



## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

# **Pearsall Independent School District**

## **Management and Performance Review**

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF  
McCONNELL JONES LANIER & MURPHY LLP

JULY 2014

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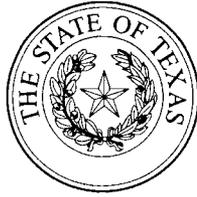
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July 30, 2014

Dr. Nobert Rodriguez  
Superintendent  
Pearsall Independent School District

Dear Dr. Rodriguez:

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

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

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

The Legislative Budget Board engaged McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy LLP to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ursula Parks".

Ursula Parks  
Director  
Legislative Budget Board

/rb

cc: Dr. Oscar Garza  
Marco Reyes  
Rochelle Camacho  
Eric Fletcher

Lionel Gandara  
Rhonda Gonzales  
Louisa Martinez

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Legislature created the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) in 1990 to “periodically review the effectiveness and efficiency of the budgets and operations of school districts.” (Texas Government Code, Section 322.016) The Legislative Budget Board’s (LBB) School Performance Review team conducts comprehensive and targeted reviews of school districts’ and charter schools’ educational, financial, and operational services and programs. The review team produces reports that identify accomplishments, findings, and recommendations based upon the analysis of data and onsite study of each district’s operations. A comprehensive review examines 12 functional areas and recommends ways to cut costs, increase revenues, reduce overhead, streamline operations, and improve the delivery of educational, financial, and operational services. School districts are typically selected for management and performance reviews based on a risk analysis of multiple educational and financial indicators.

To gain an understanding of the school district’s operations prior to conducting the onsite visit, the LBB review team requests data from both the district and multiple state agencies, including the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas School Safety Center. In addition, LBB staff may implement other methods for obtaining feedback on district operations such as surveys of parents, community members, and district and campus staff. While onsite in the district, information is gathered through multiple interviews and focus groups with district and campus administrators, staff, and board members.

Pearsall Independent School District (ISD) is located in Pearsall, Texas, along Interstate 35 and the Missouri Pacific railroad, 54 miles south of San Antonio in the central part of Frio County. Pearsall is the county seat of Frio County and has been the county seat since 1884, when the county had 700 residents. According to the 2010 census, Pearsall had a population of 9,146, an increase of 27.8 percent since the 2000 census. According to the Pearsall Chamber of Commerce’s website, the top industries in the county include agriculture, ranching, hunting, and energy from the Eagle Ford Shale Play in south Texas. The state legislators for the district are Senator Carlos I. Uresti and Representative Tracy O. King.

The district has four instructional campuses, including Ted Flores Elementary School, Pearsall Intermediate School, Pearsall Junior High School, and Pearsall High School. In school year 2012–13, enrollment totaled 2,236 students. Pearsall ISD is also a member with 10 other districts in the Atascosa County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program.

Pearsall ISD is a high-minority, high-poverty district. In school year 2012–13, nearly 93 percent of its students were Hispanic; approximately 62.5 percent of students were identified as economically disadvantaged (slightly over the state average of 60.4 percent); 5.6 percent were identified as English Language Learners (below the state average of 17.1 percent); and 62.5 percent of students were identified as at risk (over the state average of 44.7 percent).

### EDUCATIONAL OVERVIEW

Pearsall ISD has a history of variable academic achievement. Under the state accountability system, the district was rated Improvement Required for school year 2012–13, Academically Unacceptable in school year 2010–11, and Academically Acceptable in school year 2009–10. In school year 2013–14, due to continued poor academic performance, TEA placed the district under restructuring. In September 2013, TEA notified the district that Ted Flores Elementary School, Pearsall Intermediate School, and Pearsall Junior High School would be required to open in school year 2014–15 under reconstitution, which involves replacing school staff. Finally, in February 2014, TEA lowered the district’s accreditation status to Accredited-Warning and has assigned the district a monitor through August 2014. **Figure 1** shows state accountability ratings for the past five years for the district and the individual campuses under the previous system (Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, or Academically Unacceptable) and the revised system implemented in school year 2012–13 (Met Standard, Improvement Required, or Not Rated).

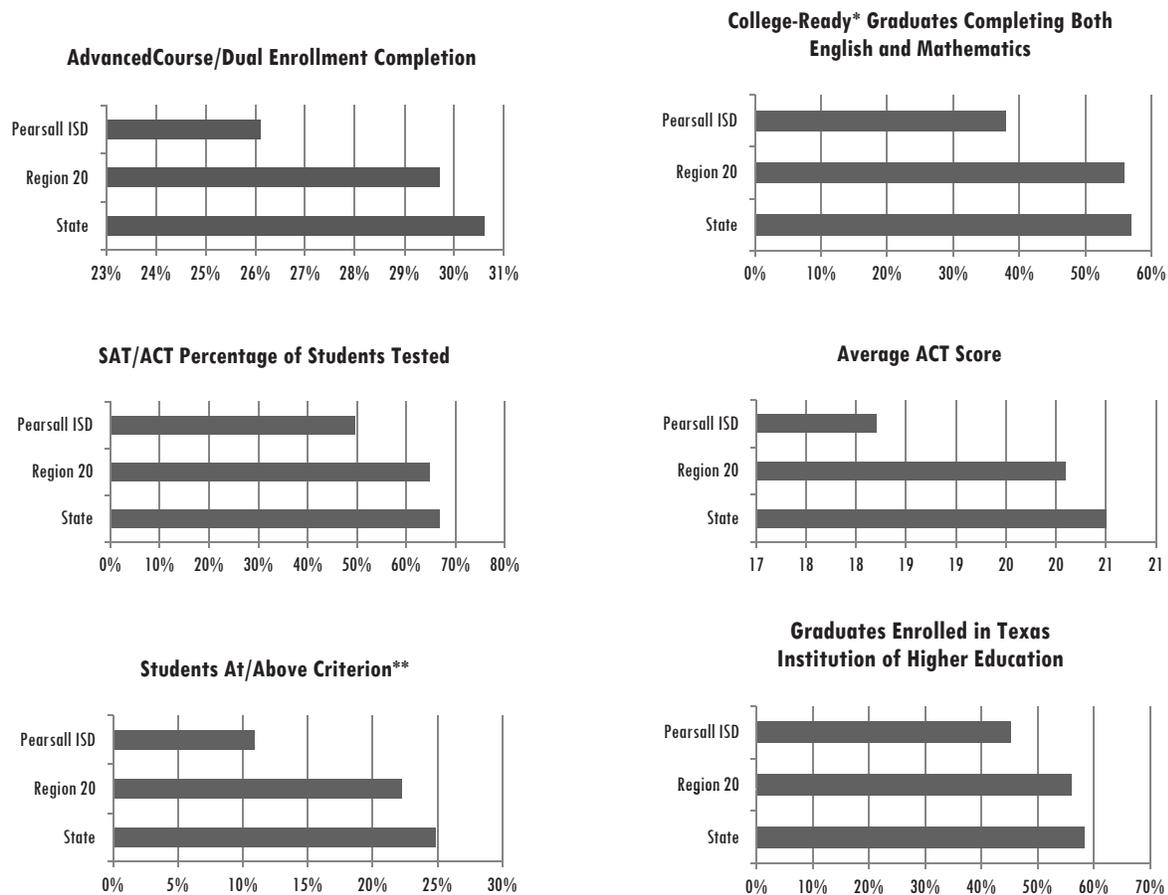
Pearsall ISD’s academic performance also lags behind other districts in the region and the state. **Figure 2** compares various academic measures of Pearsall ISD to the average of other school districts in Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) and the state.

**FIGURE 1**  
**PEARSALL ISD STATE ACCOUNTABILITY RATINGS, SCHOOL YEARS 2008–09 TO 2012–13**

YEAR	DISTRICT	PEARSALL HIGH SCHOOL	PEARSALL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	PEARSALL INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	TED FLORES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT
2008–09	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	TAKS
2009–10	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	TAKS
2010–11	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS
2011–12	None	None	None	None	None	STAAR
2012–13	Improvement Required	Improvement Required	Improvement Required	Improvement Required	Improvement Required	STAAR

NOTE: Accountability ratings were not issued in school year 2011–12 with the implementation of new state assessments.  
 Acceptable = Academically Acceptable; Unacceptable = Academically Unacceptable  
 TAKS = Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills; STAAR = State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness  
 SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System Report, school years 2008–09 to 2011-12; Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2012–13.

**FIGURE 2**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**DISTRICT STUDENT ACADEMIC MEASURES COMPARED TO REGION 2 AND STATE, SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**



\*To be considered college-ready, a graduate must have met or exceeded the college-ready criteria on the TAKS exit-level test, or the SAT or ACT test.

\*\*Criterion refers to the scores on the SAT and ACT college admissions tests, the AP and IB tests, and the College-Ready Graduates indicator. For college admissions tests, the criterion scores are at least 24 on the ACT (composite) and at least 1110 on the SAT (total). For AP and IB tests, the criterion scores are at least 3 on AP tests, and at least 4 on IB tests.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report 2012–13.

### **FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

In 2012, Pearsall ISD's preliminary property wealth per student was \$324,633. This placed the district below, and thus not subject to, the state's primary equalized wealth level (EWL) of \$476,500, which is the property wealth level above which the state "recaptures" a portion of wealthy school districts' local tax revenue to assist in financing public education in other districts. This primary EWL applies to a district's tax rates up to \$1.00 per \$100 of valuation. The state's school finance system has a secondary EWL that applies to certain enrichment tax effort above \$1.00. The Eagle Ford Shale Play has resulted in significant property value growth in fiscal year 2012, but the full impact of this growth on the district's recapture eligibility has not yet occurred. With continued increases in property wealth, it is likely that the district will be obligated to pay recapture in the near future.

In fiscal year 2012, Pearsall ISD's total actual expenditures were approximately \$24.3 million. Pearsall ISD's per pupil actual operating expenditures in fiscal year 2012 was \$9,701 compared to the state average of \$8,276. In fiscal year 2012, Pearsall ISD spent approximately 45 percent of total actual operating expenditures on instruction compared to the state average of approximately 58 percent. The instructional expenditures percentage was calculated using the district's total actual operating expenditures that funded direct instructional activities including Function 11 (Instruction), Function 12 (Instructional Resources and Media Sources), Function 13 (Curriculum Development and Instructional Staff Development), and Function 31 (Guidance, Counseling, and Evaluation Services).

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The LBB's School Performance Review team identified significant findings and recommendations based upon the analysis of data and onsite visit of the district's operations. Some of the recommendations provided in the review are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed by the school district to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

### **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

Pearsall ISD does not provide clear direction for implementing and managing curriculum and instruction, and aligning

professional development and instructional resource needs. Lack of direction can contribute to a lack of oversight of the educational needs of students as well as continued low performing schools. Aligning curriculum, instruction, and professional development allows instruction to be consistent between grades and campuses. Pearsall ISD adopted a districtwide curriculum management system in 2007; however, the district did not implement it consistently until school year 2012–13. Before school year 2012–13, each school and subject area had its own curriculum. Consequently, there was no vertical alignment across grade levels, insufficient focus on instruction, and no written instructional processes and procedures. There was no consistency in the curricula used across grade levels and subject areas, in the instructional materials, instructional strategies, or in the assessments. The district did not offer training in the curriculum management system until school year 2011–12.

Teachers reported that implementing the curriculum is challenging. Some of the difficulties teachers across all grade levels experience in using the curriculum are associated with their insufficient knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Another area of difficulty is associated with the need to develop lesson plans; this is particularly difficult for new teachers. Elementary teachers consider the curriculum pace too fast for students to master the subject, especially in math. Elementary teachers reported that the curriculum is not rigorous enough in some areas of reading. Lack of rigorous instruction was also cited in the Targeted Reconstitution Plan for both elementary and intermediate schools.

In school year 2011–12, TEA identified factors that affected student performance in Pearsall ISD. Some of the factors included were: lack of monitoring curriculum implementation; lack of a written vertical plan; and teachers' low mastery of the TEKS. Clear direction and professional development in curriculum and instruction will assist teachers in preparing the students for academic success.

Pearsall ISD also does not manage staff attendance, which has led to a high use of substitutes. In school year 2011–12, about 51 percent of teachers were absent for 11 or more school days. This increased in school year 2012–13 to about 65 percent. Consistent teacher attendance has a direct impact on student achievement and the learning environment.

Recommendations to enhance the curriculum and instruction process include:

- Fully implement its existing curriculum management system in each grade level and content area with consistency and rigor.
- Address student achievement gaps through the district and campus improvement planning process, set benchmarks, specify desired results, and evaluate progress periodically to allow for adjustments.
- Implement a comprehensive teacher attendance improvement action plan to substantially reduce/eliminate school-related absences, monitor absences, and hold teachers accountable.

### **LONG-RANGE PLANNING**

The district lacks a long-range strategic planning process to provide direction in meeting district and community needs. Strategic planning includes a process for establishing goals, objectives, and strategies, and for monitoring, evaluating, and amending the plan. A strategic plan should include all district functions and should be the basis for the district budget and district and campus improvement planning processes. With a comprehensive strategic planning process, a district can ensure agreement on its needs, use of resources, and stakeholder goals.

The lack of planning places the district in a reactive mode, concentrating mostly on immediate problems instead of preparing for future issues. For example, the district lacks a protocol to evaluate facilities initiatives and does not have a master plan for facilities management. As a result, Pearsall ISD facilities are not managed according to a centralized plan that lays out priorities, goals, and objectives based on building plans, anticipated needs, and timelines.

Regarding safety and security, the district lacks a comprehensive plan and coordinated approach to assessing safety and security procedures and needs. For example, without consistent safety drills at all campuses, such as weather emergencies and intruder lockdowns, the district risks not keeping its students safe while on school property. The district also does not have the fire alarm system connected to a local Fire Department to immediately alert it of an emergency. Instead, if the alarm sounds during the day, campus administrators or security resource officers have to investigate before calling for assistance which further compromises student safety.

Pearsall ISD also has not defined or managed a fleet replacement standard for its Transportation Department, resulting in an aging bus fleet. The lack of a replacement

standard can have a direct impact on the overall cost of vehicle maintenance as older vehicles often have a higher cost of routine maintenance. An effective system requires a clear replacement plan for its school bus fleet based within a clearly defined age and mileage parameter.

Finally, the district has not planned for the aging technology infrastructure to meet its future needs and has not planned to replace old kitchen equipment. This puts the district at risk of not being able to adequately provide food services if major equipment becomes inoperable.

Comprehensive planning allows the district to appropriately allocate financial resources for its educational and operational functions that will ultimately lead to student success.

Recommendations to improve the district's long range planning process include:

- Establish a formal, stakeholder-driven strategic planning process to develop a long-range strategic plan with measurable objectives, timelines, and responsibility assignments for which the board will hold the superintendent and executive leadership team accountable.
- Develop a long-range facilities master plan that includes an ongoing process for facility condition assessment.
- Maintain a continuous action plan to address safety and security issues as they arise and conduct an annual safety and security review to ensure that safety and security issues are resolved.
- Establish fleet and asset management guidelines and develop a fleet replacement schedule to ensure that the district maintains an affordable fleet to meet its transportation needs.
- Evaluate and identify new technology requirements and develop a three- or five-year long-range technology plan that takes into consideration the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs), and incorporate a computer replacement strategy.
- Develop an equipment replacement plan for the Food Service Department.

### **BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

Pearsall ISD has not developed a budgeting process that considers the district's priorities and empowers principals and budget managers to control and manage their budgets. The budgeting approach used by the district results in a budget that meets legal requirements, but fosters a lack of ownership within the organization.

Budget development begins with meetings between district administrative staff and principals to review the previous year budgets, review and update salary schedules, review staffing needs, and distribute budget worksheets to the campuses. Salaries and positions are established centrally by the district office, while campuses allocate material and supply budgets by using the previous year's budget as a starting point.

Principals meet with teachers to determine how the campus budget will be allocated, and the campus bookkeepers enter the campus budgets into the financial accounting system. The campus budgets are then ready for central office review and compilation into the district's preliminary budget. The board reviews the preliminary budget in May and conducts workshops in June and July, which are open to the public.

Site-based decision making committees are not involved in the budget process although budget hearings are open to the public. Once the budget and tax rate are adopted, the final budget is posted on the district's website. After the board adopts the district budget, the chief financial officer (CFO) and business manager finalize the campus budgets and make them available to the campuses for spending.

This process does not use the DIP or individual school improvement plans. The focus has been on line-item expenditures with no reference to the goals of the organization. It does not consider how the allocation of resources could help improve the education of Pearsall ISD students or the overall management of the organization. An ideal budget process allows budget managers, those most familiar with day-to-day operations, to have valuable input into the budget process and to provide incentives and flexibility to managers to improve program efficiency.

Pearsall ISD does not offer training related to the district's budget process. As a result, principals do not fully understand the district's budget process and have not been trained to effectively implement and administer their school budgets. During onsite interviews, some principals indicated that they were not comfortable with their knowledge of the district's budget process. Training principals and allowing them to

make their own budget transfers is more efficient and promotes site-based management.

To improve the district budget development and management process, the district should:

- Establish a budget development process that aligns district spending with the educational priorities as well as other district priorities and initiatives.
- Provide training to campus administrators and budget managers regarding the budget process and establish procedures to allow principals to make their own budget transfers between object codes within the same function without obtaining the approval of the Business Office.

### **FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT**

Pearsall ISD does not have adequate procedures and practices in place to ensure that the district is managing all of its financial resources appropriately. Implementing adequate procedures and practices reduces the risk of fraud, theft, or inappropriate activity.

For example, the Business Office lacks effective internal controls over the payroll and vendor master files and does not adequately segregate responsibilities involving purchase requisitions and vendor payments. With regard to payroll, there is a lack of segregation of duties that could lead to unauthorized changes to the employee master file or even the creation of fictitious employees. The Business Office has procedures for the business cycle from the initial purchase stage through the payment stage, but these procedures will not safeguard the district from staff setting up and paying unauthorized vendors.

The district also has not established effective procedures to adequately record and safeguard fixed and controllable assets. Effective procedures could prevent assets from being lost, stolen, or retired without accountability. The district maintains a fixed assets listing for financial statement purposes, but does not tag fixed assets upon purchase for later identification and tracking.

Regarding food service operations, the district's process for tracking expenditures associated with catering activities is not consistent with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Program regulations. Although food, salaries, and overhead costs are associated with catering, only the food costs are tracked separately from the department's cafeteria costs. The revenues received from catering activities are recorded in a separate budget account. Including the

costs associated with catering, such as labor and overhead, would allow the district to accurately account for net revenues.

Pearsall ISD also maintains and operates a community swimming pool at the intermediate school campus that incurs significant annual deficits, and the district has not recovered its losses with the city and county despite a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that provides for sharing the revenue and expenses for pool operations. The MOU between Pearsall ISD, the City of Pearsall, and Frio County states that each entity will provide one-third of the maintenance expenses and share one-third of the revenue. The MOU projects a contribution of \$11,454 from each of the three entities. However, the MOU does not address responsibility for major upgrades or repairs. As a result, the district has absorbed the additional expenses for maintaining the pool. Reviewing the terms of the MOU to ensure an equally shared responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the pool could result in additional revenue for the district.

Recommendations to strengthen the district financial oversight process include:

- Develop a system of internal controls and segregation of duties in the Business Office to deter and prevent fraudulent activity.
- Develop a comprehensive fixed assets management system to guide the identification, recording, inventorying, tracking, and disposal of the district's fixed assets.
- Establish a process to capture labor and overhead costs of preparing food for catering events.
- Review the terms of the lease agreement in the memorandum of understanding regarding the swimming pool to determine options available to renegotiate.

#### **DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

Pearsall ISD does not have an effective or efficient organizational structure relative to reporting responsibilities and the superintendent's span of control. Within Pearsall ISD's current organizational structure, the superintendent is at risk of spending a significant amount of time managing staff, which diminishes the amount of time available for district planning. This structure can also limit effective decision-making, which can affect staff morale.

The superintendent supervises and evaluates 12 direct reports. The superintendent's direct reports include the director of special education, the director of technology, athletic director, band director, and secretary, in addition to four principals and the three members of the superintendent's cabinet. Given the breadth of the responsibilities of this position, it is challenging for the superintendent to effectively supervise all direct reports. While an effective span of control or the number of staff a supervisor can effectively manage varies by organization, a general rule for an executive is six to eight direct reports. Reducing the superintendent's span of control frees up time for the superintendent to establish a long-range strategic plan vision and lead the district into the future.

Pearsall ISD's director of technology also serves as the district's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator; this dual responsibility substantially reduces the director's time available to spend on core technology duties. PEIMS responsibilities take more than 40 percent of the director's time. During onsite interviews, staff reported the director's time spent on PEIMS negatively affected their ability to do their jobs because of the director's limited availability to discuss and address technology issues. Allowing the director of technology to focus on technology related issues provides adequate oversight and protection for the district's investment in technology assets.

Pearsall ISD lacks clearly defined responsibilities for instructional technology, which results in a lack of focus and coordination for the identification, integration, and training of innovative classroom technology tools. In the absence of an instructional technology position, the chief academic officer (CAO) and the director of technology collaborate on classroom technology tools requested by the instructional staff. There is no ongoing training for the instructional staff, which hinders the possibility for consistency among classrooms, and reduces the opportunity to maximize integration of technology tools into the curriculum.

Recommendations to improve the district organization and structure include:

- Narrow the superintendent's span of control to seven direct reports, and redesign the present organization to accurately reflect the most efficient reporting relationships and delegated authority.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of having the director of technology also serve as the PEIMS coordinator at the district level.

- Assess the need for and, if cost effective, create a dedicated instructional technology position to coordinate and manage the identification, integration and training for technology tools.

### **STAFFING**

Pearsall ISD does not have a comprehensive plan in place to attract and retain qualified employees. Pearsall ISD had a complete turnover of principals in school year 2012–13. Pearsall Junior High has had six principals in seven years. Pearsall High School had five principals in school year 2012–13. In addition, the district has had three curriculum and instruction directors in three years. The district's teacher turnover rate for school year 2012–13 was 35.1 percent.

The district has not established a method to determine if each school has the appropriate number of teaching, administrative, and support staff. During onsite interviews, district staff indicated that the district does not use staffing guidelines to determine the appropriate number of principals, assistant principals, and counselors in its schools. At the time of the review, district staffing levels were based on historical budgets and activities. If an administrator determines that additional staff should be hired, the administrator presents a justification of the request to the superintendent and CFO for review and authorization to hire. This practice is present in several functional areas of the district.

For example, the district has neither analyzed the number of custodial staffing positions that are appropriate for each campus, nor has it analyzed the roles and responsibilities related to custodial duties. The custodian supervisor spends 50 percent of the day assisting the copy center and mailroom staff, which reduces time needed for custodial duties. Custodial staff said that they are typically interrupted during the workday to assist the campus administrators with projects such as moving furniture, which also reduces their efficiency.

Regarding transportation services, the district has not implemented an effective recruiting and retention plan in the Transportation Department to compete with local employers for skilled workers in the area. Specifically, the department must compete for skilled employees within the Eagle Ford Shale Play. As a result, the district's Transportation Department is not adequately staffed to support daily operations.

Personnel costs are the largest expenditure in most school districts. Districts often use staffing formulas for budgeting and as a starting point for allocating financial resources.

Staffing formulas also serve as guidelines for the efficient use of human resources.

Recommendations to ensure appropriate staffing levels include:

- Form a teacher turnover reduction committee to identify and implement best practice processes and strategies for attracting teachers to the district and lowering staff attrition rates.
- Develop and implement formal staffing guidelines for the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high schools.
- Develop and implement a formal process to assess the number, roles, and responsibilities of custodial staff positions.
- Examine driver recruiting activities and job sharing practices to ensure that an essential number of drivers are readily available to support effective and efficient transportation services and to reduce the impact on other departments.

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

Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter's recommendations and associated savings or costs for school years 2014–15 through 2018–19.

The following figure summarizes the fiscal impact of all 66 recommendations in the performance review.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS</b>	<b>ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS</b>
Gross Savings	\$136,847	\$87,285	\$79,736	\$79,736	\$79,736	\$463,340	\$0
Gross Costs	(\$64,763)	(\$64,763)	(\$64,763)	(\$64,763)	(\$64,763)	(\$323,815)	(\$31,500)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$72,084</b>	<b>\$22,522</b>	<b>\$14,973</b>	<b>\$14,973</b>	<b>\$14,973</b>	<b>\$139,525</b>	<b>(\$31,500)</b>

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# **CHAPTER 1**

# **EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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# CHAPTER 1. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

An independent school district's educational service delivery function is responsible for providing instructional services to Texas students based on state standards and assessments. A school district should identify students' educational needs, provide instruction, and measure academic performance. Educational service delivery can encompass a variety of student groups, and requires adherence to state and federal regulations related to standards, assessments, and program requirements.

Managing educational services is dependent on a district's organizational structure. Larger districts typically have multiple staff dedicated to educational functions, while smaller districts have staff assigned to multiple educational-related tasks. Educational service delivery identifies district and campus priorities, establishes high expectations for students, and addresses student behavior. The system should provide instructional support services such as teacher training, technology support, and curriculum resources. To adhere to state and federal requirements, an educational program must evaluate student achievement across all content areas, grade levels and demographic groups.

Pearsall Independent School District's (ISD) educational service delivery function includes a chief academic officer (CAO) who heads the Curriculum and Instruction Department and reports to the superintendent. The

department staff includes an instructional facilitator, a coordinator of accountability and assessments, library staff, and counselors, all reporting to the CAO. The counselors also report to their respective principals.

The Curriculum and Instruction Department oversees all instructional programs, counseling and guidance programs, curriculum implementation, testing, professional development of instructional staff, textbook distribution, library services, federal programs, and compliance with state and federal requirements. Since the time of the onsite visit, textbook distribution has been assigned to the director of human resources.

District enrollment for school year 2012–13 was 2,236 students. The district's four campuses include: Ted Flores Elementary School, prekindergarten to grade 1; Pearsall Intermediate School, grades 2 to 5; Pearsall Junior High School, grades 6 to 8; and Pearsall High School, grades 9 to 12. Pearsall ISD is also a member with 10 other districts in the Atascosa County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), renamed The Larry Brown School. Pearsall ISD is a high-minority, high-poverty district, as shown in **Figure 1–1**. Nearly 93 percent of its students are Hispanic, 80.5 percent are economically disadvantaged, and 62.5 percent are considered at-risk; these percentages far exceed the state percentages.

**FIGURE 1–1**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**TOTAL STUDENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS COMPARED TO REGION 20 AND STATE**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

CHARACTERISTIC	PEARSALL ISD		REGION 20		STATE	
	STUDENT	PERCENTAGE	STUDENT	PERCENTAGE	STUDENT	PERCENTAGE
Students	2,236	100.0%	427,462	100.0%	5,058,939	100.0%
African American	6	0.3%	26,103	6.1%	644,357	12.7%
Hispanic	2,077	92.9%	302,438	70.8%	2,597,524	51.3%
White	137	6.1%	82,469	19.3%	1,515,859	30.0%
Economically Disadvantaged	1,800	80.5%	272,052	63.6%	3,054,741	60.4%
At-Risk	1,398	62.5%	198,492	46.4%	2,260,864	44.7%
English Language Learners	125	5.6%	45,708	10.7%	863,974	17.1%
Special Education	185	8.3%	40,739	9.5%	431,041	8.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) 2012–13.

Pearsall ISD was rated Academically Acceptable in school year 2009–10 and Academically Unacceptable in school year 2010–11 by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). It was rated Improvement Required in school year 2012–13 as it failed to close the performance gaps for its economically disadvantaged and Hispanic students. Pursuant to the accountability provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, all public school campuses, school districts, and states are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The NCLB set a school improvement timeline for schools that fail to make AYP for the same indicator in consecutive years. While following the same timeline and subject to the same requirements, schools that get federal Title I funds such as Pearsall ISD schools do, have additional requirements. Title I funds provide financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. There is no action taken by TEA for the first two consecutive years for Title I schools. The third year is considered Year One of School Improvement or Stage 1. The fourth year is considered Year Two of School Improvement or Stage 2. Schools that receive Title I funds and are in Stage 2 have to develop an improvement plan and use part of their Title I funds for professional development of their teachers and staff. The fifth year is considered Stage 3 and requires corrective action. Title I schools in Stage 3 must also use some of their funds to provide tutoring or after-school programs from a state approved provider. The sixth year, or Stage 4, is the restructuring planning year. Having missed AYP for Reading and Mathematics for five consecutive years has put the elementary school, intermediate school, and junior high school under restructuring in school year 2013–14. Restructuring requires major changes in school staffing or governance. Under NCLB, schools facing restructuring must develop a restructuring plan and carry out one of several options if they move to Stage 5 in the following school year. Restructuring options include:

- reconstitution: replacing school staff including the principal who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress;
- chartering: closing and reopening the school as a charter school;
- contracting with a private management company of demonstrated effectiveness to operate the public school;

- state takeover: turning the operation of the school over to TEA; or
- any other major restructuring of school governance arrangement that makes fundamental reforms.

Additional requirements for campuses under reconstitution involve the attendance of members of the campus intervention team of the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) Foundation training provided by the regional education service center (ESC).

Pearsall ISD was informed on September 16, 2013 that the elementary school, intermediate school, and junior high school would be required to open in school year 2014–15 under reconstitution. A second professional service provider (PSP) was assigned to work with the elementary campus in addition to the PSP that has been working for two years with the junior high school. Pearsall ISD's superintendent, CAO, and the principals of the three campuses under reconstitution also attended the Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) TAIS training on September 16. On September 18 and 20, 2013 the principals of all four Pearsall ISD schools, the campus intervention team, and central office staff met with the PSPs to develop targeted assistance district and campus plans. An excerpt of the Targeted Reconstitution Plan for the elementary school is shown in **Figure 1–2**. According to TEA guidelines, the district was required to submit a reconstitution plan to TEA by late January 2014. The PSPs and the CAO were designated as the Reconstitution Committee to determine the teachers that would be able to return in school year 2014–15. A teacher of a subject assessed by an assessment instrument under the Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 39.023, may be retained only if the campus intervention team determines that a pattern exists of significant academic improvement by students taught by the teacher. If an educator is not retained, the educator may be assigned to another position in the district. Principals were not included in the reconstitution plan because they were in their first year as principals at their respective campus. In February 2014, the superintendent, CAO, the principals, and the director of Human Resources reviewed with the district attorney the documentation that the principals prepared on each teacher and discussed with the respective TEA representative their progress on reconstitution. District administration is in the process of determining the “cut points” for teachers based on their students' performance and set up individual professional development plans for teachers who will be retained but have not demonstrated sufficient student success. Additionally, in a letter from TEA dated

**FIGURE 1–2  
PEARSALL ISD  
ACCOUNTABILITY MONITORING – STATE TARGETED RECONSTITUTION PLAN TED FLORES ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

TARGETED RECONSTITUTION	RECONSTITUTION DETERMINATIONS	ACTION PLANNED OR TAKEN	RESOURCES AND PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINES
Campus Redesign that Addresses Staff Changes/Retention	The principal of this campus is new this year. Teachers have not seen themselves as a part of the solution and been held accountable to improve student learning. Setting goals tied to campus goals will help administration and teachers focus on instruction that is within their control.	All staff will complete a Personal Enrichment Plan that includes goals tied to campus goals. Teachers will set goals and those who meet their goals will be those who are retained. Monthly review of progress toward goals will be discussed in grade level meetings and individually with each teacher and administration. Campus administration will discuss their progress with district administration.	The principal, vice principal, District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI), superintendent.	Plans will be completed by November 11 and goals monitored monthly. Progress will be determined by student achievement using the assessments determined by teachers and the principal.
Campus Redesign that Provides a Rigorous and Relevant Academic Program	Since large numbers of students did not meet standard and very few Exceeded Standard, there seems to be a lack of rigorous instruction.	The district is using the scope and sequence from Texas Resource Systems and teachers are meeting in collaborative teams to study the TEKS for units of instruction and ensure that they are delivering instruction at high levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy and student engagement. They will analyze student work and adjust instruction based on that analysis.	Campus administrators and teachers; DCSI and Professional Service Provider (PSP) will monitor by attending team meetings and/or receiving documentation of the meetings.	These meetings have already begun and will continue throughout the year occurring at least twice a month.
Campus Redesign that Provides Personal Attention and Guidance	Close attention to personal teacher support and growth and individual student support has been lacking. All educators will complete a plan for growth that is supported by campus and district administration.	Campus administrators will provide personal attention and coaching for teachers to improve classroom teaching. Struggling students will be provided individual personal attention by adult mentors on the campus.	The principal, vice principal, and counselors will provide and monitor the support for teachers and students. Documentation will be monitored by the PSP and DCSI.	Coaching and mentoring will begin in early November and continue throughout the year.
Campus Redesign that Provides High Expectations for All Students	There has been a culture of low expectations at the campus and the belief that students will not be able to achieve at the expected levels due to their backgrounds.	Teachers have assessed students to get baseline data and determined their levels. They will be provided scaffolded instruction and interventions to bring students up to grade level. Collaborative teacher teams will ensure regular instruction at a rigorous level so that students can be successful on state assessments. They are using strategies from Teach Like a Champion to provide teachers the tools to help students reach high expectations.	Campus administrators and teachers. The DCSI and PSP will monitor by attending and/or receiving documentation of meetings.	This process has already begun and will continue throughout the year.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, November 2013.

February 28, 2014 the district was notified that its accreditation status was now Accredited-Warning. The change in status was due to the ratings assigned to the district in the state’s academic and financial accountability rating systems. With this rating, pursuant to TEC, Section 39.103, and the Texas Administrative Code, Section 97.1073, the district has been assigned a state monitor until August 31, 2014.

Pearsall ISD is lagging behind Region 20 and the state in attendance, dropout rate, graduation rate, and college preparation as shown in **Figure 1–3**. The percentage of Pearsall ISD students that are rated as college ready is 19 percentage points lower than the state rate and 18 percentage points lower than Region 20’s rate. Its average SAT score is 104 points below the state average score and 77 points below the regional average score. The percentage of its graduates attending institutions of higher learning in Texas is 13.1 percentage points lower than the state average and 10.8 percentage points lower than the regional average.

Pearsall ISD is located in Frio County, in the oil-producing portion of the Eagle Ford Shale Play. The Eagle Ford Shale Play stretches more than 350 miles through 27 counties in rural south Texas, running from Maverick and Webb Counties on the U.S./Mexico border into Grimes and Brazos Counties northwest of Houston. Eagle Ford Shale drilling began in 2008 and increased rapidly over the next five years.

With approximately 250 rigs in operation, Eagle Ford is one of the most active shale plays in the world. Drilling has been focused in the oil and gas condensate portion of the shale play, with school districts in those regions experiencing the most significant impacts.

The shale play has quickly become a major driver in the local economy, affecting property values, employment, housing availability, and taxing effort. In addition to property value increases, school districts in shale plays, such as Pearsall ISD have reported a number of other impacts including the following:

- Employment pressures—some ISDs report difficulty hiring and retaining employees due to competition from oilfield jobs, which are plentiful and tend to offer relatively high compensation.
- Student dropouts and lack of continuation to post-secondary education—due to the ready availability of high-paying jobs in the oilfield or in the businesses catering to oilfield workers, students may be less motivated to graduate or continue on to higher education.
- Housing shortages—news reports suggest that in rural districts with low numbers of properties for lease, rental rates are quickly becoming unaffordable

**FIGURE 1–3  
PEARSALL ISD  
STUDENT ATTENDANCE, DROPOUT, GRADUATION, AND COLLEGE PREPARATION AND READINESS  
COMPARED TO REGION 20 AND STATE  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

MEASURE	PEARSALL ISD	REGION 20	STATE
Attendance Rate	94.5%	95.5%	95.9%
Longitudinal Dropout Rate	9.5%	7.8%	6.3%
Graduation Rate (Class of 2012)	83.7%	86.3%	87.7%
Advanced Courses/Dual Enrollment	26.1%	29.7%	30.6%
College Ready Students– Both ELA and Mathematics	38.0%	56.0%	57.0%
SAT/ACT Tested	49.6%	64.7%	66.9%
Tested At/Above Criterion	10.9%	22.3%	24.9%
Average SAT Score	1318	1395	1422
Average ACT Score	18.2	20.1	20.5
Graduates Enrolled in TX Institution of Higher Learning (IHL)	45.2%	56.0%	58.3%
Graduates in TX IHL Completing One Year Without Remediation	60.0%	50.6%	66.1%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) 2012–13.

for school employees, leading some school districts to supplement housing costs or provide subsidized living arrangements. Additionally, some ISDs are seeing rising numbers of students who are homeless, in temporary housing, or sharing residences/domiciles with other family members.

- Population growth—many districts that have been impacted by the Eagle Ford Shale Play have experienced slow growth or decline in student enrollment as most of the new residents are single men without families.
- Transportation issues—some pedestrian routes may no longer be safe for children, requiring bus transport. Some counties report significant damage to roadways from commercial truck traffic associated with gas and oil production. Poorly maintained roads may cause wear and tear on bus fleets.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Pearsall Intermediate School engages students in tracking their own performance, making them aware of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills they have not mastered and having students set their own performance goals.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has initiated a creative branding campaign to change the mind-set of students and the community and promote a college going culture.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD's adopted curriculum management system has not been effectively implemented districtwide, affecting instruction and student performance.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD students have not been well prepared academically to progress from grade to grade leading to persistent low performance overall and achievement gaps among student subgroups.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a process for managing staff attendance leading to the engagement of substitutes with low qualifications, high substitute costs, and a negative impact on student performance.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's implementation of behavior management models has not been districtwide or sustainable resulting in a high number of disciplinary

placements where the delivery of adequate academic instruction is not assured.

- ◆ Pearsall ISD's process and method for evaluating special education placements have not been consistently and effectively implemented leading to a high rate of referrals to special education.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Career and Technical Education program is not consistent with requirements and is not guided by an advisory committee to oversee and evaluate the program regularly.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's guidance and counseling program does not operate effectively and lacks consistency from campus to campus.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's library program is poorly organized and lacks district direction and oversight resulting in inadequate staffing, an aging and out-of-date collection of books, and limited library and media services that do not meet student needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 1: Fully implement its existing curriculum management system in each grade level and content area with consistency and rigor.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 2: Address student achievement gaps through the district and campus improvement planning process, set benchmarks, specify desired results, and evaluate progress periodically to allow for adjustments.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 3: Implement a comprehensive teacher attendance improvement action plan to substantially reduce/eliminate school-related absences, monitor absences, and hold teachers accountable.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 4: Monitor the implementation of the student behavior management program, evaluate its effectiveness in improving student discipline, and determine the extent to which its disciplinary placements offer adequate academic instruction to students.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 5: Develop procedures that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation and documentation of Response to Intervention on each campus, train teachers in the process,**

**monitor implementation, and track the rate of inappropriate referrals to special education.**

- ◆ **Recommendation 6: Create a Career and Technical Education (CTE) plan with a coherent sequence of courses for each cluster, establish an advisory committee, and evaluate the CTE program annually.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 7: Create a districtwide guidance and counseling program with consistent policies, procedures, resources and forms, and a cohesive team of counselors.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 8: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the district’s library services related to staff levels, the library budget, and the age of its collection to ensure that its library staffing, collection and associated budget are consistent with state standards across campuses.**

**DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**STUDENT PERFORMANCE TRACKING**

Pearsall Intermediate School engages students in tracking their own performance, making them aware of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) they have not mastered and having students set their own performance goals.

The intermediate school principal provided a full day of training to the teachers on how to analyze the State of Texas

Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test results and tie them to respective TEKS to identify the TEKS where students need more work. As part of the training, teachers developed a student form where students who performed below 80 percent on a TEKS are asked to define their goal for addressing this TEKS, articulate things they need to work on to improve their performance in this area, and pinpoint opportunities they will use to reach their goal. The TEKS on which students have to work are captured from campus developed assessments. The form addresses each of the four core areas, math, reading, science, and social studies. **Figure 1–4** is an excerpt of the form used to track math performance. Students use the form to track their performance based on performance thresholds. For example, students with a 60 percent performance in math on a specific TEKS may set their goal to achieve a 70 percent performance level within a specified period. If students achieved their performance goal, they then set a new performance level and specify how they will reach that level. If students did not achieve their performance goal, they update the items they need to work on and the actions they will take to reach the goal.

According to the intermediate school’s principal, using the form creates student awareness of the specific areas in which they need to improve and harnesses their motivation and also helps students focus on their specific needs. Students can work on areas of need in the classroom and in afterschool tutorials, choosing interventions targeted to those areas. Involving students in analyzing and monitoring their

**FIGURE 1–4  
PEARSALL ISD  
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL GRADE 5 STUDENT SELF-TRACKING FORM  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

MATH

STAAR (4th Grade): \_\_\_\_\_ STAAR RELEASE DEC 2012 (5th Grade): \_\_\_\_\_

55      60      65      70      75      80      85      90      95      100

Needs improvement   Getting There   Sufficiently Prepared   Well Prepared                      Where I Want to be

MY GOAL	THINGS I NEED TO WORK ON	OPPORTUNITIES I WILL TAKE TO REACH GOAL

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Pearsall Intermediate School, December 2013.

performance increases personal responsibility for their performance and motivation to improve. It changes the relationship between the student and school by allowing students to focus on specific areas for improvement and make choices accordingly. This approach also gives parents a precise picture of their child's academic performance and specific areas where the student needs to improve.

### **COLLEGE CULTURE**

Pearsall ISD has initiated a creative branding campaign to change the mind-set of students and the community and promote a college going culture.

Pearsall ISD set out to change college awareness among families and students. According to district staff, many parents in the district do not encourage their children to go to college and lack college experience themselves. Also, parental involvement in the education process is low in the district. To create awareness about college, the district implemented several initiatives in all the campuses.

- It has designated Monday as college day districtwide in all campuses. On Mondays, teachers come dressed in a shirt with the name of the college they attended and talk to the students about their college experience and why college is important.
- The district has billboards promoting college attendance.
- Pearsall Junior High staff discusses with students their aspirations and dreams about going to college and asks students to do research on colleges. The school also schedules presentations from college representatives such as University of Texas San Antonio.
- The district has a Gear-up project through Texas A&M International that starts with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students to encourage college attendance.
- The district added a third high school counselor to focus on college counseling and assist with college and financial aid applications. It has a college and career fair and a series of financial aid nights where the high school counselor helps parents fill out financial aid applications for their children. Each high school student fills out a common Texas college application.

- Pearsall ISD has students visit college campuses in the area. The Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) takes migrant students to visit colleges.
- The district encourages students to take dual credit courses through Southwest Technical Junior College (SWTJC). Pearsall High School offers 12 dual credit courses: four English courses, two math courses, two U.S. history courses, and one course each in economics, government, psychology, and sociology.

Pearsall ISD has launched an innovative college going culture campaign. The campaign, built around "The Power of High Expectations" was developed by a nationally known media consultant through input from school staff and community members. The comprehensive branding campaign revolves around "What does the mind of the Latino believe about education." It compares Latino values with U.S. dominant culture values and sets of beliefs.

The campaign contends that the Latino culture and its values have an effect on Latino educational outcomes by lowering expectations and diminishing the role of education.

Consequently, the campaign found that students and their parents have very limited information about college. They are unaware of:

- scholarships that are available;
- the difference that parents can make in their children's educational future;
- others who are "making it;"
- the earning potential of a college graduate;
- the courses their child should take at any given grade;
- the difference between a high school diploma and a college-track high school diploma;
- how the system works;
- where to go for coaching and information;
- the scholarship application process;
- ways to afford tuition;
- the long-term effects of under-education; and
- the long-term benefits of higher education.

The branding campaign calls for changing behavior by changing beliefs. For example, where the old behavior entailed dropping out of school to go to work; the new behavior involves preparing for and succeeding in college. Where the old belief was that one needs to go to work to help the family and not being able to afford college, the new belief is that one needs to go to college to help the family and there are financial aid resources for that purpose. The campaign encourages Latino parents to teach their children to:

- be optimistic;
- believe in what you are doing;
- set big, clear and concise goals;
- expect success;
- be a team player;
- work well with people who are different from you;
- see opportunity and act on it;
- be a problem solver;
- work smart and work hard;
- take responsibility for what you do;
- be consistent and have good moral values;
- show gratitude; and
- give back to your family and your community.

The campaign was launched on November 14, 2013 at the high school. The launching event was attended by 150 parents and students and included presentations about college by teachers from each class and a musical program the students prepared. The next steps in implementing the campaign involve the development of curriculum for elementary and junior high students that will encourage students to attend college. The curriculum will be taught daily in five-minute sessions and involve college going topics such as persistence, dedication, career search, college/education needed for those careers, and financial help for college. The campaign manager is also compiling stories from district administrators, teachers, staff, and former students about why they went to college and how they managed to go to college. The campaign manager will present these stories on the district website, in local advertisements and articles. The district will also work with a financial literacy program. A program representative will meet with junior and senior

students and with parents to inform them about the financial aspects of college applications and attendance.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### **CURRICULUM (REC. 1)**

Pearsall ISD's adopted curriculum management system has not been effectively implemented districtwide, affecting instruction and student performance.

