch method to allow the director of Transportation to talk to bus drivers, to be aware instantly of problems in the field and to monitor field operations. In the event of an emergency, updated and documented emergency codes and procedures will facilitate driver communication and will help to facilitate resolution of the situation.

The director of Transportation should begin formally tracking the on-time performance of each driver to ensure quality service. While the director of Transportation's time is limited for on-street supervision, using dispatch to keep tabs on drivers requires less since it can be done within the Transportation office. The secretary and substitute drivers, when available, can assist with dispatching as needed. The director of Transportation should meet with drivers who are not on time to determine if the route's schedule is reasonable or to counsel the driver.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation updates the emergency codes and policies in the procedures handbook.	July 2002
2.	The director of Transportation notifies drivers and monitors of the new codes and procedures.	August 2002
3.	The director of Transportation monitors on-time performance and uses radio equipment to work with drivers to ensure quality service.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) student transportation operations in the following five sections:

E. MAINTENANCE

FINDING

The Transportation Department has developed a vehicle replacement plan; however, the board has not adopted the plan. The district purchased five 71-passenger buses in the 2001-02 school year. One 48-passenger lift-equipped bus and one 48-passenger conventional bus will also be purchased. The buses were competitively bid. The 71-passenger buses cost \$49,293 each, for a total of \$246,465. The cost of the 48-passenger buses has not yet been identified due to WHISD seeking bids. The buses are scheduled for delivery in December 2001. Prior to this purchase, no buses had been purchased since 1996. As shown in **Exhibit 9-18**, the district regularly purchased two to four buses each year between 1991 and 1996.

Exhibit 9-18
WHISD Bus Fleet List

Bus	Year	Mileage (5/01/01)	Average Daily Miles	Annual Miles
Regular Program Buses				
43	1985	53,249		
45	1985	99,827		
46	1986	30,435		
48	1986	170,043	39	7,215
50	1986	144,085	41	7,585
51	1986	236,223	60	11,100
52	1987	185,987	45	8,325
53	1987	144,567	34	6,290
54	1987	146,276	55	10,175
55	1987	164,804	32	5,920
56	1991	122,872	46	8,510

57	1991	105,427	26	4,810
58	1991	115,101	25	4,625
60	1992	110,143	34	6,290
61	1992	100,468	36	6,660
63	1993	107,513	38	7,030
64	1993	87,055	47	8,695
66	1994	107,340	57	10,545
67	1994	81,851	34	6,290
71	1995	91,180	92	17,020
72	1995	103,568	76	14,060
73	1995	112,961	66	12,210
78	1996	62,350	54	9,990
79	1996	60,678	30	5,550
80	1996	74,129	39	7,215
81	1996	64,305	37	6,845
Average	10 years	110,863	45	8,389
Special Program Buses				
47	1986	164,937	48	8,880
59	1992	83,862	32	5,920
62	1993	74,053	45	8,325
77	1995	69,716	42	7,770
Average	10 years	98,142	42	7,724

Source: Wilmer-Hutchins ISD Bus Fleet, provided by the Transportation Department, October 2001.

Note: The list provided did not include daily miles for buses 43, 45 and 46, so the average daily miles and annual miles are blank for these buses.

Between 1991 and 1996, bus purchases averaged 2.7 buses per year, for an average annual cost of \$133,091 each year (\$49,293 x 2.7 buses). As a result of not purchasing a small number of buses each year after 1996, the

district was required to purchase a larger number of buses in 2001 at a cost of \$345,051 (\$49,293 x 7 buses, assuming the 48-passenger buses have a similar cost to the 71-passenger buses).

Comal ISD adopted a vehicle replacement plan designed to replace buses every 11 to 15 months to coincide with the average 10- to 15-year bus life cycle. The plan is designed to maintain the necessary fleet size and concurrently reduce bus hazards by replacing buses once they reach the end of their life cycle. The plan also staggers replacement costs, avoiding large capital expenditures in any one year.

Recommendation 86:

Adopt a long-range vehicle replacement plan.

WHISD should adopt a long-range bus replacement plan. While buses represent a large capital investment for districts, there are many benefits to replacement plans. Replacement plans regularly introduce new buses into the fleet. The buses with the highest cost of maintenance can be replaced. The regular purchase of buses can prevent the purchase of large numbers of buses in any one year. By adopting the plan as policy, the district shows its commitment to providing funds to the plan annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops and presents a vehicle replacement plan to the director of Business Services.	August 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the vehicle replacement plan to the school board.	September 2002
3.	The school board adopts the vehicle replacement plan.	October 2002
4.	The school board budgets funds to support the vehicle replacement plan.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

From 1996 to 2001, WHISD spent an average of \$98,586 on buses per year (\$49,293 x 10 buses purchased in 1996 and 2001/5 years). Purchasing two buses per year, which would place the fleet on a 15-year replacement cycle, will also cost \$98,586 per year (\$49,293 x 2 buses).

Consequently, this recommendation does not have a fiscal impact; the primary effect of this recommendation is to spread the cost of bus purchases out and avoid large expenditures in any one-year.

FINDING

WHISD school buses often break down, disrupting service and inconveniencing students and school administrators. During the last week of September 2001, the director of Transportation estimated there had been five or six breakdowns since the beginning of the school year. The director of Transportation did not provide documentation to estimate the number of breakdowns per month or per each mile, but the director's estimate indicates that the district is experiencing roughly two to three breakdowns a month. The maintenance supervisor confirmed that the department experiences many breakdowns. The director of Transportation and maintenance supervisor said the age of the buses is a factor. The maintenance supervisor said he performs basic preventive maintenance tasks every 7,000 miles. Preventive maintenance tasks mentioned include oil change and lube job, filter change and checking the drive train, belts, brakes and electrical systems. In the transportation industry, basic vehicle preventive maintenance should be performed every 3,000 and 6,000 miles.

As shown in **Exhibit 9-19**, the average bus in the WHISD fleet operates less than 12,000 miles a year, which means that each bus undergoes the 7,000-mile preventive maintenance check only once a year. The buses are listed in order of preventive maintenance inspections per year. Ten buses average less than one inspection a year, 15 buses average at least one but less than two inspections per year, and two buses average two or more inspections per year.

**Exhibit 9-19
Annual Preventive Maintenance Inspections**

Bus	Annual Mileage	Annual PM Inspections (Mileage/ 7,000 Miles)	Bus	Annual Mileage	Annual PM Inspections (Mileage/ 7,000 Miles)
58	4,625	0.66	77	7,770	1.11
57	4,810	0.69	52	8,325	1.19
79	5,550	0.79	62	8,325	1.19
55	5,920	0.85	56	8,510	1.22
59	5,920	0.85	64	8,695	1.24
53	6,290	0.90	47	8,880	1.27
60	6,290	0.90	78	9,990	1.43
67	6,290	0.90	54	10,175	1.45

61	6,660	0.95	66	10,545	1.51
81	6,845	0.98	51	11,100	1.59
63	7,030	1.00	73	12,210	1.74
48	7,215	1.03	72	14,060	2.01
80	7,215	1.03	71	17,020	2.43
50	7,585	1.08	Average	8,291	1.18

Source: Wilmer-Hutchins ISD Bus Fleet, provided by the Transportation Department, October 2001.

Note: The list provided did not include daily miles for buses 43,45, and 46, so these buses are not included in this exhibit.

Some districts schedule preventive maintenance based on calendar days rather than mileage to ensure even low-mileage vehicles receive regular preventive maintenance. In Fort Worth ISD, for example, school buses are scheduled for a preventive maintenance inspection every 45 days. In Martin County School District in Florida, school bus inspections are performed every 20 days, which is required by Florida state law and local district policies.

Recommendation 87:

Establish a formal preventive maintenance plan that uses a calendar schedule.

The Transportation Department should develop a preventive maintenance program that involves performing preventive maintenance inspections every 60 days. Each inspection should contain all of the elements of the existing preventive maintenance program. The VMIS should be used to schedule each vehicle and to track preventive maintenance performed on time.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The maintenance supervisor develops a 90-day preventive maintenance inspection plan.	April 2002
2.	The maintenance supervisor schedules each vehicle for a 3,000-mile inspection every 90 days.	May 2002

3. The maintenance supervisor tracks preventive maintenance.	Quarterly
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. This more aggressive preventive maintenance program may result in cost savings because the program will help avoid serious maintenance problems and breakdowns. Staffing levels are adequate to increase the preventive maintenance schedule.

FINDING

The Transportation Department has access to a Vehicle Maintenance Information System (VMIS) provided by Region 10 Information Services Division. The Region 10 Information Services Division maintains a central mainframe computer for use by member districts to support functions such as payroll, general ledger and warehouse inventory. Member districts log into the Information Services Division network and access the mainframe and its programs remotely. The VMIS system is one of the programs available. The VMIS provides:

- Detailed cost information of fuel consumption, maintenance services and a complete inventory of parts used;
- Controlled preventive maintenance schedules identifying vehicles in need of periodic service;
- Immediate online access to vehicle information;
- Comprehensive reporting (daily, monthly and yearly) showing fuel usage, maintenance, cost, labor time and parts inventory summarized by vehicle, department and district;
- Identification of retail purchase for gasoline, parts and labor; and
- Reference capabilities with warehouse inventory for vehicle parts.

The director of Transportation said the district would like to use the system by the end of the school year and, as noted above, cited a "learning curve" as the main obstacle for implementation. A Region 10 Information Services Division representative said free training and customer support is available for all programs upon request. Training is available both on-site and at Region 10 Information Services Division offices and usually is one to two days in length.

Both the director of Transportation and the maintenance supervisor keep copies of maintenance records. Each bus has its own file that contains completed maintenance invoices. Records appear to be well organized; however, paper records make it difficult to quickly analyze maintenance costs and look for maintenance trends. The maintenance supervisor would

like to use a VMIS system and have access to a computer to help him track maintenance and keep track of parts.

WHISD does not keep parts inventory records. The maintenance supervisor said he sometimes tracks parts information on a pad of paper. The maintenance supervisor makes \$18.33 an hour, the mechanic makes \$15.12 an hour and benefits are 13.4 percent.

Recommendation 88:

Schedule training for, and implement, the Vehicle Maintenance Information System.

The director of Transportation should schedule an on-site training class with Region 10 for himself, the maintenance supervisor and the mechanic. After training, the director of Transportation, maintenance supervisor and mechanic should begin using the VMIS regularly to enter and store information on vehicles, repairs, preventive maintenance and fuel. The maintenance supervisor should also enter the parts inventory into the program and keep the information updated. The maintenance supervisor should use the VMIS to track information for each vehicle on a regular basis, look for trends and schedule preventive maintenance. The VMIS will help identify vehicles that should be replaced.

The maintenance supervisor should have access to a computer and Internet connection to access the VMIS. If the maintenance shop environment is not appropriate for a computer or does not have access to telephone lines for Internet access, a computer should be set up in the Transportation building in a convenient location for the maintenance supervisor to enter and access data.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation schedules training with Region 10 for himself, the maintenance supervisor and the mechanic.	As soon as available
2.	Region 10 provides a training class on the use of the VMIS.	As soon as available
3.	The director of Transportation and maintenance staff begins using the VMIS to track vehicle maintenance and parts information.	As soon as training is completed
4.	The maintenance supervisor reviews vehicle maintenance information on a regular basis to look for trends and schedule preventive maintenance.	Monthly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation has a one-time cost for training and a computer. While the training class itself is free, the maintenance supervisor and mechanic will be paid for their time. The maintenance supervisor makes \$18.33 an hour, the mechanic makes \$15.12 an hour and benefits are 13.4 percent. A two-day training class, or 16 hours of training each for the maintenance supervisor and mechanic, will have a one-time cost of \$607 ($[\$18.33 \times 13.4 \text{ percent}] \times 16 \text{ hours} + [\$15.12 \times 13.4 \text{ percent}] \times 16 \text{ hours}$). A computer and monitor for the maintenance supervisor are estimated to have a one-time cost of \$800.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Schedule training for, and implement, the Vehicle Maintenance Information System.	(\$1,407)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 10

FOOD SERVICES

This chapter examines the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) Food Services operations in four sections:

- A. Organization and Staffing
- B. Meal Participation
- C. Financial Management
- D. Computerization and Automation

The district's Nutrition Services Department is responsible for providing students with economical, nutritious and appealing meals. The Nutrition Services Department's goals are: to provide breakfast, lunch and after school snacks to students and staff in accordance with local, state and federal regulations; to help teachers in the area of nutrition education; and to provide technical assistance and training to cafeteria managers and staff at each school.

BACKGROUND

During 1998-99, the Nutrition Services Department invested \$96,197 in capital equipment. **Exhibit 10-1** shows revenue and expenditures for the Nutrition Services Department from 1998-99 through 2001-02. As indicated in the exhibit below, WHISD's Nutrition Services Department has a positive fund balance.

Exhibit 10-1
WHISD Nutrition Services Revenue and Expenditures
1998-99 through 2001-02

Revenue Source	1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Budget	2001-02 Budget	Percent Change 1998-99 Through 2001-02
Local	\$200,903	\$187,125	\$172,344	\$172,344	(14.2)
State	\$14,673	\$14,242	\$14,242	\$12,894	(12.1)
Federal	\$1,024,542	\$973,631	\$937,065	\$945,848	(7.7)
Total	\$1,240,118	\$1,174,998	\$1,123,651	\$1,131,086	(8.8)
Expenditure Category					

Payroll	\$439,905	\$485,774	\$508,112	\$525,729	19.5
Contracted Services	\$71,099	\$112,093	\$70,800	\$38,200	(46.3)
Food and Supplies	\$586,559	\$587,630	\$621,435	\$512,397	(12.6)
Other Operating Expenses	\$4,575	\$7,570	\$6,140	\$4,760	4.0
Capital Outlay	\$96,198	\$18,569	\$200,000	\$50,000	(48.0)
Total	\$1,198,336	\$1,211,636	\$1,406,487	\$1,131,086	(5.6)
Net Profit	\$41,782	(\$36,638)	(\$282,836)	\$0	N/A
Fund Balance (Beginning)	\$580,865	\$622,647	\$586,009	\$303,173	N/A
Fund Balance (Ending)	\$622,647	\$586,009	\$303,173	\$303,173	N/A

Source: WHISD Annual Financial Reports, 1998-99 through 1999-2000; WHISD Budget Reports, 2000-01 through 2001-02; Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 1998-99 through 1999-2000.

Chapter 10

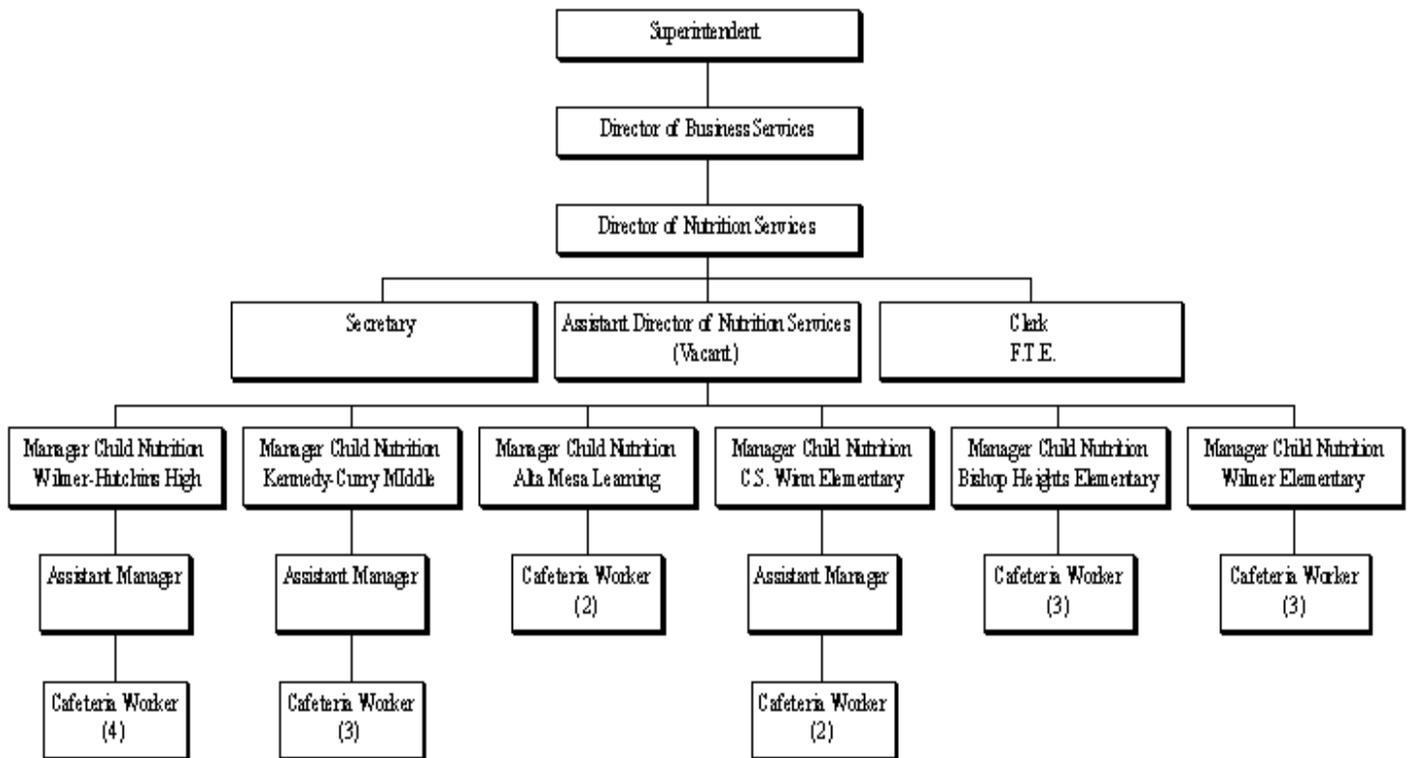
FOOD SERVICES

This chapter examines the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) Food Services operations in four sections:

A. ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The director of Nutrition Services manages the WHISD Nutrition Services Department and reports to the director of Business Services. The department operates six cafeterias and has 30.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) budgeted positions. Of these, two positions are vacant and 28 are employed, five of who are substitute workers. The Nutrition Services Department's organization chart is shown in **Exhibit 10-2**.

Exhibit 10-2
WHISD Nutrition Services Department Organization
2001-02



Source: WHISD director of Nutrition Services, September 2001.

WHISD's Nutrition Services Department participates in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Meal, Commodity, A la Carte and Snack programs.

The department adopted the following mission statement:

Provide proper nutrition to all students in a safe, sanitary and pleasing environment.

The director of Nutrition Services has more than 30 years experience in food service programs and has been the director of Nutrition Services for 29 years.

FINDING

The director of Nutrition Services and the cafeteria managers plan, design and monitor WHISD menus to ensure they comply with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) dietary guidelines. The guidelines recommend that no more than 30 percent of a meal's calories come from fat, with less than 10 percent coming from saturated fat. The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs also require school lunches to provide one-third of the Recommended Daily Intake for protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories. The WHISD Nutrition Services Department uses a software program called NutriKid to ensure menus comply with these dietary recommendations. Cafeteria staff enter menu items into NutriKid for dietary analysis. This analysis ensures the school breakfast and lunch programs comply with the Recommended Daily Allowances.

COMMENDATION

WHISD provides meals that meet or exceed all nutritional standards set by the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

FINDING

WHISD cross trains staff members of the Nutrition Services Department at all school cafeterias for key job positions. The director of Nutrition Services and cafeteria managers designed a ten-week rotation program in which the staff rotates through key areas such as entrée, vegetable, bread and dessert preparation. The director of Nutrition Services tracks this training through computerized employee schedules documenting food station rotations for employees at each cafeteria. Cross-training staff members improves employee morale and overall productivity.

COMMENDATION

WHISD has established a program to cross-train staff for key positions in all of its cafeterias.

FINDING

The WHISD Nutrition Services Department exceeds industry standards for produced meals per labor hour (MPLH) in all but one cafeteria. MPLH is a standard performance measure of efficiency for school districts, hospitals, restaurants and other food service operations. MPLH is calculated by dividing the number of meal equivalents served in a given period of time by the total hours worked during that period. If the MPLH rate is lower than the recommended rate, either the number of meals served is low or the number of hours worked is high. Conversely, if the MPLH figure is higher than the recommended rate, either the cafeteria is serving a large number of meals or the employees are working efficiently. The number of hours worked is a function of two variables: the number of staff employed; and the hours assigned per worker. The WHISD cafeterias calculate their MPLH.

Exhibit 10-3 illustrates the industry standards for recommended MPLH.

**Exhibit 10-3
Recommended Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)**

Number of Equivalents	Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)	
	Conventional System	Convenience System
	MPLH	MPLH
Up to 100	8	9
101 - 150	9	10
151 - 200	10-11	12
210 - 250	12	14
251 - 300	13	15
301 - 400	14	16
401 - 500	14	18
501 - 600	15	18
601 - 700	16	19
701 - 800	17	20
801 - 1,000	18	21
1 ,001 up	20	23+

Source: Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence by Josephine Martin and Martha T. Conklin.

There are two food preparation systems used in school cafeterias: the conventional system and the convenience system. The conventional system includes the preparation of food from raw vegetables and from scratch, while using some bakery bread and prepared pizza. The convenience system uses the maximum amount of processed food and disposable items. The convenience system generally means a higher MPLH ratio, but it does not provide the maximum nutritional value. By the same token, the conventional system generally results in a lower MPLH ratio because more time is needed for food preparation, but the nutritional value of foods served is likely to be closer to USDA dietary guidelines. WHISD's Nutrition Services Department uses a conventional system at all cafeterias. The review team used the conventional system to evaluate food services productivity because it is a more conservative approach than the convenience system, and it is the system the district uses.

Exhibit 10-4 shows the average daily number of meal equivalents, total daily hours worked and the calculated MPLH for each campus compared to the industry-recommended MPLH standards.

Exhibit 10-4
WHISD Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)
(Conventional System)
2000-01

School	Average Daily Meal Equivalents Served	Total Daily Hours Worked	WHISD MPLH	MPLH Industry Standard	MPLH Variance
Wilmer-Hutchins High	438	40.5	10.81	14	(3.19)
Kennedy-Curry Middle	611	34.0	17.97	16	1.97
Alta Mesa Learning Center	576	21.0	27.43	15	12.43
Bishop Heights Elementary	425	27.5	15.45	14	1.45
C.S. Winn Elementary	448	27.5	16.29	14	2.29
Wilmer Elementary	432	27.5	15.71	14	1.71
Total	2,930	178	17.28 avg.	14.5 avg.	2.78

Source: WHISD director of Nutrition Services, September, 2001.

Note: MPLH conventional system standards taken from Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence by Josephine Martin and Martha T. Conklin.

Alta Mesa Learning Center employees almost double the MPLH industry standard, while the Wilmer-Hutchins High School employees produce almost 11 MPLH which is more than three MPLH below industry standards.

COMMENDATION

WHISD calculates MPLH at all of its cafeterias and exceeds industry standards at all but one cafeteria.

Chapter 10

FOOD SERVICES

This chapter examines the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) Food Services operations in four sections:

B. MEAL PARTICIPATION

WHISD participates in the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Donated Commodities Program. Students who live in households where the income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive a *reduced-price* meal. Students are eligible to receive a *free* meal if the household income is less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level. The federal government reimburses WHISD for student lunch and breakfast costs as shown in **Exhibit 10-5**.

Exhibit 10-5
National School Lunch and Breakfast Program
Reimbursement Rates for WHISD
2000-01

Reimbursement Rates	
Reimbursable Lunches	
• Full-Price	\$0.21
• Reduced-Price	\$1.64
• Free	\$2.04
Reimbursable Breakfasts	
• Full-Price	\$0.21
• Reduced-Price	\$0.82
• Free	\$1.12
Breakfast-Severe Needs Schools:	
• Reduced-Price (Additional)	\$0.21
• Free (Additional)	\$0.21

Source: WHISD director of Nutrition Services, September 2001.

The director of Nutrition Services is responsible for ensuring that the Nutrition Services Department complies with the USDA-sponsored school breakfast and lunch programs, as well as the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regulations for the Child Nutrition Program. School principals and the director of Nutrition Services share the local responsibility for administering these programs.

FINDING

WHISD has no adequate mechanism to identify all students who are eligible for the free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs. As a result, WHISD may not be obtaining the maximum amount of state funding available for its economically disadvantaged students.

Compensatory education and Title I funding flows to school districts based on the number of students identified as economically disadvantaged. The term-economically disadvantaged-is defined as those students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The funds allocated for these students are then funneled to districts so they can provide additional services to students at risk of dropping out of school. While not all economically disadvantaged students are considered at risk, the number of economically disadvantaged students closely mirrors the number of at-risk students. The federal government, therefore, uses this figure as its criterion for determining compensatory education and Title I funds.

Most Texas school districts receive approximately \$500 - \$800 per child annually in compensatory funds for every child who is found eligible for free and reduced-price meals. This funding provides an additional 20 percent of the state allotment for these students. WHISD's 2000-01 compensatory educational allotment is \$553 per student.

Student eligibility is determined using federal guidelines. Eligibility forms, including a multi-child family application, are given to students at the beginning of the school year and are included in new student enrollment packets. Public announcements are also made on the free and reduced-price meal programs. It is the parent's responsibility to show that the family is eligible and to provide an estimated annual family income and the number and ages of their children. WHISD works with the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) to maintain its eligibility record for DHS certification.

Some successful programs that Texas school districts use to ensure all eligible families are enrolled in the free and reduced-price meal program are listed below.

- **Parental assistance** - Some districts provide all parents a user-friendly form and campus-based assistance to complete the forms. This approach can be critical for non-English speaking parents or parents who may have difficulty understanding the procedure to complete the form. El Paso ISD provides applications in both English and Spanish. Other districts provide staff during school registration and the first days of school to help parents complete paperwork.
- **Multi child-family identification** - Districts work to make sure all children within a family are automatically qualified even if the parent fills out a form for only one child.
- **Direct certification** - Some districts do not require families to complete an application for the federal free and reduced-price meal programs if the Texas Department of Human Services has already pre-certified the children as eligible through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- **Campus-based at-risk budgeting** - Other school districts encourage principals to aggressively qualify eligible students because funds for at-risk programs by linking their campus budgets to the number of identified students. In Texarkana ISD, for example, principals are motivated to identify every eligible child for the program because their campus' Compensatory and Title I budget is linked directly to the number of children identified as eligible.
- **Advertising campaigns** - Some districts use billboards, posters and flyers to explain the features and benefits of the free and reduced-price meal program.
- **Incentive awards** - Other districts award prizes to students and parents for completing an eligibility application. Houston ISD placed all of the applicants' names in a hat and drew for prizes including bicycles, radios and televisions. Some prizes were donated by local businesses, and some were purchased from the food services budget.

Recommendation 89:

Identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

The more children who are identified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals, the more compensatory education and Title I funding the district can obtain.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Nutrition Services and principals devise ways to increase participation.	April 2002
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2.	The director of Nutrition Services, cafeteria managers and principals develop a participation form for use in all schools.	May 2002
3.	The director of Nutrition Services develops an incentive program for the schools with the highest participation.	June 2002
4.	The director of Nutrition Services and principals establish performance measures for improving participation rates for all cafeterias.	August 2002
5.	The director of Nutrition Services and the director of Business Services continue to work to obtain the maximum amount of federal compensatory education money.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

By identifying an additional 225 students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals (an estimated 10 percent increase in its economically disadvantaged student percentage (2,250 x 10 percent = 225), the district could collect an additional \$124,425 (225 x \$553) in Title I and Compensatory Education funding. Because compensatory education enrollment is based on the prior-year six-month average of eligible students, new eligible students would not entitle the district to additional compensatory funds on those students until 2003-04. Because the district has already begun efforts to identify additional students after discussions with the review team, the savings are estimated in the first year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425	\$124,425

FINDING

Overall meal participation rates at WHISD are below industry standards and those of the peer school districts. Student meal participation is important to school districts because the district receives federal reimbursements for every student who participates in meal programs, and it ensures that more students receive adequate nutrition as directed by the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.

Exhibit 10-6 illustrates WHISD's meal participation rates compared to peer districts.

Exhibit 10-6 WHISD Participation Rates Compared to Peer School Districts

District	Breakfast	Lunch
Wilmer-Hutchins	18%	71%
Lancaster	20%	77%
La Marque	28%	49%
De Soto	18%	75%

Source: TEA, Reimbursement Report, October 2001.

WHISD's expected and actual lunch participation rates are compared to industry standards in **Exhibit 10-7**.

Exhibit 10-7
Expected and Actual WHISD Lunch Participation Rates by Grade Level

Grade Level	Expected Participation Rate	Actual WHISD Participation Rate	Percent Difference Expected vs. Actual
Elementary	70%	77%	7%
Junior High	60%	51%	(9%)
High School	50%	44%	(6%)

Source: Pannell-Martin, School Foodservice Management, 4th Edition, and WHISD Nutrition Services Department, September 2001.

WHISD offers a traditional breakfast and lunch served at designated times in the school cafeterias. Principals and teachers said in interviews that long lines and facilities limitations are major reasons for the lack of participation. WHISD is a closed campus, which means students cannot leave the campus to eat. This situation limits any food service competition to lunches brought from home, vending machines or students who choose not to eat. Traditionally, a closed campus situation helps participation rates; however, previous remarks about the lines and facilities issues would seem to affect participation.

Various factors have had an impact on breakfast participation, including the late arrival of morning buses. Because the breakfast program begins before the school day actually starts, many students do not have adequate time to eat breakfast or choose not to participate for other reasons. Identifying ways to encourage more students to participate in the breakfast program is an ongoing concern for most school districts.

Exhibit 10-8 shows the results of the WHISD Food Service survey conducted by the review team.

**Exhibit 10-8
WHISD Food Service Survey
2001-02**

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.					
Principal's and Assistant Principals	0%	60%	20%	20%	0%
Teachers	6%	5%	15%	15%	9%
Parents	7%	37%	23%	19%	14%
Students	2%	28%	31%	25%	14%
Food is served warm.					
Principal's and Assistant Principals	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers	9%	68%	9%	7%	7%
Parents	7%	44%	28%	19%	2%
Students	9%	20%	36%	20%	14%
Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.					
Principal's and Assistant Principals	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers	9%	34%	22%	24%	12%
Parents	7%	30%	30%	19%	14%
Students	9%	14%	14%	23%	39%
Discipline and order are maintained in the school's cafeteria.					
Principal's and Assistant Principals	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers	9%	66%	10%	10%	4%
Parents	9%	56%	14%	14%	7%
Students	11%	36%	25%	17%	11%
Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.					

Principal's and Assistant Principals	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers	19%	57%	7%	9%	7%
Parents	7%	49%	21%	19%	5%
Students	9%	28%	25%	17%	20%
Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.					
Principal's and Assistant Principals	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers	15%	63%	7%	10%	4%
Parents	7%	47%	28%	12%	7%
Students	8%	30%	28%	17%	17%

Source: TSPR Survey, October 2001.

Note: All rows may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Long lines, available time to eat, and the quality and taste of food affect participation rates. WHISD students said that the layout of the cafeteria is not convenient for them to quickly select meals, which limits their time to socialize with other students. National studies have shown that children who eat breakfast learn better, are less likely to be absent and have fewer discipline problems than those who do not eat breakfast.

According to *School Foodservice Management for the 21st Century*, Fifth Edition, several factors influence students' attitude toward food at school:

- Menu -(the single most important variable);
- Price (no longer the most important variable);
- Quality of food;
- Image of the food service program held by students, especially by high school students;
- Value parents place on nutrition, and their perception of how nutritious the meals are at school;
- Ages of students (older students participate in school lunch programs less frequently than younger ones);
- Gender of students (male students participate more frequently than females);
- Location (urban or city-students from rural areas participate more often than students from urban areas); and
- Attitudes of the food service employees.

As noted above, menu is the single most important variable in participation rates. In recognition of this fact, the American School Food Service Association conducted a survey of 600 school food service directors to determine the trend in menu items. The most popular new items introduced in 1999-2000 were:

New Entrees:

- Wraps/sandwiches (62 percent)
- Pizza varieties (56 percent)
- Chicken/turkey dishes (54 percent)

New Vegetables:

- Raw veggies (51 percent)
- New salads (49 percent)
- Potato dishes (41 percent)
- Stir-fry vegetables (36 percent)

New Side Dishes:

- Bread/biscuits/rolls (51 percent)
- Pasta dishes (47 percent)
- Rice dishes (46 percent)

New Desserts:

- Rolls/muffins/snack cakes (51 percent)
- New kinds of cookies (49 percent)
- Ice cream/ice cream novelties (37 percent)
- Crisps/cobblers (35 percent)

New beverages:

- Bottles/flavored water (52 percent)
- New types of juices (49 percent)
- Sport drinks (37 percent)
- Slushes/smoothies/shakes (36 percent)

Some districts across the nation have instituted a Grab-and-Go breakfast to increase participation. The Ysleta ISD has reported that students at 37 elementary schools eat in cafeterias, while students at four high schools eat on the bus in route to school, in cafeterias, snack bar or the classroom.

Grab-and-Go tests in two elementary schools increased participation by 50 and 90 percent, respectively.

Some school districts have placed mobile carts around the driveways of schools, creating a drive-through meal atmosphere similar to that of fast-food restaurants. Other schools have established a morning snack time during which breakfasts-in-a-bag are loaded into shopping carts and delivered to students in class. Lyford ISD wheels one hot and one cold mobile cart to each classroom for breakfast. They serve an average of 1,350 student breakfasts in a district of 1,516 students.

Shifting the class time of the first or second period by 10 or 15 minutes for studying or eating has helped increase breakfast participation in Brownsville ISD, which began a breakfast-to-go program in 1994. District officials realized a 617 percent increase in participation at the high school where they tested the program.

Recommendation 90:

Eliminate operational barriers and implement new programs to increase meal participation.

Some ways to increase meal participation include: establishing separate serving lines for teachers; adding additional lunch periods to reduce overcrowding at facilities where there is limited serving and seating space; placing kiosks or serving carts and menu boards at different locations in the school to cut down on long serving lines; evaluating present menus and recipes that introduce popular foods that contain recommended nutrients; and improving customer service training for Nutrition Services Department employees.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Nutrition Services and the cafeteria managers evaluate current participation rates, review new programs and best practices and develop a plan to increase participation.	May 2002
2.	The director of Nutrition Services designs and implements a program that will emphasize the key elements necessary for the Nutrition Services Department to increase meal participation.	August 2002
3.	The director of Nutrition Services monitors participation rates after implementing new programs and makes changes when necessary.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 10

FOOD SERVICES

This chapter examines the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) Food Services operations in four sections:

C. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Nutrition Services Department has an annual operating budget of more than \$1.1 million for 2001-02. The greatest increase in food service expenditures stemmed from salary increases. The largest decrease occurred in the food and supply expenditures. Revenue to support the Nutrition Services Department comes from three main sources: federal; state and local funds as initially shown above in **Exhibit 10-1**.

Exhibit 10-9 shows the expenditures of the Nutrition Services Department from 1998-99 to 2001-02.

Exhibit 10-9
Nutrition Services Department Expenditures

Expenses	1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Budget	2001-02 Budget	Percent Change 1997 to 2001
Payroll	\$439,905	\$485,774	\$508,112	\$525,729	20%
Professional and Contracted Services	\$71,099	\$112,093	\$70,800	\$38,200	(46%)
Food and Supplies	\$586,559	\$587,630	\$621,435	\$512,397	(13%)
Other Operating Expenditures	\$4,575	\$7,570	\$6,140	\$4,760	4%
Capital Outlay	\$96,198	\$18,569	\$200,000	\$50,000	(48%)
Total	\$1,198,336	\$1,211,636	\$1,406,487	\$1,131,086	(6%)

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1998-99 through 1999-2000 and WHISD Budget Reports 2000-01 through 2001-02.