The district adopted the Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative (TCMPC) TEKS Resource System, previously known as CSCOPE, in 2007. The curriculum management system was developed by the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC). TESCCC describes this system as a "comprehensive, customized, user friendly curriculum support system" that is primarily focused on impacting "instructional practices in the classroom to improve student performance." According to TESCCC, the curriculum management system has the following features:

- is a K–12 systemic model in the four core areas;
- offers common language, structure, and process for curriculum delivery;
- an aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- innovative technology;
- clarified and specified TEKS expectations assembled in a vertical alignment format;
- customizable instructional plans that allow district resources to be integrated into the system; and
- lessons in English and Spanish.

The curriculum management system components and instructional approach are shown in **Figure 1–5**. The system's lessons suggest lesson duration; provide a lesson synopsis; list the TEKS and related TEKS; specify performance indicators; list guiding questions, vocabulary, materials for each day, and resources; suggest materials to prepare in advance; and apply the instructional procedures to the topic of the lesson.

Although Pearsall ISD adopted a districtwide curriculum management system in 2007, the district did not implement it consistently until school year 2012–13. Before school year 2012–13, each school and subject area had its own curriculum. Consequently, there was no vertical alignment across grade levels, insufficient focus on instruction, and no written instructional processes and procedures. There was no

**FIGURE 1–5  
CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM COMPONENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES**

COMPONENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES
Vertical Alignment Documents: present aligned standards among grade levels.	ENGAGE: In this stage the learner is engaged by teacher questions or a story about an unusual event.
Year at a Glance: presents a quick snapshot of the entire year's instructional plan.	EXPLORE: In this stage, the student has the opportunity to work through the problem with hands-on experience; discuss the problem with other students; and receive minimal guidance from the instructor. This will help the student to become more familiar with the problem and to generate additional interest in solving the problem.
TEKS Verification Matrix: ensures that all state standards are fully accounted for in the CSCOPE curriculum.	EXPLAIN: During this stage, students begin to learn the terminology (definitions, explanations, and relationships) surrounding the material.
Instructional Focus Documents: logically group the specified standards into coherent units of instruction.	ELABORATE: In this stage the students use what they have learned in order to solve the initial problem. They should also be able to use the concepts learned in the Explain stage to solve additional problems. The instructor listens for their understanding of the concepts and terminology but does not provide direct answers or introduce new material.
Performance Indicators: evidence of student attainment of and/or progression toward an identified standard.	EVALUATE: During this stage, instructors can assess their students' learning through a variety of assessments, including the student's self-assessment.
Unit Assessments: assess the specified student expectations as noted on the Instructional Focus Document.	
Exemplar Lessons: provide a comprehensive resource of exemplar instructional activities.	
Lesson Planner: is used to develop, share, and maintain plans for high quality instruction.	

SOURCE: "CSCOPE, A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum: Taking a Closer Look", 2008.

consistency in the curricula used across grade levels and subject areas, in the instructional materials, instructional strategies, or in the assessments. In a needs assessment that the intermediate school conducted as part of the development of its Campus Improvement Plan 2011–13, only 31 percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had the appropriate instructional materials. The need for teacher buy-in and consistent implementation was recognized in district and campus improvement plans over several years but was not acted upon. For example:

- The 2010–11 Pearsall Junior High Campus Improvement Plan sets the consistent implementation and use of CSCOPE as one of its goals.
- The 2011–12 District Improvement Plan, the most recent plan the district has developed, sets the creation and implementation of a comprehensive curricular framework in all core subjects for all students as a performance objective. Activities associated with this goal include the development of a curriculum framework, publishing the curriculum framework for

staff review and input, and aligning, monitoring, and implementing it with fidelity.

The 2011–12 Pearsall Student Achievement Improvement Plan identifies lack of monitoring of CSCOPE implementation as a factor contributing to low student performance. The district developed the Student Achievement Improvement Plan in compliance with TEA Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements for failing to make adequate progress in reading and math. The plan specifies the need to “communicate the reason for selection of CSCOPE as a viable curriculum framework, the importance of full implementation (with flexibility to adapt to students’ needs as long as instruction stays aligned to the rigor of the TEKS and STAAR), and how it will be monitored for implementation and impact.”

The district did not offer training in the curriculum management system until school year 2011–12. A greater effort to get teacher buy-in and implementation began in school year 2012–13. The review team conducted three online surveys targeting parents, district level staff, and

campus level staff. The survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents. Although principals indicated that teachers are using the curriculum management system in school year 2013–14, only 37.2 percent of campus staff who responded to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that “the curriculum guides they use are effective tools;” 35.7 percent had no opinion and 27.2 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The system components that teachers find most helpful are Year at a Glance (YAG) and the Instructional Focus Documents that help with differentiation for special education and English Language Learners.

Both elementary and secondary teachers find implementing the curriculum to be challenging. Some of the difficulties teachers across all grade levels experience in using the curriculum are associated with their insufficient knowledge of the TEKS. Another area of difficulty is associated with the need to develop lesson plans; this is particularly difficult for new teachers.

Elementary teachers consider the pace the curriculum sets to be too fast for students to master the subject taught, especially in math. Some of the teachers had to re-organize the scope and sequence to get their students to master the material. Slowing the pace is not an option because it makes teachers fall behind in covering the topics they have to cover within the specified period. The pace the curriculum dictates does not allow time for re-teaching. At the same time, the curriculum is not rigorous enough in some areas of reading, according to elementary school teachers. Lack of rigorous instruction was also cited in the Targeted Reconstitution Plan for both elementary and intermediate schools. To achieve the desired level of rigor, teachers use supplementary materials. As the curriculum management system has changed from year to year, keeping up with the changes has been difficult. Elementary school teachers also found that the level at which the curriculum teaches is too advanced for some of the students and the tests included in the curriculum were too difficult resulting in a decrease in students’ scores. This required teachers to revise the lessons to match their students’ comprehension level. Teachers, and especially new teachers, also indicated the need for more training in the core subjects, in the use and implementation of the curriculum system, and in lesson plan development.

Like elementary teachers, secondary teachers find the number of TEKS to be addressed, the pace, and mastery level required challenging. In some subject areas the curriculum requires addressing a large number of TEKS in a relatively short

amount of time. For example, teachers have to teach 13 grammar TEKS in a six-week period. Both junior high and high school teachers indicated that the way the curriculum is aligned does not support lower-achieving students. At the high school level, teachers recognized that they cannot teach all science courses to the expected mastery level or keep pace with the timeline specified in the curriculum. The curriculum makes assumptions about student knowledge that are not realistic. Teachers have to address the gaps in their students’ knowledge which slows the pace. While teachers found the YAG helpful, they tend to develop their own lessons, as some of the exemplar lessons in the curriculum had faulty information.

The need for a curriculum management system that is used districtwide, consistently and effectively by teachers is important, especially for a district like Pearsall with persistently low academic performance. Pearsall ISD had the lowest TAKS performance among its peer districts in all subject areas in school year 2010–11, the last year when all students took TAKS as shown in **Figure 1–6**. Pearsall ISD was rated Academically Unacceptable in school year 2010–11. The district has also failed to make adequate yearly progress in reading and math for five consecutive years and is facing reconstitution in school year 2013–14.

Pearsall ISD’s student performance on STAAR was lower than both Region 20 and the state rates in all subject areas in school years 2011–12 and 2012–13 as shown in **Figure 1–7**. The percentage of students who met STAAR standards in the district was lower than the rates for Region 20 and the state by 50 percent or more.

Pearsall ISD student performance on End of Course exams in school year 2012–13 was considerably lower than Region 20 and the state in all subjects except for Algebra II as shown in **Figure 1–8**. In Algebra II the district student performance was 100 percent.

Diboll ISD, a district of similar size also implemented CSCOPE in 2007 like Pearsall. Previously, Diboll ISD did not have a districtwide curriculum. One of the key steps in implementation was the adoption of a board policy that required curriculum implementation districtwide. This requirement sent a clear message to the staff and ensured them that they have the full support of the board behind the curriculum management system. Diboll ISD developed a manual for the staff to help with implementation. The Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Design and Delivery Manual describes the district’s curriculum

**FIGURE 1–6**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING STANDARD ON TAKS COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 20, AND STATE**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

TEST	PEARSALL	CARRIZO SPRINGS	FABENS	WEST OSO	REGION 20	STATE
All Tests	52%	62%	72%	63%	73%	76%
Reading/ELA	73%	81%	84%	84%	89%	90%
Mathematics	64%	75%	84%	76%	82%	84%
Writing	78%	86%	91%	85%	91%	92%
Science	61%	69%	81%	71%	81%	83%
Social Studies	89%	87%	94%	89%	94%	95%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), November 2013.

**FIGURE 1–7**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON STAAR COMPARED TO REGION 20 AND STATE**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2011–12 TO 2012–13**

	PEARSALL		REGION 20		STATE	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
All Subjects	14%	14%	31%	33%	33%	35%
Reading	18%	19%	35%	39%	38%	41%
Mathematics	11%	12%	30%	32%	33%	34%
Writing	16%	12%	31%	30%	34%	32%
Science	13%	15%	28%	32%	29%	33%
Social Studies	8%	9%	23%	26%	23%	26%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, STAAR Final Level II or Above, November 2013.

philosophy and includes a curriculum mission statement; describes community expectations from and proficiencies of its graduates; defines the written, taught, and tested curriculum; specifies the curriculum development and review cycle; defines roles and responsibilities of individuals assigned with curriculum development, review, delivery, and monitoring; presents a staff development plan that is aligned with curriculum goals; specifies a process for monitoring curriculum implementation; has a glossary of terms; and includes curriculum-related board policies and regulations.

Implementation of a curriculum management system is more effective if: there is teacher buy-in; teachers have clear guidelines on what and how to implement; needed resources are available; and the system is all encompassing and does not require teachers to identify and use additional sources to supplement or substitute what the system offers. Consistent monitoring of classroom implementation and a systematic

review of teachers' lesson plans also increase the effectiveness of implementation.

The efforts Pearsall ISD has made with regard to its curriculum have not been consistent and only partially effective. Teacher buy-in and the use of rigorous instructional strategies have also been lacking according to the Pearsall ISD school reconstitution plans. The elementary and intermediate reconstitution plans cite as reconstitution determinations those factors which include: teachers not seeing themselves as part of the solution, teachers not being held accountable, and using ineffective and not rigorous instructional strategies. The district has gaps in its implementation of the curriculum and in the use of effective instruction strategies; a curriculum implementation manual can address these issues and gaps.

Pearsall ISD should fully implement its existing curriculum management system in each grade level and content area

**FIGURE 1–8  
PEARSALL ISD  
STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON END OF COURSE EXAMS COMPARED TO REGION 20 AND STATE  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

	PEARSALL	REGION 20	STATE
ELA Reading I	44%	69%	69%
ELA Reading II	46%	78%	79%
ELA Reading III	*	73%	83%
Algebra I	57%	75%	78%
Geometry	62%	84%	85%
Algebra II	100%	93%	97%
ELA Writing I	29%	53%	55%
ELA Writing II	28%	53%	55%
Biology	71%	83%	84%
Chemistry	65%	84%	84%
World Geography	56%	74%	75%
World History	38%	72%	71%
U.S. History	*	75%	72%

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

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, STAAR Final Level II or Above, November 2013.

with consistency and rigor. A manual would provide a central framework for all the instruction-related activities the district has been and will be implementing. The manual should address those components and requirements that still pose a challenge to teachers including the increase of teacher buy-in, accountability, and implementation of rigorous instruction. This information would allow school administrators and teachers to direct their time and resources in an efficient manner and develop effective lesson plans. The development of lesson plans is a challenge for new teachers. The district should consider pairing new teachers and experienced teachers in lesson plan development during common daily conference time or during days allocated to staff development. The district should implement a lesson review system to ensure that the lessons teachers prepare are consistent with the instructional approach and level of rigor set in the curriculum. The Curriculum and Instruction Department should train district and school administrators in using the lesson review form and ensure during their walkthroughs that the lessons are effectively implemented.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**STUDENT PERFORMANCE (REC. 2)**

Pearsall ISD students have not been well prepared academically to progress from grade to grade leading to persistent low performance overall and achievement gaps among student subgroups.

Pearsall ISD students have shown continuous weakness in reading and math scores. In school year 2010–11, the district was rated Academically Unacceptable. It was rated Improvement Required in school years 2011–12 and 2012–13 as it failed to close the performance gaps for its economically disadvantaged and Hispanic subgroups. In school year 2013–14, three of the four campuses, Ted Flores Elementary, Pearsall Intermediate, and Pearsall Junior High, are up for reconstitution after not making AYP for four years. **Figure 1–9** shows the district’s AYP status in 2010, 2011, and 2012. **Figure 1–10** shows the percentage of students passing end of course exams in school year 2012–13.

The **Appendix** shows Pearsall ISD’s student performance on state assessments from school years 2010–11 to 2012–13. During this three-year period state assessments included TAKS, STAAR, and End of Course exams.

**FIGURE 1–9  
PEARSALL ISD  
AYP STATUS AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING AYP TARGET IN READING AND MATH BY SUBGROUP  
SCHOOL YEARS 2010 TO 2012**

SUB GROUP	ELA AYP TARGET 76%			MATH AYP TARGET 80%		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
AYP Stage	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 3
Target	73%	80%	87%	67%	75%	83%
All Students	73%	70%	68%	63%	61%	55%
White	87%	88%	84%	75%	78%	80%
Hispanic	72%	69%	67%	62%	59%	54%
Economically Disadvantaged	69%	67%	65%	60%	58%	52%
Special Education	52%	51%	46%	50%	46%	48%
LEP/ELL	52%	57%	44%	45%	46%	41%

NOTE: ELA – English Language Arts; LEP - Limited English Proficient; ELL - English Language Learners.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AYP, District Data Table, Final AYP Results, November 2013.

**FIGURE 1–10  
PEARSALL ISD  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING END OF COURSE EXAMS BY SUBGROUP AND SUB-TEST  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

END OF COURSE EXAMS	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED PASSING END OF COURSE EXAMS PHASE-IN 1 LEVEL II OR ABOVE						
	STATE-ALL	PEARSALL ISD-ALL	WHITE	HISPANIC	ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	SPECIAL EDUCATION	ELL
ELA Reading I	69%	44%	75%	42%	39%	46%	*
ELA Reading II	79%	46%	56%	45%	39%	31%	*
Algebra I	78%	57%	60%	57%	56%	43%	*
Geometry	85%	62%	82%	60%	56%	44%	*
Algebra II	97%	100%	*	100%	100%	*	*
ELA Writing I	55%	29%	*	29%	26%	35%	*
ELA Writing II	55%	28%	*	27%	24%	47%	*
Biology	84%	71%	86%	70%	69%	53%	*
Chemistry	84%	65%	89%	63%	63%	*	*
World Geography	75%	56%	56%	55%	51%	56%	*
World History	71%	38%	67%	35%	31%	*	*

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
NOTE: ELL – English Language Learner.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, November 2013.

State assessment data are presented for the state and for Pearsall ISD by grade level, student subgroup and core subject area. Pearsall ISD students lagged behind the state in their performance in all grade levels and subject areas for each of these years. There are also performance differences

among the district’s student subgroups with Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged, special education and Limited English Proficiency/English Language Learners (LEP/ELL) students performing at a lower rate than White students. The percentage of Pearsall ISD LEP/ELL students

who met TAKS and STAAR standards and who passed End of Course exams was the lowest among all subgroups with the exception of grade 3 math and grade 7 writing.

Pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are identified for “school improvement” and must prepare a school improvement plan addressing factors that have affected student performance. The TEA identified in school year 2011–12, factors that have affected student performance in Pearsall ISD. These 12 factors include:

- lack of stability in campus leadership and change in district leadership;
- lack of challenging, measurable goals;
- lack of defined instructional best practices and expectations for collegiality and professionalism;
- lack of monitoring of CSCOPE implementation;
- lack of a written vertical plan (other than the expectation that all campuses will have a Campus Educational Improvement Committee (CEIC) and the district will have a District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC)) to maintain effective parent communication focused on increasing student achievement;
- disciplinary removals of students for five days or longer and ineffective implementation of the campus behavior management system;
- student low attendance;

- lack of consistent and appropriate formative assessments and benchmarks associated with TAKS Student Expectation;
- teachers’ low mastery of the TEKS Student Expectations;
- lack of skillful classroom instructional monitoring and feedback. Limited evidence of using classroom observations to improve mediocrity and to positively impact performance of students with known learning gaps, other than a limited number of Professional Development and Assessment System Teacher In Need of Assistance (PDAS TINAs);
- lack of academic progress of special education students and placement in special education; and
- lack of academic progress of LEP students.

Interviews with the superintendent, principals and teachers confirmed that although the district has begun to address some of the factors affecting student performance, it is still facing considerable challenges, especially in the areas of grade level alignment, teachers’ mastery of the TEKS, training and integration of new teachers, effective curriculum implementation, and the formation of a cohesive instructional team across grade levels and schools. Additionally, since the time of the onsite visit, the district has coordinated with local businesses and the faith based community to get volunteers for a new reading initiative for the kindergarten through grade 3 students. **Figure 1–11** shows that parents surveyed were highly critical of the effectiveness of Pearsall ISD’s educational programs.

**FIGURE 1–11  
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD  
OCTOBER 2013**

**THE DISTRICT HAS EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE FOLLOWING**

PROGRAM AREA	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Reading	0.0%	35.7%	0.0%	64.3%	0.0%
English or Language Arts	0.0%	42.9%	0.0%	57.1%	0.0%
Writing	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	71.4%	0.0%
Mathematics	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	64.3%	7.1%
Science	0.0%	35.7%	7.1%	57.1%	0.0%
Social Studies (History or Geography)	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents.  
SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Performance Review Parent Survey, October 2013.

Teachers across elementary and secondary grade levels commented that students are promoted to higher grade levels without being prepared academically and pointed out that there are gaps between students' knowledge level and the grade level in which they are placed. The gaps in students' knowledge are evident early on; elementary school teachers indicated that they have to do remediation in the early grades. Instruction in the early grades also lacked rigor, according to district instructional administrators. The gaps in students' knowledge grow as students progress to junior high and high school. Secondary teachers indicated that 83 percent of grade 6 students are on a grade 3 level in ELA and 70 percent of grade 8 students are on a grade 4 level in ELA. Forty-three percent of grade 6 students did not pass math and those who did passed at the low level. Seventy percent of grade 8 students are below grade level in math. According to high school teachers, chemistry and physics courses pose a challenge to students because of poor preparation. The absence of "meaningful" homework has aggravated students' knowledge gaps and contributed to their poor performance. According to the junior high school teachers, in November 2013, they started to assign "meaningful" science homework to prepare students for homework in high school; grade 6 students were assigned homework once a week, and grade 7 and 8 students were assigned homework twice a week.

Pearsall ISD's reconstitution plans echo these concerns. Both the elementary and intermediate school's reconstitution plans fault the culture of low expectations that permeated their campuses. This culture revolved around the belief that "students will not be able to achieve at the levels (desired) due to their background." According to the Pearsall Intermediate Reconstitution Plan, the culture of low expectations was so pervasive that it created a "feeling of overwhelming helplessness at the campus" and led to "less than professional exchanges with parents, students, and staff." Instruction has not been rigorous and teachers have not been held accountable for improving student learning. Lack of instructional rigor, according to the Pearsall Intermediate Reconstitution Plan was manifested in absence of a critical thinking approach, lack of reflective or responsive writing cross curricular, no utilization of effective strategies, and lack of student expectation level data to effect improvement of student learning. The Pearsall Junior High Reconstitution Plan identified in addition to lack of rigorous instruction and low expectations also a pervasive lack of understanding on the part of students of how their current performance impacts future goals. Campus survey data pointed to lack of personal attention to and guidance of

students. More than 80 percent of the students did not know that they have a counselor assigned to them and about half have not talked to an adult on campus about plans after high school. In addition, Pearsall ISD has not developed any district or campus improvement plans for school year 2013–14. Teacher quality and student achievement gaps are challenges facing many school districts and education systems in the U.S. and abroad. Two recent studies —*For Each and Every Child 2011*, (U.S. Congress' appointed Equity and Excellence Commission) and *How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better, 2013* (McKinsey & Company)— address these issues. Both studies recognize that these issues need to be confronted through multiple processes and strategies and offer a set of recommendations that districts use to turn their schools around.

*For Each and Every Child* offers five broad recommendations. While these recommendations recommend federal and state changes and initiatives, they can also be applied at the district level.

- Equitable school funding and its efficient use: redesign and reform public school funding at the federal and state levels so that sufficient resources are distributed equitably based on student needs and not zip codes.
- High quality educators, curricula, and instruction: re-examine and align the systems for recruiting, retaining, preparing, licensing, evaluating, developing and compensating effective teachers. Highly effective, well-qualified teachers must be equitably distributed across districts and schools. Students, especially those in high-need schools and districts, need strong principals.
- Universal access to high quality early childhood education with special priority for children in poor communities.
- Meet the academic and health needs of students in high-poverty communities: create a policy infrastructure and standards for services to underserved and at-risk children by encouraging parent engagement, providing health care and health education and expanded learning time.
- Governance and accountability for equity and excellence: create a national vision of expectations for student outcomes and allocate resources across states and districts reflective of the resources that districts and students need in order to achieve at the same level of their peers.

*How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better*, seeks to answer two questions: How does a school system with poor performance become good? And how does one with good performance become excellent? The study analyzed 20 education systems from around the world, with improving but differing levels of performance and examined how each has achieved significant, sustained, and widespread gains in student outcomes, as measured by international and national assessments. The study identified steps that schools can undertake, regardless of where they start, to achieve significant student performance gains and reduce achievement gaps within four to six years. Of the three types of interventions—structure, resources, and process—a vast majority of interventions that the improving systems made are “process-related” evident by spending more effort on improving the delivery of instruction and the content of what is delivered. The study identified four levels of performance: poor to fair, fair to good, good to great, and great to excellent. Moving schools from one level of performance to another requires a specific set of interventions. Each stage in the performance improvement path has its own set of interventions. Thus, schools have to implement interventions that are appropriate for their stage of performance rather than continue with interventions that were effective in their previous stage of change. There are also variations in how reforms are implemented and the appropriate mix of mandating and persuading. The study identified six interventions that are common to all performance stages across the improvement continuum, although they manifest themselves differently at each stage:

- building the instructional skills of teachers and management skills of principals;
- assessing students;
- improving data systems;
- facilitating improvement through the introduction of policy documents and education laws;
- revising standards and curriculum; and
- ensuring an appropriate reward and remuneration structure for teachers and principals.

Pearsall ISD should address student achievement gaps through the district and campus improvement planning process, set benchmarks, specify desired results, and evaluate progress periodically to allow for adjustments. Improving student performance is at the core of the district’s turnaround efforts and should be given prominence by including all

stakeholders in this initiative. The district has multiple documents addressing strategies for improving student performance such as its Student Achievement Improvement Plan and reconstitution plans for three campuses. Pearsall ISD should use these documents to inform and streamline its turnaround plans. As Pearsall ISD has not developed any district or campus improvement plans for school year 2013–14, its improvement plans should reflect its turnaround plans. The superintendent should convene a turnaround task force that includes the chief academic officer (CAO), director of human resources, chief financial officer (CFO), principals and assistant principals, director/coordinator of special education and bilingual/ESL, teachers representing each of the core areas, and parents. The turnaround task force should be divided into working teams organized around the 12 factors that TEA identified as affecting Pearsall ISD student performance. Task force members should be informed on research-based best practices associated with addressing student performance gaps. Each working team should conduct a critical review of its part of the Pearsall ISD school year 2011–12 Student Achievement Improvement Plan and associated reconstitution plans. The school year 2011–12 Student Achievement Improvement Plan delineates for each factor affecting student performance the strategies, initiatives and redesign; evidence of implementation; and evidence of impact. However, the strategies, initiatives and redesign in school year 2011–12 plan do not appear to incorporate best practices, benchmarks or desired results. The review should determine the rate of progress the district made on each of these factors and the effectiveness of the strategies and initiatives it implemented. The task force working teams should meet to present the results of their respective analysis of the factor(s) in the school year 2011–12 Student Achievement Improvement Plan assigned to them and discuss the criteria, rigor, and level of detail expected in the development of research-based strategies, benchmarks, desired results, and monitoring and evaluation methodologies. Each working team should develop, based on the analysis of progress, a plan of action to address the next stage for each factor. The plan of action should specify appropriate research-based best practice strategies, define benchmarks, identify needed resources, set measurable desired results, describe monitoring and evaluation methodologies, and provide a timetable. The plan of action each working team develops should be consolidated into a comprehensive district action plan. The task force should meet periodically to assess progress and plan effectiveness and adapt strategies as needed.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**TEACHER ATTENDANCE (REC. 3)**

Pearsall ISD lacks a process for managing staff attendance leading to the engagement of substitutes with low qualifications, high substitute costs, and a negative impact on student performance.

Research has shown that teacher absenteeism has a direct impact on student achievement. Teacher absenteeism disrupts the learning environment of the classroom and less learning occurs when regular teachers are absent; under such circumstances student motivation to attend school is also reduced. Several studies found that the overall performance of a school can be negatively impacted by high rates of teacher absenteeism. Schools with a large population of poor students and low academic performance tend to have high teacher absenteeism rates. High teacher absences also tend to lower the morale of the other teachers and result in high teacher turnover.

Teacher absenteeism has been a concern in Pearsall ISD. One of the goals set in school year 2009–10 Pearsall District Improvement Plan (DIP), the Pearsall Intermediate Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) for school year 2011–13, and in the Pearsall High School Campus Improvement Plan for

school year 2011–12 is to “increase attendance by staff and students to increase the completion rate.” The outdated DIP and CIPs were not revised annually and do not include any strategies for increasing staff attendance. The school year 2009–10 DIP specifies doing a staff survey to determine methods to improve attendance. The Pearsall Intermediate CIP for 2011–13 includes the use of a staff committee to develop a campus-wide plan for increasing staff attendance.” The plan, according to the CIP, to be implemented in January 2012, was to include six-week teacher attendance data collection, plan evaluation and revision by May 2012, and implementation in school year 2012–13. While it is unclear whether such a plan was developed and implemented, teacher absenteeism rates did not decrease.

Figure 1–12 shows annual teacher absenteeism by absenteeism category for school years 2011–12 and 2012–13. In school year 2011–12, teachers were absent 1,961.5 days or on average 12 days per teacher. In school year 2012–13, teachers were absent 1,940.5 days or on average 13.5 days per teacher. The largest categories of absenteeism included “local personal,” “state leave,” and “school related.” Some of the guidelines related to teacher attendance and leave provided in the school year 2013–14 Employee Handbook include:

- State law requires that all employees receive five days of paid personal leave per year (tracked as local

**FIGURE 1–12  
PEARSALL ISD  
TEACHER ABSENTEEISM BY YEAR AND REASON  
SCHOOL YEARS 2011–12 AND 2012–13**

REASON	2011–12		2012–13	
	DAYS	PERCENTAGE	DAYS	PERCENTAGE
01 – Jury Duty	14.0	0.7%	25.0	1.3%
03 – Local Personal	655.0	33.4%	611.0	31.5%
05 – Professional Medical Leave	78.0	4.0%	75.5	3.9%
07 – State Leave	603.0	30.7%	462.5	23.8%
08 – 94-95 State Sick Leave Forward	28.5	1.4%	23.5	1.2%
09 – School Related	528.5	26.9%	694.5	35.8%
10 – Para Medical Leave	25.0	1.3%	16.5	0.9%
11 – Vacation	29.5	1.5%	30.0	1.5%
20 – Sick Leave Pool	-	-	2.0	0.1%
<b>Total Days</b>	<b>1,961.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,940.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total Teachers</b>	<b>163.0</b>		<b>144.0</b>	
Average Number of Days Absent	12.0		13.5	

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, December 2013.

personal). Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers.

- State law also provided for sick leave. State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave may be used for the following reasons only: employee illness; illness in the employee’s immediate family, family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations), death in the immediate family, or active military service.
- According to the district, another school-related leave, not addressed in the Employee Handbook refers to absences associated with professional development activities and employees handling duties related to their assignment, such as, a coach going to a district coaches meeting or a Human Resources director going to a job fair.

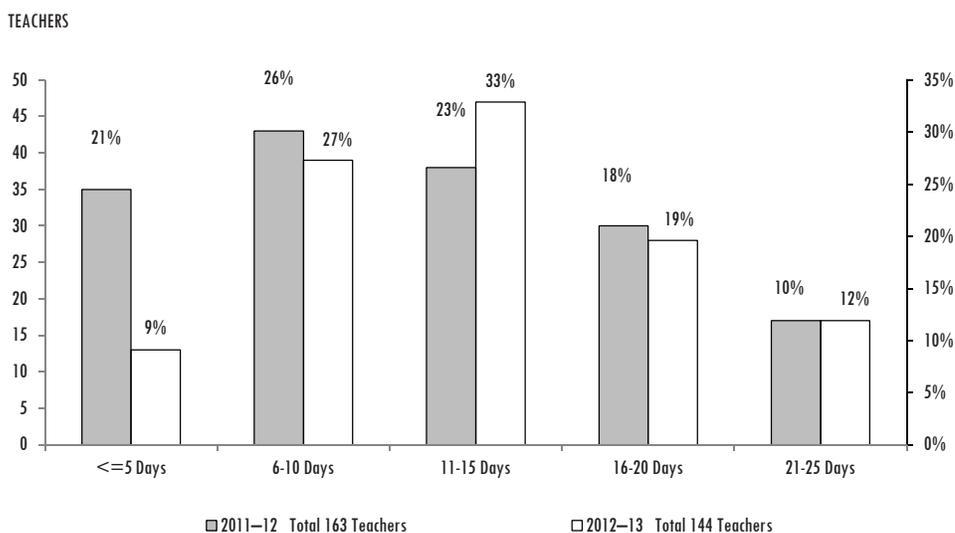
Absenteeism related to local personal reasons accounted for 33.4 percent of the absences in school year 2011–12 and 31.5 percent in school year 2012–13. Absenteeism under the

state leave category accounted for 30.7 percent of the absences in school year 2011–12 and 23.8 percent in school year 2012–13. Absenteeism for school related reasons accounted for 26.9 percent of the absences in school year 2011–12 and 35.8 percent in school year 2012–13. According to principals, parents complained that teachers are out of the classroom for too many days.

Slightly more than one-fifth of the teachers (21.5 percent) were absent in school year 2011–12 for five or fewer days; 26.4 percent were absent between six and 10 days; 23.3 percent were absent between 11 and 15 days; 18.3 percent were absent between 16 and 20 days; and 10.3 percent were absent for 21 or more days. In school year 2012–13, 9.1 percent of the teachers were absent five or fewer days; 27.1 percent were absent between six and 10 days; 32.6 percent were absent between 11 and 15 days; 19.5 percent were absent between 16 and 20 days; and 11.8 percent were absent for 21 or more days. This data is shown in **Figure 1–13**.

The district uses substitutes when teachers are absent from school. Finding substitutes is difficult according to Pearsall ISD principals and teachers and they were concerned about the quality of substitutes that the district uses. The district’s Handbook for Substitute Teachers specifies the minimum educational qualifications and certifications for substitutes as

**FIGURE 1–13**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS ABSENT**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2011–12 AND 2012–13**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, December 2013.

“Texas Certified or college degree preferred, high school diploma.” Of the list of 57 substitutes that the district has in school year 2013–14, only nine (15.8 percent) are certified teachers, one substitute has a degree but no certification, and 47 (82.5 percent) have high school diplomas. Of these 57 substitutes, 10 (21.3 percent) can substitute in the elementary school, 21 (36.8 percent) at the intermediate school, 9 (15.8) at the junior high school, and 16 (28.1 percent) at the high school. Twenty-two of the substitutes (38.6 percent) have no school designation. Using substitutes is also costly.

**Figure 1–14** shows substitute costs by year and school. Over a three-year period, school years 2010–11 to 2012–13, Pearsall ISD’s costs for substitutes were highest in school year 2012–13. Costs decreased by 28.9 percent in school year 2011–12 from school year 2010–11 level but increased 59.3 percent in school year 2012–13. The intermediate school had the highest costs for substitutes in school years 2010–11 and 2011–12 and the second highest costs in school year 2012–13. The high school had the highest substitute costs in school year 2012–13. In school year 2011–12, the district spent 6.9 percent of its budget on substitute teachers and aides. In school year 2012–13, the district spent 8.5 percent of its budget on substitute teachers and aides.

Pearsall ISD’s Handbook for Substitute Teachers specifies substitute teacher and aide pay as \$65 per day and \$75 a day for substitutes with a Bachelor’s degree. Using a weighted average daily pay rate of \$66.75 for substitute teachers and \$65 a day for aides, in school year 2010–11, the district had

substitute teachers for 3,079.2 person days and substitute aides for 435.1 person days. In school year 2011–12, the district had substitute teachers for 2,164.5 person days and substitute aides for 335.4 person days. In school year 2012–13, the district had substitute teachers for 3,640.3 person days and substitute aides for 335.7 person days as shown in **Figure 1–15**.

**Figure 1–16** shows that in the survey conducted by the review team of Pearsall ISD parents, 50 percent of the 14 parent respondents indicated that substitutes taught their children often.

Addressing the issue of teacher absenteeism, according to research, requires a comprehensive and systemic attendance improvement action plan. An attendance improvement plan consists of the following actions:

- review of board policy;
- discussions of sick leave use and abuse with teachers and aides;
- development of attendance guidelines;
- development of an attendance recognition plan;
- discussion of buyback of unused sick leave;
- improvement of teacher working conditions;
- appointment of an attendance improvement coordinator;

**FIGURE 1–14**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**SUBSTITUTE COST BY YEAR AND SCHOOL**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11 TO 2012–13**

SCHOOLS	2010–11			2011–12			2012–13		
	TEACHERS	SUPPORT	TOTAL	TEACHERS	SUPPORT	TOTAL	TEACHERS	SUPPORT	TOTAL
Ted Flores Elementary	\$46,205	\$2,535	\$48,740	\$27,958	\$3,970	\$31,928	\$33,078	\$1,483	\$34,561
Pearsall Intermediate	\$62,907	\$2,678	\$65,585	\$51,465	\$3,190	\$54,655	\$68,160	\$10,415	\$78,575
Pearsall Junior High School	\$26,078	\$1,405	\$27,483	\$32,905	\$468	\$33,373	\$44,658	\$345	\$45,003
Pearsall High School	\$56,761	\$4,765	\$61,526	\$32,088	\$1,128	\$33,216	\$97,102	\$455	\$97,557
Special Education	\$13,590	\$13,599	\$27,189	\$55	\$6,723	\$6,778	\$0	\$9,125	\$9,125
Other	\$0	\$3,300	\$3,300	\$0	\$6,325	\$6,325	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$205,541</b>	<b>\$28,282</b>	<b>\$233,823</b>	<b>\$144,471</b>	<b>\$21,804</b>	<b>\$166,275</b>	<b>\$242,998</b>	<b>\$21,823</b>	<b>\$264,821</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, December 2013.

**FIGURE 1–15  
PEARSALL ISD  
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND AIDES PERSON DAYS BY YEAR AND SCHOOL  
SCHOOL YEARS 2010–11 TO 2012–13**

SCHOOLS	2010–11			2011–12			2012–13		
	TEACHERS	SUPPORT	TOTAL	TEACHERS	SUPPORT	TOTAL	TEACHERS	SUPPORT	TOTAL
Ted Flores Elementary	692.2	39.0	731.2	418.8	61.1	479.9	495.5	22.8	518.3
Pearsall Intermediate	942.4	41.2	983.6	771.0	49.1	820.1	1,021.1	160.2	1,181.3
Pearsall Junior High School	390.7	21.6	412.3	493.0	7.2	500.2	669.0	5.3	674.3
Pearsall High School	850.3	73.3	923.6	480.7	17.3	498.0	1,454.7	7.0	1,461.7
Special Education	203.6	209.2	412.8	1.0	103.4	104.4	0.0	140.4	140.0
Other	0.0	50.8	50.8	0.0	97.3	97.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,079.2</b>	<b>435.1</b>	<b>3,514.3</b>	<b>2,164.5</b>	<b>335.4</b>	<b>2,499.9</b>	<b>3,640.3</b>	<b>335.7</b>	<b>3,975.6</b>

NOTE: Excludes substitute data for special education and other.  
SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, December 2013.

**FIGURE 1–16  
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD  
OCTOBER 2013**

**A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER RARELY TEACHES MY CHILD**

RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	RATING AVERAGE
Parents	14.3%	21.4%	14.3%	28.6%	21.4%	2.79

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Performance Review Parent Survey, October 2013.

- holding administration accountable for monitoring abuse of leave policies.

Pearsall ISD should implement a comprehensive teacher attendance improvement action plan to, substantially reduce/eliminate school-related absences, monitor absences, and hold teachers accountable. As suggested in research-based best practice, the district should address its teacher absenteeism through a comprehensive and systemic attendance improvement plan of action. Given the negative impact that teacher absenteeism can have on student performance, the district should give high priority to decreasing teacher absenteeism. Reducing teacher absenteeism would not only free financial resources but would have a positive impact on student performance.

The superintendent should appoint a teacher attendance improvement team that includes the director of human resources, CFO, CAO, principals or assistant principals and

teacher representatives. The team should nominate an attendance improvement coordinator who will also head the team. The team should analyze teacher absenteeism to determine patterns by campus and identify teachers with excessive absences. The team should set an agenda and timeline plan of action development, implementation, monitoring, preparation of monthly reports, and evaluation. The team should start with the review of board policies and consider adding sanctions for abuse of leave. The team should hold teacher forums addressing absenteeism, attendance policies, and soliciting input and suggestions on incentives and strategies for improving attendance. With input from teachers, the team should develop attendance guidelines, incorporate attendance improving strategies and incentives, and develop a system to monitor absences and hold teachers accountable.

At the same time when the teacher attendance improvement plan is being developed, Pearsall ISD should implement

procedures that can have immediate impact, such as eliminating or substantially limiting school-related absenteeism. School-related reasons accounted for 26.9 percent of absenteeism in school year 2011–12 and 35.8 percent in school year 2012–13. The district should consider not providing professional development during the school day and consider not allowing teachers to attend professional development outside of the district during the school day.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources and could result in savings. Based on school year 2012–13 absenteeism data, reducing school-related teacher absences by 90 percent and local personal absences by 50 percent will save the district \$62,111 in the first year. In school year 2012–13, school-related absences totaled 694.5 days and absences for local personal reasons amounted to 611 days. Reducing absenteeism by 625 days for school related reasons (90 percent) and 305.5 days for local personal reasons (50 percent) at \$66.75 a day for a substitute totals \$62,111. The goal in the second year will be to reduce school-related absences to 5 percent and local personal absences to 25 percent from the school year 2012–13 levels, resulting in a reduction of 188 days at \$66.75/day totaling \$12,549. Pearsall ISD should review reductions in the use of substitutes after the second year and refine its reduction goals.

#### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT (REC. 4)**

Pearsall ISD's implementation of behavior management models has not been districtwide or sustainable resulting in a high number of disciplinary placements where the delivery of adequate academic instruction is not assured.

##### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT MODEL**

Pearsall ISD has implemented two behavior management models since 2008. Implementation has not been districtwide, lacked fidelity, and has not been sustained. The district used the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model from school years 2008–09 to 2010–11 as a result of a three-year grant implemented in partnership with the Region 20. The PBIS model is a school-wide system that consists of proactive, research-based strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors with the objective of creating a positive school environment. PBIS emphasizes a continuum of positive behavior support for all students in and outside the classroom rather than a piecemeal approach. The PBIS model was not implemented districtwide or with fidelity. The PBIS model was implemented at the elementary levels only; the secondary

principals chose not to implement it. The junior high school principal participated in the grant in school year 2008–09 but decided after the first year not to implement the PBIS model. The high school did not participate in the grant from the start. Implementation at the elementary and intermediate schools was partial. The continuous personnel changes during this period made implementation difficult and inconsistent and required ongoing training of new staff. Consequently, the elementary and intermediate schools implemented PBIS at the campus level but not at the classroom level. Still, one of the strategies stated in Pearsall ISD's District Improvement Plan for 2012–13 is to "effectively implement and monitor PBIS with fidelity... to positively impact attendance, discipline and dropouts."

Pearsall ISD moved to a new student behavior management model after its PBIS grant was over in 2011. It implemented the Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation (CHAMPs) classroom behavior management model in partnership with Region 20. The model seeks to improve classroom behavior by keeping students on task and motivating them to do their best. It establishes clear and consistent classroom behavioral expectations and consequences to misbehavior and compliance. It makes students familiar with the rules and consequences. Under this model, teachers treat student misbehavior as an instructional opportunity giving students the chance to learn from their mistakes. It reduces student disruptions, disrespect, and non-compliance, and allows teachers to spend less time on disciplining students and more time on teaching. Increased student academic engagement is expected to result in better performance. The CHAMPs model creates a common framework and language across all staff with regard to student behavior, consequences, and behavior management. The elementary and intermediate schools use CHAMPs along with PBIS. The junior high school and high school use only portions of the CHAMPs model.

##### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Each Pearsall ISD campus had its own version of the student code of conduct until school year 2013–14, resulting in inconsistent application and enforcement. Pearsall High School's 2011–12 CIP Focused Data Analysis describes an inconsistently implemented and ineffective discipline management system with excessive referrals to the office and repeated referrals of the same students. Some students did not gain sufficient credits to be promoted to the next grade because of excessive absences or discipline placements. This analysis stated that only 38 percent of the high school staff

considered the discipline management system effective. The Pearsall Intermediate School Campus Improvement Plan for 2011–2013 ties discipline issues to academic performance. Twenty-one percent (63 students) of its 296 students who did not meet the 2011 reading, math, writing, and science TAKS standards were removed from the classroom for disciplinary actions from one to three days.

Pearsall ISD streamlined its code of conduct in school year 2013–14 creating a single comprehensive student code of conduct. An analysis of code of conduct violations for this school year found that students were removed from the classroom mainly for dress code violations and other minor infractions. The updated student code of conduct relaxed the dress code to keep students in the classroom and teachers focused on instruction. The district also developed a discipline ladder for secondary students associating specific offenses with disciplinary actions as shown in **Figure 1–17**.