FINDING

WHISD receives commodities from the USDA and participates in a cooperative purchasing program with the Regional Education Service Center Region X (Region 10). The contract with Region 10 helps to reduce overall food, storage and delivery costs. The cooperative's goal is to obtain substantial savings on specific food items and commodities for member districts by volume purchasing. USDA commodities are processed into usable menu items to help reduce total raw food costs. WHISD's participation in the cooperative saves an estimated \$12,000 annually based on current market prices and applying a 3 percent discount.

COMMENDATION

WHISD takes advantage of its participation in the Region 10 cooperative to achieve a substantial savings on its food costs.

FINDING

WHISD's Nutrition Services Department does not prepare financial reports that give management sufficient information to monitor income and other indicators ensuring the department's financial accountability. Each cafeteria's revenue and expenditures are documented, but the district does not use the data to calculate profitability statements. The district does use a point-of-sale system at all schools that captures critical financial and meal participation information. The business office does not help the Nutrition Services Department generate financial reports that would enable officials to monitor the Nutrition Services Department's finances.

Many food service operations in other Texas school districts have instructed the district's Business Office to monitor food services and prepare financial reports on food service operations. *Controlling Costs in the Food Services Industry*, recommends five financial and operating reports to distribute to cafeteria directors and managers so they can monitor 12 areas and take corrective action if needed. The 12 areas are:

1. the budget, which spells out management's ideals, goals and objectives in financial terms;
2. a profit-and-loss statement, which is an accumulative report that shows how the operation has performed financially over a period of time;
3. a balance sheet, which provides a snapshot of how the operation is doing at a specific time, tells what the operation is worth and describes its assets (facilities and equipment);
4. a cash flow statement, which shows the cash inflow and outflow for a period of time;
5. performance ratios and trends;
6. food cost as percentage of sales;

7. labor cost as percentage of sales;
8. the break-even point;
9. inventory turnover;
10. participation rates;
11. average daily labor costs; and
12. average daily food costs.

The key to profitability in food services is to control total costs. Directors and cafeteria managers should be aware of costs in comparison to national trends and how to evaluate operational efficiency.

Recommendation 91:

Compile and distribute monthly financial data to all cafeteria managers.

Monthly financial data are required to formulate program strategies and budget projections. The director of Nutrition Services should use the financial data to monitor the operational efficiency of each cafeteria and make changes as necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Nutrition Services determines the financial data that are necessary to distribute and takes steps to ensure that the reports are made available each month.	April 2002
2.	The director of Nutrition Services and the director of Business Services plan a financial forecast for the next year using projected enrollment, menu changes and changes in operating procedures.	May 2002
3.	The director of Nutrition Services and cafeteria managers forecast financial performance for the next year, identifying available sources of revenue such as free, reduced-price, paid and a la carte meals.	June 2002
4.	The director of Nutrition Services and cafeteria managers develop ways to monitor expense and income trends.	July 2002
5.	The director of Nutrition Services and cafeteria managers make program changes to increase profit margins.	August 2002
6.	The director of Nutrition Services monitors program changes, makes modifications as needed and reports results to the director of Business Services on a continual basis.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 10

FOOD SERVICES

This chapter examines the Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) Food Services operations in four sections:

D. COMPUTERIZATION AND AUTOMATION

FINDING

The Nutrition Services Department has installed a point-of-sale (POS) software system at all schools, but personnel are not trained to use or interpret captured financial and participation data. School cafeteria managers enter meal purchase information, but do not use the financial reports that the POS generates. The director of Nutrition Services must drive to each school or request a fax to receive POS reports from the district's cafeterias. This system has a network capability, which means that all of the POS terminals could be electronically linked to each other and to the Nutrition Services Department's computer, providing computerized access to all terminal information and reports. Networking the terminals, however, has not been a top priority for the district.

Recommendation 92:

Use all of the features of the point-of-sale system to generate the reports that are necessary to evaluate the department.

The POS software efficiently and accurately captures participation data that are required for state and federal reimbursements. Training should be provided for all staff members of the Nutrition Services Department to allow them to use all the system's features. The director of Nutrition Services and the Technology coordinator should consider the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of networking the POS system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Nutrition Services and the Technology coordinator meet with the software vendor to determine full system interface capabilities.	April 2002
2.	The director of Nutrition Services and the Technology coordinator conduct a study to determine the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of networking the POS terminals.	May 2002
3.	The director of Nutrition Services and cafeteria managers	June 2002

	determine all transactions related to the information needed for an effective reporting system.	
4.	The director of Nutrition Services and the Technology coordinator develop a timeline for training cafeteria managers to interpret POS data.	July 2002
5.	The director of Nutrition Services, all cafeteria managers and staff receive adequate training to ensure they can use the POS system and interpret the data effectively.	August 2002
6.	All cafeteria managers and the director of Nutrition Services use reports generated by the POS system to increase the department's efficiency.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) safety and security operations in three sections:

- A. Discipline Management
- B. Safety and Security
- C. Truancy

Creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, teachers and other school district employees is critical to ensuring a comfortable learning environment. Recent media coverage of school violence in several states has caused Texas parents, educators, taxpayers, communities and lawmakers to pay more attention to safety and security concerns. No Texas community-large or small, urban or rural, prosperous or poor-is immune from the potential of violence. Maintaining the safety of our state's schools is a top priority.

BACKGROUND

In *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School*, based on the results of its school performance reviews, the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) describes a model safety plan that includes a variety of strategies to reduce the potential for violence in schools. According to the report:

- *"Prevention is the foundation laid to deter crime and violence."*
Prevention can best be described as the planning phase of a school safety program. It consists of the groundwork the district must lay to prevent a crime or an act of violence from occurring.
- *"Intervention means stepping in before it goes too far."*
Individuals will invariably find a way to violate any preventive system. Within a school, some students may consciously plot and scheme to break the rules, while others will simply forget them in a momentary lapse of judgment. Intervention involves stepping in at the first sign of trouble and stopping it before it becomes a disaster.
- *"Enforcement outlines what should be done in the aftermath."*
A disruptive or violent deed has occurred and now something must be done. Enforcement in our public schools includes enforcing school rules, administering punishment when applicable and helping children who have disobeyed the rules learn how to alter their behavior.

Exhibit 11-1 outlines the 10 steps of TSPR's plan. The first three steps illustrate an effective prevention strategy, the next four steps address

intervention, and the last three steps relate to enforcement. When districts have implemented these steps in a comprehensive system, results have been significant.

Exhibit 11-1
Keeping Texas Children Safe in School
January 2000

Strategy	Steps to be Taken
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your goals and objectives: where your district is going, and what you want to accomplish. • Establish clear expectations for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. • Address warning signs before they turn into trouble.
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for trouble before it finds you. • Recognize trouble when you see it. • Have individuals in the right place and at the right time to intervene. • Have a plan of action appropriate for the occasion and practice it.
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave no room for double standards. • Ensure that discipline management extends inside and outside the classroom. • Alternative programs are not just a matter of compliance with the law; they are many students' last chance at success.

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

In the summer of 2000, the Federal Bureau of Investigation called together a group of more than 100 educators, law enforcement officials, victim assistance advocates and mental health professionals for a "summit" on school violence. The group determined that to address school violence and prevent its occurrence, school leaders should:

- Work together as a community to keep children safe, formalizing agreements and sharing information with law enforcement such as floor plans, persistent absenteeism and class schedules;
- Create a visible law enforcement presence in schools so students develop trust and feel more comfortable talking with officers;

- Create a communications link to receive information from students, like a "Crime Stoppers" anonymous tip line; and
- Adopt a reasonable zero-tolerance policy, asking the community for phrasing input to ensure better understanding to send a clear and consistent message that violent threats will not be tolerated.

School officials must take several critical steps before considering what specific programs or security techniques would be most effective in their district. They should consider the following elements in arriving at the most suitable safety and security program:

- Identify the school security threats that exist in the district;
- Establish an environment where school security is the concern of the board, staff, students and parents; and
- Establish how to best reduce security risks in a rational, effective and timely manner.

Only by addressing these elements will a school district be in a position to make "zero tolerance" a reality. Zero tolerance policies generally outline a set of behaviors that are not tolerated on the campus. Students are removed from the regular school setting for any infraction that falls within the scope of the policy.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) safety and security operations in three sections:

A. DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

Safe schools encourage socially acceptable behavior to promote learning. Effective discipline management programs set clear expectations of acceptable behavior; define penalties for misconduct; and administer discipline consistently.

Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code requires school districts to adopt a discipline plan and a student code of conduct. Specifically, the law requires school districts to set out standards for acceptable student conduct and identify the reasons a student may be removed or transferred from a classroom, school or alternative education program. The law also requires counties with populations over 125,000 to create a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) to provide an educational setting for expelled students so they can continue their education.

WHISD's student code of conduct defines what types of behavior are acceptable and what consequences a student will face for an infraction. The type of discipline administered depends upon the seriousness of the infraction. Under WHISD's student code of conduct, students may be subjected to any of the following:

- Corporal punishment;
- Detention;
- In-school suspension;
- Suspension from school, not to exceed three school days at a time;
- Removal to a Discipline Alternative Education Campus (DAEP except for children under age six);
- Extension of a DAEP removal term; and
- Expulsion.

Exhibit 11-2 lists the consequences of some of the misbehaviors listed in the code:

Exhibit 11-2 **WHISD Student Code of Conduct**

Disciplinary Consequences	Prohibited Conduct
----------------------------------	---------------------------

Corporal Punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the discretion of the campus administrator
Detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more classroom rule violations • Cutting class; leaving school without permission • Truancy; loitering • Cheating; copying another student's work • Dress code violation
In-School Suspension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated behavior warranting detention; failure to attend detention or comply with rules • Use of offensive language or physical gestures • Possession of tobacco products • Fighting • Gang-related behavior (including membership) • Accessing prohibited Internet sites on a school computer • Using any school supplies to threaten harm
Suspension from School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated conduct warranting off-campus suspension (OCS) placement; failure to attend OCS or comply with rules • Threatening to harm another person • Possession, use or distribution of drugs or alcohol; use of tobacco products • Sexual misconduct or harassment • Stealing, theft • Possessing knives, razors, chains, or other objects that can be used to threaten or harm
Discipline Alternative Education Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct punishable as a felony • Assault that results in bodily injury • Terrorist or bomb threat • First time drug offenses • Indecent exposure; public lewdness • Robbery or extortion • Off-campus commission of Title 5 Offenses (e.g., murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, sexual assault) • Use or possession of a prohibited weapon • Aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, kidnapping • Felony-punishable use, possession or sale of prohibited substances

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serious or persistent misbehavior in DAEP• Commission of an unlawful act and non-compliance in traditional or alternative school settings
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Source: WHISD Student Code of Conduct, 2000-01.

FINDING

C.S. Winn Elementary has developed an innovative solution to disciplinary problems. Instead of removing a student from class, the principal provides students who are being disciplined an opportunity to participate in positive experience designed to help the students channel their energies in a positive and productive way. For example, students may be required to write a report on respect and then present it to their class.

In one situation an older student was allowed to read stories to younger children. By providing these students the opportunity to interact with their peers or with younger children, the principal has been able to turn a negative situation into a positive experience.

COMMENDATION

The C.S. Winn principal is confronting students' disruptive behavior and helping them channel their energies into positive educational experiences.

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) safety and security operations in three sections:

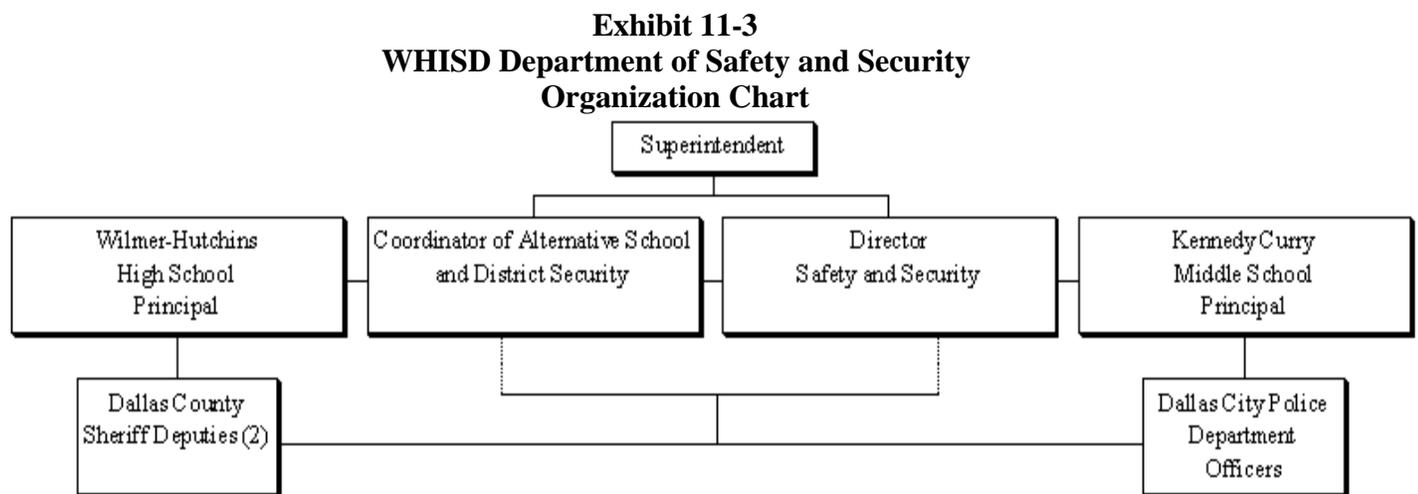
B. SAFETY AND SECURITY

A secure school environment requires comprehensive planning and appropriate policies and programs that address the needs of both the district as a whole and the unique situation each school faces. Some districts use police departments to improve security, as well as security equipment to monitor potential security hazards.

WHISD's director of Safety and Security is a former principal and football coach who has been with the district for 25 years and has established a strong rapport with the students and parents who were former WHISD students. The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety is a former peace officer who is responsible for overseeing the district's safety programs.

The district supplements its internal safety programs by contracting with the Dallas County Sheriff's Department and the City of Dallas Police Department. Two deputy sheriffs are present throughout the day at the high school, and two Dallas police officers are at Kennedy-Curry middle school. The county is responsible for paying the salaries of their law enforcement officers. WHISD pays the county a fee for the service under a contract approved by the school board. The city law enforcement officers receive \$30 per hour. According to the district, WHISD pays these officers directly as if they were working overtime since they begin work in the district after completing their regular city shift.

Exhibit 11-3 presents the current organization chart for the district's Safety and Security Department.



Source: WHISD Interviews - coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security, October 2001.

FINDING

The deputy sheriffs assigned to the high school are stationed in the back of the school out of sight of students and parents, except when the metal detector is in operation. The high school principal stated that the officers patrol the school; however, they maintain their base station in the back of the school. Although the deputy sheriffs have an office in the high school, they are not in open view of the students. The high school principal does not want the officers permanently stationed in the front of the school because she feels it sends the wrong message to school visitors and parents. Additionally, these officers do not provide the administration with a daily oral or written report describing security activities at the campus.

The district is paying for the services of the law enforcement officers to improve the overall safety and security of the district. By removing the officers from plain view, however, the district is not receiving the full benefit of these services and is undermining the effectiveness of the program. The superintendent has said the district is working to make the officers more visible. During an on-site visit in October 2001, however, the officers were not readily noticeable.

Many Texas school districts embrace the physical presence of law enforcement officers. Fort Worth ISD (FWISD) has developed active partnerships with the Fort Worth Police Department and the Benbrook Police Department to provide officers to district campuses. These officers are an integral component of FWISD's safety and security program. They maintain a visible presence in all areas on campus to deter school crime and they interact regularly with students and administrators. The students understand that there will be consequences associated with inappropriate or illegal acts. Many smaller Texas districts also maintain the presence of a police or security officer on district campuses and regularly obtain status reports for administrators on the security of the campus including positive interactions between students and officers.

Recommendation 93:

Position law enforcement officers in plain sight of all students, staff and parents.

The presence of law enforcement officers often fosters a sense that the school premises are safe. Their presence can help deter problems from occurring when students are aware of the potential of being arrested. In addition, a police officer at a school can reduce the seriousness of a violent incident by stopping it quickly. Police officers may also effectively conduct student assemblies or student activities that convey safety and security information.

The officers assigned to the Wilmer-Hutchins High School should be stationed in the front of the school and continue to make periodic physical rounds of the school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The high school principal repositions the law enforcement officers so they are stationed at the front of the school and constantly patrolling the school grounds.	April 2002
2.	The law enforcement officers meet with the high school principal once each day to share	April 2002 and

	information.	Ongoing
3.	The law enforcement officers conduct monthly student assemblies to speak to the students about safety issues and to help create a partnership between law enforcement, school administration, students and parents.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not consistently enforce nor consistently require visitor sign-in when visitors enter district buildings. At present, there is no way to differentiate among staff, students and visitors in many of the schools. The district's high school administration has begun to issue badges without pictures to some staff. The district's director of Special Programs additionally maintains a mandatory sign-in log for itinerant teachers and diagnosticians. There are no district procedures, however, stating or explaining this precedence nor requiring it at any or all campus or district locations and for all extraneous visitors, vendors or temporary staff. Some district staff members remarked that they usually know vendors who report to various campuses and do not always require those persons to provide identification upon request. Moreover, physical signs directing visitors to the main office of each school are not readily visible and, when posted, are only in English.

Killeen ISD (KISD) uses picture identification badges as a preventive security measure for the district initially instigated to improve the security in its high school. The district expanded this precautionary measure and required all central administrators, school administrators, teachers and district auxiliary personnel to wear these badges that immediately identify staff and visitors to both students and district personnel. Some districts using staff identification badges keep temporary badges in the office in the event that personnel forget their badges on occasion. Additionally, many Texas school districts prominently display signs at unlocked entrances directing visitors to the main office. These signs are frequently posted both in English and Spanish to adequately inform visitors that may need bilingual directions.

Recommendation 94:

Require all staff to wear picture identification badges, provide a numbered visitor badge for all district visitors and post check-in signs in plain sight.

Having detailed and consistent procedures outline steps that every school and the administration office should take to identify both staff and visitors should help the district increase a sense of security as well as ensure that every campus is enforcing security measures in the same way at all times. Picture identification badges increase the awareness of unauthorized adults in a school at all times. The district can offset the cost of providing identification badges by creating a vocational education project whereby students help a staff coordinator such as the district's copy supervisor produce the badges. The district's copy supervisor should be responsible for monitoring the program. The district should either institute a penalty if staff members forget their badges or have temporary badges on hand in each school office to

be used by district personnel if needed. Designated school or district administration or a law enforcement officer should immediately escort any visitor without a properly assigned visitor badge out of district facilities.

In addition, the district should post better signage directing visitors to campus offices. Signs should be in English and Spanish so that all visitors to the school know where to go to register with office staff. It should be almost impossible to be in a school without being asked to state one's purpose for being there.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety creates uniform procedures outlining consistent steps for use of picture identification badges for district staff, numbered visitor's badges, a sign-in log for each campus and administrative office and signage directing visitors to campus office locations.	April 2002
2.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety presents procedures to the superintendent for approval and implementation and coordinates with the district's supervisor of copy services to discuss the picture identification implementation strategies.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent's secretary prepares a sign-in log for each district building.	April 2002
4.	The superintendent requests funds from the board to purchase the necessary equipment to create picture identification badges, numbered visitor's badges and new signs.	May 2002
5.	The board approves funds to purchase the necessary equipment and materials.	May 2002
6.	The superintendent's secretary purchases numbered visitor's badges and distributes to each campus.	May 2002
7.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety orders signs printed in both English and Spanish directing visitors to each campus' main office.	June 2002
8.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety requests three bids for the appropriate badge production equipment.	June 2002
9.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety receives signs and coordinates installation at each school with district maintenance staff.	July 2002
10.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety completes a purchase requisition for equipment from the lowest bidder.	July 2002
11.	The equipment is purchased and delivered to the Safety and Security Department.	August 2002
12.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and Direct Safety coordinates identification badge creation and distribution with the district's supervisor of copy services.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

There will be a one-time cost of implementing this recommendation. The district will have to purchase a complete identification system, which will include:

- Pentium P-II 800 MHz 12MB of RAM, 20 GB HDD, 40X CD-ROM, 17" Monitor, 1,44MB Floppy Drive, Windows 98, Keyboard and Mouse;
- Kodak DVC-325 USB digital camera, 640x480 pixels;
- Fargo DTC 515 ID Card printer, full-color, single-sided printing, 200 card dual hopper, 110/220 V;
- UltraCard PVC cards, 30 mil, 500 Count;
- Full-Color Ribbon with Resin Black panel and Clear Overlay, 400 prints;
- 60" Tripod;
- Cleaning Kit; and
- Technical Support for one year.

The price of this system is \$5,295. In addition, the district will require an initial supply of accessories for the system. These accessories include:

- Badge holders;
- Nylon lanyards;
- Slot hole punch;
- Blank PVC cards; and
- Badge clips.

If the district purchases a set of 500 of the above items, it will cost \$613. The hole-punch will only have to be purchased once. The district will have to purchase additional supplies every three years.

In addition, the district must purchase numbered visitor cards at a cost of \$395. Finally, the district must purchase 14 signs, two for each school, two for the central administration office and two for the annex building at \$125 per sign.

The total cost of implementing this recommendation will be an initial cost of \$8,053 (\$5,295 + \$613 + \$395) + (\$125 x 14 = \$1,750). The district will be required to spend an additional \$553 every three years (\$613 - \$60 for the hole punch).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Require all staff to wear picture identification badges, provide a numbered visitor badge for all district visitors and post check-in signs in plain sight.	(\$8,053)	\$0	\$0	(\$553)	\$0

FINDING

There is no master key for the district, nor is any staff member assigned the responsibility of keeping track of the district's keys. The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety does not have access to any keys for the district. He believed that the master keys were kept in the maintenance department. The superintendent told the review team, however, that no one in the district has a master key.

Many school districts physically label keys and have the employees sign a document when keys are issued. Keys are required to be returned to the district upon an employee's termination. Additionally, many districts randomly conduct physical key counts and ensure that employees still have the keys that correspond to the signed documents in their personnel files. When a key is found to be missing, the district immediately takes action to re-key all corresponding locks in affected areas. This procedure ensures that the safety of students and staff is not compromised if a lost key finds its way into the hands of an unauthorized person.

San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) has prepared a detailed administrative policy dealing specifically with issuing keys. The district assigns accountability for all keys to the school or central administration. The policy outlines who in the district is entitled to have keys, when they are assigned and what procedure should be followed if an employee is terminated or leaves the district. In addition, the district presents detailed instructions concerning master keys, non-master keys, duplicate keys and lost or stolen keys. Finally, the policy includes procedures for re-keying.

Additionally, Killeen ISD is currently researching keyless electronic locks for its school buildings. These locks use an identification card with an encoded magnetic strip that records when the cards are used to access buildings. The assistant superintendent at Killeen indicated that installation of these locks costs approximately \$2,000 per door.

Recommendation 95:

Rekey the district locks and establish a district policy and a set of procedures designed to track all district keys.

The district should immediately rekey all of the district locks and distribute new keys to staff. It should then establish a policy to ensure that distribution of keys is strictly monitored. Each key should be manually coded and assigned to a specific staff member. Each staff member should be required to sign for their keys and be held accountable if they lose their key. The keys should be stamped "Not to be duplicated." The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety can track the issuance of keys on an Excel spreadsheet. The superintendent, the coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety, the principals and the Maintenance supervisor should be the only district staff with a master key.

While the option of electronic locks might not be immediately practical due to the limitations on wiring systems in older buildings or due to high cost, it should be considered if new additions or new schools are constructed in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, in conjunction with the coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety, develops a formal policy for master key distribution and informs the district's employees of the new policy.	April 2002
2.	The Maintenance supervisor sets up a schedule to rekey all locks in the district.	April 2002
3.	The Maintenance supervisor rekeys all district locks on a weekend when the school buildings are	May

	not in use and subsequently collects and destroys all existing keys..	2002
4.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety prepares a log to track all keys that are distributed in the district.	May 2002
5.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety distributes new keys to the employees under the guidelines of the new policy.	May 2002
6.	All staff leaving the school for the summer turn in their keys.	May 2002
7.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety reissues keys to returning staff and updates tracking log.	August 2002
8.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Safety takes responsibility for making and issuing keys to district staff as authorized by the superintendent.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

According to 2000-01 PEIMS data, WHISD has 437 employees. The cost of implementing this recommendation assumes that district administration employees will share some offices and that the teachers' aides will share classrooms, thereby reducing the total number of offices to rekey to 348. The cost to rekey is approximately \$18 per lock and key. In addition to the employees' offices, the district must rekey all outside doors and provide master keys to the eight authorized personnel. This step would involve another 17 locks and eight keys.

The total cost of implementing this recommendation would be a one-time cost of \$8,935 (348 x \$18 per office) + (89 additional keys to shared offices x \$2.50) + (17 locks x 8 keys x \$18).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Rekey the district locks and establish a district policy and a set of procedures designed to track all district keys.	(\$8,935)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The district has not addressed a number of small safety hazards including:

- A number of schools do not lock outside doors during school hours. These doors face the street and allow an unknown person to enter the building undetected. Most of the doors are equipped with a panic bar that allows them to be locked from the outside but open from the inside hallway. The district, however, is not properly using these mechanisms.
- The outside lighting at the schools, annex building and central office is extremely poor. A number of staff commented to the review team that they did not feel safe leaving the building after dark.
- There are a number of open grease vats that are stored outside the schools. These vats could represent a health hazard by attracting rats and other vermin. In addition, these vats could spill and cause slippery spots where a student or staff member could be injured in a fall.

- There are no posted directions to the office from the parking lot.

Recommendation 96:

Eliminate outstanding safety hazards to improve district safety.

The school board should establish a policy to keep all outside doors closed and locked during school hours with the exception of the main door in each school and the school administration office. Motion detection lighting should be installed at all facilities. All potential hazards, such as the open grease vats, should be identified and either immediately removed or secured so that students cannot reach them.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Maintenance supervisor inspects all panic bars on all school doors, makes sure that they are functioning properly and completes necessary repairs.	April 2002
2.	The director of Nutrition Services researches cost of storage units for grease vats.	April 2002
3.	The director of Nutrition Services submits request including cost and receives approval to purchase storage units for grease vats from director of Business Services.	April 2002
4.	The director of Nutrition Services purchases storage units for the grease vats, instructs all personnel on their use and ensures they are used consistently.	May 2002
5.	The superintendent drafts a policy requiring all doors except the main door of each school to be locked during the school day and submits to the board for approval.	May 2002
6.	The board approves the policy, and the superintendent informs all principals and staff about the policy.	June 2002
7.	School principals ensure door policy is enforced.	June 2002 and Ongoing
8.	The Maintenance supervisor researches cost, submits a request and receives approval from director of Business Services to purchase motion detector lights for the exterior of each district building.	June 2002
9.	The Maintenance supervisor orders and ensures installation of motion detector lights outside of each district building.	July - August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

There is a cost associated with implementing this recommendation.

The cost of installing motion detection lighting will be \$11,695 (68 lights @ \$21.98 each) plus the cost of hiring an electrician (102 hours of an electrician's time @ \$100 per hour).

The district will require five storage units, one for each cafeteria in order to protect the grease vats. Each storage unit's cost is \$250 for a total cost of \$1,250 (\$250 x 5 units).

The total one-time cost of implementing this recommendation will be \$12,945 (\$11,695 + \$1,250).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Eliminate outstanding safety hazards to improve district safety.	(\$12,945)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter examines Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District's (WHISD) safety and security operations in three sections:

C. TRUANCY

Truancy issues, based upon students who miss school, are connected to compensatory education funding. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was originally enacted in 1965 and serves as the largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. This law funnels about \$7 billion for compensatory education to school districts throughout the nation. School districts use compensatory funds to provide supplemental services to improve the educational performance of low-achieving students or students at risk of dropping out of school in high-poverty schools.

WHISD's 1999-2000 student attendance rates were ranked at 1,032 of Texas' 1,034 regular school districts. When attendance rates decline, the district's state funding levels also decline. In 2000-01, WHISD had an average student attendance rate of 93.6 percent. The state attendance average in 1999-2000 was more than 95 percent with a target rate of 94 percent for districts each year. Attendance is crucial to school districts; however, it is no longer one of the criteria used to determine accountability ratings by TEA. Additionally, a high percentage of the student population is at risk of dropping out of school. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students, 73.8 percent, is much higher than the state average of 49.8 percent.

The district employs one truancy officer who reports to the district's director of Business Services. The truancy officer holds a Master's degree in Social Work. The district's coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security said that he plans to address truancy issues in the future and hopes to coordinate efforts with the truancy officer.

FINDING

WHISD lacks a formal truancy plan including definitions and procedures and performance measures to increase attendance, address dropout prevention and truancy issues and track any associated funding. The truancy officer has been frustrated, however, by the lack of tracking tools and communication between the campuses and the Truancy Department. The goal of the district's Student Services Department is to reach and maintain a 95 percent daily attendance rate, reduce truancy and reduce the

								Goal
Wilmer-Hutchins High School	93.7%	90.9%	90.3%	91.2%	90.4%	88.5%	90.8%	-3.2%
C.E.P./Wilmer-Hutchins *	83.2%	89.5%	89.7%	88.9%	91.2%	88.1%	88.7%	-5.3%
Kennedy-Curry Middle School	95.3%	92.8%	90%	92.2%	92.1%	92.7%	92.6%	-1.4%
C.S. Winn Elementary	97.3%	96.1%	94%	95.8%	96%	95.3%	95.8%	+1.8%
Alta Mesa Elementary	97.4%	96%	95.2%	95.3%	94.8%	94.7%	95.5%	+1.5%
Bishop Heights Elementary	96.6%	94.8%	92.9%	93.3%	94.2%	92.9%	94.1%	+0.1%
Hutchins 5th Grade Center	97.8%	96%	93.8%	95.9%	96%	95.9%	95.9%	+1.9%
Wilmer Elementary	96.3%	95.1%	94.8%	93.7%	95.2%	95.6%	95.1%	+1.1%
Wilmer-Hutchins JJAEP	22.2%	54.5%	Closed				34.4%	-59.6%
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	95.7%	93.9%	92.4%	93.3%	93.4%	92.9%	93.6%	-0.4%

Source: Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District Annual Needs Assessment Report, 2000-01.

**Note: Wilmer-Hutchins ISD formerly contracted Alternative Education Program services from Community Education Partners (CEP) until 2000-01.*

In 1999-2000, the district's dropout rate was 1.2 percent, compared to the state average of 1.3 percent. **Exhibit 11-5** compares the dropout rates at WHISD to each of its peers, Region 10 and the state from 1995-96 through 1999-2000; the last full year AEIS data is available for those

statistics. WHISD is beginning to make progress over the dropout rates experienced in 1997-98 and 1998-99.

**Exhibit 11-5
Dropout Rates
1995-96 through 1999-2000**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	0.1%	0.0%	2.0%	2.6%	1.2%
De Soto ISD	0.7%	1.3%	0.9%	0.8%	0.5%
La Marque ISD	3.6%	1.9%	1.5%	0.2%	0.4%
Lancaster ISD	0.1%	0.7%	1.8%	0.5%	0.8%
Region 10	1.3%	1.5%	1.2%	1.0%	0.9%
State	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.3%

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

WHISD's overall student attendance rate for 1995-96 through 1999-2000 is below the state average and below the peer district average for the same time period (**Exhibit 11-6**). The last full year for which attendance data is available is 1999-2000. Attendance data is reported the year after it is generated.

**Exhibit 11-6
Attendance Rates for WHISD and its Peer Districts
1995-96 through 1999-2000**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	92.7%	92.4%	93.1%	92.8%	92.9%
De Soto ISD	96.0%	95.8%	96.0%	96.0%	96.4%
La Marque ISD	95.0%	95.2%	94.5%	94.9%	95.0%
Lancaster ISD	95.1%	95.1%	94.5%	95.5%	95.7%
Region 10	95.2%	95.3%	95.4%	95.7%	95.7%
State	95.1%	95.2%	95.3%	95.4%	95.6%

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

Note: Each year's data is reported in the following year's AEIS report.

Austin ISD (AISD) is using an Absent Student Assistance Program (ASAP) to help reduce unexcused absences and truancy cases. The program is a community-based collaborative effort involving AISD, Del Valle and Pflugerville independent school districts and the Travis County constables. Its purpose is to improve student attendance by notifying parents when their children are absent, keep children in school and prevent their involvement with the juvenile justice system. The process involves the following steps:

- Schools refer students who are absent without an excuse to the county constables.
- The county constables telephone the parents upon the student's first absence.
- On subsequent absences, constables may visit the student's home with the district representative and investigate the reason for the absence.
- Each constable's deputy receives four hours of training on the actions required under the Texas Education Code to deal with family problems.

ASAP has improved school attendance rates in Travis County school districts and allowed these districts to receive additional state funding by increasing their average daily attendance (ADA). Through an interlocal agreement with Travis County, AISD offsets 50 percent of the costs of operating ASAP in its schools.

Fort Worth ISD has funded a truancy intervention program with a full-time assigned prosecutor from the District Attorney's Office and a counselor from the Lena Pope Home. The Comprehensive Truancy Intervention Program (CTIP) is a collaborative effort between the FWISD, Tarrant County District Attorney's Office, FWPD, Tarrant County Juvenile Probation Department, Lena Pope Home, mental health and social service providers, and community-based organizations. The Lena Pope Home contracts with FWISD as a DAEP. The home is an established program for troubled youth in Fort Worth. FWISD provides teachers and the home provides behavior interventionists for referred students. The Lena Pope Home also provides behavior interventionists to other district programs. The program's goal is to reduce the number of truantries by combining law enforcement and family social services. Schools have been selected based on absenteeism.

Comal ISD instituted procedures to lower student truancy and increase attendance as a result of a Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) in 1999. Following a TSPR progress review in 2000, the district realized \$62,400 in increased revenue as a direct result of procedures instituted to increase attendance.

Dallas ISD (DISD) maintains the Dropout Prevention/Intervention and Recovery Office staffed with eight to 14 employees and an annual operating budget of more than \$595,000. This office provides students at risk of dropping out of school Campus Learning Communities, which are special programs at 19 high schools that provide self-paced, computer-assisted academic accelerated learning opportunities primarily for over-age ninth graders. Participants in the Campus Learning Communities are also given an option to work in the community. DISD offers Central Learning Communities with the same academic components as the campus programs and summer school for all students in these programs who could benefit from an extended instructional year. These efforts have succeeded in increasing attendance rates and decreasing dropout rates for DISD.

Recommendation 97:

Establish a truancy management plan addressing truancy, attendance and dropout prevention and raise the district's attendance rate to 94 percent.

The district should establish a truancy management plan and educate staff, students and parents about the district's expectations concerning student attendance. A formal definition of "unexcused absences" should be established and applied consistently throughout the district. By providing the truancy officer with the necessary tools to perform the job function, the district should also begin to move toward a goal of a 94 percent attendance rate.