By showing students their status regarding their discipline infractions, the discipline ladder acts as a deterrent.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

The use of the PBIS model was not effective, resulting in high percentages of students and disproportional percentages of special education students with disciplinary actions. Furthermore, the rate of disciplinary actions did not decrease considerably or consistently. **Figure 1–18** shows the disciplinary actions taken in school years 2009–10, 2010–11, and 2011–12 in Pearsall ISD. Between 18.6 percent and 22.2 percent of students received in-school suspension (ISS) during this period, between 5.6 percent and 7.0 percent were subject to out of school suspension (OSS); between 1.6 percent and 2.3 percent were placed in the a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP); and about 1 percent were placed in the Juvenile Justice Alternative

**FIGURE 1–17  
PEARSALL ISD  
DISCIPLINARY LADDER  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

LEVEL OF OFFENSE	DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	POINTS – 7 POINTS 15-30 DAYS IN DAEP
Code 21 Non-PEIMS Reportable	1 <sup>st</sup> —Verbal Warning	1 <sup>st</sup> —0 points
Minor AUP Violation	2 <sup>nd</sup> —T/S Conference and/or Teacher Detention	2 <sup>nd</sup> —0 points
Bus Misconduct		3 <sup>rd</sup> —0 points
Cheating	3 <sup>rd</sup> —Parent Conference and After School Detention	4 <sup>th</sup> —1 point
Disrupting Class		
Dishonesty	4 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, AP Parent Contact, Saturday Detention	5 <sup>th</sup> —1 point
Hazing		6 <sup>th</sup> —2 points
Horseplay	5 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, Face to Face Parent Conference, ISS 1 day	7 <sup>th</sup> —3 points
PDA (Public Display of Affection)		
Insubordination (minor)	6 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, AP and Principal Face to Face Parent Conference, 3 days ISS at Jourdanton or DAEP	
Not Prepared		
Obscene Gesture	7 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, AP and/or Principal Parent Contact, DAEP 15 days	
Use of Cell Phone		
Running	8 <sup>th</sup> —Same as 4 <sup>th</sup> offense. Repeat 4-7.	
Scuffling		
Skipping a Class		
Sleeping in Class		
Safety Rule Violation		
Tardies		
Throwing Object		
Dress code violation		

**FIGURE 1–17 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**DISCIPLINARY LADDER**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>OFFENSE- PEIMS REPORTABLE</b>	<b>DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS</b>	<b>POINTS – 7 POINTS 15-45 DAYS IN DAEP</b>
DB	Major Class Disruption	1 <sup>st</sup> — AP Referral, Face to Face Parent Conference, ISS 2 days	1 <sup>st</sup> —1 points
R1	Fighting with Another Student without Hitting	2 <sup>nd</sup> — AP Referral, Face to Face Parent Conference, ISS 3 days	2 <sup>nd</sup> —1 points
R1	Failure to Comply with Explicit Directive		3 <sup>rd</sup> —2 points
BL	Bullying	3 <sup>rd</sup> — AP Referral, AP and Principal Face to Face Parent Conference, 3 days ISS at Jourdanton or DAEP	4 <sup>th</sup> — 3 points
BD	Bullying-Disability		5 <sup>th</sup> —1 point
BG	Bullying-Gender		6 <sup>th</sup> —3 points
BR	Bullying-Race	4 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, AP and/or Principal Parent Contact, DAEP 15 days	7 <sup>th</sup> —3 points
BL	Bullying-Cyber/Computer		
CE	Coercion/Extortion	5 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, Face to Face Parent Conference, ISS 1 day	
CM	Computer Technology/Software Misuse or Mistreatment	6 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, AP and Principal Face to Face Parent Conference, 3 days ISS at Jourdanton or DAEP	
DB	Disruptive Behavior		
DC	Failure to Correct or Multiple Dress Code Violations	7 <sup>th</sup> —AP Referral, AP and/or Principal Parent Contact, DAEP 30 days	
DS	Derogatory Statement		
FC	Failure to Complete Assigned Disciplinary Action		
FD	False Document		
GA	Gambling		
IP	Inappropriate Physical Contact (shoving, groping, PDA)		
LD	Possession or Sale of a Look-alike Drug		
LW	Possession of a Look-alike Weapon		
OM	Possession/Use Distribution of Over the Counter Medication		
PL	Possession of Lighter or Matches		
33	Possession/Use of Tobacco		
PM	Possession/Creation/Accessing of pornography		
PR	Profanity		
R1	Repeated/Continued Code 21 violations		
RT	Theft/Stealing (non-felony)		
SD	Skip Partial/Entire Day		

**FIGURE 1–17 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**DISCIPLINARY LADDER**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

CODE	OFFENSE- PEIMS REPORTABLE	DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	POINTS – 7 POINTS
			15-45 DAYS IN DAEP
R2	Repeated/Continued PEIMS Reportable violations	1 <sup>st</sup> —AP Referral, Face to Face Parent Conference, ISS 1 day	1 <sup>st</sup> —1 points
		2 <sup>nd</sup> —AP Referral, AP and Principal Face to Face Parent Conference, 3 days ISS at Jourdanton or DAEP	2 <sup>nd</sup> —3 points
		3 <sup>rd</sup> —AP Referral, AP and/or Principal Parent Contact, DAEP 30 days	3 <sup>rd</sup> —3 points
41	Fighting/Mutual Combat	OSS 1–3 days as appropriate, Referral to Police for possible citation	1 <sup>st</sup> —3 points
			2 <sup>nd</sup> — 4 points

NOTE: PEIMS – Public Education Information Management System.  
 SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, November 2013.

**FIGURE 1–18**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2011–12**

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	2009–10			2010–11			2011–12		
	ALL STUDENTS	SPECIAL EDUCATION	ECON. DISAD.	ALL STUDENTS	SPECIAL EDUCATION	ECON. DISAD.	ALL STUDENTS	SPECIAL EDUCATION	ECON. DISAD.
Total Students	2,477	202	1,872	2,430	192	1,967	2,392	208	1,958
ISS Actions	1,468	176	1,228	1,146	169	939	1,414	242	1,282
ISS Students	533	70	416	452	59	370	530	76	472
ISS Percent	21.5%	34.6%	22.2%	18.6%	30.7%	18.8%	22.2%	36.5%	24.1%
OSS Actions	372	67	316	322	50	248	236	66	235
OSS Students	168	27	131	152	17	126	133	35	121
OSS Percent	6.8%	13.4%	7.0%	6.3%	8.8%	6.4%	5.6%	16.8%	6.2%
DAEP Actions	75	11	62	53	8	39	44	8	45
DAEP Students	58	10	47	50	7	37	38	7	35
DEAP Percent	2.3%	4.9%	2.5%	2.1%	3.6%	1.9%	1.6%	3.4%	1.8%
JJAEP Actions	19	*	15	18	*	13	*	0	*
JJAEP Students	17	*	13	18	*	13	*	0	*
JJAEP Percent	0.7%	*	0.7%	0.7%	*	0.7%	*	0	*

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
 NOTE: Econ. Disad. – Economically Disadvantaged.  
 SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, Counts of Students and Discipline Action Groupings, November 2013.

Education Program (JJAEP). The rate of disciplinary actions was considerably higher for special education students across all disciplinary action categories. In school year 2009–10, 34.6 percent of special education students had ISS placements, 13.4 percent OSS placements, and 4.9 percent were placed in the DAEP. In school year 2010–11, 30.7 percent of the special education students were placed in ISS, 8.8 percent were subject to OSS disciplinary actions, and 3.6 percent were placed in the district's DAEP. In school year 2011–12, 36.5 percent of the district's special education students received ISS, 16.8 percent received OSS, and 3.4 percent were placed in the district's DAEP. The rate of disciplinary actions involving students classified as economically disadvantaged was closer to the rate of disciplinary actions taken against all students.

The high levels of the discipline referrals of special education students and their placement in ISS, OSS and the DAEP are also reflected in TEA's Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) reports for 2011 and 2012. The PBMAS 2011 report assigned Pearsall ISD a 2 performance level for the placement of special education students in ISS and in OSS. Of 202 special education students, 173 or 85.6 percent were placed in ISS and 67 or 33.2 percent had OSS placements. In 2012, the district had a PBMAS 3 performance level for the placement of special education students in ISS. Of 192 special education students, 161 or 83.9 percent had ISS placements. A 2 performance level indicates a difference of 10.1 to 20.0 percentage points from the state standard. A 3 performance level indicates a difference from the state standard of at least 20.1 percentage points.

The number of disciplinary actions declined slightly in school year 2012–13 from school year 2011–12 level. In school year 2012–13, 1,116 disciplinary violations resulted in ISS placements, 44 resulted in partial-day ISS placements, 186 resulted in OSS placements, 66 resulted in DAEP placements, and five in JJAEP placements. While disciplinary actions declined further in the first half of school year 2013–14 (August 2013 to December 2013), they were still high: 186 students were placed in ISS, 20 had OSS placements, 10 went to partial day ISS/OSS, and 11 secondary level students were placed in DAEPs. Administrators and staff attributed the decline in disciplinary actions to the efforts of administrators and teachers to keep students in the classroom so not to disrupt their academic progress. Teachers, assistant principals, and principals speak with students and their parents and motivate the students to amend their behavior before taking any disciplinary action.

The junior high school instituted after school and Saturday ISS so that students can stay in their classroom during the school day.

Pearsall ISD's ISS programs at the elementary, intermediate, and junior high schools are overseen by substitutes who change frequently, putting into question the delivery of adequate instruction. The district does not provide any orientation or professional development to the substitutes assigned to the ISS. Teachers whose students are placed in ISS are expected to prepare the assignments/lesson plans for the respective students, provide these to the substitute in the morning and the substitute is expected to return the students' complete and incomplete work to the respective teachers at the end of the day. Some teachers check on their students in the ISS during conference time. At the intermediate school, the ISS form includes notification to the teacher, to the Special Education department if the student receives special education services, and to the school office. Previously, a certified teacher oversaw the ISS at junior high school; this teacher was assigned in school year 2013–14 to the DAEP located at the school. An aide manages the high school ISS.

#### **DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Pearsall ISD's disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) was located on the high school campus until school year 2013–14. The number of students placed in the DAEP varied from school year 2009–10 to 2012–13, as shown in **Figure 1–19**. **Figure 1–19** shows aggregate data and not grade level data for junior high and high schools students and excludes elementary school students due to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. The number of students placed in DAEP decreased annually from school year 2009–10 to 2011–12 but increased in school year 2012–13 by 69.2 percent from its school year 2011–12 level. Ninth grade students constituted the largest group among students placed in DAEP during each of these years. Between 46.2 and 71.8 percent of the students placed in DAEP were high school students. The percentage of junior high school students among students placed in the DAEP ranged from 28.2 percent in school year 2010–11 to 53.8 percent in school year 2011–12. The majority of students placed in the DAEP were males with the percentage of female students ranging from 17.4 in school year 2010–11 to 33.3 percent in school year 2012–13. The percentage of special education students also varied annually ranging from 12.2 percent in school year 2012–13 to 25.0 percent in school year 2011–12.

**FIGURE 1–19  
PEARSALL ISD  
STUDENTS PLACED IN DAEP BY SCHOOL LEVEL, GENDER, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION  
SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2012–13**

STUDENTS	2009–10		2010–11		2011–12		2012–13	
	STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Total Students Placed	57	100.0%	39	100.0%	39	100.0%	66	100.0%
<b>SCHOOL LEVEL</b>								
Junior High School (Grade 6–8)	22	38.6%	11	28.2%	21	53.8%	28	42.4%
High School (Grades 9–12)	35	61.4%	28	71.8%	18	46.2%	38	57.6%
<b>GENDER</b>								
Male	41	71.9%	38	82.6%	28	70.0%	44	66.7%
Female	16	28.1%	8	17.4%	12	30.0%	22	33.3%
<b>OTHER</b>								
Hispanic	51	89.5%	43	93.5%	39	97.5%	61	92.4%
Special Education	9	15.8%	7	15.2%	10	25.0%	8	12.2%

NOTE: \*Data on elementary school students was not included in the figure because they numbered fewer than five in one of the years. Junior high and high school grade levels were combined as some of the grade levels had fewer than five students in one or more of the respective years shown in the exhibit. Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, December 2013.

Pearsall ISD established two DAEP locations in school year 2013–14 as a result of the large number of students placed in the program in school year 2012–13. In school year 2012–13, 66 students were in the DAEP, an increase of 65 percent from the 40 students in school year 2011–12. The district decided to have a DAEP facility for high school students on campus in one of the portables and a second DAEP in a classroom in the junior high school. Previously, the DAEP was located on the high school campus. The locations of the DAEP facilities do not provide sufficient separation between students in DAEP and the other students, especially in the junior high school. A full-time certified teacher is assigned to each location. The teacher assigned to the junior high school program is a general education teacher; the high school teacher assigned to the program is certified in physical education.

**JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Pearsall ISD also sends students to the Atascosa County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), renamed The Larry Brown School, in which it participates with other 10 districts. The Atascosa JJAEP was established in 1995. It has three staff: a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, and a drill instructor. The JJAEP

can accommodate up to 15 students with its current staff level. The JJAEP facility has two rooms with cubicles and 25 laptop computers with NovaNet. NovaNet is a web-based system that provides rigorous, standards-based instruction for middle and high school students. Typically, students are placed at the JJAEP for 30 to 90 days. Upon arrival at the JJAEP, students take the IOWA test to determine their grade level and special education requirements. The student brings his/her books from the home campus. The individualized academic program developed for the student at the JJAEP follows the student’s schedule for core subjects. The JJAEP tries to accommodate the student’s electives. The plan specifies the classes to be taken, the number of days assigned to the JJAEP, services to be offered, and the projected day of graduation. The home campus teachers are expected to provide lesson plans/assignments for the student. Each student has a notebook with assignments for the day. A week before the student goes back to the home campus there is an interdisciplinary meeting with the home campus assistant principal or counselor, a probation officer, drill instructor, the parent, and the student. A transition plan is also provided to the home campus and the parents when the student completes his/her JJAEP program. The JJAEP educational

coordinator follows up on the student every two weeks once a student returns to the home campus.

As shown in **Figure 1–20**, the number of students placed in the JJAEP from school year 2009–10 to 2012–13 varied from a high of 22 in school year 2010–11 to a low of nine in school year 2012–13. **Figure 1–20** shows aggregate data and not school level, grade level, gender, or special education data in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. The majority of students with JJAEP placements were Hispanic. Attendance at the JJAEP has been a problem: on average, attendance ranged from 48.2 percent in school year 2010–11 to 81.2 percent in school year 2012–13. The JJAEP educational coordinator indicated that Pearsall ISD home campus teachers sometimes failed to send assignments for the students. Many of the students who are placed in the JJAEP do not read at their grade level; some have academic difficulties due to learning disabilities that were not diagnosed by their home campus. Several of the teachers had difficulty managing the students upon their return from the JJAEP and contacted the JJAEP educational coordinator asking for advice on how to work with specific students.

The National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) developed indicators of quality programming for disciplinary alternative education programs based on a review of exemplary practices in this area. Among its indicators are the following:

- Alternative education services are efficiently organized into effective delivery systems whether the entity is an alternative school, program, or classroom.
- The program is housed in a safe, well maintained, aesthetically pleasing, and physically accessible environment that supports optimal student learning.
- Rules and behavioral expectations are clearly written (i.e., code of conduct and comprehensive student discipline action plan), understood, and accepted by staff, students, and parents/guardians. Both mechanisms ensure that students are actively taught, rewarded, recognized, and monitored which guide and manage student behavior, evaluate progress, and direct the learner’s experience in the alternative education program.
- The program has a designated team of representatives (i.e., administrative, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents/guardians, and, if possible, student representatives) that strategically plan, monitor, and implement prevention and intervention strategies that reflect the culture and climate of the alternative education program.
- The program actively promotes student engagement and affords students with the opportunity to have a role in shaping the learning environment to facilitate feelings of connectedness.

**FIGURE 1–20  
PEARSALL ISD  
STUDENTS PLACED IN JJAEP BY SCHOOL LEVEL, DAYS ASSIGNED, ATTENDANCE, AND DISPOSITION  
SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2012–13**

STUDENTS	2009–10		2010–11		2011–12		2012–13	
	MEASURE	PERCENTAGE	MEASURE	PERCENTAGE	MEASURE	PERCENTAGE	MEASURE	PERCENTAGE
Total Students Placed	19	100.0%	21	100.0%	8	100.0%	9	100.0%
Junior High School (Grades 6-8)	9	47.4%	11	52.4%	*	*	*	*
High School (Grades 9-12)	10	52.6%	10	47.6%	*	*	*	*
Days Assigned	8 to 50		3 to 70		0 to 54		17 to 59	
Attendance Range	25-100%		0-88%		0-100%		52-100%	
Average Attendance Rate	68.4%		48.2%		56.6%		81.2%	

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

NOTE: \*Number of students has duplicates as it includes repeat placements in JJAEP.

SOURCE: Atascosa County Juvenile Probation Department, Educational Coordinator, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, November 2013.

- The alternative education program communicates high expectations for teacher performance, which in turn results in improved student academics and behavior with opportunities to celebrate individual successes on a regular basis.
- Student and staff evaluation data and feedback regarding the program are presented at staff meetings and used to make appropriate programming changes.
- The program demonstrates an understanding and sensitivity to academic, behavioral, cultural, developmental, gender, and societal needs of students, parents/guardians, and the community.
- Short and long-term program goals address the needs of the students, staff, parents/guardians, and the program.
- Program objectives are measurable and built upon student academic achievement, student behavior, and social improvement and are the basis of program accountability, evaluation, and improvement.

Pearsall ISD should monitor the implementation of its student behavior management program, evaluate its effectiveness in improving student discipline, and determine the extent to which its disciplinary placements offer adequate academic instruction to students. The district should assign a staff member to a behavior and discipline monitoring position with the responsibility for overseeing the district's behavior management program and its disciplinary placements, including ISS, OSS, DAEP, and JJAEP. The oversight position should include an instructional and financial review and assessment of the district's disciplinary programs and the development of a system for managing the disciplinary placements based on best practices. The review should address the adequacy of staff overseeing the different placement settings, the disproportional placement of certain subgroups, and the effectiveness of communications and collaboration. Communication and collaboration pertains to disciplinary placement staff and home campus teachers in providing student assignments and monitoring student progress and return to the home campus. The staff member assigned to this position should have expertise in organizing, managing, and evaluating behavior management and disciplinary placement programs at the school and district level and the authority to initiate changes and improvements based on best practices. In addition, the district should evaluate the location of the DAEP to ensure adequate

separation from the other students, especially the junior high school.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (REC. 5)**

Pearsall ISD's process and method for evaluating special education placements have not been consistently and effectively implemented leading to a high rate of referrals to special education.

Response to Intervention (RtI), according to the RtI Action Network, is a three-tier, integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by student outcome data. The RtI system involves general education or special education teachers and experts. The process begins with the screening of all children in the general education classroom and providing interventions of increased intensity to struggling students to accelerate their rate of learning. The interventions, their intensity and duration are tailored to individual student needs and their response to instruction. Students who receive these interventions are frequently and closely monitored to assess their progress and performance. The effectiveness of the RtI process is based on the rigor and fidelity with which its four components are implemented. The four components include quality classroom instruction, ongoing student assessment, tiered instruction, and parent involvement.

The first tier identifies struggling learners who need additional support and provides supplemental instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. Typically, this intervention does not exceed eight weeks, at the end of which students who demonstrate significant progress are returned to their regular education classroom program while students who do not show adequate progress are moved to Tier 2. Tier 2 consists of increasingly intensive instruction tailored to the student's needs, level of performance and progress. Tier 2 services and interventions last no longer than a grading period and are provided in small-group settings in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. In kindergarten through grade 3, interventions usually focus on reading and math. Students who do not demonstrate adequate progress are referred to Tier 3. Under Tier 3, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target their skill deficits. Students who do not show adequate progress are referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services.

Pearsall ISD implements RtI in three of its campuses: Ted Flores Elementary, Pearsall Intermediate, and Pearsall Junior High. RtI is implemented at the elementary school through two reading teachers who work with the kindergarten and grade 1 students. Students are identified through the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). The RtI teachers focus on addressing the needs of Tier 3 students and monitor teachers who address Tier 1 and Tier 2 student needs. Tier 1 interventions are provided during a daily 45-minute period where teachers can either provide remediation or enrichment, using flexible student groupings across teachers. For Tier 2 interventions, they pull out students and apply dyslexia type strategies. Tier 3 interventions increase the amount of time respective students spend with the RtI teacher. The RtI teachers assist the other teachers with lesson planning, provide training, observe students, meet with parents, and prepare and keep documentation.

The intermediate school had interventionists at each grade level who implemented RtI interventions with students on the three tiers. The interventionist positions were eliminated as a result of budget cuts. Currently, RtI is embedded with classroom teachers. Classroom teachers have the responsibility to implement all interventions on all levels. The school's dyslexia teacher was responsible for scheduling and managing the RtI team meetings school year 2013–14, when the responsibility was assigned to the counselor. According to the teachers, at the time of the onsite visit the counselor had not implemented any RtI functions. The RtI process has not been fully implemented at the intermediate school. Classroom teachers' attendance of RtI meetings to discuss progress and decide on follow-up strategies, a key component of the process, has been low. Documentation of intervention strategies and progress monitoring has also been deficient, demonstrating that the screening was not comprehensive, and most often missing vision and hearing tests. Documentation required for referrals to special education has often been incomplete and referrals to special education have resulted in a high rate of disqualifications.

The RtI focus at the secondary level shifts from basic skill development to content-area learning, high-level critical thinking skills within subject areas, increased student motivation, and appropriate behaviors. The RtI model at the secondary level follows the same process as the traditional model of selecting a campus-based RtI team; selecting a universal screener and progress monitoring benchmarks for academic and behavior RtI; establishing the RtI process and procedures including the tiered-interventions; and holding

initial, periodic and year-end team meetings. Pearsall Junior High was set to implement a behavior RtI model in school year 2012–13 but moved to a primarily academic RtI model. The RtI approach is implemented at the junior high school by the counselor. The counselor provides tiered-interventions during an intervention period for state assessment remediation. Tier 1 interventions are provided through project-based learning (PBL) of specific TEKS; tier 2 interventions involve up to 30 minutes of activities conducted in small groups of three to four students who have similar academic deficiencies in reading or math; and tier 3 interventions are provided through 45-minute sessions with two to three students. Acting both as a RtI coordinator and a school counselor, expected to devote 50 percent of his time to each area of responsibility has been challenging and resulted in less time devoted to RtI. This, in turn, affected the collection of timely data on student progress that is necessary for monitoring the effectiveness of the interventions.

The RtI program is not streamlined across campuses. Each of the campuses implementing RtI has developed its own RtI forms and documentation requirements making it difficult to assess its implementation and effectiveness. While the district has two documents titled Pearsall ISD Response to Intervention District RtI Handbook and Pearsall ISD Response to Intervention District RtI Guidebook, neither is complete. The Pearsall ISD Response to Intervention – District RtI Handbook is not readily known to staff and administrators. While it describes the RtI procedures for the three campuses, it does not include all the information regarding the RtI procedures and intervention strategies being used at the junior high school and does not include any RtI forms. The Pearsall ISD Response to Intervention District RtI Guidebook, although referred to as a district RtI guidebook describes exclusively the RtI processes implemented at the junior high school and includes information about a behavioral model omitted from the Pearsall ISD Response to Intervention RtI Handbook.

Partial and inconsistent implementation of RtI strategies have resulted in a high rate of referrals to special education that do not qualify for special education services. From school years 2009–10 to 2012–13, 101 students were referred to special education. The number of referrals to special education was highest in school year 2012–13 at 47 referrals. The number of students that did not qualify (DNQ) for special education, as determined by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, was also highest in school year 2012–13 with 15 DNQs. Over this four-year period,

27.7 percent or 28 referrals were DNQ for special education. The intermediate school had the highest percentage of DNQs over this period: 37.8 percent. In school year 2010–11, six out of 12 or 50.0 percent of the intermediate school referrals for special education were DNQs. Similarly, in school year 2012–13, seven out of 17 percent or 41.2 percent of their referrals to special education were DNQs. The elementary school's DNQ rate ranged from 9.1 percent to 24.0 percent.

TEA's *A Guide to the Admission, Review and Dismissal Process* (March 2012) provides a detailed explanation of the RtI process. This guide describes various activities that may take place during the special education process such as early intervention activities, determination of eligibility for special education, development of a child's individualized education program (IEP) and dismissal from special education. This guide is available for districts to use to navigate the requirements of the ARD process.

Crystal City ISD implemented an RtI process that both reduced the number of referrals to special education and the number of DNQs. Crystal City's RtI intervention process, named the Student Assistance Team (SAT), is a coordinated process of effective interventions that also encourages parental involvement. The system promotes collaboration among parents, students, and school and district level instructional, support, and administrative staff members before a student is referred for a special education assessment. The SAT referral system includes three processes:

- In Process I, the referring teacher recognized the student's academic/behavior problem, reviewed the student's permanent record and work samples, completed an observation checklist, and contacted a parent. The teacher implemented interventions based on the review of records and parent input. If interventions were successful, the process ended. If unsuccessful, the teacher proceeded to Process II.
- In Process II, the referring teacher met with the School Assistance Team to review Process I information. Each school had a School Assistance Team composed of two teachers, a counselor, and one administrator. The team recommended additional intervention strategies. If the strategies were successful, the process stopped. If not, the teacher proceeded to Process III.
- In Process III, the team reviewed all information on the student's progress and interventions and recommended additional interventions or contacted a parent. It reviewed eligibility guidelines to special

programs and made a referral to an appropriate special program.

The Student Assistance Team considered four options before deciding to intervene. These options included implementing school modifications for a pre-determined amount of time; initiating a 504 referral process; referring the student to the dyslexia committee; or initiating the special education referral process. During the first year of implementation the number of referrals to special education decreased by 55 percent and of the 30 students referred, 28 students qualified for special education services.

Pearsall ISD should develop procedures that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation and documentation of RtI on each campus, train teachers in the process, monitor implementation, and track the rate of inappropriate referrals to special education. The CAO should establish an RtI monitoring team to review RtI implementation on each of the three campuses. The RtI monitoring team should consist of an RtI interventionist or counselor from each of the campuses and the director of Special Education. TEA's *A Guide to the Admission, Review and Dismissal Process* which provides a detailed explanation of the RtI process, should serve as a basis for the review. The team should review the RtI process implemented on each campus and identify areas where implementation is lacking, incomplete or not sufficiently comprehensive and develop procedures that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation and documentation. The team should identify staffing and other resources needed for that level of implementation, develop templates of appropriate documentation, and specify the information and data to be included in each of the documents. The team should also set up a monitoring process within each campus and at the district level that will help ensure effective implementation. The district should combine the two RtI related documents and include the additional information identified by the RtI monitoring team review. The director of Special Education should train the staff involved in RtI implementation on the three campuses in the documentation process, focusing on documentation gaps or insufficient detail areas, provide assistance with RtI implementation, and monitor its effectiveness as measured by the number of qualified referrals to special education.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (REC. 6)**

Pearsall ISD’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) program is not consistent with requirements and is not guided by an advisory committee to oversee and evaluate the program regularly.

The Pearsall High School CTE department chair oversees the program and reports to a district CTE coordinator. Pearsall ISD has eight certified CTE teachers. CTE classes are offered only in high school. In school year 2012–13, 20.5 percent of Pearsall ISD students were enrolled in CTE classes. Pearsall ISD’s CTE enrollment was lower than the state rate and slightly higher than the Region 20 enrollment rate. As shown in **Figure 1–21**, Pearsall ISD had the lowest CTE enrollment rate among its peer districts. In school year 2013–14, 451 Pearsall ISD students or 19.4 percent, take CTE classes. The percentage of budget that Pearsall ISD spent on its CTE program in school year 2011–12 was above the state and regional percentages and was the second highest among its peer districts. However, according to the Pearsall High School principal, the CTE budget for school year 2013–14 is not sufficient for consumable supplies and several courses either do not have sufficient supplies or their equipment is outdated. Furthermore, Pearsall ISD cannot articulate several courses because the district does not have all the required equipment.

CTE courses are grouped into 16 career clusters. Each of the clusters has a coherent sequence of courses. The career clusters, as specified in the Texas State Plan for Career and Technical Education 2008–2013, link school-based learning with industry-validated knowledge and skills required for success in the workplace. Pearsall ISD offers classes in six of 16 career clusters: Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources;

Architecture and Construction; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. However, the Pearsall High School CTE program has not organized its clusters around a coherent sequence of courses. High school counselors do not present students as they enter high school with a coherent CTE course sequence that can help them develop a four-year plan based on their interests and a set of skills in a particular area that will benefit them in the future. Students who take CTE courses move from cluster to cluster rather than follow a career pathway of courses. The CTE program is still considered a collection of courses that students can select based on their schedule without understanding the purpose and logical sequence of the CTE courses. The program is considering adding Cosmetology, Certified Nurse Aide (CNA), and Police Dispatcher courses without consideration of the sequence of courses in which the added courses would fit. **Figure 1–22** shows the CTE courses the district offers in school year 2013–14 along with enrollment per course.

Career and technical student organizations are a vital part of the CTE program, as they keep students engaged in school and provide opportunities for developing leadership, technical knowledge, and academic skills. Pearsall High School CTE students participate in several CTE student organizations, including Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCA); Future Farmers of America (FFA); Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA); and a Criminal Justice Club.

Pearsall ISD has an articulation agreement with the Southwest Technical Junior College (SWTJC). At the beginning of school year 2013–14, five CTE teachers attended the

**FIGURE 1–21  
PEARSALL ISD  
CTE STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND ACTUAL EXPENDITURES COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 20, AND STATE  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

	STUDENTS IN CTE	PERCENT ENROLLED IN CTE	ACTUAL CTE EXPENDITURES*	PERCENT ACTUAL CTE EXPENDITURES	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURES
Pearsall ISD	458	20.5%	\$675,434	4.2%	\$305
Carrizo Springs ISD	642	26.3%	\$792,365	5.4%	\$334
Fabens ISD	600	25.2%	\$683,587	3.8%	\$282
West Oso ISD	758	37.3%	\$315,110	2.3%	\$149
Region 20	86,394	20.2%	\$78,745,984	3.0%	\$188
State	1,110,812	22.0%	\$1,055,446,791	3.4%	\$212

\*Includes all funds.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, November 2013.

**FIGURE 1–22  
PEARSALL HIGH SCHOOL CTE COURSES AND ENROLLMENT  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

CTE COURSES	ENROLLMENT (1)
Accounting	10
Money Matters	16, 19, 25
Government	*
Business Information Management (BIM) I	18
Business Information Management (BIM) II	7
Animation	19
Graphic Design	14, 17
Web Technology	21
Principals of Human Services	16, 23, 15, 21
Career Preparation	16
Professional Communications	18, 8, 15, 16, 3
Construction Technology	12, 15
Livestock Production	14, 24
Welding	11, 17, 15, 16
Advanced Animal Science	12
Principals of Agriculture/Food/Resources	10
Agricultural Mechanics/Metal	12, 20, 22
Principals of Law/Public Safety/Corrections and Security	21, 14, 16
Forensic Science	8
Law Enforcement I	13, 20
Energy, Power and Transportation Systems	16, 22
Automotive Technology	9, 11
Advanced Automotive technology	*
Automotive Technology	11

NOTES: (1) Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

(2) Multiple enrollment numbers refer to different sections of a course.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Pearsall High School, Schedule of Classes, September 1, 2013.

articulation course training with SWTJC. Students who complete the articulated courses can apply the credits earned to a two-year Associates in Applied Science (AAS) degree. The credits students earn for the articulated courses are guaranteed at SWTJC. In school year 2013–14, articulated courses include Accounting, BIM I and BIM II, Career Preparation, Automotive Technology, Web Technologies, and Law Enforcement I.

Pearsall High School’s school year 2013–14 Accountability Improvement Plan does not address the CTE program. The CTE program is addressed in the improvement plan the district developed with regard to the academic performance of special education students in CTE, in response to TEA’s 2012 Performance-Based Monitoring and Analysis System (PBMAS) report. The PBMAS report pointed to the low academic skill attainment of CTE students including special

education and ELL students. According to the PBMAS report, Pearsall ISD special education students enrolled in CTE had a 3 performance level in TAKS mathematics, ELA, and science and a 2 performance level in social studies. A 3 performance level refers to a TAKS passing rate that is at least 20.1 percentage points below the subject-area standard. A 2 performance level refers to a TAKS passing rate that is 10.1 to 20.0 percentage points below the subject area standard. The Improvement Plan strategies that Pearsall ISD specified consist of monitoring the enrollment of special education students in CTE, disaggregating performance data to determine effectiveness of interventions, and providing professional development to secondary teachers on specific strategies in CTE courses.

The Texas State Plan for Career and Technical Education requires districts to have a local advisory committee that is involved in decisions related to the implementation, improvement, and evaluation of the CTE program. Typically, a CTE advisory committee consists of CTE staff, school and district administrators and staff, and members of the business community and industry. CTE advisory committees can also include a parent and a student. An advisory committee is an integral part of a CTE program. A CTE advisory committee can provide expert advice and help determine whether the program prepares students for the future job market; what should training include; whether the curriculum addresses industry needs; and how instructors can verify competencies to industry standards. CTE advisory committees also analyze course content; recommend industry validated credentials or assist with obtaining testing for industry credentials, licenses or certifications; evaluate facilities and program equipment; assist with instructional and learning experience including offering training sites, organizing plant tours and field experiences, locating resources, and obtaining equipment on loan, at special prices or as gifts; assist with job opportunities and student job placements; advise on short-term and long-term plans; build interest and relationships between the program and the community organizations through partnerships; and assist in promoting CTE and education. The Pearsall ISD CTE program does not have an advisory committee.

The Texas State Plan requires that CTE be evaluated annually. One of the key roles of the CTE advisory committee is to participate in the annual evaluation of the CTE program. The evaluation addresses areas such as the composition and utilization of an advisory committee; student recruitment, selection, and enrollment procedures; TEKS, occupational

competencies, profiles and instructional objectives; facilities and equipment; instructional materials and resources; testing performance standards; curriculum development, including leadership, occupational orientation and personal development; opportunities for employment; and student follow-up and evaluation. The results of the evaluation lead to program improvement recommendations. Pearsall ISD does not evaluate its CTE program annually.

Districts that use CTE advisory committees typically hold committee meetings several times a year, usually quarterly. In addition to participation in the annual evaluation, responsibilities of the committee include: review of program progress, addressing program issues as necessary, assisting the CTE program through the formation and expansion of business and industry partnerships, and supporting the students through internships and scholarships.

TEA's *2012–13 Carl D. Perkins Effectiveness Report* has 75 indicators for evaluating CTE program effectiveness. The Carl D. Perkins is the federal Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006. The indicators are organized into five areas consisting of Administrative Leadership, Special Populations, Program Access, Fiscal Management, and Accountability. Several indicators refer to establishing relationships with businesses and industry and conducting CTE program evaluations.

The LEA reviews labor market data and workforce trends to implement programs that provide students with technical knowledge and skills essential for high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand careers.

- The LEA has established collaborative linkages with local business and industry partners involved in workforce preparation.
- The LEA has developed a comprehensive strategy for annual CTE program evaluations.
- The LEA annually evaluates its student performance data and provides ongoing, systemic, objective evaluation of CTE programs.
- CTE programs are evaluated annually to determine that the size, scope, quality, and effectiveness are sufficient to meet the needs of students and be in compliance with state and federal assessment requirements.

Kerrville ISD has a 35-member CTE advisory board composed of community members, business leaders, and parents. The board meets monthly and provides input into

the program. The board is divided into two-member teams for the evaluation. All members are trained on using the evaluation instrument that is tailored after the TEA instrument and covers each CTE course. The board evaluates the CTE program annually.

The Spring ISD CTE advisory board advises the district on its long- and short-term CTE plan, current job needs, and the relevance of the CTE courses the district offers. It provides a forum for recommending equipment and training so that the CTE program can meet its goals, and encourages students through scholarships to continue their education and preparation for a career beyond high school. The board also enhances the community's support for career and technical education.

Pearsall ISD should create a CTE plan with a coherent sequence of courses for each cluster, establish an advisory committee, and evaluate the CTE program annually. The district should consider adding new courses as they fit into a coherent sequence of courses. The high school should establish a CTE advisory committee with representatives from local business and industry and involve the advisory committee members in an annual evaluation of its program. The advisory committee members should be trained in the use of the Self-Evaluation form, and use the evaluation data from each member to prepare a program evaluation report. The CTE department should use the evaluation report for program improvement. The CTE advisory committee should meet at least once a semester.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING (REC. 7)**

Pearsall ISD's guidance and counseling program does not operate effectively and lacks consistency from campus to campus.

An effective guidance and counseling program helps to support the mission of a school by linking the academic curriculum with social support to enhance the well-being of the student. Effective programs improve students' academic achievement, confidence, and interpersonal skills. By enhancing student well-being, counselors are directly and indirectly improving the school climate. A well-managed program, according to the Pearsall High School Counseling and Guidance Program Handbook organizes personnel, physical resources, and activities in relation to defined needs,

priorities, and objectives in order to contribute to the total educational program.

Pearsall ISD has seven counselors: one at the elementary school, one at the intermediate school, two at the junior high school, and three at the high school. The high school has a lead counselor who oversees the other two counselors. Five of the counselors are new. The guidance and counseling program did not receive any direction from the district, and the counselors do not function as a district team. There is little or no cross-campus communications among the counselors and no district counselor meetings. The counselors do not know each other and are not aware of the resources and materials each counselor has. They also do not know whom to call when they need advice or help.

The counselors do not have a recommended list of community and county resources. Neither does the district maintain a list of social service resources. The absence of such a list is especially detrimental to the five new counselors who are not aware of the full-array of resources such as food banks, social services and health care resources; this limits the level of assistance they can provide to students and their families. While some of the counselors who have been in the district longer have lists of resources that they developed, they have not shared them with other counselors.

The program also lacks an adopted curriculum for guidance and character education. A guidance curriculum is considered a key component of the program. A guidance curriculum consists of structured developmental lessons designed to help students achieve desired competencies and provide students with the knowledge and skills appropriate to their developmental level. Classroom guidance lessons use research based practices with proven positive results for students. In the absence of a set curriculum, counselors develop lesson plans based on ideas and activities they found in books, heard at conferences, or information they obtained from the Internet. It is unclear whether the lesson plans counselors develop and implement meet the characteristics of an effective guidance program. The counselors are not aware of the guidance resources each other uses or the lesson plans and activities each of them develops and implements. Consequently, there is no consistency across campuses in the guidance program. Typically, guidance lessons are administered through a counselor-teacher collaborative, proactive, and preventative approach combining academic lessons with personal and social skills. The counselor and teacher work together in the classroom to address classroom management skills and help build a positive class

environment. According to the counselors, the district has reduced the time for guidance lessons because of the focus on academics.

There is no consistency in procedures, forms, and use of resources among counselors. Each campus has its own forms and procedures which impedes coordination districtwide. The Response to Intervention (RtI) forms that the campuses use differ, making it difficult to assess the implementation of RtI and its effectiveness. Each of the Pearsall ISD campuses has developed its own RtI forms. Lacking a district adopted crisis packet, one of the counselors uses a crisis packet he brought from the district where he previously worked. Another counselor developed a crisis protocol but has not shared it with the counselors in the other schools.

Pearsall ISD’s professional development program for counselors is lacking and impedes their ability to work effectively. Counselors did not receive any training in local policies and procedures, nor have they seen a written job description. The counselors have not received professional development on crisis training, available resources, and on issues such as homelessness.

The counseling program has not been evaluated. According to the survey results for this review, a small percentage of district and campus staff and parents who responded to the survey considered Pearsall ISD’s career and college counseling programs effective, as shown in **Figure 1–23**. A large percentage of district and campus staff, between 54.5 and 63.6 percent, was not familiar with the college counseling and career counseling programs. More than 36 percent of district staff considered the college counseling program to be

ineffective, as did 23.9 percent of campus staff, and 61.6 percent of the parents. About 20 percent of district and campus staff also considered the career counseling program to be ineffective.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model of Schooling Counseling Program consists of four interrelated components of counseling:

- foundation, which articulates the program’s philosophy, beliefs, and mission;
- delivery system, which specifies the activities, interactions, and methodologies necessary to deliver the program, including the guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and systems support;
- management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure that the program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated, reflects the school’s needs, and is effectively implemented; and
- accountability, which requires the demonstration of program effectiveness in measurable terms.

A well-managed counseling program has clearly articulated processes and procedures agreed upon with the administration that address how the program is organized and what it will accomplish. In an effective school guidance and counseling program, counselors coordinate resources and services for students and their families through community outreach. Counselors collaborate with agencies to provide a variety of services and opportunities to students and their families.

**FIGURE 1–23  
SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD  
OCTOBER 2013**

RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
<b>THE DISTRICT HAS EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR CAREER COUNSELING</b>					
District Staff	0.0%	18.2%	63.6%	9.1%	9.1%
Campus Staff	7.0%	23.9%	47.9%	18.3%	2.8%
Parents	0.0%	15.4%	46.2%	15.4%	23.1%
<b>THE DISTRICT HAS EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR COLLEGE COUNSELING</b>					
District Staff	0.0%	9.1%	54.5%	27.3%	9.1%
Campus Staff	7.0%	21.1%	47.9%	21.1%	2.8%
Parents	0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	38.5%	23.1%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents.  
SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Performance Review Parent Survey, October 2013.

Counselors use their collaboration and group process skills to work with all members of the school community and create community awareness and visibility of the school counseling program.

Pearsall ISD should create a districtwide guidance and counseling program with consistent policies, procedures, resources and forms, and a cohesive team of counselors. The CAO should assign the high school senior counselor as the district's coordinator of the counseling and guidance program overseeing all counselors. District counselors, as a team, should conduct a comprehensive formal review of the district's counseling and guidance program policies, processes, procedures and forms, and identify gaps and areas for revision and updating based on best-practice standards. Results of the review should be presented along with a timeline to the CAO and the superintendent for their approval. The CAO should monitor the implementation of the changes and prepare an implementation status report. The status report should be reviewed by the superintendent. Counselors should develop jointly with the director of Human Resources a comprehensive list of community resources that counselors can use for student and family referral. The community resource list should be distributed to the counselors and to other administrators and staff in the district. The list of community resources should also be posted on the districts' website. The list should be reviewed every six months and updated. The counselors should meet monthly to discuss issues associated with the guidance and counseling program, identify strategies to address these issues, and share information about their campuses and about effective practices and strategies. The website should have information on the guidance and counseling program. The counselors should prepare an annual report on their program and post it on the website.

The district could implement this recommendation with existing resources.

#### **LIBRARY SERVICES (REC. 8)**

Pearsall ISD's library program is poorly organized and lacks district direction and oversight resulting in inadequate staffing, an aging and out-of-date collection of books, and limited library and media services that do not meet student needs.

Pearsall ISD libraries do not meet the staffing requirements that the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) set in its School Library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards. These standards classify libraries into four categories: exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and

below standard. The TSLAC public school library staffing standards are based on schools' average daily attendance (ADA). **Figure 1–24** shows TSLAC standards for professional and non-professional staff.

According to the TSLAC's minimal standards (Acceptable), schools with 500 to 1,000 students require one certified librarian and 1.0 paraprofessional/aide to meet the Acceptable standard. The enrollment in Pearsall ISD's four schools ranges between 501 and 666 students as shown in **Figure 1–25**. Based on the district's student enrollment in school year 2013–14, each of the schools should have a certified librarian and a paraprofessional aide. The district has two certified librarians and two paraprofessionals. One of the certified librarians oversees the junior high school library and one oversees the high school library. One paraprofessional oversees the intermediate school library, and one oversees the elementary school library. Hence, the number of library staff in the district is not consistent with the acceptable staffing standards in each of its four schools: it two librarians and two aides less than the standard.

Pearsall ISD's library staff has experienced complete turnover since school year 2012–13. One of the library aides has been in her position for about 18 months and the second aide has been in her position for two months. Both had no previous experience or training as library aides. They are not aware of their library budget or of library-related policies. This limits the services and quality of support they can provide to students and teachers to enhance academic performance. Their primary duties include checking books out of the library and shelving returned books, assisting with a reading program, and reading stories to students. They work without any coordination with other district library staff or any supervision from the certified librarians and do not use the certified librarians as a resource. The certified librarian at the high school has been in the district for less than a month and is new to her position as a librarian; she worked as a substitute teacher before. She has not seen a job description but was told that her duties include serving as a district librarian without any explanation of these duties. The librarian is not aware of the library staff in the other school libraries or of the status of the library collection in the other schools. The library at the junior high school has been managed by a substitute in the absence of the librarian.

The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas defines an "Acceptable" collection as a balanced collection of 9,000 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 16 items per student at the elementary

**FIGURE 1–24**  
**TEXAS STATE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES COMMISSION (TSLAC) PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY STAFFING STANDARDS**  
**2013**

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

SOURCE: Texas State Library and Archives Commission, School Library Program Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2013.

**FIGURE 1–25**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**ENROLLMENT, NUMBER OF LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY AIDES, TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARD BY CAMPUS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

CAMPUS	ENROLLMENT	ADA*	LIBRARIANS	TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	LIBRARY AIDES	TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS	OVER/(UNDER)
Ted Flores Elementary	501	476	0 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	1	At least 1 Aide	(1 Librarian)
Pearsall Intermediate	666	633	0 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	1	At least 1 Aide	(1 Librarian)
Pearsall Junior High School	562	534	1 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	0	At least 1 Aide	(1 Aide)
Pearsall High School	597	567	1 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	0	At least 1 Aide	(1 Aide)
Total	2,326	2,210	2 Librarians	4 Librarians	2 Aides	4 Aides	(2 Librarians and 2 Aides)

\* ADA was calculated by multiplying school enrollment by 95 percent.

SOURCES: Pearsall ISD Enrollment for School Year 2013–14, Fall 2013 Enrollment; Texas State Library and Archives Commission, School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2013.

level, at least 14 items per student at the middle school level, and at least 12 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater. A “Recognized” collection is defined as a balanced collection of at least 10,800 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 18 items per student at the elementary level, at least 16 items per student at the middle school level, and at least 14 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater. An “Exemplary” collection is a balanced collection with at least 12,000 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 20 items per student at the elementary level, at least 18 items per student at the middle school level, and at least 16 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater. The libraries at the elementary and the high school meet or exceed the TSLAC standard relating to collection size; the intermediate school and junior high school libraries are not consistent with the standards shown in **Figure 1–26**.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission’s standard regarding average collection age, has four categories. Libraries in the Exemplary category maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 11 years. Libraries in the Recognized category maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 13 years. Libraries in the Acceptable category maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 15 years. Libraries that are Below Standard maintain an overall average age of collection of 15 or more years. The average collection age at all four libraries is not consistent with the standard as shown in **Figure 1–26**. A very high percentage of Pearsall ISD’s library collection is out of date (older than 15 years): 92.6 percent of the library collection at the elementary

school, 85.0 percent of the collection at the Intermediate school, 78.6 percent of the collection at the junior high school, and 57.4 percent of the collection at the high school.

The amount of funding that Pearsall ISD has allocated to library materials varies greatly across schools in school year 2013–14, as shown in **Figure 1–27**. There is also little consistency in the amounts allocated in school years 2011–12 and 2012–13. The amounts allocated to the elementary school and junior high school libraries in school year 2013–14 were significantly lower than what is considered an acceptable budget allocation for the school library. An Acceptable Program Development Budget Standard is equal to the number of students times 1.00 multiplied by the average replacement cost of a book. A Recognized Program Development Budget Standard is equal to the number of students times 1.25 multiplied by the average replacement cost of a book. An Exemplary Program Development Budget Standard is equal to the number of students times 1.50 multiplied by the average replacement cost of a book.

Multiple research studies in Texas and in other states clearly and consistently demonstrated the positive and statistically significant relationship between having adequate library staffing and improved student achievement. The role of librarians is especially critical to student performance. A study conducted by the Colorado State Library titled *Change in School Librarian Staffing Linked with Change in CSAP Reading Performance, 2005 to 2011* stated that schools that had or gained an endorsed librarian between 2005 and 2011 tended to have more students scoring on state reading exams

**FIGURE 1–26  
PEARSALL ISD  
ENROLLMENT, LIBRARY HOLDINGS, COLLECTION AVERAGE AGE, BOOKS PER STUDENT, AND TSLAC STANDARDS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

SCHOOL	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	COLLECTION SIZE	NUMBER OF BOOKS PER STUDENT	TSLAC LIBRARY STATUS COLLECTION SIZE	NUMBER OF BOOKS 15 YEARS OLD OR OLDER	COLLECTION AVERAGE AGE	TSLAC LIBRARY STATUS COLLECTION AGE
Ted Flores Elementary	501	14,762	29.5	Exemplary	13,664	1987	Below Standard
Pearsall Intermediate	666	9,000	13.5	Below Standard	7,649	1994	Below Standard
Pearsall Junior High School	562	7,763	13.8	Below Standard	6,104	1993	Below Standard
Pearsall High School	597	13,594	22.8	Exemplary	7,798	1994	Below Standard

SOURCES: Pearsall ISD, Librarians Report, November 2013. Pearsall ISD Enrollment Report, Fall 2013; Texas State Library and Archives Commission School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2013.

**FIGURE 1–27**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**STUDENT ENROLLMENT, LIBRARY MATERIALS BUDGET, AND TSLAC ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BUDGET**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>STUDENT ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>CAMPUS BUDGET FOR LIBRARY MATERIALS 2013–14</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BUDGET RECOMMENDED BUDGET BASED ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT, SCHOOL LEVEL, AND AVERAGE REPLACEMENT COST OF A BOOK*</b>
Ted Flores Elementary	501	\$5,000	\$9,534
Pearsall Intermediate	666	\$12,000	\$12,674
Pearsall Junior High School	562	\$3,900	\$11,701
Pearsall High School	597	\$15,000	\$14,326
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,326</b>	<b>\$35,900</b>	<b>\$48,235</b>

\*Acceptable program development budget was calculated using the school year 2013–14 enrollment and the following replacement costs of books: \$19.03 for elementary school books; \$20.82 for junior high, and \$24.00 for high school books.

SOURCES: Pearsall ISD, Enrollment Report, Fall 2013; Pearsall ISD, Budget Summary, December 2013.

at advanced levels. These students also showed greater performance increases than schools that either lost their librarians or never had one. According to the Colorado Department of Education, a librarian receives and endorsement from the state after completing the required state guidelines. Schools that had or gained an endorsed librarian also had fewer students scoring at the unsatisfactory level and a lower rate of increase of students scoring at the unsatisfactory level. Furthermore, students in schools with an endorsed librarian did on average significantly better than students in schools with libraries run by library aides without supervision. Even when controlling for the percentage of students on free or reduced price lunch, students in schools with librarians compared to students in schools with library aides performed at a higher level and had fewer unsatisfactory scores. Library aides working without supervision, most common in elementary schools, do not have any impact on reading scores. Students in elementary schools with at least one full-time endorsed librarian did better on state reading tests than schools with libraries run by library aides. The former had a larger percentage of students scoring at the advanced level and a smaller percentage of students scoring at the unsatisfactory level.

Schools with well-staffed libraries where endorsed librarians also had aides showed consistently higher performance levels. *The Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services and Student Performance (2001)* study showed that lower than recommended staffing levels and especially the absence of library aides significantly curtail the range and type of services that librarians can provide. The presence of library aides and

the number of hours they work are critical to librarians' ability to perform the range of high priority activities. Library aides "free" the librarian from having to perform basic library activities and allow the librarian to allocate time to activities that are more directly related to teaching and training staff and students, such as collaboratively planning and teaching with teachers, providing staff development to teachers, facilitating information skills instruction, managing technology, communicating with school administrators, and providing reading incentive activities. These activities, along with incremental increases in funding, student usage of the library, and a large and up-to-date collection of print and electronic resources lead to incremental gains in student learning and performance.

Pearsall ISD should conduct a comprehensive assessment of the district's library services related to staff levels, the library budget, and the age of its collection to ensure that its library staffing, collection and associated budget are consistent with state standards across campuses. Based on the assessment the district should set library service priorities, estimate the budget impact of those priorities, and include it in its budget cycle. Therefore, no fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 1: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY</b>							
1. Fully implement its existing curriculum management system in each grade level and content area with consistency and rigor.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Address student achievement gaps through the district and campus improvement planning process, set benchmarks, specify desired results, and evaluate progress periodically to allow for adjustments.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Implement a comprehensive teacher attendance improvement plan of action to substantially reduce/eliminate school-related absences, monitor absences, and hold teachers accountable.	\$62,111	\$12,549	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$74,660	\$0
4. Monitor the implementation of the student behavior management program, evaluate its effectiveness in improving students' discipline, and determine the extent to which its disciplinary placements offer adequate academic instruction to students.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Develop procedures that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation and documentation of RtI on each campus, train teachers in the process, monitor implementation, and track the rate of inappropriate referrals to special education.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Create a CTE plan with a coherent sequence of courses for each cluster, establish an advisory committee, and evaluate the CTE program annually.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Create a districtwide guidance and counseling program with consistent policies, procedures, resources and forms, and a cohesive team of counselors.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the district's library services related to staff levels, the library budget, and the age of its collection to ensure that its library staffing, collection and associated budget are consistent with state standards across campuses.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$62,111</b>	<b>\$12,549</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$74,660</b>	<b>\$0</b>

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## **CHAPTER 2**

# **DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 2. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

An independent school district's governance structure, staff management and planning process provide the foundation for effective and efficient education of students. Each school district in Texas is governed by an elected seven-member board of trustees. The board focuses on the decision-making process, planning, and providing resources for achieving goals. The board sets goals, objectives, and policies, and approves plans and funding necessary for school district operations. The superintendent is responsible for implementing policy, managing district operations, recommending staffing levels, and allocating the resources to implement district priorities. The board and superintendent collaborate as a leadership team to meet district stakeholder needs.

Pearsall Independent School District (ISD) is located in Pearsall, Texas, along Interstate 35 and the Missouri Pacific railroad, 54 miles south of San Antonio in the central part of Frio County. Pearsall, Texas is the county seat of Frio County and has been the county seat since 1884, when the county had 700 residents. According to the 2010 census, Pearsall had a population of 9,146, an increase of 27.8 percent since the 2000 census. According to the Pearsall Chamber of Commerce's website, the top industries in the county include agriculture, ranching, hunting, and energy from the Eagle Ford Shale Play in south Texas.

Pearsall ISD serves 2,236 students at four campuses: Ted Flores Elementary, Pearsall Intermediate School, Pearsall Junior High School, and Pearsall High School. A review of Academic Excellence Indicator (AEIS) reports and Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) indicates the student population decreased 1.3 percent in the past three years, from 2,265 in school year 2009–10 to 2,236 in school year 2012–13.

According to 2012–13 TAPR for the district, approximately 93 percent of Pearsall ISD students were Hispanic, 6 percent were White, 0.3 percent were African American, and 0.7 percent were Indian or Asian/Pacific Islander. In addition, 80.5 percent of students were economically disadvantaged (the state average was 60 percent), and 62.5 percent were identified as at risk (the state average was 44.7 percent). The median household income was \$31,462 in 2011 and 21.7 percent of the population lived in poverty.

### BOARD GOVERNANCE

Pearsall ISD is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, elected by position, through seven single-member districts **Figure 2–1**. According to board Policy BBB (LOCAL), board members shall be elected by position for three-year terms, with elections conducted annually as follows:

**FIGURE 2–1  
PEARSALL ISD  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

NAME	TITLE	TERM EXPIRATION	LENGTH OF SERVICE	OCCUPATION
Sylvia Rodriguez	President	May 2016	12 years	Attorney
Dr. Oscar Garza	Vice President	May 2015	16 years	Physician
Rochelle Comacho	Secretary	May 2015	6 years	Juvenile Probation Officer
George Cabasos	Member	May 2014	2 years	Retired Educator
Rhonda Gonzales	Member	May 2016	6 months	Property Manager
Louisa Martinez	Member	May 2014	14 years	Registered Nurse
Marco Reyes	Member	May 2015	2 years	Construction Project Supervisor

NOTE: Since the time of review, Sylvia Rodriguez and George Cabasos resigned from the board. Eric Fletcher and Lionel Gandara have been appointed to fill these positions. Dr. Oscar Garza is the board President and Marco Reyes is Vice President.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, November 2013.

- Positions 5 and 6: The election for Positions 5 and 6 shall be held in 2013, 2016, 2019, and in three-year intervals thereafter.
- Positions 1 and 2: The election for Positions 1 and 2 shall be held in 2014, 2017, 2020, and in three-year intervals thereafter.
- Positions 3, 4 and 7: The elections for Positions 3, 4 and 7 shall be held in 2015, 2018, 2021, and in three-year intervals thereafter.

The Board of Trustees meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM in the district board room in the Pearsall ISD central office. Since the time of the onsite visit the board meetings have been changed to Wednesday. The board also holds special meetings as necessary.

The superintendent and her secretary work with the president of the board to coordinate the preparation of the agenda for each meeting and determine the items to be included. Board members may request specific items to be placed on the agenda through the president of the board if at least two of them jointly present the item. The public is welcome to attend all meetings and may address the board on issues unrelated to individual personnel concerns during the Public Forum section of the agenda.

Two weeks before the regular board meeting the superintendent's secretary sends an email to the executive leadership team asking them to submit to her any items and information to be included in the board meeting agenda no later than seven days before the regular board meeting. The superintendent's cabinet is the district's executive leadership team and includes the chief academic officer (CAO), CFO, and director of Human Resources. The superintendent then meets with the executive leadership team to get their input and she and her secretary create a skeleton of the agenda for the board meeting, including all action items to create the board packet using the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) BoardBook application. The superintendent reviews the agenda with the president of the board and, on the Thursday before the regular board meeting the following Tuesday, the superintendent and her secretary review and finalize the entire board packet. On the Friday before the regular board meeting, the superintendent's secretary e-mails the BoardBook to all board members and posts the entire BoardBook on the district's website for public access. She also gives formal notice of the regular board meeting to the appropriate media outlets and posts the agenda on the main door of the district's central office.

Pearsall ISD's board agenda is comprehensive and includes a consent agenda for routine actions requiring board approval. The agenda also allocates time for employee recognitions, public comments, and updates and reports from the superintendent. The board's executive session is placed at the end of the agenda and the superintendent's secretary completes a certified agenda for executive session, seals the certified agenda in an envelope, and includes the sealed envelope in the official board packet.

The superintendent's secretary serves as secretary to the board, prepares the official minutes of open sessions, and submits the minutes of the previous meeting to board members along with the board agenda via e-mail. The superintendent's secretary, along with the president of the board and other board members, review the official minutes of all meetings for accuracy and completeness before they are approved. Minutes of executive sessions are not recorded. However, if the board conducts disciplinary hearings in executive session, the session is recorded on audio tape. The superintendent's secretary seals the certified agenda and audio tape (if any) in an envelope, and places the envelope in a locked, fireproof cabinet in her office.

## DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Pearsall ISD's superintendent oversees management of daily operations of the district as its educational leader and chief executive officer, and is charged with effectively implementing the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. Pearsall ISD's Board Operating Procedures, formally adopted by the board in its November 12, 2013 regular meeting, list the five most essential duties of the superintendent:

1. Accepts, administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the educational programs, services, and facilities of the district.
2. Accepts authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of personnel and makes recommendations for employment and termination of employees.
3. Prepares and submits to the board a proposed budget.
4. Recommends policies to be adopted by the board and develops administrative regulations to implement those policies.
5. Provides leadership for the attainment of student performance.

At the time of the onsite visit, Dr. Esthela Allison held the position of superintendent since January 22, 2012, under a two and one-half year contract that was to run through June 30, 2015. Since the time of the visit, Dr. Allison resigned from the position, effective March 19, 2014. The Board of Trustees named an interim superintendent effective March 24, 2014, and named Dr. Nobert Rodriguez as the superintendent effective July 1, 2014. The content of this review is specific to the practices that were in place under Dr. Allison's leadership during the onsite visit.

The board evaluates the superintendent annually by using a comprehensive evaluation instrument based on annual goals and priorities. In July of each year, the board and superintendent jointly establish these goals and priorities. The superintendent's formal, written evaluation is completed by the end of January each year.

The superintendent's cabinet is the district's executive leadership team and includes the chief academic officer, chief financial officer, and the director of Human Resources. The superintendent meets with the cabinet every Monday morning at 8:30 AM, with no set ending time. Cabinet meetings are interactive and typically include extensive discussions of pertinent issues affecting administration and operation of the district, the issuance of directives by the superintendent, status reports by members of the cabinet, and planning for monthly board meetings.

Pearsall ISD's leadership team responsible for school administration consists of elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high school principals who report directly to the

superintendent; along with the athletic director, band director, and directors of Special Education and Technology, respectively.

Dr. Allison restructured the executive leadership team and the leadership team responsible for school administration, which included hiring all new administrators whose tenure with the district or in their current position averages less than one year. **Figure 2–2** shows the tenure of cabinet level and school-based administrators in the district at the time of the onsite review in November 2013.

**Figure 2–2** shows the members of the superintendent's cabinet and school principals have been in their current positions an average of 6.7 months, contributing to a lack of familiarity with Pearsall ISD's historical operations and administration. Two of the three members of the superintendent's cabinet had been with the district for less than six months at the time of the onsite visit, and the CFO, who is the third member of the cabinet, is the longest tenured member of the cabinet at 15 months. The intermediate, junior high, and high school principals are new to district, while the elementary school principal is a first-time principal, but has been with the district over 20 years.

**FIGURE 2–2**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**TENURE OF CABINET AND PRINCIPALS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

NAME	POSITION	DATE STARTED IN CURRENT POSITION	TENURE IN POSITION AS OF NOVEMBER 2013 (MONTHS)
Dr. Regina Davis	Chief Academic Officer	August 2013	4
Robert Lindemann	Chief Financial Officer	July 2012	15
Jesus Uranga	Director of Human Resources	July 2013	5
Beatrice Nieto	Elementary School Principal	June 2013	6
Jennifer Payne	Intermediate School Principal	May 2013	7
Robert Reyes	Junior High School Principal	July 2013	5
Garth Oliver	High School Principal	July 2013	5
<b>Average Tenure in Position (in Months)</b>			6.7

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration and Staff Interviews, November 2013.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s superintendent communicated with board members through weekly “Board Notes” highlighting district initiatives, activities, and issues of importance within the district.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s superintendent developed and vetted a “Placemat” in 2012, which is a one-page document that contains three primary goals adopted by the board for Pearsall ISD, the district’s revised mission, vision, and core values, which is distributed to all employees. The Placemat succinctly says what the district does, what the district values, and what the district wants to be in the future.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks methods and processes to ensure that the board members fully understand and act within their policymaking and oversight roles for the district.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a formal planning process to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of its students through its academic programs, operations, and administrative support functions.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not made site-based decision making a priority and, as a result, does not have functional Campus Educational Improvement Committees at the junior high school or the high school.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s organizational structure does not clearly define the “practical” reporting relationships for cabinet level and campus administrators and creates a broad span of control for the superintendent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 9: Develop and implement a self-policing policy within the framework of the Board of Trustees Board Operating Procedures, and ensure that board members obtain the continuing education hours required in areas of greatest need and to decrease the instances of board involvement in day-to-day operations and undermining the superintendent’s authority.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 10: Establish a formal, stakeholder-driven strategic planning process to develop a long-range strategic plan with measurable objectives, timelines, and responsibility**

**assignments for which the board will hold the superintendent and executive leadership team accountable.**

- ◆ **Recommendation 11: Require that all Pearsall ISD campuses implement a Campus Educational Improvement Committee (CEIC) in accordance with board policy every school year; and require the junior high and high school principals to immediately identify parents, community members, and business leaders from areas serving their campuses to appoint to their respective CEICs, and activate the CEIC as intended by the Texas Education Code and board policy.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 12: Narrow the superintendent’s span of control to seven direct reports and redesign the present organization to accurately reflect the most efficient reporting relationships and delegated authority; communicate the roles and responsibilities of the chief academic officer and school principals; and clarify perceived dual reporting relationships within the organization.**

## DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### COMMUNICATION TO BOARD

Pearsall ISD’s superintendent communicated with board members through weekly “Board Notes” highlighting district initiatives, activities, and issues of importance within the district. The superintendent is a proponent of open, honest, and timely communication with board members to ensure they are informed of all academic, operational, and community-related issues and events that affect Pearsall ISD. Board Notes have included the status of academic performance initiatives, progress related to board directives, employee recognitions, issues related to parent concerns, school-based activities, and specific activities in which the superintendent is involved.

The overwhelming majority of board members give the superintendent high marks for using Board Notes as an effective tool for communicating with them, indicating how the notes keep them well-informed and enhances their ability to respond to inquiries from stakeholders in their respective districts. According to the board members interviewed during the onsite visit, Board Notes is one of the initiatives developed by the superintendent that enhances the overall atmosphere of trust between the board and superintendent. In its regular meeting on November 12, 2013, the board

voted to permanently adopt Board Notes as the preferred method of communication between the board and superintendent. The board also adopted receiving Board Notes in bi-weekly reporting intervals to be sure the superintendent had the time to capture and report all relevant initiatives and activities, as she is primarily responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the district.

Pearsall ISD has established an effective communication method between the superintendent and the board that has led to a trusting working relationship.

### GOAL DOCUMENT

Pearsall ISD's superintendent developed and vetted a "Placemat" in 2012, which is a one-page document that contains three primary goals adopted by the board for Pearsall ISD, the district's revised mission, vision, and core values, which is distributed to all employees. The Placemat succinctly says what the district does, what the district values, and what the district wants to be in the future. The placement is well-designed using the district's colors, and reflects the district's mission and vision in a two-inch column on the left; the district's values in a two-inch column on the right; and reflects the district's motto and goals in the center of the document. The district's mission and vision included in the left column of the one-page Placemat include the following:

- **Our Mission...**In partnership with families and community, our purpose is to have a learning environment that is safe, nurturing, and student-centered where everyone is accountable and all students are empowered to succeed.
- **Our Vision...**Leading the way, we will be the recognized leaders in preparing students for college, careers, and life.

The district's values, listed in the right column of the Placemat include the following:

- **Innovation**—We value individuality, creativity, variety, and progressive thinking in all we do.
- **Communication**—We practice open and honest dialogue keeping all informed. We value communication between school, home, and community.
- **Integrity**—We are honest, trustworthy, and take ownership for our actions.
- **Work Ethic**—We value hard work, we lead by example, and we hold ourselves accountable.

- **Service Oriented**—We value our students and community and will provide quality services.
- **High Expectations**—We challenge ourselves and others to work and achieve beyond current expectations.
- **Trust**—We build partnerships based on truth, honesty, transparency, and respect.
- **Passionate**—We value and encourage intense enthusiasm.

The superintendent strategically placed Pearsall ISD's motto and three primary goals adopted by the board for Pearsall ISD in the center of the Placemat. The center of the Placemat reads as follows:

- **Motto:** "Learning Today...Leading Tomorrow"
- **Goal 1: Improve Achievement for All Students**
  - Create and implement a comprehensive curricular framework in all core subject areas for all students.
  - Develop and support high-performing classrooms that focus on learner needs and individual students.
  - Within three consecutive years of enrollment in the district, all students will be academically successful.
  - Ensure a safe environment in which students and staff are accountable.
  - Prepare all students to be college and career ready.
- **Goal 2: Ensure Efficient and Effective Operations**
  - All departments will conduct a system analysis of operational processes.
  - Develop an accountability, monitoring, and reporting structure for all departments and schools.
- **Goal 3: Ensure Effective Communications**
  - Develop and implement a district-wide plan to maximize two-way communication among school, family, and community.

The superintendent views the Placemat as the primary document which captures the essence of the district's mission and, therefore, requires all district employees to prominently display the document on their desks in their respective offices

and classrooms as a constant reminder of the direction in which the district is headed. Requiring employees throughout the district to focus daily on the district's mission, vision, values, motto, and three primary goals has helped maintain individual employee focus on improving Pearsall ISD's academic and operational performance, as well as communication with parents and the community.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### **BOARD ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, TRAINING (REC. 9)**

Pearsall ISD lacks methods and processes to ensure that the board members fully understand and act within their policymaking and oversight roles for the district. Some board members do not understand their roles and responsibilities. The superintendent must sometimes remind them of their policymaking and oversight roles. According to interviews with board members and district staff, there have been instances where board members collectively and individually cross the line between governance and administration and have been involved in the day-to-day operations of the district.

The board and superintendent completed a major revision of the Board Operating Procedures, transforming a high-level, six-page document into a very detailed 15-page document that included specific operating procedures related to:

- the roles of the school board and superintendent;
- developing board meeting agendas;
- conduct during board meetings;
- information requests by board members in between board meetings and responding to scheduling inquiries;
- dealing with complaints and grievances;
- board member visits to school campuses;
- communications, including communications between the board and superintendent, communication with the media, handling anonymous phone calls and/or letters, and communicating with the public;
- evaluation of the superintendent;
- self-evaluation of the board;
- closed sessions;
- reviewing board operating procedures annually; and

- the Board Code of Conduct.

The board unanimously approved the comprehensive revisions to its Operating Procedures at its November 12, 2013 meeting. The Board Operating Procedures include a Board Code of Conduct which list a number of affirmative, "I will statements" by board members in six categories: equity in attitude, trustworthiness in stewardship, honor in conduct, integrity of character, commitment to service, and student-centered focus. However, the Board Operating Procedures do not include procedures for administering the Board Code of Conduct or guidelines outlining sanctions for board members violating any of the procedures outlined in the document or local policies adopted by the board.

In one incident, a long-time teacher requested to be transferred from one campus to another campus. The teacher was not satisfied with the position at the new campus and refused to accept the position. The teacher wanted to return to the original campus, but requested to do so after the principal at the new campus had already staffed the vacant position. After being denied the opportunity to return to the old position from the principal and the director of Human Resources, the teacher contacted members of the board for support. The superintendent reviewed the information surrounding this personnel matter and recommended to the board that the employee remain in the position at the new campus. The board overturned the superintendent's decision and reinstated the employee to the original position. It is the board's responsibility to refrain from involvement in personnel matters of employees who report to the superintendent, as this constitutes interference in personnel matters which are within the authority of the superintendent. When the board reverses personnel decisions, it undermines the authority of the superintendent and creates low morale among members of the district's school-based leadership team.

According to interviews conducted during the onsite visit, there are some board members who are parents of students attending Pearsall ISD schools and who may have a difficult time separating their roles and responsibilities as board members from their responsibilities as parents when deliberating policy issues. For example, a board member who had children in the district requested that her children not be required to comply with the district's student dress code policy for philosophical reasons and completed the appropriate School Uniform Waiver Request Form. According to board Policy FNCA (LOCAL), Student Code of Conduct, Dress Code, "the school uniform program is

mandatory and shall apply to all levels of the district. The uniform shall consist of a green top and khaki bottoms or blue jeans as further detailed in the Student Dress Code.” The policy also provides for exemptions from the school uniform program if the parent or guardian files a written statement objecting to his or her student wearing a school uniform because of religious or philosophical reasons. The parent or guardian must present their religious or philosophical objections in a School Uniform Waiver Request Form and submit the form to the school principal, who recommends or does not recommend granting the waiver.

Once the waiver is submitted to the school, the principal submits the School Uniform Waiver Request to the superintendent and the superintendent formally submits the recommended action to the board for approval. In this instance, principals did not recommend school uniform waivers for any children whose parents detailed philosophical objections in their requests for waivers to the school uniform policy. At the August 13, 2013 board meeting, the superintendent recommended the board deny 20 requests for school uniform waivers, as 17 requests were for financial reasons (board policy has no exemption for financial reasons) and three requests were for philosophical reasons, which the school principals did not agree with the philosophical arguments presented by the parents requesting waivers.

According to the official minutes of the August 13, 2013 board meeting, six of the seven board members were present and the board discussed school uniform waiver requests in executive session. After emerging from executive session, the board took two votes on the issue in the public meeting, at which time one board member made the motion to approve the principals’ denial of all three requests for school uniform waivers for philosophical reasons. The motion failed 3 to 3, as the board member who requested the school uniform waiver for her children voted “Nay,” along with two other board members and, therefore, obtained waivers of the school uniform policy for her children. Another board member made a second motion to approve the principals’ denial of requests for uniform waivers for financial reasons as presented, which passed 5 to 1.

When board decisions are being made that relate to a board member, that particular member typically refrains from casting a vote for the final decision. It is the responsibility of each board member not to deliberate or vote on issues in which they have a potential conflict of interest as it impairs the duty of objectivity each board member must honor when making decisions affecting the district.

Training and self-policing policies are essential to boards understanding their policymaking and oversight roles and responsibilities. Some of Pearsall ISD’s board members do not consistently attend continuing professional education training offered annually by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). For example, a review of Pearsall ISD’s training records indicates that some board members did not complete the required continuing education training during different reporting periods over a span of three years, from January 2011 to December 2013. Without complete continuing education training board members may not be clear on their roles and responsibilities and the acceptable practices in board governance.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) requires first-year board members to attend 10 hours of additional continuing education training based on assessed needs and the Framework for Governance Leadership in their first year. The TEC further requires experienced board members to attend at least five hours of additional continuing education training based on assessed needs and the Framework for Governance Leadership each year. Continuing education on various topics related to governance and leadership enables board members to continuously refresh themselves on their roles and responsibilities, as well as learn best practices in K–12 governance and leadership they can apply.

As a best practice, school boards throughout the U.S. are reviewing, adopting, updating, and signing their code of conduct and ethics policies each year in an effort to assist board members in striving to operate in an ethical, reasonable, and conscientious manner. For example, in November 2005, the Augusta, Georgia school board revised and updated its code of ethics and voted that it be adopted, updated, and signed each year. The White Bear Lake Area school board in Minnesota further revised its code of conduct to include procedures for administering its ethics policy and listed sanctions to be imposed on an individual school board member for violating ethical standards included in the policy. The board adopted the policy in January 2011. Education experts agree that sanctions for board members violating school board ethics policies are a “must have” in any ethics policy.

Pearsall ISD’s Board of Trustees should develop and implement a self-policing policy within the framework of the Board of Trustees Board Operating Procedures, and ensure that board members obtain the continuing education hours required in areas of greatest need and to decrease the instances of board involvement in day-to-day operations and

undermining the superintendent's authority. The board president should ensure each board member is meeting the continuing education requirements of the TEC, as well as obtaining targeted training in Tier 3 based on the assessed needs of the board, especially related to understanding their roles and responsibilities. Pearsall ISD's board should expand the Board Operating Procedures to include provisions for administering board operating procedures and enforcing its Board Code of Conduct, including listing specific sanctions to be imposed on individual school board members who violate the Board Code of Conduct. Such sanctions could take the form of a "public censure" of the board member(s) who routinely violate(s) the board's policies and related operating procedures. Also, the president of the board should initiate a process to review Pearsall ISD's Board Operating Procedures annually and have each board member sign a statement re-affirming their commitment to comply with the Board Code of Conduct at the beginning of each school year.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **PLANNING (REC. 10)**

Pearsall ISD lacks a formal planning process to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of its students through its academic programs, operations, and administrative support functions. Without a process that includes goals and measurable objectives, there is no system in place to hold the superintendent accountable to ensure that the district is meeting the needs of its students.

The district has the Pearsall ISD Placemat, which is a one-page document containing the mission, vision, values, goals and motto for the district. The district does not have a current District Improvement Plan (DIP), as required by the TEC, Chapter 11, Subchapter F, Section 11.251 and Section 11.252. The purpose of the DIP is to guide district and campus staff in improving student performance for all student groups to attain state standards. According to the superintendent, Pearsall ISD adopted a two-year reconstitution plan because the Texas Education Agency (TEA) rated the district Academically Unacceptable in school year 2010–11, and Improvement Required in school year 2012–13, as Pearsall ISD failed to close performance gaps for its economically disadvantaged and Hispanic students. As a result of the district's rating, TEA informed Pearsall ISD in September 2013 that Ted Flores Elementary School, Pearsall Intermediate School, and Pearsall Junior High School will be required to open in school year 2014–15 under reconstitution, and assigned a campus

intervention team from the Texas Accountability Intervention System Foundation to provide training through the Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) to adequately prepare for reconstitution. Further, TEA required Pearsall ISD to submit to the agency a reconstitution plan by late January 2014. To meet this deadline, the superintendent convened a meeting of the principals of all four schools, campus committees, and central office staff to meet with professional service providers to develop targeted assistance district and campus plans. The superintendent considered the targeted district and campus reconstitution plans required by TEA to be a priority and developed this two-year district accountability plan that was approved by the board in October 2013. Pearsall ISD developed this district plan from individual needs assessments and improvement plans for each campus in reconstitution in lieu of district and campus improvement plans as required by TEA.

Because the board and superintendent assigned top priority to preparing district and campus accountability plans required by TEA as a result of reconstitution, campus principals spent the majority of their time on reconstitution training and related initiatives. These activities included working with campus intervention teams and professional service providers to complete their respective accountability plans. As a result, none of the campuses prepared Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) and the district did not have a DIP for school year 2013–14. The elementary, Intermediate, and junior high schools prepared CIPs for school year 2012–13, while the high school last prepared a CIP for school year 2011–12. CIPs and DIPs are essential elements to include in a long-term strategic plan for the district because the goals are established by the campus intervention teams based on the needs of the campus and the overall district educational goals. The superintendent suggested the accountability plan required by TEA, which includes targeted campus improvement plans, is essentially Pearsall ISD's DIP and CIPs because its contents reflect analysis of previous year's student performance data and what the district must do to improve each campus. Because the accountability plan is specific to the areas identified by TEA's accountability rating system, this plan does not sufficiently cover all of the educational areas typically addressed by the CIPs and DIP.

According to board members and the superintendent, the district does not have a comprehensive strategic plan and neither the board nor superintendent has initiated the process. Each board member interviewed said they have never been engaged in a strategic planning process and

thought such a process was necessary to develop a long-term strategic plan that includes both short- and long-term goals. Reasons given by board members for not engaging in a strategic planning process included: “we are waiting for the superintendent to initiate the strategic planning process” and we are “too busy taking care of the little stuff and have not focused on big-picture strategic planning; however, we may consider initiating the dialogue around strategic planning at the board retreat December 6–7, 2013.”

The board, current superintendent, and previous superintendent have not involved Pearsall ISD stakeholders in a comprehensive strategic planning process. If the board and superintendent do not have a shared vision and goals for the district that considers Pearsall ISD stakeholders’ input, it may be challenging for the board to chart a long-term course for the district that meets stakeholders’ expectations and establish goals and objectives for which they can hold the superintendent accountable from year-to-year. Without a comprehensive five-year strategic plan developed with shared vision and goal-setting between the board and superintendent, and with Pearsall ISD stakeholder involvement as its foundation, the district may react to administrative, operational, or academic challenges annually rather than systematically with a long-term focus.

The lack of long-term planning exists in other areas of the districts operations. For example, the district lacks an effective process to manage district vehicles and does not have a plan to provide for a consistent funding source to replace worn or aged vehicles. The district also has not planned for the aging technology infrastructure to meet the future needs of the district and the district has not planned to replace old and worn kitchen equipment. This puts the district at risk of not being able to adequately provide foods services if major equipment becomes inoperable. A long-range strategic plan allows districts to link the educational goals established in the district’s DIP and CIP, and the operational goals to the district’s budget.

School districts use comprehensive strategic plans to set goals for all district operations. Strategic plans allow school districts to allocate resources to meet objectives more efficiently, and create accountability standards more effectively.

A strategic plan includes performance measures for each goal and objective, serves as the basis for district operations, and helps orientate the board when evaluating the superintendent and allocating resources. **Figure 2–3** shows a comprehensive strategic planning process.

**FIGURE 2–3  
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

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

SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, January 2014.

Pearsall ISD should establish a formal, stakeholder-driven strategic planning process to develop a long-range strategic plan with measurable objectives, timelines, and responsibility assignments for which the board will hold the superintendent and executive leadership team accountable. The district should begin the process with a shared visioning session with the board and superintendent and expand this traditional planning exercise into a fully engaged, stakeholder-driven strategic planning process. This would constructively engage students, parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and business leaders in the process of shaping the vision for the district and establishing strategic priorities aligned with the shared vision. Further, this comprehensive strategic planning process would chart the long-term direction of the district with “buy-in” from stakeholders and ensure that administrative staff, principals, teachers, and other school-based personnel agree with the direction of the district, prioritization of goals, and the allocation of resources for instructional, administrative, and operational areas.

Pearsall ISD should begin the strategic planning process by designating a member of the executive leadership team (e.g., the chief academic officer) to oversee and lead the strategic planning process. The district should also form a diverse planning committee that includes members of the district’s executive leadership team, community members, business leaders, teachers, and parents. The district should link their current plans in other areas of district operations with this strategic planning process.

Given the district’s need to focus on its mission critical day-to-day activities related to improving the academic performance of its students because of its unacceptable academic rating and pending reconstitution, the district should consider hiring an outside consultant to assist with implementing the strategic planning process. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is a one-time cost of \$14,000 including \$12,000 (\$1,200 per day x 10 days), plus expenses for travel, hotel, and per diem (\$2,000).

#### **SITE-BASED DECISION MAKING (REC. 11)**

Pearsall ISD has not made site-based decision making a priority and, as a result, does not have functional Campus Educational Improvement Committees (CEIC) at the junior high school or the high school. The junior high school principal joined the district in July 2013, and the committee at his campus has had limited success because it is not fully staffed as required by the TEC. The junior high school committee includes the principal, teachers, two parents and

two counselors. It does not have a business or community representative, which is required by the TEC. The junior high school principal has had “competing priorities” related to obtaining continued funding for the Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) School Improvement Grant for the junior high school, which consumed most of his time. The committee was not functioning and did not prepare a CIP for school year 2013–14.

The high school principal also joined the district in July 2013, and the CEIC at his campus was “not in place yet.” The principal has only had meetings with members of his campus staff. The high school committee does not have representation from parents, community members, and business leaders as required by the TEC, and the committee was not functioning at the time of the review team’s onsite visit in November 2013. Without this representation on the committee, the high school does not have input from stakeholders for the CIP. The high school principal could not focus on the CEIC and placed it on the “back burner” because he inherited a school that had five principals in one year, and there were a number of operational issues he had to address during his short tenure as principal.

Pearsall ISD’s board Policy BQB (LOCAL) states,

“a campus educational improvement committee shall be established on each campus to assist the principal. The committee shall meet for the purpose of implementing planning processes and site-based decision making in accordance with Board policy and administrative procedures and shall be chaired by the principal. The committee shall serve exclusively in an advisory role except that each campus committee shall approve staff development of a campus nature.” This policy further states, “each principal shall be responsible for the development of campus performance objectives. These objectives shall be formulated annually in accordance with a schedule established by the District, shall support the District’s educational goals and objectives, and shall be specific to the academic achievement of students served by the campus. The Board shall review and approve campus performance objectives.”

In addition board Policy BQB (LEGAL) states, the district shall maintain policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students. The district’s policy and procedures should establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees as provided by TEC

11.251(b)–(e). The committees should include representative professional staff, parents of students enrolled in the District, business representatives, and community members.

The CEICs play an important role in school administration through site-based decision-making. Although all Pearsall ISD's CEICs are not functioning in the middle and high schools, the functioning CEICs in the elementary and intermediate schools are very diverse and have worked collaboratively in previous school years with principals and other school administrators to develop campus improvement plans and provide financial and volunteer resources to improve and sustain student performance.

The TEC states: “The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district and campus-level planning and decision making process that will involve the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district’s and campuses’ educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs.” The Texas Legislature intended for CEICs to be the foundation of the site-based decision making process. As a result, the TEC charges the board with the responsibility for adopting policies to establish a campus-level planning and decision making process that feeds into the overall district-level planning and decision-making process. The superintendent is primarily responsible for implementing board policy, which includes making sure each CEIC is configured in accordance with the provisions of the TEC and functioning properly. Accordingly, the CEIC must provide for appropriate representation of the community’s diversity to periodically obtain broad-based community, business, parent, and staff input to district and campus-level committees.

Because not all of Pearsall ISD’s campuses are implementing CEICs in accordance with board policy, the district is at risk of not obtaining broad-based community, parent, business, and staff input in its campus-level and district-level decision making processes. Further, without input from parents, business, and community leaders at the junior high and high school levels, Pearsall ISD may be challenged to develop educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs to improve overall student achievement in the district. CEICs serve as a vital resource for districts, especially when districts are faced with reconstitution due to poor student academic performance.

The superintendent should require that all Pearsall ISD campuses implement a CEIC in accordance with board

policy every school year; and require the junior high and high school principals to immediately identify parents, community members, and business leaders from areas serving their campuses to appoint to their respective CEICs, and activate the CEIC as intended by the TEC and board policy. Further, the superintendent should monitor the development of CIPs from the junior high school and high school to ensure the plans have broad-based input from communities the schools serve before completing the DIP.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

### **ORGANIZATION (REC. 12)**

Pearsall ISD’s organizational structure does not clearly define the “practical” reporting relationships for cabinet level and campus administrators and creates a broad span of control for the superintendent. The superintendent position has 12 direct reports, which could possibly affect this position’s ability to engage in strategic, academic, and community-related activities necessary to enhance student performance as the district attempts to avoid reconstitution. The superintendent’s direct reports include the director of special education, the director of technology, athletic director, band director, and secretary, in addition to four principals and the three members of the superintendent’s cabinet. **Figure 2–4** shows Pearsall ISD’s organization.

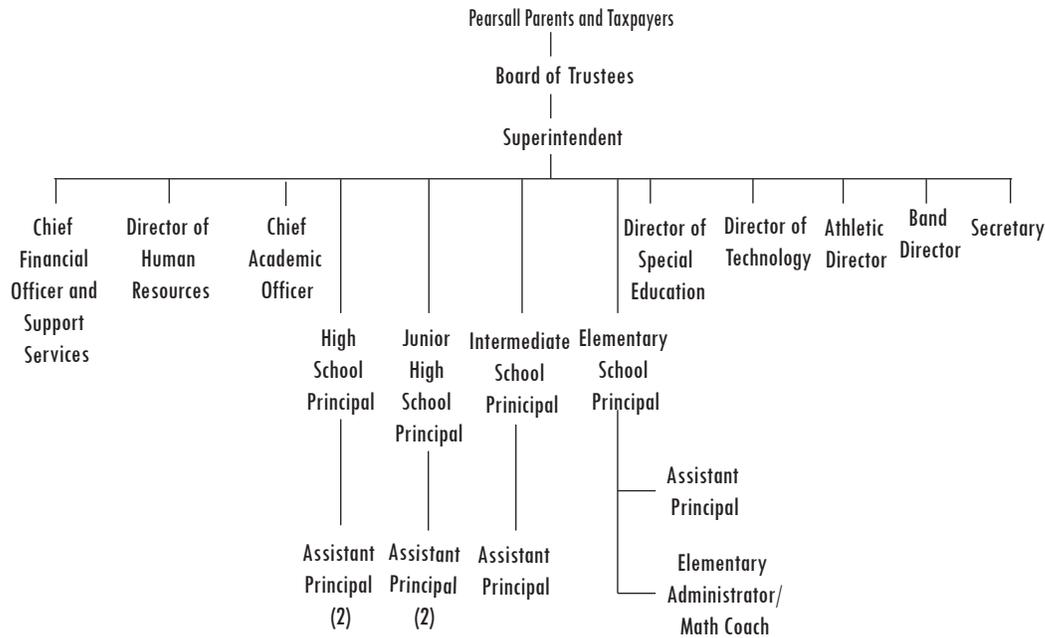
Although the current organization is flat, providing direct access to and communication with the superintendent, having 12 direct reports requires a substantial time commitment from the superintendent. This is especially true because the superintendent’s cabinet and all four principals are either new to the district or new to their respective roles. A narrower span of control with delegated management authority to members of the cabinet would enable the superintendent to focus on improving student performance.

According to the article, *Organisation—Span of Control*, the advantages of a narrow span of control include:

- Allows a manager to communicate quickly with the employees under them and control them more easily;
- Makes feedback of ideas from employees more effective; and
- Requires less management skills.

Carrizo Springs CISD and West Oso ISD are two of the peer districts selected for comparison to Pearsall ISD for this review. Carrizo Springs CISD’s and West Oso ISD’s

**FIGURE 2-4**  
**PEARSALL ISD ADMINISTRATION ORGANIZATION**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013-14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, November 2013.

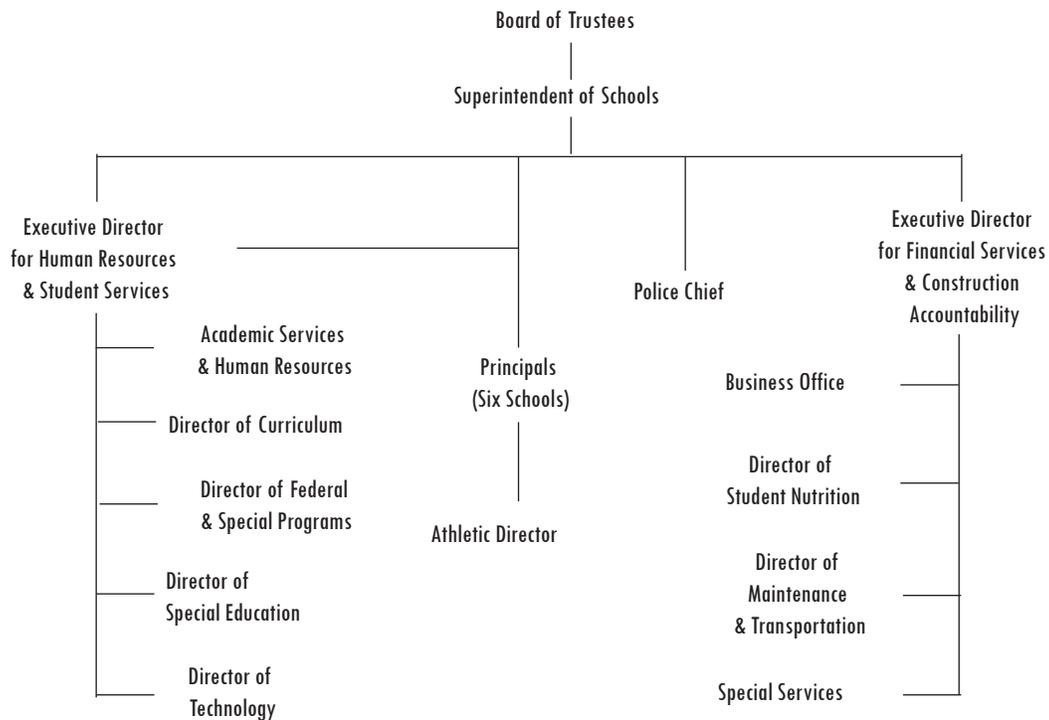
organizations have narrower spans of control than Pearsall ISD. **Figure 2-5** shows Carrizo Springs CISD’s organization and shows the superintendent with nine direct reports, including six principals. It also shows the athletic director reporting to the principal (which is likely the high school principal) rather than directly to the superintendent. Carrizo Springs CISD also groups human resources, curriculum, special education, federal and special programs, academic services, and technology underneath the executive director for Human Resources and Student Services.

**Figure 2-6** shows West Oso ISD’s organization and shows the superintendent with nine direct reports, including four principals and the board/superintendent’s secretary who also serves as the human resources coordinator. The organization also shows the athletic director and band director reporting to the high school principal rather than directly to the superintendent. West Oso ISD has an assistant superintendent who is responsible for special programs, instructional facilitators, and instructional technology. Pearsall ISD’s peer districts delegate responsibility for managing the athletic and band directors to high school principals in addition to delegating technology and special education services to a cabinet-level leader.