As attendance increases, so will the district's funding on both a state and federal level. The district may wish to explore opportunities to partner with other districts in the future to address truancy issues or to create its own program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business Services partners the coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security with the truancy officer to contact Dallas ISD's Dropout Prevention/Intervention and Recovery Office, Fort Worth ISD's truancy program staff, Austin ISD's Absent Student Assistance Program (ASAP) personnel the	March 2002
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	Travis County constables involved in the ASAP program and Comal ISD's truancy prevention program staff to obtain information.	
2.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security and truancy officer work in cooperation to create a formal plan for truancy including definitions, performance measures and procedures addressing attendance, truancy and dropout prevention and decide if a proposal to provide joint services with another district is warranted.	April 2002
3.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security and truancy officer appropriately contact Dallas ISD or other districts with a proposal to provide joint services for truancy prevention to find out if the other district or districts are interested in this type of cooperative effort and include this information in the formal plan.	May 2002
4.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security and the truancy officer present the plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	June 2002
5.	The superintendent and board approve the plan and any interlocal agreement if a joint truancy plan is desired.	July 2002
6.	The coordinator of the Alternative School and District Security and the truancy officer implement the plan and educate district staff, students and parents as various stages of the plan are implemented.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

An increase of 1.1 percent in attendance would bring WHISD up to the state targeted attendance rate of 94 percent (92.9 percent + 1.1 percent). This increase would result in a similar increase in total refined ADA (average daily attendance) conservatively estimated at 1 percent or the equivalent of 32 students (3,283 enrollment x .01). Assuming that each additional student enrolled would generate at least \$4,000 in new state aid (Total State Aid for 2000-01 of \$13,545,433 ÷ 3,283 enrollment), the district could realize \$128,000 in additional revenues per year.

Based on the 2000-01 figures, the fiscal impact assumes that the district would achieve half of the savings, the first year that the plan is in place and full savings in the following years. The additional revenue resulting from an increase in ADA should more than offset any cost incurred by the district.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Establish a truancy management plan addressing truancy, attendance and dropout prevention and raise the district's attendance rate to 94 percent.	\$64,000	\$128,000	\$128,000	\$128,000	\$128,000

FINDING

WHISD does not provide the truancy officer with adequate tools to reduce absenteeism. The truancy officer does not have online computer access to student attendance records and must rely on the school clerks to provide the information on absent students. The truancy officer does not have online access to the attendance records, and cannot identify potential problem students and begin intervention before the problem escalates. In addition, the truancy officer does not have spreadsheet applications installed on her personal computer to statistically track the number of truanancies, the number of charges filed, the number of appearances in court and the number of pending truancy cases.

A Norfolk, Virginia school district collects data on students who are tardy, absent, leave school grounds without permission or are truant and brought to school by local officials and analyze the data for trends. The district uses the information to develop programs and procedures to combat truancy. In 1995-96, the district realized a 1 percent increase in student attendance.

Recommendation 98:

Provide the truancy officer with online access and spreadsheet applications to track truancy statistics.

Consistency in absenteeism reporting and clear performance measures help truancy programs in school districts reduce student absences. The truancy officer should track and analyze past truanancies and identify the students who are at risk of becoming truancy cases. Based on the analysis, the truancy officer can develop a more effective truancy plan that meets the district's needs. The officer can use the data to identify students that are truant consistently and intervene before court action is necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Technology coordinator sets up on-line access on the truancy officer's personal computer.	April 2002
2.	The Technology coordinator installs a spreadsheet application on the truancy officer's personal computer.	April 2002
3.	The truancy officer implements spreadsheet applications to track truancy statistics.	May 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The costs associated with the Internet connection should already be included in the district's budget.

Appendix A

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

The following comments convey the public forum and focus group's perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Need to have board meetings so that the parents can voice their opinion or just socialize.
- Site base management is not working.
- Superintendent has no communication with lower level staff.
- Some of the board members hire their friends and give them a high salary.
- The school board attorney makes too much money for the district to furnish him a laptop computer with our tax dollars.
- They raised the school taxes without a tax election.
- Look at the Tax Code 45.003 and see if the rate is over 1.50.
- We need help out here, they are voting to spend our tax dollars any way they want to.
- The board members give themselves benefits by eating at every board meeting.
- Board members are not supposed to compensate themselves.
- Board members should follow the laws!
- Responses from the district need to be made in a timely manner. Responses are never within the time periods prescribed by law.
- Secretaries are hired when we are still in a deficit and when we have enough at hand that can be utilized.
- The school voted to do a RIF in June 2001, but reassignments were made instead. Now we are being sued by staff members because people were hired in their position at a higher pay.
- A new board should be appointed.
- Need a school board lawyer - who knows what he's doing and doesn't write his own contract salary amount. This is wrong.
- Taxes are too high. The board does not ask anyone about their taxes. They only tax poor people.
- Need a new board, not one who appoints themselves and sues anyone who runs against them with tax money from the people who have no knowledge of any of this.
- Board members should have term limits in single-member districts.
- Superintendent needs to meet with LPAN Association.

- Would like to see board members more professional at board meetings.
- Need new people on the board.
- Would like to see board working with superintendent.
- Would like to see the board work more professionally.
- Would like for president and board members to communicate more so that the meetings will not be a catch-up session for the board and president.
- Would like for board members to be more informed.
- Superintendent should follow all board directives.
- Board should read board packet before meetings.
- Board packets should be delivered 5 to 7 days before meetings.
- Board Governance nor superintendent are following directions.
- All packets should be given to the teachers before each meeting, and parents should be able to come to each meeting.
- Would like to see new board members - Until we have new members it will not get any better.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- All schools need books.
- Books are not available to most students.
- As a mother, I really don't understand why my child doesn't have the text books that are needed to further learning skills.
- Our kids do not have enough homework to be done at home. Why?
- Why is the administration office getting raises? Please answer.
- More Hispanics are moving to the district and there are not enough ESL teachers at each school.
- TAAS tests need to be supervised by monitors to ensure correct procedures are followed.
- District needs more classes for advanced students.
- Need for teachers that care for students to learn. Amen.
- The district needs to supply the students with books. There are some classes where students do not have books.
- We need bilingual teachers to help students. I believe this is one reason some of the test scores are down.
- Some time ago there was a group of teachers upset about their health insurance in the school district. They were not showing up for work because of their insurance, so we the people of this district are coming before the district to say we want the tax money back that we paid to the state, because our children are not learning anything from their teachers in this district.
- The Special Education Department only baby-sits.
- We need more certified teachers teaching in their fields. Principals should be certified too.

- We need books! There should be school and not a social meeting where kids meet their friends. We need better security and programs.
- There is no special education and no talented and gifted teacher at each school.
- Please take all WHISD schools located in Dallas to Dallas TX. We need DISD.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- We are never notified about anything.
- Board meeting unproductive - no follow through.
- Would like to see board members more active in the community.
- If a board member has a child, I think that child should also attend WHISD and not another district. That has always been the case. Our board members send their kids elsewhere for education.
- Notices are not given to students to give to parents.
- Would like to see some of our schools welcome the community instead of giving cold feelings.
- Our buildings are not fit to teach in (some) if not all.
- There is no communication with the community when asked, someone always say we'll get back to you but they never do.
- There is no community/parent involvement. We lack it. PLEASE HELP!!
- Residents never receive notices of meetings.
- Notices should be posted in the newspaper for all board meetings.
- Stop stealing from our children. They are our future.
- Close the schools down!
- Give me my tax dollars back until you improve the quality of education in this district.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Reduction in personnel order by board was never done.
- I think the district should hire more certified teachers.
- I think that the district should get out of the buddy system and hire qualified people. There is a lot of waste in maintenance in this district.
- Both statements above need quick assessment.
- Need vast improvement. No upward mobility programs and no promotion from within, only hiring of friends.
- Many certified people are not hired if they are not known. Quick, do something.
- Administrators need to live within the district.
- Need to quit hiring friends and relatives.
- Please see if DISD would take over this school district.

- I feel that some board members are getting kickbacks under the table.
- We need to annex out of this district.
- He has never gone to court and only tells the board to pay them.
- We're never noticed when TEA or anyone that's dealing with the school district comes here.
- Never have a better time to let anyone know that how this board works.
- They want to keep everything in their small click.
- Three to four people want to run the school and city.
- Please have DISD take over this district.
- Do a safe and knowledgeable hiring. Know the backgrounds of who you hiring. Talk about salary and development.
- Tired of all new employees getting more money than the ones educating all of our children.
- I'm tired of every time a new superintendent comes in he/she always spends money only in the Administrative office and not on the children.
- Every time a board meeting is held the only things that are on this list is for the Administrative building only.
- No buddies allowed.

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- Facilities not maximized.
- Needs better planning custodial services.
- Also on maintenance of schools.
- Maintenance contracts should be canceled and proper bidding procedures need to be followed.
- We need better restroom facilities.

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- No certified Risk Management/Project.
- Management personnel.
- No advisement of cash and investment practices.
- Health insurance too high.
- Less people should be authorized to write checks for the district.
- Too much eating goes on during our board meetings.
- Everybody seems to have credit cards with the district's Tax number. What's going on?
- Most of the Administration lives outside of Wilmer - Hutchins, but they make the money and don't even pay taxes in the district. That's where the money goes.
- I've been a citizen of Hutchins for 28 years. This school was once a 5A district now it's a 3A district. What I would like to see take

place is all schools that are in Dallas, TX go under the DISD school district. We need a WHISD only for Hutchins, TX! I'm tired of paying these high taxes in the school district and my grandchildren cannot get a qualified education due to the on going power struggles of a selected click of some people.

- We should be able to make drastic changes in the election 2002, if TEA does not put a stop to this nightmare robbing the kids of their education.
- Termination process ends in suits.
- I think WHISD attorneys do not defend the district.
- I am a tax paying citizen living in Hutchins for 28 years, over 65 disabled and would like to see our city taxes and school taxes go down.
- All city and school members' children should attend WHISD schools, not Dallas schools.
- Just give me my tax dollars back, and I will be more than happy to send my child to another school district where he can learn more each and everyday instead of two days out of the week's time.
- My child is coming home and asking me to take him out of the school district in which I pay my taxes. And we need nurses that know their job so if or when a child gets sick, the nurses will know how to take care of them until the child's mother or father is called.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Community never knows what's going on.
- I believe the district should have more qualified and certified people doing our financial work.
- Where is the money?
- I would like to see the taxes lowered for citizens over 65 and disabled.
- Principals need to be people oriented to kids and parents.
- If I pay \$800 in taxes, why can't I be contacted in writing of the status or the happenings in the district. It only cost \$.34 to mail something.
- Our tax rate is always set too high.
- It was reported that there was a million dollar deficit in Spring 2001. More money is spent uselessly in Wilmer-Hutchins than in the entire state of Texas and our children are not learning.
- More items (computers, televisions etc.) are constantly being lost or stolen from our schools.
- Citizens never get reports as to what is happening in the school.
- We need to know, we want to know.
- Why raise taxes without new processes along the way.
- We need to stop hiring more secretaries.
- Secretaries are overpaid.

- Too many people can sign checks.
- When the school improves, I would gladly give more money for taxes, but not now. The children are getting nothing in return.
- Don't raise the taxes if you're not going to give an optimistic and gallant education.
- List some sort of report every six months as where the budget stands. We need to improve.
- Would like to see school taxes lowered.
- Our school doesn't need to be talking about a budget or taxes because the peoples' tax dollars are not going into the school where they should be. If you can't do right by our children, do better for their education. Why are we made to talk of budgeting, taxes or financial reporting? So give back to us - the people - so we can take care of our young children, so that they can and will be able to succeed in life.
- A new board needs to be appointed, that reflects all citizens in the district.
- Proper bid procedures need to be followed.
- Glad of the audit.
- A new single-member board district, please!

PURCHASING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- The district should really get a good purchasing program in place. There is a lot of waste in this area.
- Poor management in this area.
- All current contracts should be canceled and bid procedures followed. All new contracts need to be negotiated through proper channels.
- Textbook custodian should be hired immediately.
- We are mere inventors and not machines, etc.

FOOD SERVICE

- You ask yourself, do you like to eat cold food?
- Do you like to eat off of paper plates?
- Why don't you come and eat lunch at school and tell me what you think.
- Hot foods and nutritious foods need to be provided.
- Need to give the children more than a little spoon full of food.
- First, we need to exterminate the roaches in the food area.
- Our kids need a balanced meal.
- Need cooked food and not rotten and spoiled food.
- No food allowed at the school board meetings for the trustees. They also shouldn't eat in front of the citizens while there.
- Please allow Dallas ISD to take over Wilmer-Hutchins ISD.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

- Computers are stolen as soon as they enter the district. So how can the kids learn? Also, there aren't enough competent personnel for teaching this subject.
- Computer and printers not up and running in computer graphics.
- Some of the schools have computers but not printers.
- Need more school tech equipment, also training.
- All areas are not Internet accessible especially the attendance area.
- It is important to attain accuracy in this area.
- Classes need to be offered more than twice a week and after school.
- All computers need to be up and running.
- Hire a person to teach this class.
- Need more trained personnel.

TRANSPORTATION

- The buses are coming they say.
- Transportation is bad.
- The bus drivers need to care more about the safety of our children.
- Drivers should do a bus check to make sure everything is working before leaving the bus yard.
- Better bus drivers.
- Need more planning for route drivers.
- Need to have meetings with the district on routes of the buses.
- Need more drivers along with new buses that have air in doors that work.
- Please allow Dallas ISD to take over WHISD.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Need to have more meetings on discipline, safety and security for students.
- Teachers need special training in this area.
- Special attention needs to be made to ISS school.
- Keep the metal detectors on and use them! Security officers, pay attention. Watch out for fights and arguments.
- Security contract was not bid and should be awarded on fair opinion. All bids should be sealed and opened in a public forum.
- We were born into a free world and our children should feel safe when they come to school.
- If the staff would care more about our children and make them feel safe at school, there would be no need for security or enforcement from the law. If the staff would talk to and treat our children with

kindness and love, I believe the kids would respect them as they do their parents.

Appendix B

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions

The following comments convey the parents' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

Demographic Data

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No response			
	16.3%	72.1%	11.6%			
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	
	4.7%	72.1%	7.0%	0%	2.0%	
3. How long have you lived in Wilmer-Hutchins ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No response
	41.9%	11.6%	39.5%	0%	0%	7.0%
4. What grades levels(s) does your child(ren) attend?	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	
	5.5%	7.0%	1.6%	9.3%	9.3%	
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	
	9.5%	11.6%	7.0%	2.1%	7.0%	
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth		
	23.3%	9.3%	9.1%	4.7%		

Percentages exceed 100 percent due to multiple students in a family.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	2.3%	32.6%	48.8%	11.6%	4.7%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	2.3%	30.2%	46.5%	16.3%	4.7%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	9.3%	34.9%	48.8%	2.3%	4.7%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	7.0%	30.2%	55.8%	2.3%	4.7%

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.	4.7%	32.6%	9.3%	34.9%	18.6%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	7.0%	34.9%	41.9%	11.6%	4.7%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	2.3%	27.9%	37.2%	23.3%	9.3%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	2.3%	25.6%	41.9%	20.9%	9.3%
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	9.3%	58.1%	4.7%	16.3%	11.6%
	b. Writing	9.3%	55.8%	2.3%	20.9%	11.6%
	c. Mathematics	4.7%	58.1%	4.7%	20.9%	11.6%
	d. Science	4.7%	55.8%	2.3%	23.3%	14.0%

	e. English or Language Arts	4.7%	62.8%	2.3%	18.6%	11.6%
	f. Computer Instruction	11.6%	41.9%	16.3%	18.6%	11.6%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	7.0%	55.8%	9.3%	16.3%	11.6%
	h. Fine Arts	7.0%	58.1%	14.0%	7.0%	14.0%
	i. Physical Education	9.3%	51.2%	9.3%	20.9%	9.3%
	j. Business Education	4.7%	34.9%	27.9%	20.9%	11.6%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	4.7%	25.6%	30.2%	25.6%	14.0%
	l. Foreign Language	0.0%	44.2%	20.9%	18.6%	16.3%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	7.0%	30.2%	32.6%	18.6%	11.6%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	4.7%	30.2%	23.3%	25.6%	16.3%
	c. Special Education	7.0%	30.2%	44.2%	7.0%	11.6%
	d. Head Start and Even Start programs	16.3%	34.9%	27.9%	9.3%	9.3%
	e. Dyslexia program	7.0%	16.3%	48.8%	14.0%	14.0%
	f. Student mentoring program	7.0%	11.6%	37.2%	27.9%	16.3%
	g. Advanced placement program	4.7%	14.0%	30.2%	34.9%	16.3%
	h. Literacy program	7.0%	20.9%	37.2%	20.9%	14.0%
	i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	7.0%	9.3%	46.5%	18.6%	18.6%
	j. Summer school programs	9.3%	37.2%	32.6%	11.6%	7.0%
	k. Alternative education programs	14.0%	18.6%	44.2%	14.0%	9.3%
	l. "English as a second	7.0%	27.9%	41.9%	14.0%	9.3%

	language" program					
	m. Career counseling program	4.7%	23.3%	41.9%	23.3%	7.0%
	n. College counseling program	2.3%	20.9%	51.2%	11.6%	14.0%
	o. Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	30.2%	37.2%	16.3%	16.3%
	p. Drop out prevention program	4.7%	14.0%	48.8%	16.3%	16.3%
11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	7.0%	20.9%	46.5%	16.3%	9.3%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	2.3%	23.3%	20.9%	27.9%	25.6%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	7.0%	41.9%	27.9%	16.3%	7.0%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	7.0%	41.9%	27.9%	18.6%	4.7%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	9.3%	25.6%	18.6%	23.3%	23.3%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	14.0%	55.8%	14.0%	14.0%	2.3%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	14.0%	27.9%	34.9%	16.3%	7.0%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	7.0%	27.9%	20.9%	23.3%	20.9%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	7.0%	27.9%	20.9%	25.6%	18.6%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	7.0%	30.2%	32.6%	18.6%	11.6%

C. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	2.3%	32.6%	16.3%	25.6%	23.3%
22.	District facilities are open for community use.	2.3%	16.3%	46.5%	30.2%	4.7%
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	4.7%	9.3%	34.9%	30.2%	20.9%

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.	0.0%	23.3%	44.2%	27.9%	4.7%
25.	Schools are clean.	7.0%	51.2%	11.6%	14.0%	16.3%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	7.0%	44.2%	20.9%	16.3%	11.6%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	2.3%	30.2%	20.9%	23.3%	20.9%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	0.0%	41.9%	25.6%	25.6%	7.0%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	4.7%	25.6%	51.2%	9.3%	9.3%

E. Asset and Risk Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	Mv property tax bill is	7.0%	23.3%	23.3%	20.9%	25.6%

	reasonable for the educational services delivered.					
31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	0.0%	23.3%	20.9%	30.2%	25.6%

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.	0.0%	25.6%	48.8%	14.0%	11.6%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	2.3%	25.6%	48.8%	14.0%	9.3%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	0.0%	23.3%	51.2%	14.0%	11.6%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	0.0%	20.9%	60.5%	11.6%	7.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	4.7%	44.2%	16.3%	14.0%	20.9%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape.	7.0%	48.8%	14.0%	20.9%	9.3%
38.	The school library meets student needs	4.7%	51.2%	20.9%	16.3%	7.0%

	for books and other resources.					
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H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	18.6%	55.8%	7.0%	9.3%	9.3%
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	14.0%	76.7%	7.0%	0.0%	2.3%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	7.0%	37.2%	23.3%	18.6%	14.0%
42.	Food is served warm.	7.0%	44.2%	27.9%	18.6%	2.3%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	7.0%	37.2%	18.6%	25.6%	11.6%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	11.6%	60.5%	16.3%	9.3%	2.3%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	7.0%	30.2%	30.2%	18.6%	14.0%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	9.3%	55.8%	14.0%	14.0%	7.0%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	7.0%	48.8%	20.9%	18.6%	4.7%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	7.0%	46.5%	27.9%	11.6%	7.0%

I. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly	18.6%	41.9%	16.3%	14.0%	9.3%

	rides the bus.					
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	7.0%	39.5%	27.9%	16.3%	9.3%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	9.3%	48.8%	32.6%	7.0%	2.3%
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	4.7%	67.4%	20.9%	0.0%	7.0%
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	11.6%	53.5%	18.6%	7.0%	9.3%
54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	9.3%	58.1%	20.9%	7.0%	4.7%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	7.0%	44.2%	27.9%	18.6%	2.3%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	9.3%	41.9%	34.9%	11.6%	2.3%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	9.3%	30.2%	46.5%	9.3%	4.7%
58.	Buses are clean.	2.3%	27.9%	46.5%	16.3%	7.0%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	2.3%	39.5%	37.2%	14.0%	7.0%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	7.0%	30.2%	51.2%	4.7%	7.0%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	7.0%	51.2%	14.0%	14.0%	14.0%
62.	School disturbances are	9.3%	44.2%	20.9%	14.0%	11.6%

	infrequent.					
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	7.0%	41.9%	23.3%	16.3%	11.6%
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	7.0%	37.2%	25.6%	18.6%	11.6%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	4.7%	39.5%	32.6%	14.0%	9.3%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	4.7%	37.2%	51.2%	4.7%	0.0%
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	2.3%	32.6%	53.5%	9.3%	2.3%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	7.0%	48.8%	44.2%	0.0%	0.0%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	4.7%	37.2%	30.2%	20.9%	7.0%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	2.3%	25.6%	48.8%	14.0%	9.3%

K. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	7.0%	37.2%	32.6%	18.6%	2.3%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	9.3%	30.2%	34.9%	14.0%	11.6%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer	7.0%	23.3%	34.9%	20.9%	14.0%

	fundamentals.					
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills	7.0%	18.6%	37.2%	23.3%	14.0%
75.	Students have easy access to the internet.	7.0%	20.9%	46.5%	9.3%	16.3%

Appendix B

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The following comments convey the parents' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of parent survey respondents.

- There is no discipline or control during lunch in the elementary school cafeteria. Aides stand around while children are throwing food and screaming.
- Students should have homework at least twice a week. Books should be assigned to and maintained by the student. Instruction should be based on class subjects instead of the TAAS test. Discipline should be a responsibility of teachers in the classroom.
- Most graduating students are not adequately prepared for college. 80% of our students who enroll in college drop out after the first year because they are not able to cope. Borderline special education students are not receiving adequate living skills and mentoring.
- Adequate help is not available for the number of students taking music. The music department at the high school has gone to pot. A lot of musical talent is wasted after training at the high school. Cameras on buses are either not used, not monitored or nobody cares.
- All students, including special needs students, should get a good education. Teachers should listen to what the students have to say.
- I trust everything is all right.
- More emphasis should be placed on reading, writing, English, computers and business education. We really need an intellectual turnaround in this district.
- I recently removed my child from this school. The bathrooms are filthy. The f-wing building smells horrible, the scent is all over my child. The students' clothing is inappropriate for future leadership of our nation and as future business people.
- The teachers curse the students. The day I withdrew my child, several classrooms I went in were horrible. The students were discussing sex as I spoke to the teacher. Students in the classrooms were very rude. In music the boys were lying in the girl's laps and

students were rude to the teacher. I asked the music teacher, "So what do you all do?" The teacher said, "Nothing today. I have no piano." It is a very, very sad example of a school.

- The students' clothing and behavior is 0! I wouldn't want my dog enrolled in this school. The teachers are no example to the students in dress or conduct. If my child still went there, I would sue you.
- I hope parents close that horrible place. God help you. P.S. It is not all about sports, it's about future leaders of respect and dignity.
- My only complaint is with transportation. Last year I was assured that my child would be picked up and dropped off at our street. After many complaints to the transportation supervisor nothing has been done and he no longer returns my phone calls.
- This school district is the worst that my children have ever been in. It is so bad they are begging me to take them out of this district. I will remove them in a matter of months.
- The principal is a bad leader for the students and staff. The school needs a better principal and better teachers.
- Teachers pull on student's clothes and use foul language to each other, parents and students. Something needs to be done.
- When you have parent/teacher conferences with the principal, the teachers do all the talking. The parent and the students do not get to talk.
- My daughter's world geography teacher won't let my daughter in class and then marks her absent. One of my daughter's teacher last year always had a bad attitude toward the students and parents. Another of my daughter's teachers last year didn't pass her. The principal told the teachers not to pass her. That's why she is back in the ninth grade. The principal does not like my daughter and neither do the teachers. One teacher this year does not explain the work, then gives you a bad grade - an "F." None of the teachers explain work to the students. They are still trying to not pass her again, and then she will be in the ninth grade again. That's not right. She is supposed to be finished in 2004 and the way they are doing she will be 20 years old before she finishes high school.
- I would like for all the children to get free lunch because most of the food is thrown in the garbage. The children are not eating all of the food and the food is going to waste so why charge a fee. It should be equal access in every school district when one district in the metroplex gets new supplies the whole metroplex school district should get new school supplies and equipment. The whole district should have the opportunity to experience better things at the same time.
- We need better teachers. Students need things that are open to students in other school districts.
- I feel as though we need to be notified of different activities in a more timely fashion. We are always told at the last minute.

- If students fail their class they should automatically put them in a tutoring class so they can change their grades and pass.
- Teachers need to notify the parents if a student is not doing his work or is misbehaving in school. They should let us know immediately.
- So far there is nothing I have a complaint about other than lunches. My child is in middle school and they run out of what is being served that day. Different and filling foods are served to the next lunch group after my child has been served. When the cafeteria runs out of a certain food, my child says he has to eat a sandwich and the other group will get pizza. At this time I do not have any concerns about his education.
- Please help. Our children are in need of new schools on the primary levels. Major up scaling is also needed on the junior high and high school level. Please tour our district. Seeing is believing.
- We need highly qualified teachers to fill job openings.
- The curriculum is great. I just hope that higher-level teachers are more persistent in teaching curriculum to the students. The teachers, especially at the elementary level, should be offered more training courses in teaching in an effective manner.
- I think an effort should be made for teachers of younger children to realize and remember that 5, 6 and 7 year olds are CHILDREN not adults. Teachers should be utilized so that ones with patience, tolerance, high imagination, strong character and a genuine love of small children are used in the lower grades, ALWAYS. Children need to learn and understand procedures but tolerance should also be remembered. Our children are our future.
- I would like to see my seventh grader and my tenth grader with books for all of their classes. I would also like the teachers to be more responsive to the parents. If I call a teacher on Monday it may take a whole week to return my call.
- My child attends high school. The teachers seem to work hard, but I would still like for them to take just a just little more time with the students. Some students need more time to understand a subject.
- First grade classes don't have books. There are too many children in the classes. More help programs are needed for students that are in special ed classes. More teachers are needed that can handle students with mental and physical defects.
- In my opinion the school and the district are performing bad. My children are not learning how to read and they had to repeat the year again. They didn't bring any books or homework to the house. We had to move from Wilmer because of an emergency and my children had to repeat the year at their new school because they didn't know anything.

- I am a grandparent raising a grandchild. Since I have had previous experience with the public schools I can say that this is the worst school I have ever dealt with. The teacher sends my grandson's progress reports using his last name as our last name. The absentee policy is unreasonable. I took my grandson to the doctor one morning, we got to school at 10:30 and they counted him absent for the entire day. Anytime I call the school no one can answer my questions. The teacher tells me to check with the office and the office says to check with teacher. As we didn't have any school-age children, we didn't consider the school district when we purchased our home. Trust me, we will move out of this school district as soon as we can.
- They teach my children at a grade level or higher grade.
- I think more parents should take time to go to the school and see what the children are really like at each and every school they attend. At some schools the students are so bad that some of the teachers cannot control them. Our schools need to be a safe place for them to learn, not fight each other.
- I feel that foreign language should be implemented at the preschool level rather than waiting until high school. I am very proud the school district is maintaining their pre-K, 3 and 4 programs since 1989. My child is learning a lot and is forming excellent social skills. These days, children at age 4 are ready for the computer skills to be implemented and the Leap Frog my son's teacher uses is excellent.

Appendix C

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions

The following comments convey the district administrators' and support staffs' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
		27.4%	65.8%	6.8%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		2.9%	72.1%	7.4	0%	2.9%	14.7%
3.	How long have you been employed by Wilmer-Hutchins ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response
		33.8%	25.0%	8.8%	1.18%	19.1%	1.5%
4.	Are you a(n):	a. administrator		b. clerical staffer	c. support staffer	No Response	
		23.5%		26.4%	33.8%	16.3%	
5.	How long have you been employed in this capacity Wilmer-Hutchins ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response
		38.7%	19.1%	10.2%	13.2%	14.7%	4.1%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	8.8%	29.4%	39.7%	5.9%	16.2%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	10.3%	32.4%	20.6%	22.1%	14.7%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	11.8%	29.4%	33.8%	10.3%	10.3%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	16.2%	27.9%	35.3%	10.3%	10.3%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	10.3%	23.5%	20.6%	29.4%	16.2%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	8.8%	29.4%	33.8%	17.6%	10.3%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	5.9%	19.1%	32.3%	19.1%	23.5%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	23.5%	22.1%	19.1%	22.1%	13.2%
9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	11.8%	29.4%	32.4%	19.1%	7.4%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	5.9%	22.1%	27.9%	29.4%	14.7%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	7.4%	27.9%	30.9%	22.1%	11.8%

12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	11.8%	30.9%	28.0%	20.6%	8.8%
	b. Writing	11.8%	29.4%	30.9%	23.5%	4.4%
	c. Mathematics	8.8%	38.2%	25.0%	23.5%	4.4%
	d. Science	11.8%	30.9%	29.4%	22.1%	5.9%
	e. English or Language Arts	11.8%	33.8%	30.9%	17.6%	5.9%
	f. Computer Instruction	13.2%	27.9%	30.9%	19.1%	8.8%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	7.4%	30.9%	32.4%	20.6%	8.8%
	h. Fine Arts	8.8%	27.9%	26.5%	27.9%	8.8%
	i. Physical Education	10.3%	33.8%	29.4%	19.1%	5.9%
	j. Business Education	8.8%	29.4%	33.8%	20.6%	7.4%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	11.8%	30.9%	28.0%	20.6%	8.8%
	l. Foreign Language	10.3%	35.3%	29.4%	16.2%	8.8%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	4.4%	13.2%	35.3%	33.8%	13.2%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	8.8%	25.0%	30.8%	17.6%	17.6%
	c. Special Education	7.4%	30.9%	30.9%	14.7%	16.2%
	d. Head Start and Even Start programs	14.7%	33.8%	26.5%	14.7%	10.3%
	e. Dyslexia program	10.3%	32.4%	42.7%	7.4%	7.4%
	f. Student mentoring program	5.9%	27.9%	41.2%	5.9%	19.1%
	g. Advanced placement program	4.4%	19.1%	38.2%	19.1%	19.1%
	h. Literacy program	4.4%	22.1%	38.2%	16.2%	19.1%

	i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	7.4%	17.6%	41.2%	13.2%	19.1%
	j. Summer school programs	5.9%	20.6%	32.3%	17.6%	23.5%
	k. Alternative education programs	11.8%	47.1%	27.9%	8.8%	4.4%
	l. English as a Second Language program	7.4%	30.9%	33.8%	13.2%	14.7%
	m. Career counseling program	7.4%	22.1%	35.3%	19.1%	14.7%
	n. College counseling program	7.4%	27.9%	29.4%	22.1%	13.2%
	o. Counseling the parents of students	5.9%	25.0%	33.9%	19.1%	16.2%
	p. Dropout prevention program	8.8%	20.6%	32.4%	22.1%	16.2%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	16.2%	30.9%	23.5%	13.2%	16.2%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	7.4%	13.2%	16.2%	36.8%	25.0%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	5.9%	17.6%	17.7%	25.0%	33.8%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	1.5%	8.8%	22.0%	35.3%	32.4%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	1.5%	13.2%	23.6%	26.5%	35.3%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	2.9%	27.9%	28.0%	25.0%	16.2%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors. science labs	8.8%	13.2%	22.1%	27.9%	27.9%

	and art classes.					
21.	The student-teacher ratio is reasonable.	10.3%	35.3%	29.4%	16.2%	8.8%
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	2.9%	32.4%	22.0%	20.6%	22.1%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	17.6%	50.0%	13.3%	4.4%	14.7%

C. Personnel Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	8.8%	27.9%	19.1%	22.1%	22.1%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0.0%	17.6%	17.7%	20.6%	44.1%
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	1.5%	25.0%	19.1%	25.0%	27.9%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	5.9%	20.6%	28.0%	23.5%	22.1%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	1.5%	23.5%	23.6%	22.1%	29.4%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	1.5%	13.2%	26.5%	23.5%	35.3%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	4.4%	23.5%	22.1%	23.5%	26.5%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such	2.9%	45.6%	13.2%	14.7%	23.5%

	as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.					
32.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	2.9%	10.3%	20.6%	26.5%	39.7%
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	2.9%	16.2%	30.9%	20.6%	29.4%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	4.4%	16.2%	29.4%	25.0%	25.0%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	4.4%	17.6%	17.6%	23.5%	36.8%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	4.4%	39.7%	19.1%	17.6%	19.1%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	4.4%	14.7%	14.7%	29.4%	36.8%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	1.5%	13.2%	23.5%	26.5%	35.3%

E. Facilities Use And Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff	2.9%	22.1%	30.9%	17.6%	26.5%

	and the board provide input into facility planning.					
40.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	2.9%	23.5%	25.0%	23.5%	23.5%
41.	Schools are clean.	1.5%	7.4%	48.5%	17.6%	25.0%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	5.9%	29.4%	10.3%	27.9%	26.5%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	2.9%	17.6%	10.3%	30.9%	38.2%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	4.4%	7.4%	10.3%	33.8%	44.1%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	2.9%	23.5%	19.1%	25.0%	29.4%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	4.4%	22.1%	29.4%	16.2%	27.9%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	2.9%	19.1%	30.9%	17.6%	29.4%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	2.9%	13.2%	51.5%	11.8%	20.6%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	2.9%	14.7%	44.1%	14.7%	23.5%
50.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	2.9%	16.2%	10.3%	35.3%	35.3%
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	4.4%	22.1%	29.4%	20.6%	23.5%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	4.4%	16.2%	35.3%	19.1%	25.0%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	5.9%	26.5%	19.1%	20.6%	27.9%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	2.9%	23.5%	26.5%	19.1%	27.9%
55.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources for students.	5.9%	27.9%	29.4%	17.6%	19.1%

H. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	8.8%	27.9%	19.1%	22.1%	22.1%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	8.8%	27.9%	29.4%	17.6%	16.2%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.4%	17.6%	32.3%	23.5%	19.1%
59.	Security personnel have a good working	5.9%	14.7%	23.5%	30.9%	25.0%

	relationship with principals and teachers.					
60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	7.4%	33.8%	36.8%	5.9%	16.2%
61.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	5.9%	35.3%	41.2%	8.8%	8.8%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	10.3%	48.5%	26.5%	5.9%	8.8%

I. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	8.8%	27.9%	20.6%	25.0%	17.6%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	10.3%	32.4%	22.1%	17.6%	17.6%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	10.3%	27.9%	29.4%	14.7%	17.6%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	8.8%	35.3%	28.0%	13.2%	14.7%
67.	The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	8.8%	29.4%	29.4%	13.2%	19.1%
68.	The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	10.3%	22.1%	29.5%	17.6%	20.6%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the	11.8%	14.7%	33.8%	16.2%	23.5%

Internet.					
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Appendix C

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The following comments convey the district administrators' and support staffs' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of administrative and support staff survey respondents.

- The educational performance of the Wilmer Hutchins I.S.D. is at it's lowest. Communication is poor from the staff, community, schools, parents and school board members. Salaries that are paid to employees are a joke. We cannot live on what they pay us.
- Support personnel Aides, cafeteria workers custodians etc. are treated as if we are nobodies! Compared to other surrounding schools districts we are underpaid.
- Teachers, as well as other employees' morale is low.
- New hired employees salaries are inflated. (ALL)! The personnel department isn't helpful with steps or explaining what's going on with your salary. People skills are lacking.
- Double standards. If you are liked or disliked by some administrators your salary is accordingly affected.
- No incentives for Aides or workshops.
- The District Site-Based Committee is presently non-functioning. Individual campuses are beginning to work on their campus improvement plans, but I'm not sure about their Site-Based Committee.
- With the start of the 2001/02 school year, there has been no communication from the Central Administration with previous Veteran Administrators in the District Site-Based Committee with the exception of their first meeting Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001.
- Veteran administrators who have filed grievances with their state organizations have not been issued contracts and their previous titles have been demoted.
- Money is being spent from Title I programs before the original application has been approved.
- They are making amendments to the budget even though the Title I application has not yet been approved.