In addition to the superintendent’s broad span of control, Pearsall ISD’s organization and reporting structures do not clearly define the “practical” reporting relationships for cabinet level and campus administrators. Although Pearsall ISD’s organization chart shows principals with a “direct” reporting relationship to the superintendent, the chief academic officer (CAO) understands principals to have a “dual direct reporting responsibility” to the superintendent and CAO. She further understands the superintendent and CAO are “jointly” responsible for oversight of the principals’ activities, as the four principals answer to the superintendent for “teacher and school operations-related matters,” and answer to the CAO for academic matters such as curriculum, instructional programs, and support for counselors.

The perceived dual reporting responsibility does not reflect the reporting structure presented in the district’s organization chart and appears to be unclear to the administrators as each principal interviewed understood they reported to the superintendent, and the CAO merely supported them with academic and program-related matters. For example, the high school principal understands the CAO to provide curriculum support, and has more interaction with the superintendent than with the CAO. The junior high school

**FIGURE 2–5  
CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD ORGANIZATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Carrizo Springs CISD, Superintendent’s Office, January 2014.

principal sometimes receives directives from the superintendent, and at other times receives directives from the CAO. The intermediate school principal understands principals report directly to the superintendent and the CAO interacts with principals in a support role, as needed, and helps coordinate the district’s school improvement program. The elementary school principal has more frequent interaction with the superintendent rather than the CAO.

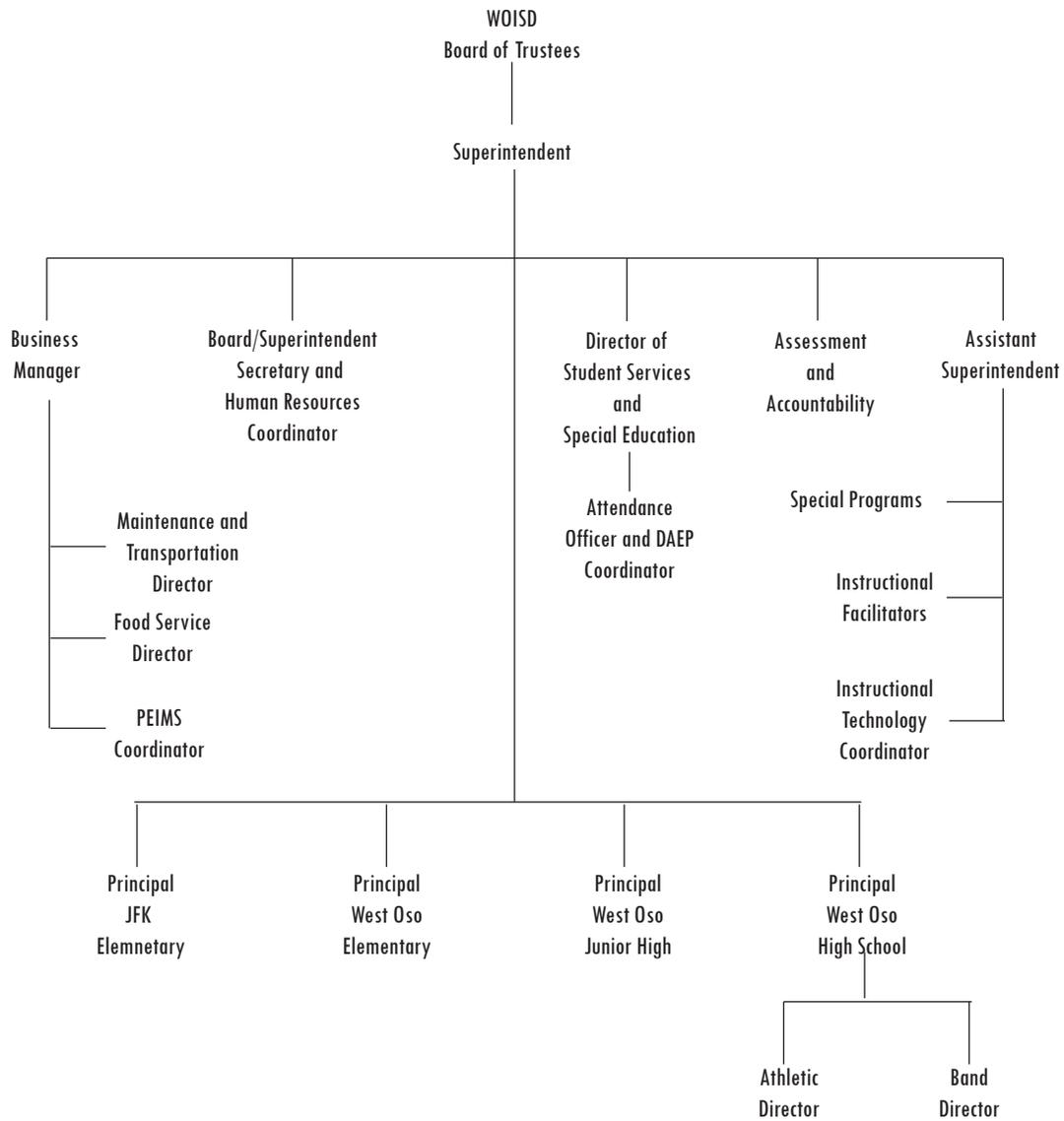
Based on the review team interviews, there is ambiguity in the communication and overall understanding of reporting relationships between the principals, superintendent, and CAO in practice, versus the design of the district’s organizational structure. The article entitled, *Charting the Decision Making Structure of an Organization*, states that one should remember, “theoretically, each manager is responsible for more work than he can personally do. Therefore he delegates subsections of his responsibilities to others who are then said to report to him ...creating the lines of delegation and the lines of accountability.” Given this premise, the organization structure is designed to communicate actual reporting relationships and delegated authority so individuals know to whom they are ultimately accountable and who is

accountable to them for their work. If members of the organization are confused about who they are accountable to and who is accountable to them, it creates a lack of focus or direction for one’s responsibility and ultimately affects the overall evaluation process. In school districts, this potential lack of focus or direction leads to uncertainty about organizational goals and ultimate decision-making authority related to those goals.

The district administration should narrow the superintendent’s span of control to seven direct reports and redesign the present organization to accurately reflect the most efficient reporting relationships and delegated authority; communicate the roles and responsibilities of the CAO and school principals; and clarify perceived dual reporting relationships within the organization. Once the organization is redesigned, the job descriptions of the CAO and principals should reflect direct reporting and delegated authority, including district-wide coordinating functions.

Pearsall ISD’s redesigned organization should delegate the oversight responsibility for the athletic director and band director to the high school principal and delegate oversight responsibility for Special Education and Technology to the

**FIGURE 2-6  
WEST OSO ISD ORGANIZATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013-14**

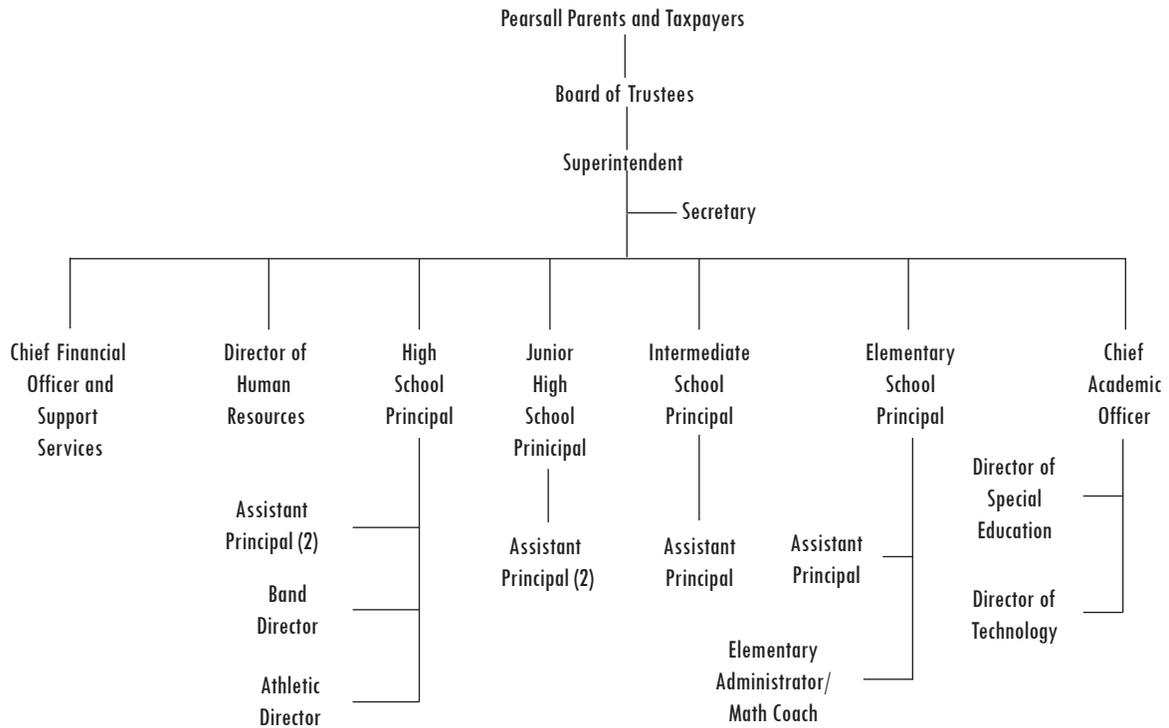


SOURCE: West Osos ISD, Superintendent's Office, January 2014.

CAO. **Figure 2–7** shows a proposed organization for Pearsall ISD.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FIGURE 2–7  
PEARSALL ISD PROPOSED ORGANIZATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, January 2014.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 2: DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT</b>							
9. Develop and implement a self-policing policy within the framework of the Board of Trustees Board Operating Procedures, and ensure that board members obtain the continuing education hours required in areas of greatest need and to decrease the instances of board involvement in day-to-day operations and undermining the superintendent's authority.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10. Establish a formal, stakeholder-driven strategic planning process to develop a long-range strategic plan with measurable objectives, timelines, and responsibility assignments for which the board will hold the superintendent and executive leadership team accountable.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$14,000)
11. Require that all Pearsall ISD campuses implement a CEIC in accordance with board policy every school year; and require the junior high and high school principals to immediately identify parents, community members, and business leaders from areas serving their campuses to appoint to their respective CEICs, and activate the CEIC as intended by the TEC and board policy.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12. Narrow the superintendent's span of control to seven direct reports and redesign the present organization to accurately reflect the most efficient reporting relationships and delegated authority; communicate the roles and responsibilities of the CAO and school principals; and clarify perceived dual reporting relationships within the organization.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$14,000)</b>

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## **CHAPTER 3**

# **HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

An independent school district's human resources function is responsible for the management of staff. This function is critical because salaries, wages, and benefits account for approximately 80 percent of the average Texas school district's total budget. Human resource management is dependent on the organizational structure of the district. Larger districts may have staff dedicated to human resource management, while smaller districts assign staff these responsibilities as a secondary assignment.

Human resource management includes compensation and benefits; recruitment, hiring, and retention; administrative planning and duties; records management; staff relations and grievances; and staff evaluations. These functions are defined by either compliance-based or strategic-based responsibilities. Compliance-based responsibilities include assuring an organization is following federal, state, and local labor laws in areas such as benefits, compensation and hours worked, records management, mandatory leave, discrimination, medical privacy, safety, termination, and eligibility to work. Strategic-based responsibilities include recruiting and retention, compensation and benefits, and staff relations.

Employee stability is a key component of providing students with a quality education. Pearsall Independent School District (ISD) has a high teacher turnover rate (35.1 percent in school year 2012–13); 45 percent of its teachers have less than six years' teaching experience with the district. The district employed 338 individuals in school year 2012–13; the staff included 165 teachers, 111 auxiliary staff, 34 educational aides, 15 professional support staff, eight campus administrators, and five central office administrators.

Pearsall ISD's Human Resources (HR) Department reports to the superintendent and is staffed with a director and one secretary. The director of HR has been employed by the district since July 2013. Managing the human resources function is one component of the director's responsibilities. Additional management and oversight responsibilities for this position include social services, security, school resource officers (SROs), nurses, and a truancy officer.

The primary activities of Pearsall ISD's HR Department include: recruiting new teachers; posting job vacancies; processing new hire and substitute documents; completing new employee benefits and insurance enrollment forms;

verifying teacher and administrator certifications; conducting substitute training and new teacher orientation sessions; processing criminal background checks; tracking employee performance appraisals; processing forms for job transfers; issuing annual renewal contracts; maintaining personnel files; and conducting informal compensation comparisons with local school districts. The Business Office administers benefits and insurance and processes workers compensation claims. The superintendent is responsible for employee grievances. **Figure 3–1** shows the current HR Department organization.

**FIGURE 3–1**  
**PEARSALL ISD HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Human Resources Department, November 2013.

The largest operating expense incurred by school districts is personnel costs. School districts receive revenues from various sources, including federal grants, and account for these in special revenue and grant funds. The General Fund is where local tax dollars are deposited and is usually the largest fund districts use to finance operations. Districts typically report payroll expenditures as a percentage of their General Fund. Pearsall ISD's General Fund budget for fiscal year 2013 was \$17.8 million. The district's total payroll expenditures for fiscal year 2013 from all funds were \$16.5 million, or 61.0 percent of total expenditures. The portion of the General Fund used for payroll expenditures in fiscal year 2013 was \$12.3 million, or 69.2 percent of expenditures from the General Fund. **Figure 3–2** shows the district's actual payroll expenditures for fiscal years 2011 to 2013 from the General Fund. **Figure 3–3** shows Pearsall ISD's actual payroll expenditures from all funds.

Pearsall ISD's staffing composition has fluctuated slightly from school years 2009–10 to 2012–13. The percentage of

**FIGURE 3–2  
PEARSALL ISD  
PAYROLL TRENDS – GENERAL FUND  
FISCAL YEARS 2011 TO 2013**

CATEGORY	2011 ACTUAL	2012 ACTUAL	2013 ACTUAL	PERCENT INCREASE (DECREASE) FROM FY 2011 TO FY 2013
Payroll	\$10,788,933	\$9,665,573	\$12,325,834	14%
Total General Fund Expenses	\$13,797,076	\$13,384,022	\$17,813,247	29%
Percentage of General Fund Used for Payroll Expenses	78.2%	72.2%	69.2%	(9%)

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Revenue and Expenditure Reports by Major Object Code, January 2014.

**FIGURE 3–3  
PEARSALL ISD  
PAYROLL TRENDS – ALL FUNDS  
FISCAL YEARS 2011 TO 2013**

CATEGORY	2011 ACTUAL	2012 ACTUAL	2013 ACTUAL	PERCENT INCREASE (DECREASE) FROM FY 2011 TO FY 2013
Payroll	17,286,504	\$16,086,901	\$16,538,516	(4.3)%
Total All Funds Expenses	26,239,567	\$25,340,188	\$27,128,560	3.4%
Percentage of All Funds Used for Payroll Expenses	65.9%	63.5%	61.0%	(4.9%)

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Revenue and Expenditure Reports by Major Object Code, January 2014.

teachers has increased three percent from school year 2009–10 to 2012–13. Conversely, auxiliary staff decreased by 2 percent during the same period. In school year 2012–13, 49 percent of district staff were teachers, 33 percent were auxiliary staff, and 4 percent were campus and central office staff. **Figure 3–4** shows staff by classification from school year 2009–10 to school year 2012–13.

Pearsall ISD’s school year 2012–13 staffing mixture, consisting of 49 percent teachers, included a high percentage of teachers compared to its peer districts and the region. Peer districts are districts similar to Pearsall ISD that are used for comparison purposes. The district’s percentage of auxiliary staff (33 percent) was higher than that of the region (29 percent) and the state (27 percent). Pearsall ISD’s percentage of educational aides was 10 percent, compared to 9 percent for the state, and was comparable to that of its peers. **Figure 3–5** shows Pearsall ISD staff by classification compared to peer districts, Region 20, and the state average for school year 2012–13.

**FIGURE 3–4  
PEARSALL ISD  
STAFF BY CLASSIFICATION  
SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2012–13**

CLASSIFICATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Teachers	46%	48%	48%	49%
Professional Support	5%	4%	3%	5%
Campus Administration	2%	3%	3%	2%
Central Administration	2%	2%	1%	2%
Educational Aides	11%	10%	10%	10%
Auxiliary Staff	35%	34%	35%	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR), November 2013.

**FIGURE 3–5  
PEARSALL ISD  
STAFF PERCENTAGES BY CLASSIFICATION COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 20, AND THE STATE  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

CLASSIFICATION	PEARSALL ISD	WEST OSO ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD	FABENS ISD	REGION 20	STATE
Teachers	49%	47%	44%	46%	48%	51%
Professional Support	5%	9%	8%	7%	10%	9%
Campus Administration	2%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Central Administration	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Educational Aides	10%	11%	11%	9%	10%	9%
Auxiliary Staff	33%	28%	32%	33%	29%	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, November 2013.

**FINDINGS**

- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have a comprehensive plan in place to attract and retain qualified employees.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not established a method to determine if each school has the appropriate number of teaching, administrative, and support staff.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not evaluated the potential tax implications of providing reduced-cost housing and childcare to district employees.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks formal, documented policies and procedures for human resources functions.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s failure to ensure performance appraisals are conducted for all professional staff is not consistent with board policies.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s HR staff are not involved in the employee grievance process, nor do they provide training to supervisors on employee grievance procedures.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ◆ **Recommendation 13: Form a teacher turnover reduction committee to identify and implement best practice processes and strategies for attracting teachers to the district and lowering staff attrition rates.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 14: Develop and implement formal staffing guidelines for the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high schools.**

- ◆ **Recommendation 15: Consult with a tax specialist to determine the requirements for reporting the difference between the market value and the actual amount charged to employees for apartment rental and daycare services.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 16: Develop written human resource procedures that are consistent with industry best practices and establish a process to make employees aware of these procedures and how to access them.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 17: Implement a systematic process with accompanying written procedures to ensure that all employees receive an annual performance appraisal and retain the completed appraisal in staff personnel files.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 18: Revise board policies and grievance practices to include the HR Department in the grievance process from complaint inception to disposition.**

**DETAILED FINDINGS**

**STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (REC. 13)**

Pearsall ISD does not have a comprehensive plan in place to attract and retain qualified employees. The district hired 75 new employees for school year 2013–14. The district’s academic accountability rating dropped from Academically Acceptable in school year 2009–10 to Academically Unacceptable in school year 2010–11, and the district received an Improvement Required accountability rating in school year 2012–13.

Pearsall ISD had a complete turnover of principals in school year 2012–13. Pearsall Junior High has had six principals in seven years. Pearsall High School had five principals in school year 2012–13. In addition, the district has had three curriculum and instruction directors in three years. The district’s teacher turnover rate for school year 2012–13 was 35.1 percent. This rate is more than twice the state rate of 15.3 percent and Regional Education Service Center XX’s (Region 20) rate of 14.7 percent. It is also the highest among its peer districts. The teacher turnover rates for Pearsall ISD’s peer districts range from 8.6 percent in Fabens ISD to 20.5 percent in West Osó ISD. Of 165.3 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers in school year 2012–13, 45—or 22.7 percent—did not return to the district. Pearsall ISD’s percentage of first-year teachers, 18.9 percent, is 2.7 times the state and regional percentages of 7.0 percent and 7.1 percent, respectively. The percentage of first-year teachers in Pearsall ISD’s peer districts ranges from 3.4 percent to 9.8 percent. **Figure 3–6** shows years of experience for teachers in Pearsall ISD compared to years of experience in the peer districts, Region 20, and the state.

Teacher turnover rates in Pearsall ISD have been steadily increasing in recent years. **Figure 3–7** shows the years of experience and turnover rates for teachers in the district from school years 2009–10 to 2011–12. Teacher turnover more than doubled from 15.9 percent in school year 2009–10 to 35.1 percent in school year 2012–13. During this period, the

district’s teacher turnover rates were considerably higher than the state turnover rates. In school year 2009–10, the district’s teacher turnover rate was 4.1 percentage points higher than the state rate; it was nearly twice the state rate in school year 2010–11, and was more than twice the state rate in school year 2011–12. In school year 2012–13, the district’s teacher turnover rate was 2.3 times the teacher turnover rate for the state. High teacher turnover has resulted in an increase in the percentage of first-year teachers in the district. The district’s percentage of first-year teachers increased from 8.0 percent in school year 2009–10 to 18.9 percent in school year 2012–13. The district’s percentage of first-year teachers was approximately double the state percentage in school years 2010–11 and 2011–12 and was 2.7 times higher the state percentage in school year 2012–13.

District staff, campus staff, and parents acknowledge that teacher turnover is high. The review team conducted a survey of district and campus staff and parents before the onsite visit. Approximately 78.5 percent of district staff, 81.7 percent of campus staff, and 72.7 percent of parents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that teacher turnover is low. **Figure 3–8** shows the responses of district staff, campus staff, and parents to this survey item.

In interviews with the review team, district staff reported that attrition rates are affected by Pearsall ISD’s proximity to San Antonio-area school districts and the Eagle Ford Shale Play. Independent school districts in this region are experiencing

**FIGURE 3–6  
PEARSALL ISD  
TEACHERS’ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND TURNOVER RATES COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 20, AND STATE  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

	PEARSALL ISD	FABENS ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD	WEST OSO ISD	REGION 20	STATE
Number of Teachers	165.3	174.3	146.7	138.4	26,696.8	327,419.5
Teachers as a Percent of All Staff	48.9%	46.0%	44.3%	46.6%	48.5%	51.0%
Beginning Teachers (<1 Year Experience)	18.9%	3.4%	6.7%	9.8%	7.1%	7.0%
1–5 Years’ Experience	26.0%	25.3%	24.5%	29.9%	26.0%	26.1%
6–10 Years’ Experience	15.1%	28.3%	18.4%	20.9%	23.1%	22.7%
11–20 Years’ Experience	22.5%	32.1%	32.0%	25.7%	27.6%	26.9%
More than 20 Years’ Experience	17.4%	10.9%	18.3%	13.6%	16.2%	17.3%
Average Years Experience	10.4	10.7	12.2	10.3	11.3	11.5
Average Years Experience with District	6.9	8.2	10.3	7.0	7.9	8.0
Teacher Turnover Rate	35.1%	8.6%	14.4%	20.5%	14.7%	15.3%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, November 2013.

**FIGURE 3–7**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**TEACHERS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND TURNOVER RATES COMPARED TO STATE**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2011–12**

	2009–10		2010–11		2011–12	
	PEARSALL ISD	STATE	PEARSALL ISD	STATE	PEARSALL ISD	STATE
Number of Teachers	179.6	333,006.8	182.8	334,876.4	172.7	324,144.6
Teachers as a Percent of All Staff	46.2%	50.0%	48.0%	50.5%	48.1%	50.8%
Beginning Teachers (<1 Year Experience)	8.0%	6.0%	11.9%	6.0%	9.4%	4.6%
1–5 Years' Experience	31.6%	31.0%	27.6%	30.0%	29.5%	28.7%
6–10 Years' Experience	17.2%	20.3%	16.9%	21.1%	14.1%	22.3%
11–20 Years' Experience	20.6%	24.4%	20.8%	25.0%	26.0%	26.6%
More than 20 Years' Experience	22.6%	18.3%	22.8%	17.9%	21.0%	17.9%
Average Years Experience	11.8	11.3	11.6	11.4	11.7	11.6
Average Years Experience with District	8.7	7.6	8.3	7.7	8.4	8.1
Teacher Turnover Rate	15.9%	11.8%	21.2%	11.9%	26.1%	12.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, November 2013.

**FIGURE 3–8**  
**DISTRICT STAFF, CAMPUS STAFF, AND PARENT SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD**  
**OCTOBER 2013**

RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
<b>Teacher turnover is low.</b>					
District Staff	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	71.4%
Campus Staff	1.4%	1.4%	15.5%	31.0%	50.7%
Parents	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%	18.2%	54.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents.  
 SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Performance Review District, Campus, and Parent Surveys, October 2013.

significant impacts. With approximately 250 rigs in operation, Eagle Ford is one of the most active shale plays in the world. The shale play has quickly become a major driver in the local economy, affecting property values, employment, housing availability, and taxing effort. The Eagle Ford Shale Play pays skilled workers higher salaries than Pearsall ISD. During interviews with the review team, staff indicated that this has had a negative impact on the district's ability to hire and retain skilled workers.

District staff also reported that Pearsall ISD has difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and qualified administrators because salaries for teachers are lower than those paid by districts in and around San Antonio, the largest city in closest proximity to Pearsall. Although Pearsall ISD increased teacher pay in school year 2013–14, the district's pay rate

continues to be lower than that of many San Antonio-area districts. Furthermore, the Eagle Ford Shale Play has caused a sharp increase in Pearsall housing costs. As a result, many of the district's teachers live in San Antonio and commute to Pearsall ISD. During interviews with the review team, district staff stated that new teachers often come to Pearsall ISD to gain experience and then move to San Antonio-area schools to earn higher pay. District staff also reported that it is challenging to retain degreed substitute teachers when teachers are absent from the classroom. In addition, since the time of the onsite visit, the superintendent resigned and the chief financial officer (CFO) has been named interim superintendent.

The district's average campus administrator salary of \$69,695 is the second highest among its peer districts; however, it is

lower than the average administrator salary for both Region 20 (\$71,972) and the state (\$71,259). The average salary for Pearsall ISD central administration staff ranks in the middle of the range for its peer districts while being lower than the Region 20 average and higher than the state average. Pearsall ISD’s average teacher salary of \$43,266 is lower than the average teacher salaries of its peer districts, Region 20, and the state. The lower average teacher salary in Pearsall ISD could be attributable to the district’s higher percentage of first-year teachers compared to peer districts. **Figure 3–9** shows a comparison of the average salaries for various job classifications for Pearsall ISD, its peer districts, Region 20, and the state in school year 2012–13.

School districts use a variety of methods to reduce employee attrition rates and competitively compensate teachers. Many school districts use the annual Salaries and Benefits report published by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to analyze their salaries and compare them to other school districts in the region and state.

In addition, districts often identify innovative approaches to competitively compensate their employees. Some of the more frequently used approaches include providing additional paid time off; paying longevity bonuses; and paying signing bonuses after an employee has served in the district for a designated length of time.

Southwest ISD was able to reduce teacher turnover by using two major initiatives. Budget priorities were adjusted to ensure that the teacher salary schedule would remain competitive with other districts in Region 20, and grant funds were obtained to offer a retention bonus for qualified teachers who agreed to return for the next year. By adjusting the district’s budget priorities, Southwest ISD was able to focus its teacher salary schedule to maximize retention of its teaching staff.

Additionally, Southwest ISD secured funding for a \$300 Teacher Retention Incentive (TRI) through a \$194,000 grant from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The grant was available through the U.S. Department of Education’s Rural and Low Income School Program (RLISP), Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2. Approved by the Board of Trustees on March 26, 2003, the program provided a one-time TRI for fully certified teachers to be paid at checkout on the last school day in May 2003. To qualify for the incentive, the teacher must have been fully certified, serving as the teacher-of-record in a Southwest ISD classroom, and committed to return to Southwest ISD in a teaching position in school year 2003–04. In accepting the TRI, the teachers authorized the district to withhold \$300 each from their final checks in the event they resigned and did not return to teach in the district.

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) suggests a three-step process to address a high teacher turnover problem. These steps include:

- Step One: Measure teacher turnover rate and its costs. The district needs to collect data tracking teacher turnover, determine which teachers leave, from which schools, reasons for leaving, and where these teachers are taking jobs. The district should then calculate the costs associated with teachers leaving and the district having to recruit, hire, and train replacements.
- Step Two: Invest in well-prepared teachers and in a comprehensive induction program. Well-prepared teachers, even if they are beginning teachers, have solid content knowledge, understand how students learn, and possess the skills to help students meet high academic standards. Studies have shown that hiring well-prepared teachers reduces first-year attrition by one-half. Once such teachers are hired, the district needs to provide them with a strong support system to facilitate their success. An effective induction program has four components: (1) building and

**FIGURE 3–9**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**AVERAGE SALARIES BY CLASSIFICATION COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 20, AND THE STATE**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

CLASSIFICATION	PEARSALL ISD	WEST OSO ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS CISD	FABENS ISD	REGION 20	STATE
Teachers	<b>\$43,266</b>	\$46,779	\$46,682	\$52,490	\$50,167	\$48,821
Professional Support	<b>\$48,219</b>	\$54,121	\$48,731	\$60,120	\$57,963	\$57,253
Campus Administration	<b>\$69,695</b>	\$68,869	\$59,028	\$79,100	\$71,972	\$71,259
Central Administration	<b>\$92,387</b>	\$93,520	\$74,511	\$103,350	\$92,554	\$91,993

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, November 2013.

deepening teacher knowledge; (2) integrating new teachers into the teaching community and school culture that supports continuous professional growth; (3) supporting continuous professional growth of teachers; and (4) encouraging professional dialogue that promotes the goals, values, and best practices of the teaching community. This induction system provides: trained mentors that spend a specified amount of time with the new teachers; supportive communications from district and campus administrators; common planning and collaboration time with other teachers; a reduced course load and help from aides; and participation in an external network of teachers.

- Step Three: Transform schools into genuine learning organizations. In a genuine learning organization, teachers share the responsibility for each other's professional growth and students' academic success. In such a culture, beginning and experienced teachers work together to promote students' academic achievement. Moreover, experienced teachers guide the learning paths of the beginning teachers and help them to become rooted in the school culture and their academic area.

Pearsall ISD should form a teacher turnover reduction committee to identify and implement best practice processes and strategies for attracting teachers to the district and lowering staff attrition rates. The process that NCTAF sets for reducing teacher turnover could be used as a road map for the district. The superintendent should lead this committee. The committee should also include the chief academic officer (CAO), the director of HR, the CFO, and teacher representatives. The committee should conduct a comprehensive analysis of teacher turnover in the district, identify potential reasons for this turnover, and examine the effectiveness of current teacher support systems. Based on the analysis, the committee should develop a comprehensive plan articulating strategies and initiatives the district can use to address potential reasons for teacher turnover. The comprehensive plan should define changes in teacher hiring and retention practices (including teacher qualification criteria); establish a formal teacher support system; and establish a districtwide cohesive teacher community. The plan should also determine costs associated with each of the strategies and support systems, include a timeline for implementation, and assign implementation monitoring and evaluation responsibilities to district staff.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **STAFFING FORMULAS (REC. 14)**

Pearsall ISD has not established a method to determine if each school has the appropriate number of teaching, administrative, and support staff.

During onsite interviews, district staff indicated that the district does not use staffing guidelines to determine the appropriate number of principals, assistant principals, and counselors in its schools. At the time of the review, district staffing levels were based on historical budgets and activities. If an administrator determines that additional staff need to be hired, he or she presents a justification of the request to the superintendent and CFO for review and authorization to hire. Pearsall ISD has a general guideline for staffing classrooms. For the elementary school level, the ratio is 22 students to 1 teacher; the ratios for the secondary school levels range between 25 and 28 students to 1 teacher. The Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 25.112, requires kindergarten through grade 4 to maintain a maximum class size of 22 students per teacher. The Texas Education Code does not establish requirements for class size past grade 4.

Personnel costs are the largest expenditure in school districts. Payroll costs generally account for 80 percent or more of a district's budget. Districts often use staffing formulas for budgeting and as a starting point for allocating financial resources. Staffing formulas also serve as guidelines for the efficient use of human resources. Smaller districts, such as Pearsall ISD, often face challenges in maintaining adequate staffing levels. Another challenge faced by many school districts is the ability to identify problem areas and goals to address and appropriately fund these priorities when developing the budget and making decisions about staffing and financial allocations.

School funding in Texas is based on the number of students in average daily attendance (ADA). When enrollment rises or declines, funding allocations change accordingly, making it necessary for the district to make corresponding staffing adjustments. Pearsall ISD has experienced a decline in student population of 29 students between school year 2009–10 and 2012–13. Pearsall ISD reduced its staff by 51 employees during this same period. The employee reduction was based on assessing staffing needs informally with principals and departmental managers. However, an informal assessment process does not ensure that the district is appropriately staffed to address the educational needs of its

students. **Figure 3–10** shows a comparison of staffing by category and total student population for school years 2009–10 to 2012–13.

**Figure 3–11** shows administrative staffing levels by enrollment for elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high schools at the time of the onsite review.

AdvancED is an education community whose mission is to advance education excellence through accreditation and school improvement. AdvancED publishes Standards for Quality—Schools. Standard 4 discusses resources and support systems. Standard 4 lists specific indicators to determine if school districts have the resources to provide services to ensure success for all students. Indicator 4.1 states: “Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school’s purpose, direction, and the educational program.” While Indicator 4.1 does not provide specific staffing standards for schools, the indicator evaluates whether “school leaders use a formal, systematic process to determine

the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school purpose, educational programs, and continuous improvement.”

AdvancED was established in 2006 with the unification of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC). Before joining AdvancED, SACS CASI issued Public School Standards. Standard 6 of this publication included staffing recommendations by membership or enrollment. **Figure 3–12** shows excerpts from the recommended school administrative staffing table included in Public School Standards, Standard 6.1.

Tatum ISD developed and uses internal staffing formulas based on state and federal regulations, peer district comparisons, student enrollment, and program needs. The superintendent continually reviews student enrollment to

**FIGURE 3–10  
PEARSALL ISD  
STAFF BY CLASSIFICATION  
SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2012–13**

CLASSIFICATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	INCREASE (DECREASE) FROM 2009–10 TO 2012–13
Teachers	180	183	173	165	(15)
Professional Support	17	14	12	15	(2)
Campus Administration	9	10	9	8	(1)
Central Administration	6	6	5	5	(1)
Educational Aides	41	39	35	34	(7)
Auxiliary Staff	135	130	126	111	(24)
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>(51)</b>
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>2,265</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>2,212</b>	<b>2,236</b>	<b>(29)</b>

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS and TAPR, November 2013.

**FIGURE 3–11  
PEARSALL ISD  
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING IN SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

SCHOOL	TED FLORES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
Enrollment	676	480	558	588
<b>Current Staffing: Full-time equivalent Positions</b>				
Principal	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Assistant Principal	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
Counselor	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Human Resources Department, January 29, 2014.

**FIGURE 3–12**  
**SACS CASI PUBLIC SCHOOL STANDARDS**  
**RECOMMENDED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING BY MEMBERSHIP**  
**2005**

MEMBERSHIP	LEVEL	1–249	250–499	500–749	750–999	1000–1249
Administrative Head	Elementary	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Secondary	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Administrative or Supervisory Assistants	Elementary	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5
	Secondary	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
Guidance Professionals	Elementary	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
	Secondary	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
Library or Media Specialists	Elementary	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Secondary (Middle School)	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Secondary (High School)	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
Support Staff for Administration, Library Media, or Technology	Elementary	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.5	3.0
	Secondary	1.0	2.5	4.0	4.5	5.0

SOURCE: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, Public School Standards, 2005.

stay at or below the state-mandated class sizes. In addition, the superintendent makes custodial staffing allocations in conjunction with the director of Maintenance and Transportation based on campus enrollment and campus size.

In school year 2000–01, Eagle Pass ISD also developed and began applying staffing formulas based on enrollment data to determine the required number and types of personnel at each school. The allocations are the basis for the salary portion of the budget each year. For example, the ratio for pre-kindergarten teachers is 1:18 (one teacher to 18 students); for grades kindergarten to 4, the ratio is 1:22; for grades 5 to 12, the ratio is 1:25–30; and for elementary physical education, the ratio is 1:300. The ratio of counselors at all grade levels is 1:400. There is one custodian for every 17,000 square feet of permanent construction, and one custodian for every 15,000 square feet of portable buildings. The elementary management team consists of one principal and instruction officer (one position) for 400 students and the district adds an additional instruction officer for enrollments above 400 students. The secondary management team consists of one principal, one assistant principal, and one curriculum lead teacher for 400 students and the district adds an additional curriculum lead teacher or assistant principal position for every 400-student increment. The ratio for nurses at elementary schools is 1:500, while the middle school and high school ratio is 1:750. The ratio for security officers at middle schools and high schools is 1:300.

Pearsall ISD should develop and implement formal staffing guidelines for the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high schools. These guidelines should be used to ensure that classes are adequately staffed to achieve student success. These staffing guidelines should also be used to estimate personnel expenditures in the annual budget development process. The district should use industry staffing standards as a model to develop staffing guidelines that fit the profile of its students. Given the demographic profile of Pearsall ISD students, the superintendent, academic leadership team, and board should develop and adopt formal school administrative staffing guidelines that are appropriate for Pearsall ISD. Staffing formulas should be developed and implemented before the next budget cycle.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **EMPLOYEE HOUSING AND CHILDCARE (REC. 15)**

Pearsall ISD has not evaluated the potential tax implications of providing reduced-cost housing and childcare to district employees. The district owns seven apartments that are available for rent to staff as an incentive or benefit. The district rents the apartments to teachers on a first-come first-served basis. Teachers are allowed to rent the apartments for up to three years for \$500 a month. The price was determined by the board and was set to be affordable for the staff. The apartments are being rented to teachers as an incentive to attract teachers to work for the district. Housing costs

continue to rise in the Pearsall area due to the demand for housing that has resulted from the Eagle Ford Shale Play.

Pearsall ISD also operates a daycare center for students, district staff, and families that meet federal, state, and local guidelines. Any district employee may participate in the childcare program. Students who participate in the program are required to enroll in the Child Care Services (CCS) Program administered by Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas. Other Workforce Solutions clients may be eligible for assistance with daycare expenses if they work, go to school, or are enrolled in a vocational program for a minimum of 25 hours per week for a single-parent home and 50 hours per week for a two-parent home. For qualifying participants, the state reimburses Pearsall ISD the difference between the standard fee and that charged to the participant based on income. Daily childcare fees are:

- infant (0–17 months): \$35.96 per child or \$30.57 for Pearsall ISD employees;
- 18–35 months: \$25.12 per child or \$21.36 for Pearsall ISD employees; and
- 3–4 years: \$23.26 per child or \$19.86 for Pearsall ISD employees.

The U.S. Internal Revenue Code (IRC), Section 61, and the U.S. Treasury Income Tax Regulation, Section 1.61, define gross income as including the difference between the fair rental value and the actual rent charged by employers and states that the difference should be recognized and reported as income.

Pearsall ISD does not include the rental incentive and reduced childcare fees as gross income for participating employees. As a result, the district could be at risk of being assessed additional taxes, penalties, and interest if the IRS performs a payroll audit.

Pearsall ISD should consult with a tax specialist to determine the requirements for reporting the difference between the market value and the actual amount charged to employees for apartment rental and daycare services. The district should annually determine the fair market value of the apartments it owns and, if necessary, adjust employee income in accordance with tax requirements. The district's auditors may provide this information at no cost to the district.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 16)**

Pearsall ISD lacks formal, documented policies and procedures for human resources functions. Documented policies and procedures ensure that operations are not hampered if knowledgeable employees leave the district and serve as training tools and a reference source for new employees.

Pearsall ISD has experienced significant employee turnover. At the time of the review team's onsite visit in November 2013, all of the principals were new to the district. The director of HR has been with the district since July 2013 and is the third individual in this position in three years. The administrative assistant for HR has been with the department for 10 years and provides the knowledge and information necessary to allow personnel processes to function. However, this knowledge has not been documented in the form of written procedures that describe how to perform critical human resources functions.

According to the director of HR, the HR Department updates and distributes an employee handbook each year. This handbook covers employment topics and identifies the applicable board policies. All employees are required to sign an acknowledgement of handbook receipt. However, in interviews with the review team, some district employees stated that they were not sure of the personnel procedures, especially those regarding the complaint and grievance process. The grievance process is included on page 26 of the employee handbook and refers to board Policy DGBA (LOCAL). The employee handbook states that complaints and grievances should be filed in accordance with the policy. This policy details the timing and levels of the grievance process. **Figure 3–13** shows a summary of topics covered in the employee handbook.

Although Pearsall ISD produces an employee handbook that addresses many human resources topics, the district lacks written procedures that explain how critical functions of the HR Department are performed. The lack of written human resource procedures that are easily accessible to department staff could result in a lack of knowledge and understanding of fundamental personnel processes. In addition, without written procedures, as HR Department staff leave the district knowledge of the department's processes could be lost and the continuity of HR functions could be interrupted.

Effective written procedures provide: (1) a permanent record of critical functions and processes; (2) directions for performing critical departmental tasks; (3) a reference for

**FIGURE 3–13**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK TOPICS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

HANDBOOK SECTION	NUMBER OF TOPICS COVERED
Employee Handbook Receipt	N/A
Drug Statement	N/A
District Information	6
Employment	13
Compensation and Benefits	14
Leave and Absences	13
Employee Relations and Communications	2
Complaints and Grievances	1
Employee Conduct and Welfare	25
Other Topics—General Procedures	6
Termination of Employment	6
Student Issues	10

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Employee Handbook, November 2013.

existing employees; (4) a training tool for new employees; and (5) uniformity and continuity of transaction processes.

A well-conceived policies and procedures manual defines the difference between a policy and a procedure and includes step-by-step descriptions of each process and the procedures used to perform it. Best practices for developing policies and procedures manuals include:

- writing in clear, concise, and simple language;
- consistent and logical framework;
- index to promote ease of location of specific processes;
- manuals developed with users in mind;
- understandable construction so that users can follow tasks and procedures;
- periodic review and updates;
- a means of documenting and communicating updates; and
- an organized, scheduled approach developed by knowledgeable employees.

Pearsall ISD should develop written human resource procedures that are consistent with industry best practices and establish a process to make employees aware of these

procedures and how to access them. HR Department staff should draft the written procedures for review and approval by the director of HR. Once the procedures are approved, they should be published on the district's internal website to allow staff to access them when needed. The district should also establish a process for updating the written HR policies and procedures on a regular basis.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS (REC. 17)**

Pearsall ISD's failure to ensure performance appraisals are conducted for all professional staff is not consistent with board policies. The district's lack of formal, written appraisal procedures could also place the district at risk of violating the TEC, Section 21.354(c), (d), which states that district funds may not be used to pay an administrator who has not been appraised in the preceding 15 months.

Pearsall ISD has five board policies covering performance appraisals. **Figure 3–14** shows key points of the board policies regarding employee appraisal.

Pearsall ISD does not have a process in place to ensure that appraisals are conducted for all staff and that documentation of appraisal results are submitted to the HR Department as required by policy.

On August 13, 2013, the director of HR issued a memorandum to campus principals, directors, coordinators, and supervisors responsible for contract recommendations. The memo described the contract recommendation and documentation process for evaluations and included written procedures, timelines and examples, and sample forms. The memorandum stated that the resource packet could be used for professional and/or paraprofessional personnel; however, the instructions and examples focused on administrator and teacher performance appraisals.

At the time of the onsite visit, staff said no processes are in place to conduct and document annual appraisals of administrators. The district evaluates teachers using the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). The district is effectively using technology in the evaluation of the professional teaching staff through the PDAS system. However, during interviews with the school review team, HR Department staff reported that one campus did not provide the department with teacher appraisal documentation for school year 2012–13. In addition, evaluations of non-teaching employees are not consistently conducted and

**FIGURE 3–14  
PEARSALL ISD  
BOARD POLICIES REGARDING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

POLICY NAME	POLICY TITLE	EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS NAMED	REQUIRED EVALUATION FREQUENCY	REQUIRED EVALUATION INSTRUMENT
DNB (LEGAL)	Performance Appraisal Evaluation of Other Professional Employees	Superintendent Principal Supervisor Counselor Other Full-Time Certified Professional Employee Nurse	Annual	Administrators—Commissioner’s recommended appraisal process and performance criteria OR appraisal process and performance criteria developed by district in consultation with district- and campus-level committees and adopted by the board  Principals—Educational performance, student performance domain, and student achievement indicators shall be primary consideration  All others—Appraisal instruments shall be developed, selected, and revised with involvement of appropriate administrators
DNA (LOCAL)	Performance Appraisals Evaluation of Teachers	Teachers	Annual	Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS)
DN (LOCAL)	Performance Appraisal	All district employees	Annual	Based on the employee’s assigned duties and other job-related criteria
DNB (LOCAL)	Performance Appraisal Evaluation of Other Professional Employees	All district employees	Does not state	Does not state
DNA (LEGAL)	Performance Appraisal Evaluation of Teachers	Teachers	Annual	Performance criteria developed by the Commissioner OR locally developed appraisal process and performance criteria

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Board Policies, January 2014.

documented in personnel files. When paraprofessional and auxiliary staff were asked if they received annual performance appraisals, the review team received mixed responses. Some staff stated they did receive appraisals; however, most reported that they have not received performance appraisals.

Effective performance management processes communicate expectations to employees, provide ongoing feedback and coaching, and address performance issues. When performance appraisals are not consistently conducted, discussed with the employee, and placed in the personnel files, employees do not have a clear indication of expectations or the quality of their performance. Pearsall ISD’s lack of a systematic appraisal process that encourages employees to perform to their full potential could negatively impact the district’s effort to provide a high-quality, rigorous education.