- There is no coordination among schools for coordination of programs.
- One school does not know what the other school is doing.
- Required programs are not being implemented (i.e. Dyslexia, Section 504, Drug program etc.)
- The main reason for the lack of effective curriculum is possibly that the position of Asst. Supt. for curriculum is not filled.
- Reading program is lagging because previous Director of Reading resigned due to personnel reasons.
- Evaluation of federal/state programs - Applications are not submitted in a timely manner and neither are they evaluated correctly or in a timely manner (i.e. Middle School Initiative Grant, Drug-free schools, Gun-Free report etc).
- All of this chaos has come about because of lack of communication between veteran administrators and the superintendent.
- With the help of the Comptroller's Office, it is time for some state intervention - dissolving the District. Also, it is time for an audit of funds both state and federal because they are certainly not being spent within guidelines.
- Pay is very poor in this district. Support staff is not paid enough for all that they do. Hold class all day when teacher is out or have to go to meetings. They do all the teacher dirty work. School nurse is paid on what an Aide gets paid. They have to be certified in everything that they do. They don't have Internet or working computers.
- Wilmer Hutchins District has no direction. We, as a district should be focused on the students not the adults. Our students don't have books, but we are paying big salaries to new hired employees, but the students have no books. This does not make sense. Please do something; this district needs a better administration.
- Wilmer Hutchins I.S.D. performance is excellent; they have very good education programs.
- Because of ineffective educational leadership at the Central Admin. level it is time for a State takeover. No school district is expected to survive without an instructional leader (Asst. Supt.) and the fragmented overall operation of the District.
- The school district is without accurate and adjusted budgets. Funds are being spent inappropriately and not within guidelines.
- A business office audit is also necessary.
- Certain board members are daily interfering w/daily campus operations. Please help!!!
- Teachers, students and administrators are willing and capable of teaching to the highest level, however limitations exist that halt their efforts. Many things, maintenance, computer and classroom equipment are never repaired or available in classrooms. After a

while new employees leave or lose their excitement and old employees have no desire to improve, therefore the district does not improve.

- Parents would come to the schools almost every day, staying the whole day walking around causing disruption.
- Car tires have been cut during the year - nothing was done.
- I support parental involvement, but the involvement must not be disruptive.
- Board members are not supportive of administrators - they are community members and always support parents whether right or wrong.
- Very poor! (1) Taxes are too high for the district, have not built any new schools. (2) Administrators make all the money; the underdog can barely live. (3) We are still being paid by the pay scale that was redone in 1997 and 1998. (4) Money was taken from us and the district never gave that money back to us.
- I believe that we are not providing the best education to our students. Our students are not fully prepared to enter college or the workforce because of the lack of basic education skills. The district can really use some advice on how to improve our programs so we can give our students the best education.
- A morale boost for the district is needed for all our employees.
- To date Sept 20, no District Advisory Committee for 2001-2002.
- SBDM @ campus level in place; concerns about effective decision-making.
- Instructional programs in core areas in place, some are new this year, however concerns regarding delivery, effectiveness and monitoring.
- Students need more time in Computer labs for TEKS, in addition to purchase software programs.
- Sp. Populations need close monitoring for compliance and quality.
- Low Performing.
These buildings are too old and worn out. This is horrible I have never seen anything like this. Please come and see.
- No comments at this time. Keep up the good work with students and TAAS test good work. Thanks.
- Many students on the elementary level are missing much needed basic skills. Contrary to test scores (scores do not necessarily reflect the knowledge base of students), many students are poor readers.
- Some students are verbally abused and demeaned by teachers.
- Students are allowed to enter the nurse's office and take prescribed medication. Students have access to other medications that are not in a locked cabinet. There is no adult supervision when students are allowed to get their medication.

- Restroom facilities are not properly maintained. The building is not properly maintained. The attendance office is not kept locked. Student records are not kept in file cabinets that are locked. Student records are available to all. The library is not secured.
- Security is not good. There have been many incidents of theft.
- We have a new superintendent, who has made many positive changes. Hopefully he will make more. It is my desire that students will be taught the skills needed to achieve academic success.
- A principal requested faculty members return their surveys to the campus.
- I feel that we have to wait too long for repairs when it comes to computers. We have a lot of computers that need repairs.
- None.
- 13.k) hasn't arrived yet.
- This district is in very bad shape. The administration staff is more about power instead of the students learning and that's sad. Staff is fighting among themselves and there is no control. This district needs help badly. Thanks.
- 49. This depends on requestor budget Principal signature etc.
- The central office staff (business office) has seen many changes in administration, unfortunately none in our compensation without legal action. Some secretaries are employed at a much higher rate of pay than clerical. If this item isn't on the agenda please do something for the degreed staff working in administration.
- There are inconsistencies of pay grade and schedules.
- Our test scores rise and fall with student performances according to the leadership level, the Principal and Superintendent. There are too many changes. We need a Business Manager who will last at least five years. Administrators need interpersonal skill and attitudes, after all. Students and teachers are harassed.
- 63. Very few.
- 66. Upgraded this year.
- Students and faculty, are very often reprimanded in the public (with visitors and other students present). Professional staff are quick to decide if a child is "ill" or "spoiled".
- In homebound services we deal with sick children and pregnant girls. There is only one homebound teacher in the district.
- I resigned my position at WHISD about 6 months ago and I returned back to WHISD with great hope. My hope is that the new staff members will accomplish positive attitudes for this district and for the present staff members in this district. I do pray that my returning back to this district will be rewarding in many ways.
- The attitudes are very negative. WHISD present staff members need brighter attitudes, teamwork, and team spirit and team participation. And to develop, mature and grow.

- It is sad that the administration staff is more concerned about power instead of the students' education. Starting at the top, what administrator is really concerned? I'm an employee of this district and it's sad that Austin would continue to see our children not receiving the education they deserve. Our children deserve the best like any other district. This district needs help or to be closed. Thanks for reading this concern.
- Food Service Dept. salaries are not right.

Appendix D

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions

The following comments convey the teachers' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
		16.2%	73.5%	10.3%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		17.6%	67.6%	2.9%	0%	2.9%	9%
3.	How long have you been employed by Wilmer-Hutchins ISD?	-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response
		41.1%	17.6%	20.6%	7.4%	11.8%	1.5%
4.	What grades are taught in your school?	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	
		5.9%	13.2%	4.4%	16.2%	14.7%	
		Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	
		13.2%	17.6%	4.4%	7.4%	8.8%	
		Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth		
13.2%	17.6%	19.1%	17.6%				

Exceeds 100 percent - multiple grade levels taught by most teachers.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization And Management

Survey Questions	Strongly	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly
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		Agree		Opinion		Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	5.9%	41.2%	30.9%	13.2%	2.9%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	4.4%	32.4%	33.8%	14.7%	8.8%
3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	4.4%	26.5%	50.0%	7.4%	5.9%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	5.9%	23.5%	33.8%	22.1%	8.8%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	13.2%	45.6%	27.9%	5.9%	1.5%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	19.1%	35.3%	33.8%	5.9%	0.0%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	7.4%	23.5%	35.3%	22.1%	5.9%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	10.3%	44.1%	14.7%	20.6%	4.4%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	7.4%	23.5%	36.8%	19.1%	7.4%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	25.0%	45.6%	8.8%	13.2%	1.5%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials	8.8%	51.5%	5.9%	19.1%	7.4%

	that they believe are most effective.					
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	4.4%	26.5%	36.8%	16.2%	10.3%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	8.8%	29.4%	38.2%	14.7%	2.9%
14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	11.8%	54.4%	13.2%	8.8%	5.9%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	7.4%	48.5%	23.5%	7.4%	5.9%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	7.4%	45.6%	25.0%	10.3%	5.9%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	13.2%	50.0%	10.3%	10.3%	8.8%
	b. Writing	7.4%	52.9%	16.2%	11.8%	5.9%
	c. Mathematics	7.4%	60.3%	11.8%	7.4%	7.4%
	d. Science	5.9%	54.4%	14.7%	10.3%	8.8%
	e. English or Language Arts	7.4%	57.4%	19.1%	2.9%	7.4%
	f. Computer Instruction	4.4%	57.4%	16.2%	8.8%	7.4%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	1.5%	55.9%	22.1%	7.4%	7.4%
	h. Fine Arts	1.5%	47.1%	16.2%	19.1%	10.3%
	i. Physical Education	7.4%	52.9%	19.1%	7.4%	7.4%
	j. Business Education	0.0%	20.6%	55.9%	8.8%	7.4%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	1.5%	26.5%	52.9%	5.9%	7.4%

	l. Foreign Language	1.5%	20.6%	51.5%	10.3%	10.3%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	10.3%	39.7%	19.1%	16.2%	8.8%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	10.3%	32.4%	29.4%	10.3%	11.8%
	c. Special Education	13.2%	54.4%	11.8%	7.4%	7.4%
	d. Head Start and Even Start programs	4.4%	38.2%	36.8%	4.4%	10.3%
	e. Dyslexia program	4.4%	33.8%	35.3%	10.3%	10.3%
	f. Student mentoring program	4.4%	29.4%	39.7%	7.4%	13.2%
	g. Advanced placement program	2.9%	19.1%	50.0%	8.8%	13.2%
	h. Literacy program	2.9%	30.9%	36.8%	13.2%	10.3%
	i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	2.9%	33.8%	25.0%	16.2%	16.2%
	j. Summer school programs	8.8%	60.3%	16.2%	2.9%	5.9%
	k. Alternative education programs	2.9%	26.5%	36.8%	13.2%	13.2%
	l. "English as a Second Language" program	2.9%	45.6%	23.5%	10.3%	11.8%
	m. Career counseling program	0.0%	32.4%	39.7%	13.2%	8.8%
	n. College counseling program	0.0%	22.1%	44.1%	19.1%	8.8%
	o. Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	38.2%	30.9%	17.6%	7.4%
	p. Drop out prevention program	0.0%	20.6%	51.5%	11.8%	10.3%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	2.9%	19.1%	27.9%	23.5%	20.6%

20.	Teacher turnover is low.	5.9%	33.8%	26.5%	19.1%	8.8%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	5.9%	54.4%	14.7%	10.3%	8.8%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	2.9%	14.7%	30.9%	27.9%	17.6%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	4.4%	7.4%	29.4%	29.4%	23.5%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less-than-satisfactory performance.	5.9%	51.5%	22.1%	8.8%	5.9%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	13.2%	58.8%	11.8%	8.8%	1.5%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	4.4%	23.5%	19.1%	26.5%	20.6%
27.	The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	4.4%	50.0%	17.6%	14.7%	5.9%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	17.6%	51.5%	7.4%	13.2%	4.4%

C. Personnel Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	8.8%	25.0%	11.8%	30.9%	17.6%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	8.8%	44.1%	22.1%	8.8%	10.3%

31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	1.5%	16.2%	41.2%	23.5%	11.8%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	2.9%	17.6%	39.7%	19.1%	14.7%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	2.9%	16.2%	41.2%	17.6%	16.2%
34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	11.8%	47.1%	17.6%	10.3%	7.4%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	20.6%	58.8%	13.2%	1.5%	0.0%
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	2.9%	8.8%	36.8%	26.5%	19.1%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	4.4%	32.4%	35.3%	14.7%	7.4%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	1.5%	27.9%	47.1%	8.8%	8.8%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	4.4%	25.0%	19.1%	27.9%	17.6%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	7.4%	57.4%	10.3%	11.8%	7.4%

41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	4.4%	8.8%	23.5%	36.8%	20.6%
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	1.5%	16.2%	10.3%	44.1%	22.1%
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	5.9%	32.4%	36.8%	11.8%	7.4%

E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	1.5%	27.9%	38.2%	17.6%	8.8%
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	0.0%	39.7%	33.8%	14.7%	5.9%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	0.0%	4.4%	60.3%	14.7%	14.7%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	0.0%	4.4%	45.6%	19.1%	25.0%
48.	Schools are clean.	2.9%	44.1%	13.2%	20.6%	13.2%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	2.9%	35.3%	11.8%	30.9%	13.2%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	1.5%	14.7%	16.2%	39.7%	22.1%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled	4.4%	36.8%	17.6%	20.6%	14.7%

	promptly.					
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F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	7.4%	29.4%	29.4%	20.6%	7.4%
53.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	11.8%	36.8%	29.4%	10.3%	5.9%
54.	Financial reports are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	2.9%	25.0%	35.3%	23.5%	7.4%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	1.5%	10.3%	25.0%	44.1%	13.2%
56.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	2.9%	17.6%	45.6%	16.2%	11.8%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	1.5%	17.6%	41.2%	20.6%	13.2%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	1.5%	11.8%	58.8%	13.2%	8.8%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	1.5%	20.6%	29.4%	27.9%	14.7%

60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	7.4%	41.2%	16.2%	19.1%	10.3%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape.	5.9%	44.1%	25.0%	10.3%	8.8%
62.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	5.9%	36.8%	14.7%	22.1%	13.2%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	5.9%	52.9%	14.7%	13.2%	7.4%
64.	Food is served warm.	8.8%	63.2%	8.8%	7.4%	5.9%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	7.4%	72.1%	4.4%	2.9%	7.4%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes	8.8%	32.4%	20.6%	22.1%	10.3%
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	8.8%	61.8%	10.3%	10.3%	2.9%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	19.1%	52.9%	7.4%	8.8%	5.9%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	14.7%	58.8%	7.4%	10.3%	2.9%

I. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	5.9%	50.0%	13.2%	17.6%	7.4%
71.	Gangs are not a	10.3%	35.3%	26.5%	16.2%	5.9%

	problem in this district.					
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	2.9%	27.9%	33.8%	22.1%	7.4%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	0.0%	26.5%	22.1%	32.4%	13.2%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	8.8%	35.3%	38.2%	7.4%	4.4%
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	8.8%	27.9%	48.5%	5.9%	2.9%
76.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	11.8%	47.1%	26.5%	7.4%	1.5%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	8.8%	57.4%	14.7%	8.8%	4.4%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	7.4%	35.3%	26.5%	14.7%	10.3%

J. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	8.8%	48.5%	7.4%	22.1%	7.4%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	4.4%	39.7%	5.9%	30.9%	13.2%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	7.4%	55.9%	13.2%	13.2%	4.4%
82.	Computers are new enough to be useful for	11.8%	45.6%	14.7%	14.7%	7.4%

	student instruction.					
83.	The district meets students' needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	5.9%	32.4%	16.2%	26.5%	13.2%
84.	The district meets students' needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	4.4%	22.1%	30.9%	23.5%	13.2%
85.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	8.8%	39.7%	19.1%	16.2%	10.3%

Appendix D

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The following comments convey the teachers' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of teacher survey respondents.

- If you could personally interview each student, you could see each would like to learn to the greatest. Motivation at the "K" and/or "pre-K" level is most important and it has begun to take first place. If the district would keep moving forward, not slack up on any grade level...get stronger on "beginning stage," the "WHOLE" system will improve.
- No comments.
- I have been employed with the Wilmer-Hutchins ISD for less than two weeks. Therefore, I am not able to evaluate all areas.
- For most classes, textbooks are valuable but some overflow classes are short and at four weeks it is a problem that children are behind. Also, art and music should be a definite weekly, if not daily, experience. Children are losing out.
- Students are not receiving the appropriate foundation skills they require (reading, listening, working) before they reach the 4th grade level. This hampers their ability to excel.
- I feel that if the right leaders remain in their positions long enough, this district can become as good or better than Dallas or Ft. Worth. Stop making changes too soon.
- I do not have an idea where the state money is going for this district!? I wish someone would come and show them how to spend the state money our district is getting.
- I feel we improve the education of students if we have up-to-date resources to teach the students. It is hard trying to teach the subject when the textbooks are at least 10-11 years old. Old information is not good.
- In my second year in the district, I have seen a marked improvement with regard to the vision direction and anticipation from the new superintendent. His regular campus visits and the continued enforcement of his message to faculty to me is an added

focus to improving the focus of the district - which is educating the kids in a safe and friendly atmosphere.

- I feel the district is trying to provide the best education possible for the students. However, I realize that monetary resources aren't always readily available. I would like to see AR (Accelerated Reader) implemented in the elementary schools at least.
- Do not use this survey as a waste of time. If you do not plan to act, don't ask the questions as we already have enough lip service!
- We have a problem with our kids' behavior. I believe it is because they feel like second-class citizens. We are not making them feel better by having over-crowded, understaffed broken-down campuses with antiquated equipment (when it does work) and never enough supplies. I know times are hard, but surely we can do better than this!
- There's definite improvement in the direction the school district is conducting its educational goal this year.
- The school board in this district tries to run everything in a heavy-handed way; they do not have the educational nor business-minded expertise to effectively run a school district. Most of the central office personnel are unfriendly and/or unhelpful. The finances are slow and/or blocked. Beginning teachers and teachers with 0-5 years experience get \$3,000 - \$5,000 dollar raises while teachers with over six years get only a step raise of \$300-\$400 dollars. Nothing is handled in a timely manner.
- The principal at the high school has done a very adequate job, though heavy-handed at times.
- We must work more on good education for all our students.
- We must try to keep teachers, administration in place from year to year.
- Improving in some areas.
- Computers are old and Internet is not available for all classes. Textbooks and student workbooks are not provided in a timely manner, if received at all. The library is not equipped with technology at the elementary level.
- The WHISD cares for its students and their success. I'm glad to be part of this school district.
- Wilmer-Hutchins is a great place to work and learn. There are some TAX issues that leave us with old buildings, however, they are painted and maintained.
- I feel we could have a wonderful school district if we could get some stability. We need a board, superintendent and principal that are about the students and not themselves. They also need to be fair with everyone and not have favorites. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to voice my opinion without interruption.
- I feel this school is working toward becoming a force to be reckoned with. There are a few things such as better equipment,

more professionalism and less favoritism. Although, my answers on this survey may seem harsh, I really feel this school can be turned around.

- The library is often locked up with a chain around the door when the librarian is absent. Students are not permitted to enter into the library and it is very difficult for teachers to enter into the library when the librarian is absent. The library is not used as a learning tool for the students.
- Discipline of habitual offenders is slow and delayed by upper administration denial. If you don't recognize a problem, you don't have to deal with it. Upper management being the central office.
- Wilmer-Hutchins has come a long way, but still has a longer way to go.
- As a teacher in WHISD for several years now, I have observed many things that I consider to be hampers to the educational performance of this district. These items begin with some parents and teachers and move all through the hierarchy of the school. I will attempt to be brief in each area.
- Some parents hamper the educational process through their unwillingness to instill the necessary ideals and behavior patterns in their children before they become of school age. Many situations cannot be helped, but many more definitely can. There is no way that anyone can document that children completely disregard parental instruction once they reach a school. In certain cases, the behavioral skills simply haven't been taught.
- Many teachers should make the low-performing list themselves. It is my observation that they lose sight of the primary agenda, teaching the children. Many become so wrapped up in buying the latest vehicles and biggest houses that they are willing to do anything, or in many cases, nothing, to retain those paychecks. The thought of actually earning the money that they bring home each month has passed away and been buried under an excuse that; "The students just don't want to learn." Many of them are uncertified in the areas that they teach, or are still on emergency certificates after numerous years simply because an administrator likes them as a person rather than because of what they do for the students. Many of them are so caught up in spreading gossip that they cannot even effectively plan a lesson, let alone execute it. Some have come to the conclusion that some students cannot be taught and have given up altogether. Others try to shift all of the SE students into other teacher's classes because they are unwilling to attempt to reach out to them. It is my belief that some of them were forced to resort to becoming teachers rather than it being in their heart from the start. They are driven by greed, rather than by concern for students.
- The campus administrators are the root of most of the observable problems in this district. I make this statement in light of the fact

that it is their job to see that everything at the campus level is done. It is their job to see that the students have a clean and comfortable facility, are fed, cared for, protected, and most importantly taught. It stands to reason that a happy and content child would perform at a peak level, just as a happy and content teacher would do. However, when a campus administrator is observably biased, and mistreats students and other subordinates, it creates an environment that is stressful and undesirable to be in or work in. When numerous announcements are made every period of the day, each one breaks the concentration of the teachers and more importantly of the students. When a Principal allows his/her friends to go to all of the workshops, earn all of the extra money available by making extra bus runs etc., teach less or smaller classes, do less teaching in those classes, not go to meetings that other staff are forced to go to, and benefit from other biases, he/she makes it very clear to the entire school and community that the performance of the students are not their top agenda. When any teacher is allowed to continue being employed when it is documented that they do not spend the time that they are employed actually working, the disservice that they are doing results in the student suffering. If a teaching slot is not filled, the students are herded into the gym each day. At year's end, their report cards indicate that they have mastered Spanish 1 with a grade of 85 for each six-week cycle. The following year, they are failing Spanish 2, and everybody wants the Spanish 2 teacher fired. The students are suffering, but it is not their fault. It becomes clear to all who are listening at the time, that the administrators have lost sight of the reason why they are at the helm of the school. In my estimation, those administrators become no better than a student who acts out to impress his friends at a teacher's expense. They too are acting out, but at students' expense.

- The central administration is top heavy. There are directors of this and that all over, but they do more paper pushing than actual administration that will impact student achievement. The turnover rate is very high. One team comes in, on fire to make changes, and then sink into the realization that they are powerless to impact the status quo of this district due to forces that are constantly at work against them. These forces can take the form of other central administrators unwilling to make a change, powerful community members, political figures, and others who have agendas that do not include students. They then leave and are replaced by a new team, only to have the scenario repeat itself.
- The members of the Board of Trustees also leave much to be desired. In addition to being completely submersed in the political garbage, they too have agendas that do not include the students that they are assembled to protect and serve. Several are observed to be

and taken to be illiterate, and only a couple actually have any reasonable amount of education themselves. It is my personal observation that they do not have the interest of the students at heart. They are instead, more interested in carrying out personal vendettas against other staff and/or administrators that they have distaste for.

- In summation, in order to effect change in this district that will result in better student achievement and enhance the educational performance of the district, it will be necessary to examine every level of the educational hierarchy and proceed with a multifaceted plan. There must be changes in parental skills, community involvement, teaching skills and strategies, employment and hiring practices, administrative procedures and a replacement of the Board of Trustees. But most importantly and foremost, there must be a re-focus on the original agenda of serving the student populations of this district. Many of us need to rethink our positions and the reason why we hold them. We as a district need to experience a re-dedication to the students, their well-being, and the conversion of children to productive citizens.
- Thank you for your time.
- The Wilmer-Hutchins ISD would increase its educational performance if they would start an effective recruitment program for new teachers, divert more money from athletics (football) and use it toward instructional equipment in the classrooms and monetarily reward those teachers who sit on various committees, serve as department chairs and consistently give of their time and support for the educational initiatives being implemented.
- The administrators or principal hollers at teachers in the parking lot, classroom, and hallway and during conferences being held. I have been the recipient of this several times. Some administrators do not respond to grievances filed against them to alleviate the problems. One retaliates or harasses teachers who file grievances. One talks to parents and students about teachers in a negative way. I have also had this done to me. I have filed grievances, but nothing has been done. I have been unable to get a copy once requested of what I have been directed to sign without getting a lawyer involved. I have been told to get your lawyer and only then will I give you a Xerox copy. This was done in the presence of my students. The learning environment is disrupted by the "PA" system with announcements made all through the day, mostly for non-education concerns. There is no copy machine available for teachers to use a lot of the time. You have to get what you are copying approved by the principal who rarely comes to school early. This person does not greet the teachers in the mornings nor speak to all of the teachers in her building. The students, therefore, know the teachers not liked by the administration and feel they can

disrupt your class without penalty. The library is chained and/or locked during the school day. Teachers cannot go inside the library until the librarian arrives and unchains the door. If the librarian is absent, the students and teachers cannot get inside the library. I have complained to the superintendent and the business manager; nothing has been done. The principal wrote three different arrival and departure times for teachers. I have addressed this concern to the superintendent and nothing has been done. The principal is verbally telling teachers that they should arrive by 7:30 a.m. and leave at 4:00 p.m. However, the time is 7:40 a.m. until 3:40 p.m. on various handouts to the teachers, students and parents. I asked the superintendent what the work hours were for teachers. He said, "7:40 a.m. - 3:40 p.m." I told him the times the principal is demanding. He said that he would check in the matter; however, nothing has been done. Some teachers can walk behind the counter in the front office without the principal saying anything. However, I was told verbally - along with a few other teachers who filed grievances to "walk around" - do not go behind the counter. I was told not to go back to my classroom through the library following a parental conference.

Appendix E

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions

The following comments convey the students' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
		35.9%	57.8%	6.3%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		4.7%	82.8%	4.7%	0%	0%	7.8%
3.	What is your classification?	Junior	Senior	No Response			
		45.3%	51.6%	3.1%			

SURVEY QUESTIONS

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.	6.3%	28.1%	43.8%	17.2%	4.7%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	4.7%	35.9%	39.1%	20.3%	0.0%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	20.3%	31.3%	29.7%	17.2%	1.6%
	b. Writing	20.3%	31.3%	28.1%	18.8%	1.6%
	c. Mathematics	28.1%	29.7%	25.0%	15.6%	1.6%

	d. Science	23.4%	39.1%	23.5%	10.9%	3.1%
	e. English or Language Arts	20.3%	34.4%	26.6%	14.1%	4.7%
	f. Computer Instruction	21.9%	26.6%	28.1%	10.9%	12.5%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	23.4%	28.1%	32.8%	14.1%	1.6%
	h. Fine Arts	20.3%	29.7%	34.3%	15.6%	0.0%
	i. Physical Education	21.9%	31.3%	39.1%	7.8%	0.0%
	j. Business Education	12.5%	25.0%	39.1%	14.1%	9.4%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	18.8%	21.9%	42.2%	10.9%	6.3%
	l. Foreign Language	15.6%	18.8%	39.0%	12.5%	14.1%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	12.5%	26.6%	32.8%	17.2%	10.9%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	15.6%	29.7%	34.3%	12.5%	7.8%
	c. Special Education	12.5%	31.3%	45.3%	7.8%	3.1%
	d. Student mentoring program	7.8%	15.6%	46.9%	12.5%	17.2%
	e. Advanced placement program	10.9%	20.3%	43.7%	14.1%	10.9%
	f. Career counseling program	9.4%	15.6%	45.3%	15.6%	14.1%
	g. College counseling program	7.8%	21.9%	37.5%	17.2%	15.6%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	12.5%	29.7%	25.0%	21.9%	10.9%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	6.3%	28.1%	37.5%	17.2%	10.9%
7.	The district provides a	6.3%	20.3%	29.7%	21.9%	21.9%

	high quality education.					
8.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	4.7%	14.1%	31.3%	25.0%	25.0%

B. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	12.5%	26.6%	37.5%	23.4%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	7.8%	15.6%	31.2%	25.0%	20.3%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	4.7%	4.7%	31.3%	25.0%	34.4%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled in a timely manner.	7.8%	25.0%	25.0%	18.8%	23.4%

C. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	14.1%	28.1%	20.3%	28.1%	9.4%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	14.1%	35.9%	31.2%	14.1%	4.7%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape.	9.4%	15.6%	34.4%	23.4%	17.2%
16.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	10.9%	26.6%	35.9%	12.5%	14.1%

D. Food Services

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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		Agree		Opinion		Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	14.1%	29.7%	29.7%	14.1%	12.5%
18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	1.6%	28.1%	31.2%	25.0%	14.1%
19.	Food is served warm.	9.4%	20.3%	36.0%	20.3%	14.1%
20.	Students have enough time to eat.	3.1%	6.3%	20.3%	28.1%	42.2%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	15.6%	34.4%	26.6%	9.4%	14.1%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	9.4%	14.1%	14.1%	23.4%	39.1%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the schools cafeteria.	10.9%	35.9%	25.1%	17.2%	10.9%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	9.4%	28.1%	25.0%	17.2%	20.3%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	7.8%	29.7%	28.2%	17.2%	17.2%

E. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	21.9%	29.7%	26.5%	17.2%	4.7%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	12.5%	34.4%	40.7%	6.3%	6.3%
28.	The length of the bus ride is reasonable.	10.9%	35.9%	37.5%	7.8%	7.8%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	15.6%	43.8%	32.8%	6.3%	1.6%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	18.8%	31.3%	37.5%	9.4%	3.1%

31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	23.4%	32.8%	29.7%	9.4%	4.7%
32.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	7.8%	15.6%	37.5%	18.8%	20.3%
33.	Buses arrive early enough to eat breakfast at school.	6.3%	14.1%	40.7%	14.1%	25.0%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	7.8%	23.4%	48.5%	14.1%	6.3%
35.	Buses are clean.	10.9%	17.2%	40.6%	14.1%	17.2%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	12.5%	17.2%	35.9%	21.9%	12.5%

F. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	6.3%	32.8%	29.7%	18.8%	12.5%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	6.3%	23.4%	42.2%	14.1%	14.1%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	6.3%	20.3%	40.6%	17.2%	15.6%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	14.1%	20.3%	39.0%	15.6%	10.9%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	9.4%	21.9%	42.2%	14.1%	12.5%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	18.8%	26.6%	35.9%	10.9%	7.8%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	15.6%	31.3%	35.9%	12.5%	4.7%
44.	A good working	9.4%	28.1%	53.1%	9.4%	0.0%

	arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.					
45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	6.3%	26.6%	43.8%	15.6%	7.8%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	6.3%	28.1%	37.5%	23.4%	4.7%

G. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	3.1%	12.5%	31.2%	28.1%	25.0%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	15.6%	23.4%	42.2%	7.8%	10.9%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	9.4%	26.6%	39.1%	10.9%	14.1%
50.	The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	4.7%	14.1%	40.6%	20.3%	20.3%
51.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	4.7%	18.8%	37.5%	14.1%	25.0%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	4.7%	15.6%	34.4%	17.2%	28.1%

Appendix E

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The following comments convey the students' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of student survey respondents.

- I feel they need to get some more money so they can fix appliances and a lot more.
- The education at Wilmer Hutchins is fair enough. The only problem I have is with things not being fair, favorites and students and teachers (staff etc.), and with being embarrassed. I feel that the only way a student can be successful is if the people at the head of the table do their part and set a good example.
- The education at Wilmer-Hutchins is totally not enough education for students who are willing to learn. I feel that we need more education at Wilmer-Hutchins, like career programs to discuss about career activities. And we must talk about the most important things that we need to know about education. So that's all I have to say about Wilmer-Hutchins School. We really need more help.
- The educational performance is in pretty good shape.
- I really don't have much to say about this school. All I want is better computers for students with Internet and better rooms. That's all.
- Some of the employees at WHHS are not fair. Some of them show favoritism toward others such as athletes and popular children. Some teachers do not give you the grade earned, but the grade they think you deserve. Some of the school's employees don't show equal rights. Some teachers don't teach and they try to fail you because you can't pass the sixth week test.
- Wilmer-Hutchins is a school that has advanced during the years. We are off the low performance list and heading toward excellence.
- At WHHS we need the following:
 - Carpet
 - New water fountains
 - Rest Rooms remodeled
 - More tutorials offered

- School needs a structure on homework plans for example, 1st, 2nd and 3rd period homework on Mondays; 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th on Tuesday; Wednesday and Thursday should be used for studying for tests.
- I think we have great teachers, but the students sometimes act like they don't care about anything. The behavior of the students brings the teachers down so they focus more on discipline than teaching. I also think that the teachers should become more of disciplinarians instead of not doing anything at all.
- No opinion.
- I think our principal and our school have improved a lot since the year of 1999, but the security needs to be much more alert and secure. Also, the security methods need to be different instead of the same every day. Also the computer tech should be more available to the students and the teachers. Also, the discipline at school needs to be stricter.
- Wilmer-Hutchins ISD could do better if we had more Business Education for career bound students. We need more computers because it's at the point right now that you have to schedule to research on one. For example, as a student at Wilmer-Hutchins High School I'm in a class, which is Desktop Publishing. We have no computers that operate. So, we have to do paperwork because all of the computers that are in the class are very old and won't operate.
- I feel Wilmer-Hutchins needs new computers for key boarding classes to keep from going to the computer classes.
- Special Education students cannot read.
- My school doesn't have high quality education because we barely get the right kind of computer technology and course subject (some English classes, science, history and math classes) knowledge we need to know at our status for going to college.
- I feel this school needs better education. They also need new teachers, ones that will teach all the students, not just a few.
- They don't have enough classes for juniors and seniors compared to my old school. The lunch is too high and they only give us one item on our trays besides milk.
- I think that Wilmer-Hutchins high school is really nice but the food is not good and we have to wait a little too long to even get a tray.
- I kind of enjoy coming to school, but we do not have enough counselors to meet the requirements for students that are college bound.
- The Wilmer-Hutchins ISD is a great place it just need some work, but it is a good place to learn.
- We need to be able to use the Internet. We should be able to have study hall.

Appendix F

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions

The following comments convey the principals' and assistant principals' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
		20.0%	80.0%	11.5%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		61.5%	0%	23.1%	0%	0%	15.4%
3.	How long have you been employed by Wilmer-Hutchins ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response
		7.7%	19.2%	26.9%	30.8%	15.4%	0%
4.	What grades are taught in your school?	Pre K to 5th		K to 6th	7th to 9th	10th to 12th	
		20%		20%	40%	40%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%

3.	School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6.	Central administration is efficient.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%
7.	Central administration supports the educational process.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%
8.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
10.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
12.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
13.	The district provides	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%

	curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.					
14.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
15.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
16.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	b. Writing	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	c. Mathematics	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	d. Science	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	e. English or Language Arts	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	f. Computer Instruction	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
	h. Fine Arts	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
	i. Physical Education	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	j. Business Education	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%
	l. Foreign Language	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%
17.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%

	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%
	c. Special Education	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
	d. Head Start and Even Start programs	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	e. Dyslexia program	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	f. Student mentoring program	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	g. Advanced placement program	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%
	h. Literacy program	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	j. Summer school programs	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	k. Alternative education programs	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%
	l. "English as a second language" program	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	m. Career counseling program	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	n. College counseling program	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	o. Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	p. Drop out prevention program	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
18.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
19.	Teacher turnover is low.	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
20.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%

21.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%
22.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
23.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
24.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
25.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
27.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
28.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
29.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%
30.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
31.	The district operates an	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%

	effective staff development program.					
32.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
33.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%
34.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
35.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
36.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
38.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%
39.	District facilities are open for community use.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%
47.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
48.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%

	it.					
49.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
50.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
51.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
52.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
53.	Textbooks are in good shape.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
54.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
56.	Food is served warm.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
57.	Students have enough time to eat.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
58.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
59.	Students wait in food lines no longer than	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	10 minutes					
60.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
61.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
62.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

I. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
64.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
66.	Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%

J. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
68.	School disturbances are infrequent.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
69.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
70.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
71.	Vandalism is not a	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%

	problem in this district.					
72.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
73.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
74.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
75.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
76.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77.	Students regularly use computers.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
78.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
79.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
80.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
81.	The district meets student needs in	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%

	advanced computer skills.					
82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
83.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Appendix F

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

NARRATIVE RESPONSES

The following comments convey the principals' and assistant principals' perception of Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of principal and assistant principal survey respondents.

- (A: 2 -School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.) Too much!!
- Severely hampered in educational process by combatant and resistive teachers and staff members.
- Teachers are tightly connected to political systems and are difficult to supervise.
- Some responses noted as disagree or strongly disagree are directly related to quality of staffing.
- Every effort is being made to justify educational performance environment for the students. Things are improving and I believe that they will continue to improve.