Annual performance evaluations serve as a tool to report to employees on their job performance during the previous period and set expectations for the next period. Evaluations

are a means to provide employees with an opportunity to formally communicate their assessment of how they have performed and what they would like to do to improve. When maintained in personnel files, performance evaluations can provide documentary evidence of performance issues over time that may result in disciplinary action.

Tatum ISD conducts annual performance evaluations of paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel. The major responsibilities and duties listed in job descriptions are the basis for evaluating employee performance. For trades people, paraprofessionals, some directors and nonprofessionals, a modified job description doubles as an evaluation instrument. Supervisors assess each assigned duty to judge whether performance criteria are being met and add comments or recommendations on job descriptions. Supervisors then discuss the results with the evaluated staff member and sign and date these records for the employees’ personnel files. This process has been credited with improving communication between administrators and employees. Administrators also

use this practice for identifying needs and developing improvement plans for individual workers.

The Pearsall ISD HR Department should implement a systematic process with accompanying written procedures to ensure that all employees receive an annual performance appraisal and retain the completed appraisal in staff personnel files. The HR Department should also develop and implement a performance appraisal training program that is provided to all supervisors on an annual basis. Appraisal training should also be provided to inform employees about the evaluation process. The director of HR should notify the superintendent of performance appraisals that have not been completed, and corrective action should be taken.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE PROCESS (REC. 18)**

Pearsall ISD's HR staff are not involved in the employee grievance process, nor do they provide training to supervisors on employee grievance procedures. The HR Department does not include grievance documentation in employees' personnel files.

Board Policy DGBA (LOCAL), Personnel-Management Relations Employee Complaints/Grievances, provides guidance for Pearsall ISD's grievance process. According to this policy, level one hearings are with the lowest-level administrator; level two hearings are with the Superintendent or designee; level three hearings are with the board. This policy does not include the HR Department in the grievance process, nor does it require that the HR Department receive or maintain records of grievance complaints, hearings, or outcomes. The HR Department does not provide training to administrators and principals about the grievance process, appropriate record keeping, or conduct.

As a result of not being involved in the grievance process, there is no documentation available, and no management reporting is provided to the superintendent and board regarding the number of grievances filed and the results. The lack of HR Department involvement in training, hearing grievances, and maintaining documentation can expose the district to financial loss if a hearing is not conducted correctly. Employees may be able to repeat offenses without facing disciplinary action, and systemic problems may go unresolved.

Pearsall ISD should revise board policies and grievance practices to include the HR Department in the grievance

process from complaint inception to disposition. All level two grievances should be heard by the director of HR to ensure that human resource regulations are not being violated. The district should require grievance documentation to be maintained in the personnel files. The HR Department should generate management reports monthly or quarterly to provide a summary of the number of grievances, the nature of the grievance, and results. HR should provide these reports to the superintendent and board for review. Additionally, the HR Department should provide annual training to all supervisors on the appropriate manner of handling employee complaints, including the grievance process and required documentation.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 3: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT</b>							
13. Form a teacher turnover reduction committee to identify and implement best practice processes and strategies for attracting teachers to the district and lowering staff attrition rates.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14. Develop and implement formal staffing guidelines for the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high schools.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15. Consult with a tax specialist to determine the requirements for reporting the difference between the market value and the actual amount charged to employees for apartment rental and daycare services.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
16. Develop written human resource procedures that are consistent with industry best practices and establish a process to make employees aware of these procedures and how to access them.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
17. Implement a systematic process with accompanying written procedures to ensure that all employees receive an annual performance appraisal and retain the completed appraisal in staff personnel files.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
18. Revise board policies and grievance practices to include the HR Department in the grievance process from complaint inception to disposition.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

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## **CHAPTER 4**

# **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

An independent school district's community involvement function requires communicating and engaging stakeholders in district decisions and operations. District stakeholders include students, staff, guardians, residents, and businesses. Stakeholders must be aware of issues facing the district, support its priorities, and respond to its challenges. Communication includes public meetings, the district's website, campus-to-home communications, extracurricular activities, and local media.

A successful community involvement program is designed so that it addresses both the unique characteristics of the school district and the community. A critical component of school improvement and accountability systems is a high level of community involvement. Community members and volunteers provide valuable resources that can enrich and enhance the overall educational system. In turn, community members directly benefit because they ultimately supply an informed citizenry, an educated workforce, and future community leaders.

Pearsall Independent School District's (ISD) community involvement function is administered at the district level by the superintendent. The superintendent is instrumental in handling outreach to business and civic organizations. Campus principals administer school-based parental and community involvement activities. According to the district's board Policy BJA (LOCAL), the superintendent's responsibilities include:

- directing a proactive program of internal and external communication to improve staff and community understanding and support of the district;
- establishing mechanisms for community and business involvement in the schools and encouraging participation; and
- working with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.

To the extent permitted by law, the superintendent may delegate responsibilities to other employees of the district but remains accountable to the Board of Trustees for the performance of all duties, delegated or otherwise. The superintendent said that the district posted two positions to

direct and strengthen community involvement and communications: a family and community engagement specialist and a parent liaison. Since the review team's onsite visit these positions were combined into one and filled using the U.S. Department of Education Title I funding. The family and community engagement specialist position was established to report to the chief academic officer (CAO) and collaborate with school and district staff to implement a parent involvement program. The goal of the program is to engage parents, community, and campuses to support the academic achievement of students. Specific responsibilities include:

1. serve as a liaison and assist district, school staff, parents, and community to embrace the parent involvement and engagement program;
2. assist campuses in the recruitment of parents, families and community members to assist with activities and program needs;
3. schedule, coordinate and facilitate parent meetings that provide parents information about participation pursuant to Title I, Part A;
4. assist principal to identify and recommend campus parent educators;
5. collect and prepare materials about parent involvement policy, distribute materials to parents, and maintain parent resource room;
6. compile budget and cost estimates based on documented program needs;
7. prepare the annual evaluation of the parental involvement program; and
8. supervise campus parent liaisons.

Additional responsibilities include the duties previously performed by the parent liaison position:

1. assist in informing parents of services available to their children and planning and conducting activities at school for parents;
2. assist parents with their volunteer services at school;
3. serve as a liaison between parents and district family engagement specialist;

4. serve as a liaison between the services provided by the school district and services available in the community, region and/or state; and
5. comply with program requirements according to assigned campus.

**Figure 4–1** shows Pearsall ISD’s community involvement functions by campus for school year 2013–14. The campuses are involved in 16 community involvement functions. The elementary school has assigned responsibility of each function to campus level staff. The other campuses have engaged in some but not all of the community involvement functions.

**Figure 4–2** shows Pearsall ISD’s major community involvement activities by campus for school year 2012–13. Each campus provides an open house or meeting the teacher night to introduce the parents and community to the campus. Other activities include career day, pep rallies, pennies for patients, and family movie night.

**Figure 4–1** and **4–2** shows the efforts that each campus has made to engage the community in the activities of the district.

**FINDINGS**

- ◆ Pearsall ISD has a parent involvement policy but is not fully engaging parents in its schools.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not strategically reached out to community stakeholders and business partners to maximize support opportunities for the district.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ◆ **Recommendation 19: Strengthen campus-based parent involvement initiatives by conducting a self-study and ensuring active parent support groups are in place to implement initiatives.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 20: Establish a process to improve communications and stakeholder involvement with community members and business partners and re-establish the district’s educational foundation.**

**FIGURE 4–1  
PEARSALL ISD  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FUNCTIONS BY CAMPUS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

MAJOR FUNCTIONS	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL
Establish the direction for communications, community relations, and education partnerships for school community involvement efforts	Administrator	Principal	Principal	Parent Liaison
Work with the superintendent and district leadership to provide information for board meetings and districtwide communications	Administrator	Principal	Principal	Principal
Serve as school spokesperson	Administrator	Principal/Assistant Principal	Principal	Principal
Facilitate structured volunteer programs in schools	Counselor	Principal/Volunteer Coordinator	None	Athletic/Band Director
Develop and oversee mentoring, tutorial, and community programs	Assistant Principals	Teachers	None	Assistant Principals
Facilitate school/business partnerships that connect classroom learning experiences in various industry areas	Administrator	Secretary/Principal/Counselor	None	All professionals
Provide opportunities for students to obtain a behind-the-scenes look at career choices	Counselor	Counselor	None	Counselors
Develop and oversee educational enrichment programs	Administrator	None	None	Principal and Assistant Principals
Prepare internal and external newsletters to inform stakeholders about district activities and assist campuses in editing newsletters	Teachers Administrator	Principal/Assistant Principal	None	Principal and Central Office

**FIGURE 4–1 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FUNCTIONS BY CAMPUS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

MAJOR FUNCTIONS	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL
Assist the district’s Technology department with maintaining website items such as school announcements of events	Administrators	Principal/Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal, Technology Teacher	Athletic Director/ Secretary/School Webmaster
Gather data for informational news stories	Administrators	Principal/Assistant Principal	Technology/ Coaches	None
Coordinate graphics and composition production	Assistant Principal	None	None	Principals
Prioritize print jobs based on district/campus needs	Administrator	Principal	None	Central Office Print Shop
Produce printed materials developed by the school, such as curriculum guides, supplemental curriculum information, promotional displays, brochures, and graduation programs	Administrators	Print shop	None	Central Office/ Lionel Sosa Partnership, Counselors, Principal, Assistant Principals
Design and produce posters, banners, and instructional materials for the campus	Administrators	Print shop	None	Teachers, Paraprofessionals, and Principals
Provide equipment and technical support for teachers and staff to independently produce instructional materials for classrooms and/or projects	Technology Department	None	Technology Department	Central Office and Principals

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Principals, January 2014.

**FIGURE 4–2**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**MAJOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES BY CAMPUS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

HIGH SCHOOL	JUNIOR HIGH	INTERMEDIATE	ELEMENTARY
Open House	Report Card and Progress Report Night	Open House	Meet the Teacher Night
Career Day	Open House	Meet the Teacher	Nursing Home Caroling
Blood Drive	Band Concerts	Veterans Day Parade/ Letters	Report Card Pick-Up
Christmas Parade— Concert	Veterans Day	PTO Monthly Meetings	Family Movie Night
Veterans Day Parade	Pep Rallies	Pennies for Patients	Christmas and Spring Programs
			Reading/Math Family Night
			Coat/Mittens/Scarf/Socks Drive
			Veterans Day Program/Host
			Career Day
			Hispanic Heritage Celebration
			Christmas Buddy Tree
			Pie Feast Day
			Star Buck Store

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Principals, January 2014.

**DETAILED FINDINGS**

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT (REC. 19)**

Pearsall ISD has a parent involvement policy but is not fully engaging parents in its schools. Pearsall ISD does not have a district or campus volunteer recruitment, training, and monitoring plan to fully implement the parent involvement policy. There are no uniform procedures for recruiting, screening, training, and monitoring volunteers. Each campus screens volunteers and uses different strategies to recruit and monitor volunteer activities. Neither central administration nor the district’s schools track or share volunteer information. Since the review team’s onsite visit in November 2013, the district hired a family and community engagement specialist in February 2014 to direct the parent involvement program. In addition, since the onsite visit the district has created a uniform volunteer application to be used throughout the district.

Pearsall ISD’s parent involvement policy, as required as a recipient of Title I, Part A funds is based on four principles that provide a framework through which families, educators, and communities can work together to improve teaching and learning. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) established these four principles. Specifically, these principles stress shared accountability between schools and parents for high student achievement, including expanded public school choice and supplemental educational services for eligible children in low-performing schools, and local development of parental involvement plans with sufficient flexibility to address local needs.

The key objectives of Pearsall ISD’s parent involvement policy include:

- central administration shall work in collaboration with parents and guardians and actively support schools and parents by enhancing parent involvement;

- principals, teachers and all school staff shall work in collaboration with parents and guardians; and
- parents and guardians are asked and encouraged to be involved in their children’s learning and education.

**Figure 4–3** shows that the success rates of Pearsall ISD campuses in recruiting volunteers vary. The number of volunteers and volunteer hours are low, and records are not consistently maintained to track volunteer data.

**Figure 4–4** shows the results of the review team’s campus staff and parent survey. According to the survey results, more than 57 percent of Pearsall ISD campus staff and parents agree that schools do not have enough volunteers.

All Pearsall ISD schools except the intermediate school campus maintain a Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) on the district’s website. The CIPs parental involvement goals do not specify annual performance targets for increasing parental involvement. The District Improvement Plan (DIP) and CIPs are not revised annually, and, as of the time of the onsite fieldwork, each plan covered a different time frame but none included school year 2013–14. The most recent DIP at the time of onsite fieldwork was dated, school year 2011–12. The outdated CIPs list activities to continue to improve community involvement and communication, as shown in **Figure 4–5**.

Pearsall ISD’s board Policy GE (LEGAL) also suggests the district establish at least one parent-teacher organization (PTO) at each school in the district to promote parental involvement in school activities. PTOs are nonprofit organizations formed by parents, teachers, and school staff to support and provide additional volunteer infrastructure to their local schools. Whether it is recruiting volunteers to help at the school or raising funds to support programs and activities, PTOs are one way for a community to support a school and expand its volunteer base.

**FIGURE 4–3  
PEARSALL ISD  
SUMMARY OF VOLUNTEER HOURS BY CAMPUS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

PEARSALL ISD CAMPUS	VOLUNTEERS	VOLUNTEER HOURS
Elementary School	19	500+ (estimate)
Intermediate School	5	200
Junior High School	3	12
High School	No records	No records

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Principals, January 2014.

**FIGURE 4–4  
CAMPUS STAFF AND PARENT SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD  
OCTOBER 2013**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
<b>“SCHOOLS HAVE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH STUDENT AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS.”</b>					
Campus Staff	4.2%	13.9%	18.1%	47.2%	16.7%
Parents	0.0%	35.7%	7.1%	42.9%	14.3%

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding; Survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents.  
SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Survey, October 2013.

Only the elementary school at Pearsall ISD has an active PTO. The success and effectiveness of activities at the other campuses vary based on the administration’s interest and involvement and on the initiative and dedication of parents.

The status for each campus PTO organization is:

- elementary school: the PTO is very active and hosts fundraisers, teacher luncheons, student-related seasonal coloring contests, floats for parades, and various needs drives such as for uniforms, coats, and toys;
- intermediate school: became active again in fall 2013;
- junior high school: no PTO; and
- high school: according to onsite interviews, there was no PTO and no knowledge of a PTO/PTA in more than 40 years.

As stated in the Texas Education Code, Section 26.001, “Parents are partners with educators, administrators, and school district boards of trustees in their children’s education. Parents shall be encouraged to actively participate in creating and implementing educational programs for their children.”

Between 1998 and 2005, University-Community Partnerships at Michigan State University’s (MSU’s) Office of University Outreach and Engagement published a series of 34 *Best Practice Briefs*. The briefs were designed to summarize research-based information about human service concepts, processes, models, and tools for funders, policy makers, and service organizations. A brief in this series titled “Why Parent Involvement is Important to School Performance” covers ways parents can be involved with schools. The material is organized with checklists to facilitate self-study by school personnel. Research outlined in the best practice brief noted:

- When parents are involved, students:

- achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents’ education level;
- have higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, and complete homework more consistently; and
- exhibit more positive attitudes as well as decreased alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior.
- Different types of parent/family involvement produce different gains:
  - When parents collaborate with the teacher, educators hold higher expectations of students and higher opinions of the parents; children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better because parents and professionals bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.
  - When parents are involved in full partnerships (i.e. decision making), student achievement among disadvantaged children not only improves, it can reach levels that are standard for middle-class children.

This brief also presents a comprehensive self-study assessment tool that districts could use when evaluating their parental involvement activities. **Figure 4–6** shows an excerpt of this comprehensive self-study assessment tool. The complete assessment can be accessed at <http://outreach.msu.edu/>.

Other school districts have strong parent and community programs. San Elizario ISD established an initiative to increase parental and community participation in schools by engaging participants in program activities that enhance student learning and foster an inviting atmosphere at school. Beginning with a district improvement plan goal to increase meaningful parental and community involvement in all

**FIGURE 4–5  
PEARSALL ISD  
CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

CAMPUS/CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN DATE	GOAL AND ACTIVITIES PER CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN
<p><b>Elementary School:</b></p> <p><i>2012–2013 Campus Improvement Plan</i></p>	<p><b>Implement Goal 3 to continue to improve involvement and communication throughout the campus and with parents and community.</b></p> <p>Maintain a campuswide newsletter, and each grade will produce a newsletter or activity calendar in the primary language of parents, send it home, and post it on the website to describe scheduled activities and note volunteers needed for specific activities.</p> <p>Host parent report card pickup night after 5:00 pm so that parents can attend.</p> <p>Implement monthly grade level representative and faculty meetings, and weekly grade level meetings.</p> <p>Teachers will have face-to-face conference with each child’s parent at least twice a year and phone calls at least three times a year.</p> <p>Implement an anti-drug program to be taught in classrooms with motivational and community role models and speakers.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for community members to teach students about fire safety, railroad safety, and bus safety.</p> <p>Students will visit various local businesses.</p> <p>Invite parents, community leaders, board members, and other campuses to participate in school activities.</p> <p>Develop, recruit, organize, and recognize parental and community volunteers and contributions. Provide a space for parents to work on campus.</p> <p>Students will participate in community activities including local parades, county and city art contests, soil conservation, and business partnerships.</p> <p>Consistently communicate with parents through meetings, newsletters, and website.</p> <p>Increase participation in parent/teacher organization, set goals for parent/teacher involvement in the school and community, and review parent involvement policy and school/parent compact.</p> <p>Introduce students to colleges and careers by visiting community businesses, setting up classroom and counseling activities, and inviting guest speakers (including parents) to discuss their careers.</p>
<p><b>Intermediate School</b></p> <p><i>2011–2013 Campus Improvement Plan</i></p>	<p><b>Possible Factors Impacting Student Performance:</b></p> <p>No data was available to indicate the parents’ perception of communication and involvement with Pearsall ISD.</p> <p><b>Complete Goal 4: Safe, Secure and Positive School Climate, Activity 4:</b></p> <p>Develop and implement a plan for all aspects of communication with staff, students, parents and community. Develop a calendar for an annual review through perceptual surveys of parents, students, and staff of all communication systems and revise the communication plan accordingly.</p>

**FIGURE 4–5 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

CAMPUS/CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN DATE	GOAL AND ACTIVITIES PER CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN
<b>Junior High School</b>  <i>2011–2013 Campus Improvement Plan</i>	Complete Goal 4, Objectives 9 and 11:  9. 100% of parents, students, and staff will agree that they are treated respectfully and fairly.  11. 100% of parents will agree that: (a) teachers let them know their children’s progress; (b) the school communicates about the programs and resources available to help their children; and (c) they know the school counselor and can talk with her or him when needed.  Complete Activities:  Develop and implement a plan for all aspects of communication with staff, students, parents, and community.  Develop a calendar for an annual review through perceptual surveys of parents, students, and staff of all communication systems.  Revise the communication plan accordingly.
<b>High School</b>  <i>2011–2012 Campus Improvement Plan</i>	<b>Implement High School Parent Involvement Policy:</b>  Distribute learning objectives and goals to all parents at beginning of school year.  Use parent-school compact, which outlines how responsibilities will be shared for promoting student achievement. Parents and students will be asked but not required to sign the compact.  Maintain campus education improvement committee, which consists of parents, community members, and school staff who will discuss the design and implementation of the parent involvement policy annually.  Post the parent involvement policy and parent-school compact in the school office and on the school website, and distribute them to all parents.  Use conferences, phone calls, personal contacts, written notices, electronic mail, and the local media to establish effective communication and inform parents.  Evaluate and assess parent, student and community needs and the implementation of the parent involvement policy through questionnaires and other measures.  <b>Complete Campus Goal 3: Provide Comfortable and Safe Environment, and Performance Objective 4: Parental involvement will increase in both number of participants and frequency of participation.</b>  Establish a campus newsletter and post regular updates on website, including a parent link.  Implement ongoing activities to reward and recognize student achievement and attendance.  Conduct activities to maximize opportunities for parents to participate.  Increase the number of teacher/parent conferences/contacts not related to academic or discipline issues but as a support mechanism for the school and for the parent.  Seek opportunities to more actively involve parents at school and to involve the school in the community.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Campus Improvement Plans, November 2013.

**FIGURE 4–6  
SAMPLE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM  
SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL**

	OK	COULD IMPROVE
<b>LEVEL 1: PRECONDITIONS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT: SCHOOL STAFF ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS THAT FACILITATE PARENT INVOLVEMENT</b>		
Principal, teachers, and staff understand the importance of the parents' role in the process of educating children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principals, teachers, and staff view parents as experts on their children and as equals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal, teachers, and staff understand that parents' attitudes toward school affect their children's attitudes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal, teachers, and staff recognize the strengths of families who raise children within adverse circumstances, including parents who are in poverty, incarcerated, divorced, or experiencing domestic violence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal and teachers expect to have personal contact with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SOURCE: Michigan State University, Best Practice Briefs – Parent Involvement in Schools, June 2004.		

schools, the board and administration set a goal of increasing involvement by 25 percent each year. The campus administration, teachers, staff, parent liaisons, and central office staff are responsible for implementing the initiative. Parents are valued as an instructional resource for their children.

The PTO Today website outlines the steps required for starting PTO organization at schools. The 10 basic steps include:

1. make a plan;
2. select a name;
3. recruit a board of directors;
4. form a state nonprofit organization— prepare the certificate of formation ;
5. file the certificate of formation with the state;
6. draft by-laws;
7. hold an organizational meeting of directors;
8. apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN);
9. apply for 501 (c)(3) status; and
10. apply for state exemptions and other permits.

Pearsall ISD campus administrators should strengthen campus-based parent involvement initiatives by conducting a self-study and ensuring active parent support groups are in place to implement initiatives. The district can use a self-study assessment similar to that developed by MSU

engagement specialists to determine: (1) why parents are not fully engaged in volunteering in schools; (2) how the district might better focus the particular volunteer needs of campuses to reach volunteer targets as outlined in each school's CIP; and (3) what activities and programs parents would most likely support (decision-making process).

The district should also establish and maintain functioning PTOs at each school to improve parent involvement by allowing parents, teachers, and school administrators to jointly plan volunteer activities and assist with developing the proper support and resources. The district can consider using the basic steps as outlined on the PTO Today website.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**COMMUNITY/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS (REC. 20)**

Pearsall ISD has not strategically reached out to community stakeholders and business partners to maximize support opportunities for the district. While the district has ongoing relationships with several local businesses that benefit the district financially, academically, and socially, some key relationships have remained untapped. Examples of organizations which presently support the school district are shown in **Figure 4–7**.

Two prime examples of untapped partnerships include the lack of an educational foundation and the absence of partnerships with businesses involved in the Eagle Ford Shale Play. Pearsall ISD has not strategically reached out to businesses involved in the Eagle Ford Shale Play. The district is located in the oil-producing portion of the Eagle Ford

**FIGURE 4–7**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

BUSINESS PARTNER	DESCRIPTION OF SUPPORT	DISTRICT	ELEMENTARY	INTERMEDIATE	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL
H-E-B	Provides donations for all schools and districtwide donations such as coupons, e-readers, food, gift cards, water, etc.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Walmart	Provides donations for all schools and districtwide. Also provides space for students to have class projects demonstrations, such as robotics.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sonic Drive-In	Provides vouchers for free food, drinks, and ice cream for perfect attendance and honor roll.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
McDonald's	Provides coupons for free food and ice cream for students who have perfect attendance, honor roll, and various other activities that meet the needs of individual campuses.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Oaks Theatre	Provides free entrance to the theater to all students; usually done at the end of the school year.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frio-Nueces Current Newspaper	Provides free newspaper coverage/space to all Pearsall ISD schools, programs, and districtwide initiatives.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Browns Feed and Seed	Provides plants to decorate the graduation stage for Pearsall ISD seniors.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A & D Ballroom	Provides use of facility for activities that benefit school programs and the district.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Chesapeake Energy	Provided rewards for teachers and students	No	No	No	Yes	No
Tractor Supply Co.	Provided plants for projects	No	No	No	Yes	No

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Superintendent and Principals, January 2014.

Shale Play, which is a major driver in the local economy, affecting property values, employment, housing availability, and taxing effort. Pearsall ISD's close proximity to a shale play has resulted in a number of workforce employment issues, including difficulty hiring and retaining employees due to competition from oilfield jobs, student dropouts, and lack of continuation to post-secondary education.

Due to the availability of high-paying jobs in the oilfield, many Pearsall ISD students may be less motivated to continue their education and instead opt to explore employment opportunities with the shale play. Pearsall ISD's superintendent is aware of this situation, but has given the development of the strategic plan a higher priority rather than pursuing partnership opportunities with the businesses

in the shale play that could encourage the development of a qualified workforce for all employers.

Additionally, Pearsall ISD does not have an active educational foundation. The January 14, 2014, board meeting agenda included consideration and possible action on dissolving the Virginia Thompson-Pearsall Educational Foundation, which was organized, but never fully implemented. The superintendent said that although meetings were held, the foundation did not get started. Since the time of the onsite visit, the foundation has organized, elected officers and is in the process of adopting by-laws.

Educational foundations at school districts are established as 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations to provide additional funding support for academic programming. An educational

foundation is governed by a board of directors, which usually includes local business, industry, and community leaders. Such a foundation is typically a separate entity from the school district and has an executive director, who manages the day-to-day operations. Usually, its mission is to fund grants for projects to enhance teaching and learning and to receive and administer gifts for other educational purposes. Often grants are awarded through the foundation to fund staff or student projects that promote academic achievement. Beaumont ISD is located in an oil-producing community similar to Pearsall. Beaumont ISD's foundation was formed in 1993 and has raised more than \$183,000 since inception. Beaumont ISD's foundation has a goal of establishing a \$1 million endowment.

Pearsall ISD's DIP and the Board of Trustees Goals for 2013–14 include a goal to “ensure more effective communications” with community stakeholders, such as Eagle Ford Shale Play businesses, and potential educational foundation organizers. The specific objective related to this goal is to: “Develop and implement a districtwide plan to maximize two-way communication among school, family, and community.” Specific action plans include:

- evaluate existing district communication resources;
- develop a plan to maximize the use of existing communication resources;
- develop district survey calendar and streamline response time;
- train staff on effective communication; and
- train staff on effective utilization of district website as a communication tool with students, parents, and community.

The district's existing communications goals do not focus on ways for Pearsall ISD to forge close relationships with potential community or business partners by aligning business cultures or participating in regular interaction with students, teachers, and business employees at schools and business sites to nurture and grow the relationship. Existing communications goals do not call for supporting the community or business partnerships through the highest levels of management within both organizations.

Best practices suggest that regular dialogue and interaction take place between school districts and civic, nonprofit, and business organizations. These conversations can provide the framework for improving community involvement and enhance districtwide communications and outreach to

stakeholders. Successful districts implement these specific communications best practices to strengthen partnerships:

- communicate effectively:
  - establish programs that facilitate two-way communication;
  - involve community members in the schools and district employees in the community;
  - train staff to improve their public relations role;
  - leverage technology to continuously improve communication between the district, schools, and community constituencies;
  - maintain positive, proactive relationships with the media; and
  - produce effective, economical printed materials (at a minimum an annual report should be produced or similar type of document prepared to inform community members of district accomplishments and challenges);
- assess and monitor progress:
  - establish written goals and a timeframe for implementation;
  - communicate goals to staff; and
  - review the plan annually.

A December 2011 article in the publication *Smart Business* titled “Why Partnerships between Businesses and School Districts Create Regional Economic Growth” provides sound best practice rationale for developing and nurturing major employer/corporate relationships:

**Public school systems and a city's economic development program are closely linked**—A relationship between a school district and a city's economic development program is the key to ensure the success of the city. In the city of Irving, Texas, a partnership between the Irving Economic Development Partnership and the Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce helps the city grow in infrastructure, business, quality of life, and quality of workforce. As the city grows, the community often looks to the local public schools to prepare students to meet future employment needs. These types of partnerships make recruitment and retention of top teaching and administrative talent easier, and helps students

understand the rewards that come with educational achievement. Positive economic development and school improvement are mutually beneficial.

**Major employers derive substantial benefits when they are involved with school districts in their community**—Getting involved with local school districts will assist employers such as meeting their community involvement goals targeted to impact youth. By investing time in students, organizations play a significant role in preparing their future workforce as well. Community involvement also provides major employers first-hand knowledge and information about the success and challenges the schools in their communities face. Getting employers directly involved in a school district helps reinforce a culture of service in the community and builds employee morale. By investing time in school districts and students, organizations are essentially strengthening the community and developing the workforce at the same time. Partnering with school districts also develops students to become future leaders.

Additionally, the nonprofit Council for Corporate and School Partnerships identifies, establishes, recognizes, and supports exemplary business and school relationships that improve the student experience in K–12 schools around the country. These steps provide a guide to establish, implement, sustain, and evaluate partnerships between schools and businesses:

- determine whether the district has unmet needs and whether forming a business partnership to meet those needs would enhance the student experience (assess critical needs and assess potential contributions);
- identify and research potential partners;
- understand the district’s core values;
- draft a partnership proposal and submit it to the potential partner;
- have a frank discussion with the potential partner about values, goals, and needs;
- assess the impact of the potential partnership on the academic, social, and physical well-being of the students;
- define short- and long-range goals of the potential partnership, including expected outcomes;

- once the partnership has been established, collaborate to identify activities that meet the goals of all involved;
- align activities with education goals of the individual schools and district;
- ensure that the partnership activities are integrated into the school and business culture;
- ensure that the partnership provides opportunities for students, teachers, and business employees to interact with each other and at community, school and business sites;
- establish a formal (and written) management structure with specific individuals assigned to manage partnerships to ensure accountability, provide quality control, and monitor alignment with partnership goals;
- provide training for all involved parties; and,
- secure explicit support and concurrence for the partnership throughout the school and business at the highest levels as well as throughout the staff.

Pearsall ISD should establish a process to improve communications and stakeholder involvement with community members and business partners and re-establish the district’s educational foundation. The district should improve communications with key stakeholders to develop successful partnerships with businesses such as those in the Eagle Ford Shale Play. Re-establishing the district’s educational foundation would allow the district to identify additional support from the business community. In addition, key district employees, such as the superintendent, the chief academic officer, and principals should establish a district community relations committee (CRC) to strengthen communications and relationships in these areas:

- provide an opportunity for discussion among school district employees and business and industry about school district programs and operations and how they can be improved to better serve the community;
- review the district’s curriculum materials for content and current industry standards;
- recognize outstanding educators and expose them to education and industry experts;
- identify funding and financial support opportunities for the district;

- identify technical resource personnel that may assist the district;
- identify competency levels and performance standards;
- identify potential volunteer opportunities that would mutually benefit the committee organizations; and,

- raise visibility of the school district in the community.

The district should consider the steps outlined by Council for Corporate and School Partnerships.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>							
19. Strengthen campus-based parent involvement initiatives by conducting a self-study and ensuring active parent support groups are in place to implement initiatives.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
20. Establish a process to improve communications and stakeholder involvement with community members and business partners and re-establish the district's educational foundation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

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# **CHAPTER 5**

# **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 5. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

An independent school district's facilities program is responsible for providing safe and clean learning environments. A school district's facilities include campuses, buildings, grounds, athletic facilities, portable buildings, and supplement facilities (e.g., storage, warehouses, etc.) Facilities management includes planning for facilities use, construction of projects, and maintenance of infrastructure (e.g., electrical, plumbing, irrigation, heating and cooling, etc.). Managing facilities is dependent on a district's organizational structure. Larger districts typically have staff dedicated to support facilities management, while smaller districts may have staff with dual roles. For example, the same staff may be responsible for custodial and groundskeeping tasks.

Facilities planning helps to establish district priorities, allocate resources and funds, and identify milestones. Planning is based on student enrollment, campus and building capacity, the condition of facilities, curriculum needs, and state regulations. Management of construction and maintenance projects should include contract

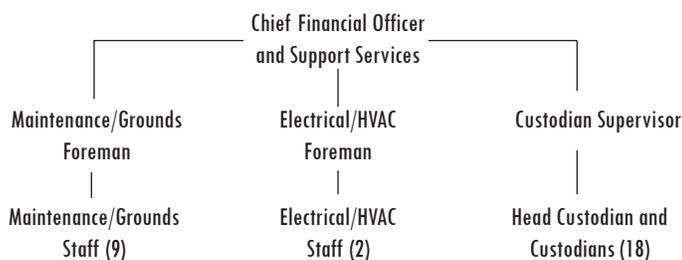
management, cost control, and a project schedule with defined milestones. Facilities maintenance requires a program for planned maintenance of facilities and equipment and routine cleaning of facilities to ensure a safe environment for students and staff.

Pearsall Independent School District's (ISD) facilities Support Services function is led by the Chief Financial Officer and Support Services (CFO). The CFO oversees the district's maintenance and custodial operations and reports to the Superintendent.

**Figure 5–1** shows Pearsall ISD's facilities Support Services organization.

Pearsall ISD's facilities include four campuses, an administration building, daycare center, portable buildings, storage portable buildings, and a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) portable building. **Figure 5–2** shows the district's most recent main building inventory available.

**FIGURE 5–1  
PEARSALL ISD FACILITIES ORGANIZATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, November 2013.

**FIGURE 5–2  
PEARSALL ISD MAIN BUILDING INVENTORY  
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

FACILITY	BUILDING	REPLACEMENT COST	SQUARE FEET
Administration	New Administration	\$1,882,000	16,432
	Technical Building	\$274,000	2,114
	Administration Portable	\$90,000	1,536
	Administration Grounds	\$41,000	720
	Administration Storage	\$26,000	320

**FIGURE 5–2 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD MAIN BUILDING INVENTORY**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>BUILDING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT COST</b>	<b>SQUARE FEET</b>
	Single Dwelling	\$74,000	972
	Duplex Dwelling	\$176,000	1,536
	Fourplex Dwelling	\$427,000	3,968
	Mechanical Building	\$29,000	200
<b>Bus Barn</b>	Bus Barn	\$236,000	7,000
<b>Elementary School</b>	Elementary School	\$8,327,000	77,278
	Portable Office	\$89,000	1,536
	Pavilion 1	\$159,000	4,800
	Pavilion 2	\$5,000	196
	Pavilion 3	\$7,000	256
<b>High School</b>	Main Building	\$16,685,000	141,172
	Auto Mechanical/Art Building	\$1,248,000	10,800
	Field House	\$613,000	7,200
	Vocational/Agricultural Building	\$608,000	6,000
	Portable Office	\$132,000	2,328
	Portable Storage	\$90,000	1,536
	Portable Storage 2	\$87,000	1,536
	Portable Daycare	\$99,000	1,536
	Portable Daycare Office	\$93,000	1,536
	Greenhouse	\$18,000	600
	Auto Mechanic Storage	\$37,000	588
	Gazebo	\$8,000	309
	Gazebo 2	\$8,000	309
<b>Intermediate School</b>	New Intermediate Building	\$10,011,000	79,426
	Old Intermediate Building	\$3,348,000	30,535
	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Wing	\$1,751,000	17,477
	Portable Library	\$91,000	1,536
<b>Junior High School</b>	Junior High School	\$4,727,000	42,672
	Gymnasium/Cafeteria	\$1,970,000	17,776
	Band Hall	\$1,138,000	8,667
	GMR Building	\$542,000	4,123
	Fieldhouse/Restrooms	\$296,000	3,250

**FIGURE 5–2 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD MAIN BUILDING INVENTORY**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

FACILITY	BUILDING	REPLACEMENT COST	SQUARE FEET
	Dogie Guidance Center	\$279,000	2,412
	Visitor Concession/Restrooms	\$159,000	1,296
	Concession/Restrooms	\$176,000	1,216
	Pool Building	\$137,000	906
	Home Grandstand	\$30,000	294
	Stadium Storage	\$19,000	180
	Stadium Storage 2	\$37,000	496
	Stadium Storage 3	\$22,000	170
	Dugout 1	\$7,000	160
	Dugout 2	\$7,000	160
	Baseball Storage 1	\$1,000	36
	Baseball Storage 2	\$1,000	36
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$56,317,000</b>	

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, Insurance Appraisal Report, 12/31/10.

According to the parent and employee surveys conducted by the review team, a majority of respondents said that the district's schools and buildings are clean and emergency management is handled promptly, as shown in **Figure 5–3**.

**FIGURE 5–3**  
**DISTRICT AND CAMPUS STAFF SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD**  
**OCTOBER 2013**

RESPONDENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
<b>"Schools are clean and buildings are properly maintained."</b>					
District Staff	0.0%	72.7%	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%
Campus Staff	7.0%	52.1%	9.9%	26.8%	4.2%
Parents	0.0%	71.4%	0.0%	21.4%	7.1%
<b>"Emergency management is handled promptly."</b>					
District Staff	18.2%	54.5%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%
Campus Staff	9.9%	54.9%	16.9%	14.1%	4.2%
Parents	0.0%	50.0%	42.9%	7.1%	0.0%

NOTES: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents.  
 SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board School Review Team Survey, October 2013.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a process to address known facilities issues in the district and to plan for future routine maintenance needs.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks clear guidelines for facilities support services staff responsibilities and work procedures.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks an effective preventive maintenance program for its facilities.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have a work order management system in place that allows thorough review and analysis of facilities maintenance and repairs.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has neither analyzed the number of custodial staffing positions that are appropriate for each campus, nor have they analyzed their roles and responsibilities related to custodial duties.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD maintains and operates a community swimming pool at the intermediate school campus that incurs significant annual deficits, and the district has not recovered its losses with the city and county despite a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that provides for sharing the revenue and expenses for pool operations.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not established a process to monitor the financial performance of auxiliary facilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 21: Develop a long-range facilities master plan that includes an ongoing facility condition assessment process.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 22: Draft a facilities procedures manual and initiate a staff training plan to ensure safe and consistent facilities in the district.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 23: Develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 24: Test and implement the available automated work order system to process, prioritize, and track work order requests.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 25: Develop and implement a formal process to assess the number, roles, and responsibilities of custodial staff positions.**

◆ **Recommendation 26: Review the terms of the lease agreement in the memorandum of understanding regarding the swimming pool to determine options available to renegotiate.**

◆ **Recommendation 27: Conduct a regular cost-benefit analysis of auxiliary facilities to determine potential options for minimizing costs.**

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### FACILITY CONDITIONS (REC. 21)

Pearsall ISD lacks a process to address known facilities issues in the district and to plan for future routine maintenance needs. The district also lacks documented records of facilities needs, proposed projects and costs, and status reports. The CFO is responsible for overseeing facilities management and maintaining records of the status of facility projects.

At the superintendent's recommendation, the district hired a consultant to conduct a facility utilization study in February 2012, and a report was issued with these key findings:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance concerns need to be addressed, including a doorway that is not wheelchair-accessible;
- drainage issues exist at most campuses;
- the upkeep and continued maintenance of the swimming pool need review;
- old equipment and used tires at facilities;
- administrators and custodians carry a large number of keys instead of a master key concept, which could make finding the correct key in a crisis difficult;
- unlocked exterior doors;
- elementary school needs mold removal and repairs;
- older part of intermediate school is in poor repair; newer section is in significantly better repair;
- junior high is in relatively good repair;
- high school needs repairs; and
- overall facility conditions: elementary school—Poor; old intermediate school—Poor; new intermediate school—Good; junior high school—Fair; high school—Good; administration—Good.

After reviewing the 2012 facility utilization study, the administration and board met to determine action plans for

the deficiencies reported. Pearsall ISD's former assistant superintendent prepared a cost estimate to resolve the facility issues, and the superintendent presented the list to the board. The board indicated which facility issues would be completed during school year 2012–13, at costs totaling \$875,103. However, as of February 2014, only 10 of the 26 projects on the list have been completed; one is in progress, and 15 are pending.

No full facilities assessment has been conducted since the February 2012 review, and no updated comprehensive list of facility needs has been maintained.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducted a Program Access Review (PAR) of Pearsall ISD in spring 2013 and identified about 200 architectural barriers and facility access issues. Issues include areas that were not readily accessible to people who have impaired mobility. Findings from the PAR resulted in the development of an Action Plan for Program Access by Pearsall ISD, which was approved and monitored by TEA. The district was required to complete all renovations by August 31, 2013, and was granted an extension to December 31, 2013, because of the substantial progress made. Facility condition issues reported in the PAR included:

- wheelchair access signage missing;
- wheelchair-accessible call system at entrance missing;
- dispensers too high in restrooms;
- grab bars needed in toilet stalls;
- van-accessible parking spaces needed;
- rails needed on side of ramps; and
- sidewalk access to DAEP needed.

While Pearsall ISD does not maintain a comprehensive list of needed facility repairs and renovations, the district maintained a list of corrective actions required to comply with the PAR requirements. As of February 2014, the CFO reported that all items except for the signage requirements have been completed.

While onsite in November 2013, the review team also observed:

- numerous restrooms in the Ted Flores Elementary School have extensive water damage and an unpleasant odor;
- mildew from leaks;
- structural cracks in gym walls;

- discoloring on walls and floors;
- sink areas are misshapen, have water damage, and are discolored;
- exposed pipes in restrooms that are rusty and corroded;
- some carpeting needs replacing;
- portable building is used to store chairs;
- old vehicles, tires, and other debris on the grounds behind the daycare center and DAEP portable buildings; and
- doorway not wheelchair accessible.

Many of these issues were described in the facility utilization study but have not been corrected. For example, the general disrepair of the elementary school, old vehicles and used tires not being removed, and the non-wheelchair-accessible door were all reported in the February 2012 assessment and were still present during the onsite visit in November 2013.

In addition, the board requests an annual status report from the administration regarding the status of the Approved Facilities Plan List. The school year 2012–13 status report was requested by the review team but not provided. Work orders are prepared as problems are detected, with no recurring maintenance schedule. A file of work orders pending major repairs or renovations for board approval was not available for review.

The condition of a school's facilities impacts safety and security as well as comfort and morale. A long-range facility master plan provides a guide for future construction and renovation programs. A formal facilities condition assessment (FCA) program and deferred maintenance plan are critical components of the facilities master plan process. These plans assess facility conditions, identify deferred maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of existing facilities. **Figure 5–4** shows program elements used by many districts to develop a well-documented and comprehensive master planning approach to facilities.

A typical FCA program evaluates exterior, interior, mechanical systems, safety and building code compliance. An effective deferred maintenance plan accounts for all possible major maintenance requirements for future years rather than reacting to problems as they arise.

**FIGURE 5–4  
SAMPLE LONG-RANGE FACILITY MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS**

PROGRAM ELEMENT	MISSION	RESPONSIBILITIES	PLAN ELEMENTS
Planning	Needs Assessment	Identify current and future needs	Demographics, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis
	Scope	Outline required building areas; develop schedules and costs	Programming, cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis
	Strategy	Identify structure	Facilities project list, master schedule, budget plan, organizational plan, community involvement plan
	Public Approval	Implement public relations campaign	Public and media relations
Approach	Management Plan	Detail roles, responsibilities, and procedures	Program management plan and systems
	Program Strategy	Review and refine details	Detailed delivery strategy
	Program Guidelines		Educational specifications, design guidelines, computer-aided design standards

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Recommended Planning Model for Facilities and Planning, January 2003.

TEA provides a template for the action plan status for the PAR deficiencies that includes the area of noncompliance, corrective action, and timeline for implementation.

The Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) offers facility planning services to Texas school districts that include a detailed study of current facilities and projected building needs as well as demographic analysis and enrollment forecasts. TASA’s comprehensive school facility study includes:

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

Pearsall ISD should develop a long-range facilities master plan that includes an ongoing facility condition assessment process. This assessment should incorporate backlogs of deferred maintenance as well as future and routine maintenance to effectively correct facilities issues as they are identified. To inform this process, the district should maintain documented records of facilities needs, proposed projects and costs, and status reports.

In developing the plan, the district should also consider services offered by TASA or other consultants if needed. No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation.

**PROCEDURES (REC. 22)**

Pearsall ISD lacks clear guidelines for facilities Support Services staff responsibilities and work procedures.

Facilities support services staff responsibilities include maintenance and grounds, custodial, and electrical and heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC). Support services staff lack comprehensive procedures and a formal training plan to address problems and perform routine tasks consistently.

Additionally, support services staff responsibilities for inspecting and accepting or rejecting renovation and construction projects are not clear. For example, electrical/HVAC staff reported that they were not responsible for monitoring and inspecting the air conditioning system installed in the new wing of the elementary school during the system installation process, and that problems with the

system were identified only after that portion of the project was closed out. The staff said that if they were involved throughout the renovation or construction process, then they would have a more direct knowledge of the specific work that was done when they sign off at project closeout and could possibly preclude potential problems.

The department has documented vehicle procedures, inventory procedures, and tool procedures; however, these procedures do not address how to proceed with work order requests or report facility problems.

Training plans have also not been developed for support services staff. New employees either learn on the job or have experience and learn the specific methods used by the district onsite. Not having a formal training plan makes it difficult for Pearsall ISD to ensure consistent training for support services staff responsibilities and work procedures. This puts the district at risk for inconsistent work quality, staff inefficiencies, and on-the-job accidents.

Pearsall ISD’s peer districts maintain documented training requirements for maintenance, grounds, and custodial staff, as shown in **Figure 5–5**. Peer districts are similar districts that are used for comparison purposes.

Best practices for maintenance procedures established by the Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, sponsored by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), suggests that a maintenance and operations procedures manual should, at a minimum, contain:

- a mission statement;
- purchasing regulations;
- accountability measures;

- asbestos procedures;
- repair standards;
- vehicle use guidelines;
- security standards; and
- work order procedures which employees are trained to use.

Pearsall ISD should draft a facilities procedures manual and initiate a staff training plan to ensure safe and consistent facilities in the district.

The maintenance/grounds foreman and supervisors should draft a maintenance and custodial procedures manual that is consistent with the new facilities procedures manual. Existing manuals prepared by facility planning associations or area school districts could serve as models for these procedures manuals. Maintenance procedures should include work order procedures, safety procedures, procedures for major types of maintenance work, and emergency/crisis situations and procedures. Custodial procedures should include cleaning procedures, integrated pest management, and cleaning standards. Using these models, the CFO should customize a facilities procedures manual for Pearsall ISD, meet with employees to discuss the contents of the manual including which areas are applicable to each group, and conduct training to implement the procedures. Pearsall ISD should initiate a periodic training program to minimize possible on-the-job accidents, staff inefficiencies, and repeated work, and to ensure that support services personnel are knowledgeable in current maintenance and custodial methods. Areas of training include new employee training, cross-training employees, new regulatory requirements, and when new equipment or tools are purchased.

**FIGURE 5–5  
PEARSALL ISD TRAINING HOURS COMPARED TO PEERS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

WORKER CLASSIFICATION	AVERAGE TRAINING HOURS PROVIDED 2012–13		
	PEARSALL ISD	FABENS ISD	WEST OSO ISD
Maintenance	None	18 hours: cold weather, lifting, hot weather, sexual harassment, fire hazards, chemicals	12 hours: chemicals; cleaning procedures; Material Safety Data Sheet Safety; slips, trips, and falls
Grounds	None	18 hours: cold weather, lifting, hot weather, sexual harassment, fire hazards, chemicals	4 hours: round table discussion on safety
Custodial	None	18 hours: cold weather, lifting, hot weather, sexual harassment, fire hazards, chemicals	4 hours: round table discussion on safety

NOTE: Peer districts include Fabens ISD, West Oso ISD, and Carrizo Springs ISD. Carrizo Springs did not respond to this data request.  
SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Peer District Survey, January 2014; Pearsall ISD, Administration, October 2013.

The district should develop individual training plans for all facilities support services staff. The CFO and foremen/supervisor should meet to determine the type of training needed for all job operations and safety related to staff functions. Clear documentation of training should be referred to and reviewed periodically to ensure that consistent and updated training is provided and to measure safety improvement practices. In addition, the CFO should maintain documentation of all safety-related training conducted and store these documents at a designated document center for easy access and reference for management and employees. Ongoing evaluation of training efforts should be built into the program to educate employees about the facilities and grounds.

The foremen/supervisor should also reach out to vendors and suppliers who offer free training. No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation. Once the district determines the training needs, the proposed funding should be incorporated into the annual budget.

**PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE (REC. 23)**

Pearsall ISD lacks an effective preventive maintenance program for its facilities.

The district’s maintenance/grounds foreman and custodian supervisor prepared a checklist of summer repairs for school

year 2012–13 that identified areas requiring cleaning, painting, replacement, plumbing, and other repairs. This schedule is a starting point and indicates the district’s awareness of maintenance required to minimize future repairs. However, a long-term schedule that addresses preventive maintenance is not in place to assist the district with regular facility maintenance needs.

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

Ysleta ISD implemented a preventive maintenance (PM) program. The program first included inventorying and bar-coding maintainable equipment, and identifying and developing associated PM procedures. The Ysleta ISD staff identified the steps and durations involved in maintenance schedules. Their next steps included associating PM procedures to the equipment to improve the overall maintenance of the buildings and building systems.

Effective districts maintain a PM schedule for major activities. Examples are shown in **Figure 5–6**.

**FIGURE 5–6  
SAMPLE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

ACTIVITY TYPE	FREQUENCY
<b>Electrical</b>	
Check exit lights	Weekly
Check breakers that indicate overheating	Annually
Check for discolored and worn receptacles	Replace as needed
Check switchgear enclosures (secured)	Weekly
Check isolators for damage	Quarterly
Check service feeders and service drops	Semiannually
Check and service generators	Quarterly
Check and repair lights in hallways	Repair as needed
Check and repair classroom lights	Repair as needed
Check exterior lighting (wall packs and canopy)	Weekly, repair as needed
Conduct fire alarm test and inspections	Annually
Conduct fire sprinkler system inspection	Annually
Conduct elevator inspections	Annually
Check parking lots pole lighting	Weekly, repair as needed

**FIGURE 5–6 (CONTINUED)**  
**SAMPLE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

<b>Activity Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Check all scoreboards	Annually
Clean fire alarm system smoke detectors	Semiannually
Check all interior bleachers	Semiannually, repair as needed
Check all stadium lights	Annually, repair as needed
Check all softball and baseball lighting	Annually, repair as needed
Check that all panels are secure and accessible	Semiannually
Check for opened boxes (exposed wires)	Weekly
Perform general facility inspections	Annually
Check for broken or removed cover plates	Replace as needed
<b>Paint</b>	
Stripe exterior parking lots	Annually
Pressure wash exterior building, sidewalks, and graffiti	As needed
Pressure wash all athletic facilities	Seasonal
Paint interior of facilities	As needed
Paint exterior of facilities	Every eight years
Perform general facility inspections	Annually
Perform maintenance on pressure washer	Daily
Inspection of facilities for chipping paint	Quarterly
<b>General Maintenance</b>	
Check roofs, downspouts, and gutters	Semiannually
Inspect playground equipment	Semiannually
Inspect indoor and outdoor bleachers	Annually
Inspect parking lots	Annually
Inspect flooring	Annually
Perform general facility inspections	Annually by supervisor
Inspect asbestos-containing material	Semiannually
Inspect bathrooms	Annually
Inspect drop ceilings	Annually
Inspect fire extinguishers	Annually
Inspect exterior doors	Annually
Inspect interior doors	Annually
Inspect windows	Annually
Inspect fencing	Annually
Inspect canopies	Annually
Inspect football stadiums	Annually
Inspect baseball stadiums	Annually
Inspect facilities for termites	Annually
<b>HVAC/Plumbing</b>	
Gas pipe and meter inspection	Annually

**FIGURE 5–6 (CONTINUED)  
SAMPLE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

ACTIVITY TYPE	FREQUENCY
Change AC unit filters	Monthly / Quarterly
Clean chiller condenser coils	Semiannually
Clean fan coil and air handler evaporator coils	Annually
Lubricate pumps and motors	Quarterly
Inspect and test chillers for capacity	Annually
Check chiller compressor oil and cores	Annually
Check chemical levels in closed-loop chilled and hot water piping	Monthly
Test backflow preventers	Annually
Inspect and test boilers	Annually
Natorium pool AC units	Quarterly
Direct expansion systems	Annually
Air compressor	Monthly
Check water fountains	Annually
Check water heaters	Annually
Conduct energy management and replace batteries	Annually
Inspect restroom fixtures	Annually
Check floor drains	Monthly

SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, February 2013.

Pearsall ISD should develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district’s facilities. The maintenance/grounds foreman should develop the preventive maintenance program using best practices and preventive maintenance lists as a guide. No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation. Once the preventive maintenance program is implemented, the proposed funding should be incorporated into the annual budget.

**WORK ORDER SYSTEM (REC. 24)**

Pearsall ISD does not have a work order management system in place that allows thorough review and analysis of facilities maintenance and repairs.

There is no formal tracking of the quantity or backlog of work orders or supervisory inspection of completed work orders to ensure that work was properly and timely completed. The unused automated work order system forces staff and users to rely on manual processes that are inefficient, time-consuming, and error-prone.

Pearsall ISD’s Technology Department uses the Eduphoria SchoolObjects work order system for technology work orders, but this system is not being used to track facilities work orders. SchoolObjects allows districts to log work order

requests, details, and completion information electronically. Once completed, the SchoolObjects program can monitor the work orders in aggregate and analyze details such as quantity, response time, and work hours required for completed work orders.

While the director of technology configured the Eduphoria SchoolObjects work order system to include a separate electrical module (refrigeration/electrical/HVAC) and maintenance module (grounds/pest control/carpentry/plumbing/general repairs), this system was not used. This automated application would allow requestors to enter their work order ticket information online. The application would also provide the capability to track and report statistical data on open and completed work orders. **Figure 5–7** shows an example of the request notification in the automated system.

Currently, campus employees fill out and submit a paper work order form to the maintenance/grounds foreman, who manually prioritizes the work orders using his discretion to route work orders to maintenance staff. Work orders are not numbered or logged in, so the facilities support services staff cannot determine how many work orders are submitted, currently pending, or closed. The district files contain hundreds of paper work order forms. Without entering the

**FIGURE 5-7  
EXAMPLE OF WORK ORDER REQUEST NOTICE  
USING EDUPHORIA SCHOOLOBJECTS SOFTWARE**

Request ID: 4463  
 Request Type: Plumbing  
 Requestor: Smith, John  
 Date: 11/13/2013 5:52 PM  
 Assigned To: Williams, John  
 Priority: Normal  
 State: Close  
 Room: Office  
 Campus: Administration  
 Serial No.:  
 Model:  
 Extension: 1203

Request Details: Faucet leaking in restroom  
 Reviewed by Jones, Jane: Done

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD Work Order System, Information Technology Director, November 2013.

data into an automated system to analyze key performance data, it is difficult to determine: how many work orders have been issued; their current status; the related cost; the frequency of the same request; whether all work orders are accounted for; the duration of the project; and if high-priority work is completed first. With an automated system, management could assess the status of each work order and generate reports to use as a management tool.

The review team selected a sample of 10 closed work orders, which contained work orders dated through May 2013. The work order forms were inconsistently signed and dated, and the section for hours worked and materials used was rarely completed. Without this information, management cannot track how much is spent on maintenance repairs by specific work order. **Figure 5-8** shows the results of the work orders reviewed.

Two of the 10 work orders did not indicate the date completed; nine did not indicate how many labor hours the project required; and five did not show an approval signature. The review team does not have the technical capability or

**FIGURE 5-8  
PEARSALL ISD  
SAMPLING OF WORK ORDER COMPLETION DATES AND TIME LAG  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012-13**

REQUEST DATE	DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST AND LOCATION	COMPLETION DATE OR STATUS DATE	DAYS BETWEEN REQUEST AND COMPLETION DATES	SIGNED BY MAINTENANCE STAFF	LABOR HOURS REQUIRED DOCUMENTED	APPROVAL FOR WORK COMPLETED?
5/3/2013	Replace bottom glass to ramp exit— junior high school	5/6/2013	3	Yes	No	Yes
5/14/2013	Sink faucets not working—junior high school	No date	No date	Yes	No	No
4/26/2013	Disposal not working and no cold water—intermediate school cafeteria (request made by memo instead of work order form)	5/3/2013	7	Yes	No	No
5/2/2013	Need 30 white tables in intermediate annex gym	5/3/2013	1	Yes	No	Yes
5/2/2013	Sink is broken; water fountain is broken—intermediate school	5/6/2013	4	Yes	No	Yes
5/16/2013	Water fountain leaking; restroom not working—intermediate school	5/24/2013	8	Yes	No	Yes
4/23/2013	Air conditioner not working— junior high	4/23/2013	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
3/25/2013	Water fountain knocked off wall—junior high	No date	No date	Yes	No	No

**FIGURE 5–8 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**SAMPLING OF WORK ORDER COMPLETION DATES AND TIME LAG**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

REQUEST DATE	DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST AND LOCATION	COMPLETION DATE OR STATUS DATE	DAYS BETWEEN REQUEST AND COMPLETION DATES	SIGNED BY MAINTENANCE STAFF	LABOR HOURS REQUIRED DOCUMENTED	APPROVAL FOR WORK COMPLETED?
3/26/2013	Water faucet leaking—junior high	3/26/2013	0	Yes	No	No
4/3/2013	Pour cement at entrance of greenhouse gate—junior high	4/3/2013	0	Yes	No	No

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Work Order Files, Maintenance Secretary, November 2013.

performance standards to determine if the project was completed within a reasonable period. The review team also could not determine if all work orders are accounted for since they are not prenumbered. The files provided by the department’s secretary in November 2013 only consisted of work orders dated through May 2013. The secretary could not locate any other records or determine how many work orders were outstanding.

An automated work order system allows building users a convenient way to submit work order requests and track the progress of the requests. An automated system is an effective tool for managing the maintenance operation and the public’s investment in facilities, and the system provides management with tools to manage the flow of work and monitor staff performance. These tools and reports can contribute to a more efficient and effective maintenance program. Work order software programs can also be programmed to produce preventive maintenance work orders on a pre-set schedule. This feature helps to ensure that preventive maintenance work is completed on a timely basis, therefore minimizing deferred maintenance.

Automated systems provide the following capabilities:

- establish targets for work order completion times and track success rates;
- prioritize work orders objectively and efficiently;
- monitor work order status;
- track direct labor hours and material costs by school, work order, and staff;
- quantify the amount of travel time between district facilities;

- easier access to historical maintenance records for each school; and
- schedule and automatically generate work orders for preventive maintenance.

Pearsall ISD should test and implement the available automated work order system to process, prioritize, and track work order requests. The maintenance/grounds foreman and secretary can access and review the application on a daily basis to manage the workload. This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**STAFF ALLOCATION (REC. 25)**

Pearsall ISD has neither analyzed the number of custodial staffing positions that are appropriate for each campus, nor has it analyzed the roles and responsibilities related to custodial duties. For example, the custodian supervisor spends 50 percent of the day assisting the copy center and mailroom staff, which reduces time needed for custodial duties. Custodial staff said that they are typically interrupted during the work day to assist the campus administrators with projects such as moving furniture, which also reduces their efficiency. In 2002, the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) published guidelines for establishing custodial staffing levels for educational facilities. Based on the guidelines published by APPA, custodians should clean approximately 21,000 square feet per day to establish a school at “Level 2,” the APPA standard for “Ordinary Tidiness.” A building cleaned at “Level 2” is considered acceptable for classroom and school space.

APPA also provides an adjusted guideline for cleaning that assumes that special attention is paid to some custodial tasks and provides another adjusted guideline for more demanding

cleaning activities. The adjusted guideline requires each custodian to clean about 16,705 square feet of floor space. **Figure 5–9** shows the district’s custodial allocation for its daily cleanable square feet as compared to industry standards. As indicated, Pearsall ISD’s custodial workforce does not meet the standard by either measure. Compared to the standards, the district has from five to 11 fewer custodial staff than required. However, this analysis assumes that all custodial staff, including the custodian supervisor, are conducting custodial duties for the full day. The district has not analyzed the use of the custodians.

Pearsall ISD should develop and implement a formal process to assess the number, roles, and responsibilities of custodial staff positions. The district should also discontinue using the custodian supervisor to deliver mail and copy jobs and should contract for a temporary worker during the school year for these duties. Hiring a temporary worker would allow the custodian supervisor to focus solely on the custodial function. The fiscal impact for hiring a temporary worker is \$290 per week (\$7.25/hour x 40 hours) times 36 weeks, or \$10,440 per school year. No additional fiscal impact is assumed related to the number of custodians. The district should analyze and budget for the number of custodians needed at the conclusion of its assessment process.

**COMMUNITY POOL (REC. 26)**

Pearsall ISD maintains and operates a community swimming pool at the intermediate school campus that incurs significant annual deficits, and the district has not recovered its losses with the city and county despite a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that provides for sharing the revenue and expenses for pool operations.

In July 1985, Frio County received a grant for major repairs to the pool from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department because it was considered a historical site. At that time, the district considered closing the pool because it could not afford the repairs. The county intervened so the pool would remain open. A condition of the grant was that the pool must remain open for 40 years (until 2025), or these funds must be paid back.

A MOU effective May 31, 2011, between Pearsall ISD, the City of Pearsall, and Frio County states that to maintain the swimming pool, each party agrees to provide one-third of the maintenance expenses and share one-third of the revenue. According to this MOU, the school district will keep the pool open to the public during summer months, the city has priority for pool usage on Friday nights, and the city donates the water for the pool. The agreement is in effect for five years from the execution date, and any party can terminate the agreement by giving 90 days’ written notice. The MOU projects a contribution of \$11,454 from each of the three entities. The MOU does not address responsibility for major upgrades or repairs.

The swimming pool is only open during the summer months for the public’s use, and the pool is not used during the school year. The City of Pearsall’s Parks and Recreation Department sponsors a Summer Youth Program at the intermediate school campus for children ages eight through 18. The six-week program includes swimming and other recreational activities and begins in July. Lifeguards are paid minimum wage by the district and must be certified in CPR.

Although the MOU states that each party is to provide one-third of the maintenance expenses and share one-third of the revenue, Pearsall ISD pays many costs associated with the

**FIGURE 5–9  
PEARSALL ISD  
ACTUAL CUSTODIAL STAFF ALLOCATION STUDY COMPARED TO INDUSTRY STANDARD  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

FACILITY	GROSS SQUARE FEET (GSF)	ACTUAL CUSTODIAL POSITIONS	INDUSTRY STANDARD GSF/21,000	INDUSTRY STANDARD GSF/16,705
Elementary School	74,485	4	4	4
Intermediate School	130,526	5	6	8
Junior High School	115,522	4	6	7
High School	177,591	6	8	11
Administration	41,338	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>539,462</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, 2012 Facility Utilization Study, November 2013.

swimming pool that are not shared with the city or the county. Since the 2011 MOU went into effect, one of the district coaches has served as the swimming pool manager for a salary of \$2,000 per month for six weeks each summer, paid by the district. The swimming pool manager supervises the lifeguards and manages swimming pool operations, including collecting revenues, reconciling the pool sign-in sheet, and making bank deposits. The review team requested to view the contract with the swimming pool manager, but the Pearsall ISD Business Office reported that the agreement is verbal. The salaries for the swimming pool manager and lifeguards are included in the district’s financial reports. The district also spent \$142,271 in swimming pool upgrades in 2012, and those costs were not shared by the county or the city. The district also pays for liability insurance for the swimming pool and pool building. Additionally, the pool has a crack that has not been repaired, and the district plans to discuss this additional cost with the other parties to the MOU.

Each year, the city provides the water to fill the pool. Pearsall ISD bears the cost to refill water losses due to splashes and evaporation. The district’s Business Office could not confirm to the review team who would be liable in the event of an injury or accident involving the public’s use of the swimming pool. The district pays for all operating and maintenance costs and bills the county and city \$11,454 each annually. That amount is based on the MOU amount, instead of billing based on allocating one-third of revenues and expenses. The city and county representatives informed the district that it is their belief that \$11,454 is the maximum amount each entity has to pay.

A comparison of recent years’ income and expenses for the swimming pool are shown in **Figure 5–10**. As shown, gross expenses exceed revenues, resulting in a net loss for the past three years. Payments from the City of Pearsall and Frio County do not cover a full one-third of expenses, as agreed upon in the MOU.

**FIGURE 5–10  
PEARSALL ISD  
SWIMMING POOL ANNUAL NET LOSS, FISCAL YEARS 2011 TO 2013**

REVENUE	2011	2012	2013
Enterprising Activities— Swimming Pool	\$6,795	\$14,218*	\$8,758
Enterprising Activities— Swimming Pool Parties	\$2,483	\$2,330	\$300
Enterprising Activities— Swimming Lessons	\$1,135	\$960	\$0
Enterprising Activities— Swimming Pool Concessions	\$203	\$0	\$0
Payments from City of Pearsall and Frio County	\$22,909	\$0*	\$34,363*
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$33,525</b>	<b>\$17,508</b>	<b>\$43,421</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Payroll Costs—Lifeguard Salaries	(\$25,650)	(\$32,520)	(\$24,003)
Payroll Costs—Pool Maintenance	(\$510)	\$0	\$0
Payroll Costs—Supervisor Salaries (pool manager at \$2,000/month, plus assistant/chemical specialist in 2012–13)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$9,000)
Payroll Costs—Social Security	(\$60)	\$0	(\$65)
Payroll Costs—Workers Compensation Cost	(\$66)	(\$1,958)	(\$1,737)
Payroll Costs—Unemployment Cost	(\$19)	(\$14)	(\$44)
Payroll Costs—Teacher Retirement Cost	(\$6)	(\$3,111)	(\$259)
Professional and Contracted Services— Repairs	(\$1,402)	(\$3,230)	(\$14,732)
Professional and Contracted Services—Contracted Services	(\$600)	(\$9,480)	(\$6,930)
Supplies and Materials	(\$8,356)	(\$20,427)	(\$14,561)
Other Operating Costs	\$0	\$0	(\$21)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$40,669)</b>	<b>(\$74,740)</b>	<b>(\$71,352)</b>
<b>Net Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>(\$7,144)</b>	<b>(\$57,232)</b>	<b>(\$27,931)</b>

NOTE: \*In 2012, Frio County’s revenue share (\$11,454) was incorrectly booked to Enterprising Activities—Swimming Pool. Additionally, the City of Pearsall’s share for 2012 was paid in 2013 and included with its 2013 payment.  
SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Budget Report, Business Office, January 2014.

The district has not corresponded with Frio County or the City of Pearsall to request additional funding or alternatives to avoid additional net losses. Alternative uses of the swimming pool during the school year have not been developed.

Pearsall ISD should review the terms of the memorandum of understanding regarding the swimming pool to determine options available to renegotiate. The district should meet with county and city officials to negotiate increased funding to maintain and operate the swimming pool; discuss alternatives to reverse the pool’s operating deficits; and clarify liability for any incidents and major upgrades. To support the upkeep and maintenance of the pool, the CFO should prepare a financial report to present to the superintendent and the board showing the annual deficit that the district incurs. This report should be used as the basis to renegotiate the MOU with the county and city to recoup the district’s past losses and alleviate future losses. Also, the district should consider options to use the swimming pool facilities during the school year to benefit the students. The fiscal impact for this recommendation is calculated using the average net loss for Pearsall ISD for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 of \$42,582  $[(\$57,232 + \$27,931) / 2]$ . Assuming that Frio County and the City of Pearsall would each pay a third of this total, it is estimated that Pearsall ISD would save \$28,388  $[(\$42,582 / 3) \times 2]$  annually by implementing this recommendation.

**AUXILIARY FACILITIES (REC. 27)**

Pearsall ISD has not established a process to monitor the financial performance of all auxiliary facilities. As a result, the district is not able to determine the financial impact of operating these facilities.

Pearsall ISD does not track and analyze the costs and expenses of operating auxiliary facilities in the district. The district operates a daycare center, leases the building that houses Southwest Technical Junior College for district students to attend dual-credit courses, and maintains apartments for employees’ use. The district also maintains a copy center whose profitability reports show an annual profit.

The district owns the portable building for the Healthy Start Early Learning Center, a daycare which has been operating since 2001. Five Pearsall ISD employees work in the facility: one director, one cook, and three care providers. The daycare facilities are available to district students, employees, and to Workforce Solution clients. Revenue includes fees paid by the customers and supplements from the state and the city of San Antonio. Expenses include salaries, teaching materials,

office supplies, and diapers. Food is purchased with funds from the Child and Adult Food Care Program budget. The district’s custodial and maintenance staff clean and maintain the building. Net income/loss for operating the daycare are shown in **Figure 5–11**. This figure was created by the review team to provide a comparison of revenue and expenses because Pearsall ISD did not monitor this data.

**FIGURE 5–11  
PEARSALL ISD  
HEALTHY START LEARNING CENTER NET INCOME/LOSS  
FISCAL YEARS 2011 TO 2013**

REVENUE/EXPENSE	2011–12	2012–13
City of San Antonio Funding	\$96,272	\$85,559
State Funding	\$3,762	\$0
Student/Parent Fees	\$14,279	\$9,498
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$114,313</b>	<b>\$95,057</b>
Payroll Costs	(\$101,827)	(\$94,201)
Professional & Contracted Services	(\$566)	(\$960)
Supplies & Material	(\$4,311)	(\$2,734)
Other Operating Costs	(\$553)	(\$559)
Other Uses/Special Items/Extra	(\$5,387)	\$0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$112,644)</b>	<b>(\$98,454)</b>
<b>Net Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$1,669</b>	<b>(\$3,397)</b>

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis; Pearsall ISD, Budget Report, Business Office, January 2014.

Southwest Texas Junior College rents classrooms from Pearsall ISD for dual-credit courses. District custodial and maintenance staff clean and maintain the building. The district’s Business Office does not maintain a report of revenues and expenses for the leased classrooms. No additional financial information was provided to the review team.

The district leases seven apartments to teachers on a first-come basis for up to three years. Pearsall ISD custodial and maintenance staff do not clean the apartment buildings. The lease agreement states that the district is responsible for mowing yards and maintaining and repairing all plumbing and electrical fixtures. The district budgeted \$150,000 and spent \$125,000 in fiscal year 2013 to renovate the apartments. The district’s Business Office does not maintain a report of revenues and expenses for the leased apartments. No additional financial information was provided to the review team, including whether the maintenance costs were counted for separately or were a component of the district’s overall facilities maintenance costs.

By not monitoring the revenue, costs, and benefits of maintaining auxiliary facilities, Pearsall ISD may incur financial deficits in these operations. While there are non-monetary benefits for district employees and students by providing daycare and housing assistance, without transparency in financial reporting the administration may be challenged to assess alternatives to support the services while minimizing the costs.

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) is a method of evaluation that estimates the value of projects to determine whether these projects are worth undertaking or continuing. CBA can be calculated many ways, depending on the end goal and level of detail used when measuring benefits or costs. For example, direct monetary costs or benefits can be calculated easily, but calculating indirect costs can be complex which can compromise accuracy. The specific costs, benefits, and level of detail in a program will determine the scope of the project. **Figure 5–12** shows a sample CBA.

Effective districts have managed the financial alternatives of their programs. For example, Troup ISD board members voted in March 2014 to approve a fee increase at the district’s Child Care Center to create a sustainable operating budget.

This increase aimed to balance the budget but not make a profit. Currently, 32 children are enrolled in the program, which is licensed through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The district opened the center in 2005, and fees are used to pay the salaries of six employees currently working there. Troup ISD helps subsidize a portion of these salaries, in turn ensuring local parents have a child care provider that offers education-based care.

New Trier Township High School in Northfield, Illinois opened an on-site child care center as a retention and recruitment tool, as a way to reduce teacher absences and leaves, and as a way to stay competitive with other surrounding school districts that offer child care to their faculty and staff. The New Trier Child Care Center (center) is independently operated by a national child care and early education provider. The provider sets rates for care that it believes can sustain the center’s continued operation, and parents pay those rates, as they would with any other child care center. The school does not reimburse or offset the cost for any staff members. The provider assumes all liability for the center’s operation, including the risk involved in any profitability or loss, and pays for operational costs including utilities and janitorial services.

**FIGURE 5–12**  
**SAMPLE COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

	<b>DETERMINE PURPOSE AND SCOPE</b>	<b>GATHER FINANCIAL DATA</b>	<b>ALLOCATE DIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>ALLOCATE INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>CHECK YOUR DATA</b>	<b>APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE</b>
<b>Process</b>	Determine the purpose Define your programs Determine programmatic scope	Determine relevant data to gather Gather data Modify source and format of data, where necessary	Allocate direct costs by programs (or sites)	Identify cost drivers Allocate direct costs by programs (or sites)	Check the analysis for accuracy and logical soundness	Assess the results and draw implications for your organization Make decisions based on data Identify next steps
<b>Timeline estimate</b>	2-3 days	One week to a month	2-3 days	One to two weeks	One day	Depends on organization
<b>People to involve (beyond the person conducting analysis)</b>	Management team Program directors	Finance and HR Departments All staff (if doing staff time interviews)	Program or site directors Finance Department	Program or site directors Finance Department		Management team

SOURCE: Nonprofit Cost Analyst Toolkit, Bridgespan Group, June 2009.

Pearsall ISD should conduct a regular cost-benefit analysis of auxiliary facilities to determine potential options for minimizing costs. Although the facilities provide needed benefits to the community, the Business Office should maintain cost benefit analysis and report the profitability margin so that administration can determine if fees should

be increased or if costs can be reduced. A profitability margin report would also provide transparency for operations outside of the core school district functions.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

## FISCAL IMPACT

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 5: FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</b>							
21. Develop a long-range facilities master plan that includes an ongoing facility condition assessment process.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
22. Draft a facilities procedures manual and initiate a staff training plan to ensure safe and consistent facilities work in the district.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
23. Develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
24. Test and implement the available automated work order system to process, prioritize, and track work order requests.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
25. Develop and implement a formal process to assess the number, roles, and responsibilities of custodial staff positions.	(\$10,440)	(\$10,440)	(\$10,440)	(\$10,440)	(\$10,440)	(\$52,200)	\$0
26. Review the terms of the lease agreement in the memorandum of understanding regarding the swimming pool to determine options available to renegotiate.	\$28,388	\$28,388	\$28,388	\$28,388	\$28,388	\$141,940	\$0
27. Conduct a regular cost-benefit analysis of auxiliary facilities to determine potential options for minimizing costs.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,948</b>	<b>\$17,948</b>	<b>\$17,948</b>	<b>\$17,948</b>	<b>\$17,948</b>	<b>(\$89,740)</b>	<b>\$0</b>



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# **CHAPTER 6**

# **BUSINESS SERVICES**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 6. BUSINESS SERVICES

An independent school district's business services functions include financial management, asset and risk management, and purchasing. Financial management involves administering the district's financial resources and planning for its priorities. Administration activities include budget preparation, accounting and payroll, tax collection, and auditing. Planning involves aligning a district's budget with district and campus priorities, allocating resources, and developing a schedule with milestones.

Financial management is dependent on a district's organizational structure. Larger districts typically have staff specifically dedicated to financial functions, while smaller districts have staff with multiple responsibilities. Budget preparation and administration are financial management functions that are critical to overall district operations. These functions include budget development and adoption; oversight of expenditure of funds; and involvement of campus and community stakeholders in the budget process. Managing accounting and payroll includes developing internal controls and safeguards; reporting account balances; and scheduling disbursements to maximize funds. Management of this area includes segregation of duties, use of school administration software systems, and providing staff training.

The Texas Education Code, Section 44.008(a), requires a financial audit to be performed annually by a certified public accountant holding a firm license from the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy. The audit provides an annual financial and compliance report; an examination of the expenditure of federal funds; and a report to management on internal accounting controls.

Asset and risk management functions control costs by ensuring that the district is adequately protected against significant losses at the lowest possible cost. This protection includes the identification of risks and methods to minimize their impact. Areas where districts need to manage risk include investments, revenue/cash flow, capital assets, and insurance.

Managing assets and risks is also dependent on the organizational structure of a school district. Larger districts typically have staff dedicated exclusively to asset and risk

management, while smaller districts often assign staff these responsibilities as a secondary assignment.

Managing investments includes identifying those with maximum interest earning potential while safeguarding funds and ensuring liquidity to meet fluctuating cash flow demands. Forecasting and managing revenue include efficient tax collections to allow a district to meet its cash flow needs, earn the highest possible interest, and estimate state and federal funding. Capital asset management involves identifying a district's property (e.g., buildings, vehicles, equipment, etc.) and protecting it from theft and obsolescence. Insurance programs cover employees' health, workers' compensation, and district liability.

An independent school district's purchasing function is responsible for providing quality materials, supplies and equipment in a timely, cost-effective manner. Purchasing includes identification and purchase of supplies, equipment and services needed by the district, as well as the storage and distribution of goods.

School districts in Texas are required to follow federal and state laws and procedures applicable to purchasing. The purpose of competitive bidding requirements found in the Texas Education Code, Section 44.031, is to stimulate competition, prevent favoritism, and secure the best goods and services needed for district operations at the lowest possible price. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed a comprehensive purchasing module in the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), which is available as a resource for district purchasing.

Pearsall Independent School District's (ISD) adopted General Fund budget for fiscal year 2014 is \$21.8 million. The district derives 58 percent of its revenue from the state, 42 percent from property taxes and other local sources, and less than 1 percent from the federal government. Local revenues are derived primarily from property taxes. The district's 2014 total tax rate is \$1.1450. The total tax rate is composed of \$1.00 maintenance and operations and \$0.1450 debt service (interest and sinking).

The district's top three budgeted expenditures are for instruction, support services-non student based, and support

services-student based. **Figure 6–1** shows a five year summary of Pearsall ISD General Fund activity.

The business office budget for fiscal year 2014 is \$541,448, which is 2 percent of the district’s general fund budget of \$21.8 million. Pearsall ISD’s chief financial officer (CFO) heads the district’s Business Office where financial, asset and risk management, and purchasing activities are conducted. The CFO is also responsible for support services such as transportation and student nutrition. In the Business Office, the CFO leads a staff of six employees consisting of a business manager, an accounts payable manger, an accounts payable clerk, a payroll manager, a payroll clerk, and a receptionist. The CFO began working for Pearsall ISD in August 2012 and has more than 15 years experience in school district financial management. Since the time of the visit, the superintendent resigned and the CFO is the interim superintendent.

The Financial Allocation Study for Texas (FAST) examines both academic progress and spending for Texas school districts. A district receives a rating of one to five stars

indicating its success in combining cost-effective spending with the achievement of measurable student academic progress. **Figure 6–2** shows Pearsall ISD FAST ratings compared to peer districts. Peer districts are districts similar to Pearsall ISD that are used for comparison purposes for this review. As **Figure 6–2** shows, Pearsall ISD has a high spending index and a low accountability rating relative to its peer districts.

The CFO and business manager are certified by the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO). The accounts payable manager is in the final stage of certification as all testing requirements have been met. The payroll and accounts payable managers have over 10 years experience in their current positions, while the accounts payable clerk began in November 2011. The Business Office has written procurement policies that are part of the Financial Procedures Manual 2012–2013 (Procedures Manual). Standard forms are posted online for internal and external users.

**Figure 6–3** shows the Business Office organization.

**FIGURE 6–1  
PEARSALL ISD  
GENERAL FUND BUDGET OVERVIEW  
FISCAL YEARS 2010 TO 2014  
(IN THOUSANDS)**

	2010 ACTUAL (1)	2011 ACTUAL (1)	2012 ACTUAL (1)	2013 ACTUAL (1)	2014 BUDGETED (2)
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Local Revenue	\$5,239	\$6,872	\$6,901	\$9,297	\$12,675
State Revenue	\$13,231	\$12,912	\$11,556	\$11,128	\$9,200
Federal Revenue	\$76	\$85	\$71	\$64	\$66
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$18,546</b>	<b>\$19,869</b>	<b>\$18,528</b>	<b>\$20,489</b>	<b>\$21,941</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
10 Instruction and Instructional-Related Services	\$9,850	\$9,440	\$8,211	\$8,708	\$11,032
20 Instructional and School Leadership	\$1,321	\$1,279	\$1,340	\$1,391	\$1,575
30 Support Services - Student (Pupil)	\$2,104	\$2,052	\$2,277	\$2,120	\$2,735
40 Administrative Support Services	\$683	\$767	\$821	\$945	\$1,200
50 Support Services - Non-Student Based	\$3,341	\$3,082	\$3,249	\$3,512	\$3,841
60 Ancillary Services	\$66	\$44	\$77	\$78	\$122
70 Debt Service	\$250	\$250	\$251	\$160	\$557
80 Capital Outlay	\$76	\$0	\$149	\$1,327	\$0
90 Intergovernmental Charges	\$631	\$645	\$660	\$727	\$781
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$18,322</b>	<b>\$17,559</b>	<b>\$17,035</b>	<b>\$18,968</b>	<b>\$21,843</b>

NOTES:

(1) Annual Financial Reports for Years Ended August 31, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

(2) Pearsall ISD 2013–14 General Fund Budget

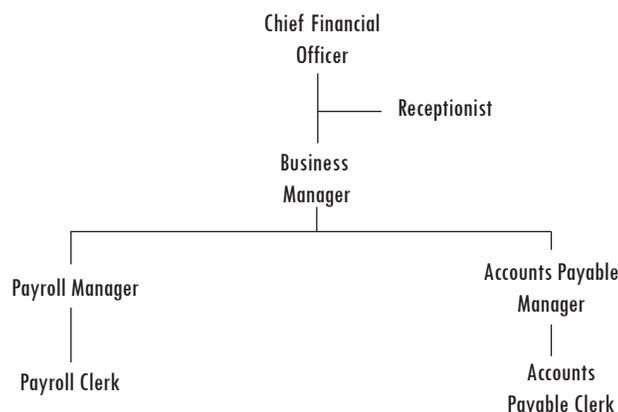
SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, General Fund Budget, Annual Financial Reports, January 2013.

**FIGURE 6–2  
PEARSALL ISD SUMMARY FAST RATINGS COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS  
2012**

DISTRICT	SPENDING INDEX	ACCOUNTABILITY RATING	COMPOSITE PROGRESS PERCENTILE	FAST RATING NUMBER OF STARS OF 5
Pearsall ISD	Very High	Academically Unacceptable	1	1.0
Carrizo Springs CISD	High	Academically Acceptable	2	1.5
Fabens ISD	High	Recognized	66	3.0
West Oso ISD	Average	Academically Acceptable	28	2.5

SOURCE: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, *Financial Allocation Study for Texas 2012*, November 2013.

**FIGURE 6–3  
PEARSALL ISD  
BUSINESS OFFICE ORGANIZATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, November 2013.

Pearsall ISD maintains its operating funds at Security State Bank and invests idle cash in both certificates of deposit and the Lone Star investment pool. As of October 2013, the district had approximately \$12 million invested in certificates of deposit at Security State Bank earning between 0.57 percent and 0.07 percent interest. In addition, as of October 2013, the district had approximately \$500,000 invested in the Lone Star investment pool earning 0.16 percent interest.

The fiscal year 2012 audit report from the district’s external auditor indicated that Pearsall ISD’s financial statements are an accurate representation of the district’s financial condition (unqualified opinion).

Pearsall ISD obtains property casualty insurance through the Texas Association of Public Schools Property and Liability Fund. Since fiscal year 2009, the district has had seven claims against its property casualty policy. Two claims against the Educator’s Legal Liability policy resulted in losses totaling

\$90,778. One claim against the Property Damage policy for hurricane damage resulted in estimated losses of approximately \$2.7 million. There are no disputed property casualty insurance claims.

Workers’ Compensation Insurance is self-funded through Workers’ Compensation Solutions, which is the company responsible for the administrative aspects of the program such as processing and reporting workers’ compensation claims. Since fiscal year 2011, the district’s workers’ compensation claims have decreased from 36 in fiscal year 2011, to 27 in fiscal year 2012, and 17 in fiscal year 2013. At the end of fiscal year 2013, six claims remained open at an estimated total cost of \$57,500. No workers’ compensation claims are in dispute.

The CFO was assigned oversight responsibilities of the warehousing activities in May 2013. Pearsall ISD’s warehouse is approximately 5,000 square feet. The warehouse activities,

including receiving, inventory storage, and deliveries, are performed by the custodial supervisor. The custodial supervisor began in April 2011. The warehouse centrally receives and stores copy paper for the district. Maintenance and janitorial supplies are received and stored both at the warehouse and at the individual campuses.

Beginning in school year 2010–11, the Texas Legislature authorized districts to use their textbook allotment funds to purchase any type of instructional materials, including electronic books, software programs, and online applications. Pearsall ISD's IMA allotment for school year 2013–14 is \$178,636. According to the chief academic officer (CAO), the district will acquire the upcoming curriculum adoption for mathematics (grades K–8) and science (grades K–12). The district will continue delivering instruction using hardcopy textbooks as the district does not have a one-to-one technology initiative.

At the time of the onsite review, the CAO was the instructional materials allotment (IMA) coordinator for the district. However, after the onsite visit, this responsibility was assigned to the director of human resources. Operationally, the elementary school principal is responsible for district-level textbook inventory management including placing orders, receiving, distributing, and recording textbook activities. Textbook responsibilities were assigned to the elementary school principal in August 2013.

Each campus has a textbook coordinator that is responsible for maintaining, securing, and storing the assigned textbook inventory for their respective campuses. Campus textbook coordinators collect textbooks at the end of the school year and conduct a physical count at the beginning of each school year using the TEA-generated inventory listing. The district uses the TEA inventory report to track textbook inventory.

Pearsall ISD issues purchase orders electronically through the Texas Enterprise Information System (TxEIS), which is a fully integrated system that supports the operational and reporting needs of the district. The district uses the budget, finance, human resources, purchasing (except for commodity code tracking), and warehouse modules of the TxEIS system.

Purchase requisitions are initiated by campus financial secretaries, approved by administration, and authorized by the CFO. Vendor orders are placed by the originating campus's secretary. Campuses and departments submit purchase orders through the purchase requisition module of TxEIS. The module's electronic approval path forwards the requisition to the next authorized approver in the sequential

order defined by the district. After ensuring that the requisitions have been approved and funds are available, the clerk releases the requisition, which then becomes a purchase order.

Goods and services are also requisitioned using a manual payment request form issued by the Business Office. Payment request forms are typically used for purchases made at the beginning of the fiscal year when the TxEIS system is being updated for the new budget, or for annual or recurring payments, such as insurance premiums and utility bills. A requestor can obtain a payment request form from the district's website and submit a hard copy to the accounts payable staff. The accounts payable staff issues a payment authorization number that is used in lieu of a purchase order to issue a check.

Goods and services are received by the campus or department financial secretaries. Invoices are received by the accounts payable staff and are provided to the financial secretary to confirm receipt of invoiced items. The financial secretary submits the related packing slip and invoice copy to the accounts payable staff. Goods are then recorded as received in TxEIS by the accounts payable staff.

Pearsall ISD buys most goods and services through cooperative purchasing agreements. The CFO wanted to give local vendors an opportunity to provide Pearsall ISD with goods at the best value to the district. In June 2013, the CFO and the district's attorney developed a request for proposals (RFP) for goods requesting discounts on the vendors' normal shelf, catalog, or list price. The district received nine responses to the RFP from a variety of local vendors offering to provide goods at a discount to the district.

In January 2013, the district issued a Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals for Construction Manager-At-Risk Services related to the renovation of the second grade wing at Ted Flores Elementary School. The construction contract was procured in accordance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2267, as required by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 44. The bid process was performed by a San Antonio, Texas-based architecture firm in accordance with the professional services agreement between the firm and Pearsall ISD dated January 20, 2005. The architecture firm published the notification for bid and the bid request; managed the subsequent proposal receipts; evaluated the proposal responses based on pre-defined bid criteria and tabulated final scores; and issued acceptance and rejection notifications.

The district requires the approval of the superintendent and the Board of Trustees for professional and consulting services contracts exceeding \$25,000. Contracts for rentals and service agreements less than \$2,500 must be signed by the campus administrators, whereas service agreements exceeding \$2,500 must be approved by the CFO or superintendent.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD has established a process to monitor the district's bonded indebtedness that has resulted in additional revenue available for student services.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has implemented an efficient system that has eliminated the need to manually track and record employee hours and attendance.

### FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not effectively link spending to the needs and priorities of the district.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's principals and other budget managers are not empowered to effectively control and manage their budgets.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a local, board-adopted fund balance policy to guide the district in both short- and long-term planning.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Business Office lacks effective internal controls over the payroll and vendor master files and does not adequately segregate responsibilities involving purchase requisitions and vendor payments.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have effective procedures to adequately record and safeguard fixed and controllable assets.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks an effective process to manage obsolete surplus property and is missing potential opportunities to gain revenue from surplus sales.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not established procedures for cross training staff to perform the duties of other employees in the Business Office creating a risk that operations would not continue if an employee leaves the district or is absent from work for an extended period of time.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not established a method to ensure that bank statements are reconciled on a regular basis.

- ◆ Pearsall ISD has established a process that inefficiently uses multiple district personnel to verify documentation related to accounts payable.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have consistent methods to effectively communicate policies and procedures associated with the purchasing process.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have a formal process to analyze aggregate annual amounts spent with each vendor or track aggregate commodities purchases to determine if they exceed \$50,000.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have guidelines in place to ensure that the budget document is presented in a format that maximizes its usefulness as a tool for educating and informing stakeholders about district operations and priorities.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks written cash handling procedures to govern money collection for campus-based fundraising events.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have an account code structure in place to efficiently produce student activity fund expenditure reports by campus.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 28: Establish a budget development process that aligns district spending with the educational priorities identified in the district improvement plan and factors in the implications of the Eagle Ford Shale Play as well as other district priorities and initiatives.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 29: Provide training to campus administrators and budget managers regarding the budget process and establish procedures to allow principals to make their own budget transfers between object codes within the same function without obtaining the approval of the Business Office.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 30: Establish a fund balance policy to protect the district's fund balance and ensure that it remains adequate for unforeseen future events.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 31: Develop a system of internal controls and segregation of duties in the Business Office to deter and prevent fraudulent activity.**

- ◆ **Recommendation 32:** Develop a comprehensive fixed assets management system to guide the identification, recording, inventorying, tracking, and disposal of the district's fixed assets.
- ◆ **Recommendation 33:** Devise guidelines and procedures for identifying, collecting, storing, and disposing of surplus equipment and obsolete warehouse items.
- ◆ **Recommendation 34:** Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to business office staff to ensure that employees are cross trained.
- ◆ **Recommendation 35:** Establish guidelines and procedures for the reconciliation process that include a timeline for completing regular reconciliations.
- ◆ **Recommendation 36:** Streamline the accounts payable process by eliminating redundancy in the performance of the three-way match.
- ◆ **Recommendation 37:** Make the purchasing policies and procedures available on the district website to ensure that employees have access to them when making purchases.
- ◆ **Recommendation 38:** Establish a system to track and monitor aggregate purchases to reduce the district's risk exposure and ensure compliance with state competitive procurement requirements.
- ◆ **Recommendation 39:** Establish guidelines to improve and regularly evaluate the budget document to ensure that it provides information to stakeholders regarding the district's financial plan, goals, and future initiatives.
- ◆ **Recommendation 40:** Develop student activity fundraising procedures that include written cash-handling guidelines.
- ◆ **Recommendation 41:** Develop a coding system for student activity funds that would allow expense reports to be generated by campus.

## DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **BONDED INDEBTEDNESS**

Pearsall ISD has established a process to monitor the district's bonded indebtedness that has resulted in additional revenue available for student services.

A bond refunding involves selling a new bond whose proceeds are used to pay off (or partially pay off) an existing bond or bonds. When interest rates decline after bonds have been issued, it could be advantageous for the bond issuer to refund outstanding bonds to save interest costs over the life of the issue. Interest rates, potential savings, and managing the debt tax rate are the most common reasons for debt refunding or reissuance.

Pearsall ISD's bond financial advisor monitors the district's bonded indebtedness in order to refund and issue bonds when it is cost-effective. The district pays \$5,000 annually for the services of its financial advisor. The financial advisor assists the district with monitoring its debt and informs the district of debt that qualifies for refunding. Based on interest rates, potential debt tax rates, and qualifying debt, the financial advisor recommends the best course of action.

In fiscal year 2011 the district refunded \$2.7 million of its 2002 Series Bonds to reduce its total debt service payments over 12 years by \$163,364. This resulted in an economic gain (difference between the present values of the debt service payments on the old and new debt) of \$140,574. By monitoring the district's bonded indebtedness, Pearsall ISD is able to make additional revenue available for student services.

### **BIOMETRIC SCAN TECHNOLOGY**

Pearsall ISD has implemented an efficient system that has eliminated the need to manually track and record employee hours and attendance. The district uses advanced scanning biometric clocks as shown in **Figure 6-4**. The machine on the right has an outline of the human hand. The employee places his or her hand between the electronic nodes, and the machine identifies the employee and the time the employee clocked in or out.

The biometric clocks are integrated with the district's TimeClock Plus system, which is the system used by the district to capture employee time and upload it to the payroll module of the TxEIS system. This system replaces the need to tabulate time from paper timesheets or time cards.

**FIGURE 6–4**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**BIOMETRIC CLOCKS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration Building, November 2013.

Biometric clocks are located at each of the schools and every employee is required to clock in and clock out whenever they enter and leave the building. The system is preloaded with each employee's expected or contracted number of hours and produces a variance report, which is reviewed and corrected as necessary each pay period by payroll staff. The variance report shows the difference between what an employee is expected to work during the pay period and what they actually worked. The report is used to determine how much an employee should be paid based on actual time worked. Once the variance report is corrected, it is uploaded into the payroll module of the TxEIS accounting system where the hours are matched with each employee's pay rate, and the payroll is produced.

The district's use of biometric scan technology streamlines the time and attendance reporting process by eliminating manual timesheets and punch cards, which are paper-based and prone to error.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### **BUDGET PRIORITIES (REC. 28)**

Pearsall ISD does not effectively link spending to the needs and priorities of the district. The district does not align its budget to its annual district improvement plan (DIP). At the time of the onsite review, the district's most recent DIP was from school year 2011–12. The district's budget process builds on the previous year's budget with some flexibility for making adjustments within established parameters. The district uses prior year expenditures as a starting point. Little

cost-benefit analysis data are used to inform the budget development process.

Budget development begins in February with meetings between district administrative staff and principals to review budgets from the previous year, review and update salary schedules, review staffing needs, and distribute budget worksheets to the campuses through the district's budget module in TxEIS, the district's financial accounting system. Salaries and positions are established centrally by the district office while campuses allocate material and supply budgets using the previous year's budget as a starting point.

Principals meet with teachers to determine how the campus budget will be allocated, and the campus bookkeepers enter the campus budgets into the TxEIS system. The campus budgets are then ready for central office review and compilation into the district's preliminary budget. The board reviews the preliminary budget in May and conducts workshops in June and July, which are open to the public.

Once the CFO calculates the effective and rollback tax rates, the proposed budget is posted on the district's website and the board conducts public hearings to adopt the budget and tax rate. Site-based decision making committees are not involved in the budget process although budget hearings are open to the public. Once the budget and tax rate are adopted, the final budget is posted on the district's website. After the board adopts the district budget, the CFO and business manager finalize the campus budgets and make them available to the campuses for spending.

Three of Pearsall ISD's campuses are in danger of reconstitution in school year 2013–14. A campus is considered for reconstitution after it has been identified as unacceptable for two consecutive school years. Failure to consider the DIP when determining spending priorities could put the district at risk of not meeting its academic improvement goals.

In addition, the Eagle Ford Shale Play has resulted in significant property value growth in fiscal year 2012. However, the full impact of this growth on the district's recapture eligibility has not yet occurred. As of fiscal year 2012, Pearsall ISD has not been required to pay recapture. Recapture requires property rich districts to pay property poor districts as a means to equalize funding per student across the state. Pearsall ISD has not reached the property wealth threshold that would place the district in the property rich category. However, with continued increases in property wealth, it is likely that the district will be obligated to pay

recapture in the near future. Pearsall ISD’s lack of an effective process for linking spending to the district’s needs and priorities could put the district at risk of being fiscally unprepared for the implications of the Eagle Ford Shale Play.

Galena Park ISD integrates its site-based decision making processes with long-term enrollment and facility planning to drive budget and decision making. An article in a 2000 issue of Inc. Magazine related to budgeting best practices provides insight into how budget to corporate strategy links are created. According to the article,

“companies that apply best practices find that communication plays an important role. Top management must take the lead in developing and communicating strategic goals.... Because the budget expresses how resources will be allocated and what measures will be used to evaluate progress, budget development is more effective when linked to overall corporate strategy.”

Pearsall ISD should establish a budget development process that aligns district spending with the educational priorities identified in the district improvement plan and factors in the implications of the Eagle Ford Shale Play as well as other district priorities and initiatives. The budget development process should involve the site-based decision making committees as well as district and community stakeholders. Each budget development period, the district should link its spending priorities back to the district improvement plan so that it is clear how resources are being allocated to achieve strategic objectives. As budget initiatives are being developed, the CFO should ensure that each budget manager is aware of the district’s initiatives and is aligning their spending plans with district goals.

It is important to note that it may take more than one fiscal year to put this process into effect. Although some steps of the process can be implemented in one year, thoughtful, careful consideration of the district’s academic acceptability, programmatic priorities, infrastructure needs, technology requirements, and funding options will take more than one year to complete. However, once all components are in place, the district’s programs and activities can be evaluated and reviewed on the basis of the board’s strategic initiatives and priorities.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**BUDGET TRANSFERS (REC. 29)**

Pearsall ISD’s principals and other budget managers are not empowered to effectively control and manage their budgets. This practice is not consistent with the principle of site-based management.

When a campus desires to transfer funds between objects within the same function or from one functional code to another, staff complete a budget amendment request, which is reviewed and approved by the principal and then sent to the Business Office. Transfers from one functional code to another require board approval, however, transfers between objects within the same function do not have to be approved by the board. After budget requests are submitted to the Business Office, they are reviewed by the business manager. If a request is for a transfer from one functional code to another, it is scheduled on the board agenda for approval. If a request is for a transfer for one object code to another within the same function, the business manager approves the transfer in the TxEIS system. This process delays the ability of the campus to requisition funds against the object code to which funds are being moved.

The review team obtained information from the junior high school campus showing the number of days it took for fund transfers to be approved and the funds made available.

Figure 6–5 shows a summary of this analysis.

**FIGURE 6–5  
PEARSALL ISD  
DAYS TO PROCESS BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUESTS  
WITHIN THE SAME FUNCTIONAL CODE  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

DATE SUBMITTED	DATE RETURNED	DAYS LAPSED
9/16/2013	9/19/2013	3
8/30/2013	10/3/2013	34
9/23/2013	9/30/2013	7
9/27/2013	10/3/2013	6
9/30/2013	10/3/2013	3
10/4/2013	10/17/2013	13
9/16/2013	9/19/2013	3

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Junior High School Budget Change/ Amendment Requests, November 2013.

A waiting period of any length is avoidable because campus budget managers may be given the authority to transfer their own funds, which would make funds available immediately. However, Pearsall ISD does not permit campus budget managers, including campus principals, to perform this task.

Not allowing principals to make their own budget transfers is a consequence of lack of training. The reason the district cited for not allowing principals to make their own budget transfers is that the Business Office is concerned that campus staff will make accounting mistakes. Pearsall ISD does not offer training related to the district's budget process. As a result, principals do not fully understand the district's budget process and have not been trained to effectively implement and administer their school budgets.

During onsite interviews with the review team, three of the district's four principals indicated that they were not comfortable with their knowledge of the district's budget process. The principals cited a lack of familiarity with budget codes, allocation of non-personnel resources, and the overall budget process as a factor that limits their ability to become more effective school administrators. One of the principals was a new principal and the other two principals were new to the district. They were not familiar with Pearsall ISD's budget process because the superintendent hired them in the summer before school year 2013–14 after the budget had already been prepared.

Permitting campus principals to move funds within the same function promotes the concept of site-based management. In addition, giving principals the authority to make their own budget transfers without the approval of the Business Office enhances the principals' status as campus managers and frees up the Business Office from having to approve transfers. TEA's FASRG affirms that this is a viable practice. Section 5.3.4 of the FASRG entitled, "Budget Amendments" states:

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

However, campus administrators in Pearsall ISD are not provided the training or access to the budget transfer module of the TxEIS software system needed to perform budget transfers.

To improve budget and purchasing accountability at the school level, Kingsville ISD gave each school online access to its budget line items in the district's financial system. The online access allows principals to monitor their budgets more effectively by generating their own budget-to-actual reports

whenever they want. This access was a precursor to allowing principals to make their own budget transfers.

Pearsall ISD should provide training to campus administrators and budget managers regarding the budget process and establish procedures to allow principals to make their own budget transfers between object codes within the same function without obtaining the approval of the Business Office. To implement this recommendation, the district should provide comprehensive training to campus principals and other budget managers regarding the budget codes and the overall budget. The district should also develop procedures explaining what transfers principals are allowed to make versus those that require approval from the Business Office. The district should provide training for principals and their bookkeepers on budget transfer procedures and the budget transfer module of the TxEIS system. Once, the principals and bookkeepers have been trained, the district should provide them with access to the budget transfer module and allow them to make their own budget transfers.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **FUND BALANCE (REC. 30)**

Pearsall ISD lacks a local, board-adopted fund balance policy to guide the district in both short- and long-term planning. A fund balance is like a savings account or "rainy day fund." It represents resources the district holds in reserve to weather financial storms. Without such a policy, the reserves in the General Fund, from which the district supports daily operations, could drop below levels necessary to provide adequate protection against unexpected increases in normal operating costs or unforeseen financial crises. For example, since the district has experienced increased revenues as a result of the Eagle Ford Shale Play, it may potentially have to pay recapture in the near future. Without an adequate fund balance policy, Pearsall ISD could be unprepared to pay recapture and finance district operations.

The General Fund is the primary fund through which most school district functions are financed. Most state aid and local property tax revenue is deposited in the General Fund. **Figure 6–6** shows Pearsall ISD's General Fund balance and the percentage increase in fund balance each fiscal year from 2011 to 2013. The fund balance increased 20 percent in fiscal year 2011, 11 percent in fiscal year 2012, and 10 percent in fiscal year 2013.

**FIGURE 6-6  
PEARSALL ISD  
FUND BALANCE HISTORY  
FISCAL YEARS 2011 TO 2013**

YEAR	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR
2011	\$14,095,992	20%
2012	\$15,618,802	11%
2013	\$17,216,167	10%

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, January 2014.

In 2009, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued GASB Statement No. 54, Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions, which replaces the traditional categories of reserved and unreserved fund balance with five new categories: (1) nonspendable; (2) restricted; (3) committed; (4) assigned; and (5) unassigned. School districts implemented GASB 54 beginning in school year 2010–11. The unassigned fund balance is what is left over after funds have been allotted to each of the other four classifications in the General Fund. Unassigned fund balance may be used for any legal purpose. Pearsall ISD’s unassigned fund balance fund balance for fiscal year 2014 is \$13.5 million.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that governmental entities establish a formal policy on the level of unrestricted fund balance that should be maintained in the General Fund. The GFOA recommends that the policy be flexible enough to allow for increases and decreases necessary to comply with the policy based on circumstances. The GFOA’s best practice states the following:

“Such a guideline should be set by the appropriate policy body and should provide both a temporal framework and specific plans for increasing or decreasing the level of unrestricted fund balance, if it is inconsistent with that policy. The adequacy of unrestricted fund balance in the general fund should be assessed based upon a government’s own specific circumstances. Nevertheless, GFOA recommends, at a minimum, that general-purpose governments, regardless of size, maintain unrestricted fund balance in their general fund of no less than two months of regular general fund operating revenues or regular general fund operating expenditures.”

All of Pearsall ISD’s peer districts have a fund balance policy. For example, Carrizo Springs’ CISD board policy CA (Local) outlines the purpose of the fund balance, provides a definition

of fund balance, and states minimum amounts for the General and Debt Service Funds as follows:

The general fund shall maintain a balance of three month’s projected expenditures. The District shall maintain a minimum balance of at least ten percent of the District’s projected annual bond payment requirement.

Pearsall ISD’s Board of Trustees should establish a fund balance policy to protect the district’s fund balance and ensure that it remains adequate for unforeseen future events. A healthy fund balance would enable the district to better deal with any impacts of increased property values resulting from the Eagle Ford Shale operations. The fund balance policy should be used in the district’s planning efforts and should be flexible enough to increase or decrease in any given year. Pearsall ISD should identify an acceptable level of unassigned fund balance and seek to maintain it. The CFO should provide a schedule of scenarios of fund balance options for the board to consider in establishing a fund balance policy. The board should make consideration of the fund balance options a part of the budget development process.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**INTERNAL CONTROLS (REC. 31)**

Pearsall ISD’s Business Office lacks effective internal controls over the payroll and vendor master files and does not adequately segregate responsibilities involving purchase requisitions and vendor payments. With regard to payroll, there is a lack of segregation of duties that could lead to unauthorized changes to the employee master file or even the creation of fictitious employees.

The HR Department provides the Payroll Department with salary information and completes the demographics screen in the TxEIS system. The Payroll Department inputs salary information into the system as well as deductions and leave information. There are no internal controls in place to prevent someone in the Payroll Department from changing employee salary or demographic information.

TxEIS does not provide a report showing changes to the employee master file. As a result, the district is without a document to serve as a mitigating internal control. Therefore, a fictitious employee could be created since staff in the Payroll Department has complete access to this data. Payroll staff

acknowledged that a fictitious employee could be set up by an employee, and the act not be detected.

With regard to the vendor master file (VMF), Pearsall ISD does not adequately segregate responsibilities involving purchase requisitions, the vendor master file, and vendor payments. The district's Business Office responsibilities are not adequately segregated. The Business Office has procedures for the business cycle from the initial purchase stage through the payment stage.

However, given the system access and duties delegated to the accounts payable staff, the structure does not prevent the accounts payable staff from setting up an unauthorized vendor, recording an unauthorized purchase authorization number, and issuing an unauthorized check using the electronic signature plate. The accounts payable clerks are responsible for:

- adding to and maintaining the vendor master file;
- assigning purchase authorizations within the system;
- recording goods and services as received in TxEIS;
- preparing checks; and
- affixing the electronic board members' signatures to the checks.

New vendors are required to submit a conflict of interest questionnaire (CIQ) and an IRS Form W-9 to an accounts payable clerk prior to set up in the vendor master file. The accounts payable staff enter the vendor name, address, tax identification number, and the system assigns a vendor number.

Pearsall ISD generates most purchase requisitions electronically through the TxEIS electronic workflow procurement system. The CFO provides final approval of system-generated purchase orders. Campus secretaries submit supporting documentation to accounts payable clerks to confirm receipt of goods. Upon receipt of confirmation, the accounts payable clerks record the ordered goods as received in TxEIS.

Some goods and services are requisitioned using a manual payment request form. The accounts payable staff prepare the purchase requisition form and issue a payment authorization number to record in the TxEIS finance module to prepare a check. The purchase request form is submitted to the CFO for approval. Payment requests are typically used for purchases made at the beginning of the fiscal year when

TxEIS is being updated for the new budget, or for annual or recurring payments, such as insurance premiums and utility bills.

The CFO reviews the list of proposed expenses. Upon approval, the accounts payable staff prepares the checks, affixes the electronic board signatures on the checks, and mails the checks to the vendors.

The electronic signature plate is kept in a safe behind a locked closet door. The signature plate can only be removed from the safe when two individuals are present.

Segregation of duties is an internal control intended to prevent or decrease the risk of errors or irregularities, identify problems, and ensure that corrective action is taken. Ideally, no single individual has control over two or more phases of a transaction. The TEA's FASRG, Section 1.5.4.6, specifically recommends the segregation of responsibilities for the requisitioning, purchasing and receiving functions from the invoice processing, accounts payable and general ledger functions.

Pearsall ISD should develop a system of internal controls and segregation of duties in the Business Office to deter and prevent fraudulent activity. Duties of the payroll and purchasing functions should be appropriately segregated to ensure that no single employee has access to change employee salary and demographic data. The district should closely examine and segregate the duties of the HR Department and the Payroll Department. If possible, access controls should be established within the TxEIS system to ensure segregation of duties between the two departments.

Pearsall ISD should also establish appropriate segregation of purchasing duties in the Business Office. The district should reassign responsibilities for the VMF and the preparation of purchase requests to an individual outside of accounts payable. VMF responsibilities could be given to a secretary who is not involved with accounts payable. The district should grant accounts payable staff read-only access to the VMF. The district should also limit the access of payroll clerks to the payroll master file so that they cannot make additions or changes to the file.

The CFO, payroll manager, human resources manager, accounts payable manager and technology director should work together to develop a plan for segregating duties between payroll and human resources and to establish greater control over the payroll and vendor master files.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FIXED ASSETS MANAGEMENT (REC. 32)**

Pearsall ISD does not have effective procedures to adequately record and safeguard fixed and controllable assets. Fixed assets are defined by TEA as those having a value of \$5,000 or more or having a useful life greater than one year. The district’s lack of effective fixed asset procedures could result in assets being lost, stolen, or retired without accountability. This risk also extends to controllable assets, which are assets costing less than \$5,000 but are desirable for ownership and must be safeguarded from theft and misuse. Such assets include technology and communication equipment such as cell phones.

Pearsall ISD’s CFO acknowledged the district’s lack of a fixed asset management system. The district maintains a fixed assets listing for financial statement purposes but does not tag fixed assets upon purchase. Tagging is the act of affixing a barcode or unique number on the asset so that it can be identified and tracked. The fixed asset list is compiled from the general ledger. These assets are purchased and coded to fixed asset expenditure accounts and later classified to capital asset accounts. The

business manager is responsible for compiling and maintaining this list.

The district also lacks processes for taking annual physical inventories to verify the existence of an asset after it has been purchased and procedures for moving and disposing of fixed assets. Bookkeepers at the schools confirmed that they have no fixed asset responsibilities other than making a list of computers at the end of the year and giving it to the technology director.

The Information Technology (IT) Department maintains an inventory of technology assets. The IT Department is notified when technology equipment is purchased by the coding on the requisition. IT Department staff can run a report of technology equipment purchases. However, lists of technology equipment are maintained for the IT Department’s own purposes and are not a part of a comprehensive, district-wide fixed asset management system. Although the serial numbers of technology equipment are placed on the inventory listing, a unique tag identifying the equipment as belonging to Pearsall ISD is not placed on the items and recorded in the listing. An overview of the technology equipment listing maintained by the IT Department is shown in **Figure 6–7**.

**FIGURE 6–7  
PEARSALL ISD  
TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT INVENTORY LISTING  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

NAME OF LISTING	PURPOSE	FIELDS ON THE LISTING
Computer Inventory	List of computers owned by the district	Computer Name Model RAM Service Tag\Serial
High School Smart Board and Document Cameras	List of Smart Boards, Promethean Boards, and document cameras	Room Number Smart Board\Promethean (Y/N) Document Camera (Y/N)
Printer Inventory	List of printers owned by the district	Room Number Brand Model Service Tag\Serial Networked (Y/N) IP Address
Projector Inventory	List of projectors owned by the district	Room Number Brand Model Service Tag\Serial Quality Cabling Splitter (Y/N)

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Information Technology Department, November 2013.

The review team obtained a copy of the district’s fixed asset listing used for financial statement purposes and selected 10 assets to attempt to locate at the high school. The review team noted that although the listing contains a bar code field, bar code tags are not affixed to the physical asset. While attempting to locate the selected assets, the review team observed that the items were not tagged, and most could not be found. **Figure 6–8** shows the results of this review.

The lack of an effective fixed asset management limits the district’s ability to capture asset information at the procurement stage and track the cost, useful life, location,

movement, custodian, and disposition of each asset. In addition, the amount reported on their financial statements may not be consistent with the value of actual fixed assets present in the district.

Section 1.2.4.8 of TEA’s FASRG, entitled Inventories of Capital Assets, states that certain capital assets, such as furniture and equipment, should be inventoried on a periodic basis. Annual inventories taken at the end of the school term before the staff members leave are recommended. Discrepancies between the capital asset/inventory list and

**FIGURE 6–8  
PEARSALL ISD  
FIXED ASSET LOCATION TESTING RESULTS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

ASSET DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNED LOCATION	LOCATED ASSET?	OBSERVATION
Projector, LCD Color Video System	Library	No	The librarian had only been on the job two days.
Engine Analyzer	Auto Shop	No	The equipment shown was a newer model acquired a few years ago that was not on the fixed asset listing. The new asset had no tag.
Bender Hydraulic	Auto Shop	No	The equipment shown was not on the fixed asset listing and was manufactured by a different vendor.
Planer, 18"	Auto Shop	Yes	The equipment was not in service and was not tagged. Newer equipment that was in service was not on the asset listing.
Lathe, Disc/Drum	Auto Shop	No	The equipment shown was manufactured by a different vendor and had a tag affixed. This tag is a holdover from a time when the district did tag assets. However, neither the equipment nor the tag number were on the fixed asset listing.
Braising Pans, Tilting, Gas	Kitchen	Inconclusive	The review team was shown a piece of equipment kitchen staff said was a braising pan. However, the equipment was not tagged, and there was no way to verify that the item shown was the same as the one on the asset listing.
Steamer, Pressure W/Boiler	Kitchen	No	Observed a newer model acquired during the last few years that was not tagged.
Mixer, 60 Quart	Kitchen	Yes	Matching serial number, manufacturer, and description, no exceptions noted.
Kettle, 2/3 Steam Jacketed, Pedestal, Tilt	Kitchen	No	Shown a piece of equipment matching the description of the equipment on the listing but with a different serial number.
Align System, 4-Wheel	Auto Shop	No	Auto shop staff said no equipment matching the description was on the premises.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Fixed Asset Listing, November 2013.

what is on hand should be settled. Missing items should be listed and written off in accordance with established policy.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts established fixed asset best practices to assist local governments with setting up an effective and efficient fixed assets management system. These best practices represent a comprehensive solution for fixed assets management systems and include suggested steps to develop and maintain an effective system. **Figure 6–9** shows these best practices.

Pearsall ISD should develop a comprehensive fixed assets management system to guide the identification, recording, inventorying, tracking, and disposal of the district’s fixed assets. The superintendent or designee should establish a detailed definition of controllable assets and create inventorying, tracking and disposal procedures in writing. The superintendent or designee should use these procedures

to guide and train district staff in the proper handling of district assets. Procedures should include the following:

- definitions and examples of controllable assets the district wishes to track;
- methods for identifying controllable and fixed assets, such as bar coding;
- staff responsibilities and accountability for assets;
- inventory database(s) used for record keeping, including procedures for making hard copy and electronic backups;
- frequency of physical inventories, such as annual or semiannual, including procedures for transferring assets from one location to another;

**FIGURE 6–9**  
**TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS FIXED ASSET BEST PRACTICES**

Preliminary Steps	<p>Identify individuals in the district who will have key fixed asset responsibilities and establish the nature of such responsibilities.</p> <p>Devise policies and procedures governing capitalization thresholds, inventory, accounting, employee accountability, transfers, disposals, surplus and obsolescence, and asset sale and disposition.</p> <p>Determine district fixed asset information needs and constraints.</p> <p>Determine the hardware and software necessary to effectively manage the system.</p>
Creating the Fixed Asset Management System	<p>Adopt a proposal setting up the fixed asset system including adoption of formal policies and procedures.</p> <p>Create positions and job descriptions for those with fixed asset responsibilities.</p> <p>Determine the design of the fixed asset inventory database and develop standard forms to match the format of computerized records.</p> <p>Provide training as necessary.</p> <p>Identify specific assets below the capitalization threshold that should be tracked for information purposes and safeguarding.</p> <p>Budget the amount necessary to operate the fixed assets management system adequately.</p>
Implementing the Fixed Asset Management System	<p>Inform all departments of the requirements, policies, and procedures of the fixed assets system.</p> <p>Ensure that assets to be tracked on the system have been identified and tagged.</p> <p>Enter information into the fixed assets database.</p> <p>Assign appropriate values to the assets in the database.</p> <p>Establish location codes and custodial responsibility for fixed assets.</p>
Maintaining the Fixed Asset Management System	<p>Enter all inventory information into the automated fixed asset system as fixed assets are received.</p> <p>Assign tag numbers, location codes, and responsibility to assets as they are received.</p> <p>Monitor the movement of all fixed assets using appropriate forms approved by designated district personnel.</p> <p>Conduct periodic inventories and determine the condition of all assets.</p> <p>Generate appropriate reports noting any change in status of assets including changes in condition, location, and deletions.</p> <p>Reconcile the physical inventory to the accounting records, account for discrepancies, and adjust inventory records.</p> <p>Use information from the system to support insurance coverage, budget requests, and asset replacements and upgrades.</p>

SOURCE: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, “Getting a Fix on Fixed Assets”, 1999.

- procedures to follow when assets cannot be located, including responsibilities for making reports to police and the district’s insurance carrier, as appropriate;
- procedures to follow when the district disposes of assets that are no longer useful or needed, including procedures for making deletions from inventory records; and
- procedures to follow when assets are donated to the district.

The district should conduct an assessment to determine what the district needs to develop or acquire to implement a comprehensive fixed asset system.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**SURPLUS PROPERTY (REC. 33)**

Pearsall ISD lacks an effective process to manage obsolete surplus property and is missing potential opportunities to

gain revenue from surplus sales. Surplus items are gathered by maintenance and/or warehouse personnel and stored either in the district’s old administration building or behind the high school. For example, surplus computers are stored in an old administration building, and vehicles are in the field behind the high school. Photos of the items behind the high school are shown in **Figure 6–10**. Photos of the surplus computer equipment in the old administration building are shown in **Figure 6–11**. Surplus property is identified when the property is no longer used and is taken out of service. For example, when the district upgrades computers, existing computers become obsolete and become surplus. When new chairs and desks are purchased to replace old chairs and desks, the old ones become obsolete and are classified as surplus. When vehicles are no longer operable they become surplus.

The last surplus sale was in fiscal year 2007 during which the district received proceeds of approximately \$1,900. Although there are many surplus vehicles and old tires stored behind the high school, the district has no plans to conduct a surplus

**FIGURE 6–10  
PEARSALL ISD  
SURPLUS VEHICLES  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, November 2013.

**FIGURE 6-11**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**SURPLUS TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013-14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, November 2013.

sale. The district is missing an opportunity to generate additional revenue because even if these vehicles are inoperable, they could be auctioned for parts, and the pile of tires sold for scrap rubber. Scrapped computers may have had some salvage value at the time they were retired. However, with advances in computer technology each year, the value of surplus computer equipment declines with the passage of time. The absence of effective surplus management processes is preventing the district from accessing this stream of revenue.

In addition to issues with surplus property, Pearsall ISD's warehouse contains obsolete materials. The district stores paper, office and janitorial supplies, grass seed, and fertilizer in the warehouse. The warehouse also stores obsolete items such as typewriter correction tape, chalk, and carbon legal paper. Most of the items on the October 2013 warehouse inventory listing were not used in the last two years.

Quantities for 21 of the 26 items on the October 2013 inventory listing were the same as those listed on the August 2011 inventory listing. Storing obsolete and aged inventory and records is an inefficient use of warehouse space and resources.

Other districts have developed best practices for managing surplus property. Brownsville ISD's fixed assets manual details the process for disposal of obsolete fixed assets in the district either through public auction or other means. Surplus items are collected by the Warehouse/Textbooks/Fixed Assets Department and held for quarterly auctions. The items to be disposed of are compiled into an agenda item for board approval, and the board approves of the disposition of the assets. Auction proceeds are deposited to the appropriate fund (Food Service Fund, General Fund or other fund as determined by the school district) at the auction's completion.

Pearsall ISD should devise guidelines and procedures for identifying, collecting, storing, and disposing of surplus equipment and obsolete warehouse items. Guidelines should emphasize recovery of salvage value through auction sales or other means in order to maximize income from the disposal. The CFO should direct the business manager to develop surplus property procedures and communicate them to district personnel responsible for overseeing district assets. The CFO should also direct warehouse staff to identify and eliminate obsolete inventory. The business manager should prepare training materials and conduct training for maintenance, warehouse, and campus personnel involved in fixed asset management so that they understand the procedures for identifying, capturing, and handling surplus property and keeping the warehouse free of obsolete items. The district should dispose of the vehicles behind the high

school as well as the computer equipment in the old administration building because they are potential hazards.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**CROSS TRAINING (REC. 34)**

Pearsall ISD has not established procedures for cross training staff to perform the duties of other employees in the Business Office creating a risk that operations would not continue if an employee leaves the district or is absent from work for an extended period of time. For example, the payroll manager can perform all the duties of the payroll clerk. However, the payroll clerk cannot perform certain duties of the payroll manager. **Figure 6–12** shows the duties of the payroll manager and the payroll clerk. This figure shows that the

**FIGURE 6–12  
PEARSALL ISD  
JOB DUTIES  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

PAYROLL MANAGER	PAYROLL CLERK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print and review time clock reports—when all are verified and correct, merge to TxEIS;</li> <li>• Enter all applicable information in TxEIS for any employees new to the district;</li> <li>• Refigure salary information for employees with changes or who resigned;</li> <li>• Compare payroll register to previous payroll register after all information has been entered and corrections made;</li> <li>• Process checks;</li> <li>• Submit electronic payments to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Child Support, unemployment payments, and post transactions to TxEIS;</li> <li>• Print TRS reports, make corrections, and submit information to TRS through Texas Reporting and Query System (TRAQS);</li> <li>• Complete Texas Association of School Board (TASB) surveys and submit;</li> <li>• Post absences from weekly absentee reports turned in by various departments;</li> <li>• Unemployment payments; and</li> <li>• Process W-2 forms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sort, and verify that punch reports, absentee reports and absent from duty reports are turned in, and signed.</li> <li>• Type and print Weekly Absentee Report for the Business Office, superintendent’s office, HR Department, Curriculum and Instruction Department;</li> <li>• Post absences for the district;</li> <li>• Post any changes that employees make such as address, phone number, direct deposits, etc. Post extra duty pay for the different departments;</li> <li>• Verify that substitutes and paraprofessional staff time and hours are correct on TimeClock (when working on payroll)—contact secretaries and make corrections as needed;</li> <li>• Calculate payroll, verify with the previous payroll that pay is accurate, that all employees got paid, and that no new employees were missed;</li> <li>• Print, stuff and seal envelopes—store in safe until payday;</li> <li>• File check stubs in numerical order, holes punched and fastened with prongs, labeled with check numbers, and pay date;</li> <li>• Verify with third-party administrator the deduction registers, type and print a payment request, once it is approved, print, stuff, seal and mail checks, file;</li> <li>• Verify and reconcile two bank accounts, print and file reports;</li> <li>• Complete forms for disability, life insurance, Texas Department of Human Services, employment verifications and other services as needed by district employees;</li> <li>• Maintain a spreadsheet with IRS taxes that are paid;</li> <li>• Complete a 941 quarterly Federal Tax Return, print reports, give to superintendent to sign, make copies, fill out certified mail form, take to post office for postmark, and file reports; and</li> <li>• Look over manager’s calculations when new hires, or payoff on employees.</li> </ul>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, November 2013.

duties performed by the payroll manager not performed by the clerk include electronic payments of payroll taxes, child support withholding, Teacher Retirement System (TRS) payments, TRS reporting through the TRS reporting system, and unemployment payments.

Duties of the accounts payable manager that no one has been cross-trained to perform include 1099 processing, training on the TxEIS financial accounting system, and maintaining TxEIS user profiles and approval paths. The accounts payable clerk is responsible for processing worker’s compensation claims, and no one else in the Business Office is trained to

perform this function. **Figure 6–13** shows the duties of the accounts payable manager and clerk.

In addition, no one is cross-trained to perform certain duties of the business manager. These include preparation of the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) and Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) reports, special program expenditure reports, and year-end journal entries necessary to correct the financial records at the end of the year. Failure to cross train employees could slow or stop essential operations performed in the Business Office. **Figure 6–14**

**FIGURE 6–13  
PEARSALL ISD  
JOB DUTIES  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANAGER	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CLERK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and approve requisitions;</li> <li>• Review and process invoices, purchase orders, receipts, and vendor information for payment;</li> <li>• Detect and resolve problems with invoices;</li> <li>• Review and approve and post budget changes and journals;</li> <li>• Process checks;</li> <li>• Maintain vendor files;</li> <li>• Process 1099's;</li> <li>• Issue out district credit cards;</li> <li>• Train and supervise accounts payable clerk;</li> <li>• Provide TxEIS training;</li> <li>• Maintain TxEIS user profiles/approval paths;</li> <li>• Answer questions from staff and vendors by phone, email, and mail;</li> <li>• Process department purchase orders and payments; and</li> <li>• Distribute invoices to campuses and departments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review/approve requisitions;</li> <li>• Review and approve post budget changes;</li> <li>• Distribute invoices to campuses/department;</li> <li>• Receive, review, process purchase orders for payment;</li> <li>• Detect problems with incorrect orders and invoices;</li> <li>• Post all bank deposits;</li> <li>• Reconcile Interest and Sinking Bank Statement;</li> <li>• Reconcile Payroll Bank Statement;</li> <li>• Process any workers' compensation paperwork;</li> <li>• Maintain vendor files;</li> <li>• Receive incoming calls from employees/vendors and answer questions;</li> <li>• Student activity check processing;</li> <li>• End of month processing; and</li> <li>• Post purchase orders for payment.</li> </ul>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, November 2013.

**FIGURE 6–14  
PEARSALL ISD  
BUSINESS OFFICE FUNCTIONS STAFF HAVE NOT BEEN CROSS TRAINED TO PERFORM  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

- Electronic payments of payroll taxes
- Child support withholding
- TRS payments
- TRS reporting through the TRS reporting system
- Unemployment payments
- 1099 processing
- Training on the TxEIS financial accounting system
- Maintaining TxEIS user profiles and approval paths
- Processing worker’s compensation claims
- Preparation of the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) and Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) reports
- Special program expenditure reports
- Year-end journal entries necessary to correct the financial records at the end of the year

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, November 2013.

shows a summary of the business office functions that staff have not been cross trained to perform.

The school review team conducted a workload survey of each business office employee. Each person was asked to list their work tasks and provide an estimate of the time committed to each task for each month during the year using the following scale:

- 4 – average of 6 or more hours per day;
- 3 – average of 3 to 5 hours per day;
- 2 – average of 1 to 3 hours per day;
- 1 – few hours per week; and
- 0 – no time commitment.

The survey also asked each person to indicate whether others in the department were cross trained to perform his or her tasks and whether the output of each task was reviewed by someone in the department. Survey results indicate that business office staff are not cross trained on all tasks and that most tasks do not require review or approval. The analysis also shows that workloads are fairly regular and do not fluctuate significantly nor does the workflow appear to be seasonal. **Figure 6–15** shows each employee in the Business Office, the number of tasks each employee performs, the percentage of these tasks that another business office staff is cross trained to perform, and the percentage of these tasks that must be reviewed and or approved by a higher level staff.

The review team calculated the percentage of tasks that another employee was cross-trained to perform. **Figure 6–16** shows the results of the analysis by position.

Given the small size of the Business Office, failure to ensure that all major functions can be performed by more than one employee can lead to major complications. The district risks

critical tasks going undone or being performed incorrectly if staff are not trained to perform the duties of employees who are not available to complete their responsibilities due to workload, leave, illness, or attrition. For example, during interviews with the review team, staff reported that the business manager had recently been out on extended leave. There was no one in the Business Office who could perform some of the business manager’s duties so the work was not completed until she returned.

San Elizario ISD’s Human Resources Department (HR) cross trains its staff to increase department sustainability and to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The HR director instituted a practice of moving employees from job to job in an effort to expand the effectiveness of the HR Department as well as strengthen each employee’s understanding of the HR Department’s processes and give each employee the opportunity for professional growth. The method and timing of the moves depended on the work schedule of the employees and was done at the HR director’s discretion. In addition to the cross-training, the HR director encourages all members of the department to suggest improvements for departmental processes. HR staff indicate that cross-training encourages a positive climate in the HR Department.

Pearsall ISD should provide ongoing professional development opportunities to business office staff to ensure that employees are cross trained. The district should prepare cross training plans that take into consideration not only the benefits to the district but also to department management and employees. The business manager should confer with the payroll manager and accounts payable manager to develop, plan and schedule for cross training the payroll and accounts payable clerks. The cross training should occur during non peak times and should be repeated as often as necessary until the employees adequately learn one another’s job function.

**FIGURE 6–15  
PEARSALL ISD  
BUSINESS OFFICE WORKFLOW ANALYSIS RESULTS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

TITLE	NUMBER OF TASKS	PERCENTAGE OF TASKS CROSS TRAINED	PERCENTAGE OF TASKS REVIEWED AND APPROVED
Business Manager	18	67%	39%
Accounts Payable Manager	14	64%	36%
Accounts Payable Clerk	14	93%	50%
Payroll Manager	10	60%	20%
Payroll Clerk	17	82%	53%

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, January 2014.

**FIGURE 6–16  
PEARSALL ISD  
BUSINESS OFFICE WORKLOAD SURVEY  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

TITLE	TASKS REPORTED	PERCENTAGE OF TASK CROSS TRAINED
Accounts Payable Clerk	14	93%
Payroll Clerk	17	82%
Business Manager	18	67%
Accounts Payable Manager	14	64%
Payroll Manager	10	60%

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, January 2014.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**BANK RECONCILIATIONS (REC. 35)**

Pearsall ISD has not established a method to ensure that bank statements are reconciled on a regular basis. At the time of the onsite review, the district had not reconciled its bank statements for two months. The CFO and business manager are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the bank accounts are reconciled. This responsibility has been delegated to the payroll and accounts payable clerks and is monitored by the CFO and business manager; notification of completion of bank reconciliations is done informally.

At the time of the onsite review in November 2013 district bank accounts had not been reconciled since August 2013. However, staff indicated that the accounts are usually reconciled on time. Bank reconciliations are normally done after the end of the month once the district receives the bank statement from the bank. The district uses hard copies of bank statements to complete reconciliations. The district has four bank accounts as shown in **Figure 6–17**.

The accounts payable clerk is responsible for reconciling the Interest & Sinking Fund and Payroll bank accounts while the payroll clerk reconciles the Local Maintenance and Student Activity fund accounts. The review team performed a review of the August 31, 2013 bank reconciliations, which were the most recent that had been completed at the time of the onsite visit. The review team noted all accounts were reconciled, and there were no unreconciled differences.

Bank reconciliations are a critical internal control to ensure that cash balances are correct and that funds have been spent

**FIGURE 6–17  
PEARSALL ISD  
BANK ACCOUNTS AS OF AUGUST 31, 2013**

ACCOUNT NAME	PURPOSE	BALANCE 8–31–2013	INTEREST BEARING?
Local Maintenance	Maintenance & Operations	\$3,200,125	Yes
Payroll	Payroll	\$216,960	Yes
Interest & Sinking	Debt Service	\$6,583	Yes
Student Activity Funds (3)	Student Clubs	\$92,863	Yes
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$3,516,531</b>	

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Business Office, November 2013.

for intended purposes. Regular, timely bank reconciliations ensure that funds are not misappropriated or recorded incorrectly. Reconciliations also enable organizations to safeguard cash by ensuring that its record of cash receipts, expenditures, and balances agree with the bank’s records as the custodian of the organization’s cash.

The Texas Education Code, Section 39.083, requires school districts to publish an annual financial report. This requirement is also codified in board Policy CFA (LEGAL) Financial Reports and Statements. If reconciliations are not performed or are performed incorrectly, the organization cannot be certain that its funds are safeguarded, or its accounting records or financial reports are accurate. Even relatively short periods during which bank accounts are unreconciled create a risk that transactions might not be readily identified and recorded. Moreover, time sensitive errors might be overlooked and potential refunds due to banking errors may be lost during short periods of unreconciled balances.

The following are common benefits organizations receive from timely bank account reconciliations:

- provide current, accurate financial statements;
- eliminate error backlog;
- identify general ledger adjustments that may be necessary;
- identify bank and/or book errors;
- provide a baseline for cash flow analysis and control;
- validate cash account balances; and
- uncover irregularities.

In the paper entitled: *How to Improve Account Reconciliation Activities* (2007), issued by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), PwC recommends the following bank reconciliation best practices:

- facilitate faster identification of errors through timely reconciliations;
- investigate large or unusual items and conclude in the body of the reconciliation as to the appropriateness of their accounting treatment;
- reference the journal entry required to record all adjustments;
- establish action plans for reconciling items—a proper reconciliation identifies the reconciling item and the actions that are going to be taken to clear the reconciling item; document approval for all account reconciliations—all account reconciliations should be reviewed in conjunction with supporting documentation and approved for completeness and propriety by someone other than the person who performed the reconciliation;
- report to management regularly on account reconciliation status—measure account reconciliation status and report findings to management on a regular basis, typically monthly; and
- require action plans on delinquent reconciliations—require the account owner of delinquent reconciliations (e.g., those that exceed 60 days) to prepare a 90-day action plan to remediate the deficiencies.

Pearsall ISD should establish guidelines and procedures for the reconciliation process that include a timeline for completing regular reconciliations. For example, the district could implement a practice of reconciling bank accounts by the twentieth day of the following month. This should provide for a reasonable timeline given existing online banking and cash management technology, which provides 24/7 access to account information and automated account reconciliation. The district has access to this technology through its bank. Use of online banking technology would also eliminate the need for the district to receive hard copy bank statements to reconcile its accounts. Online access to bank transactions would make reconciliations easier thereby encouraging timely preparation. Bank reconciliations should be submitted to the CFO when completed for approval and

signoff. The district should incorporate the best practices recommended by PwC in their reconciliation procedures.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (REC. 36)**

Pearsall ISD has established a process that inefficiently uses multiple district personnel to verify documentation related to accounts payable.

The purchasing and accounts payable process begins when a user enters a purchase requisition into the TxEIS system, which routes it through the automated workflow for approval. Users include principals, and their secretaries\ bookkeepers, teachers, and department heads and managers. The system notifies approvers, which included principals and department heads, of open requisitions via e-mail. All vendors must be on the pre-approved local vendors list or in the Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) Purchasing Cooperative.

The Region 20 Purchasing Cooperative is a group of vendors that are on an approved list maintained by Region 20 after having qualified to be on the list through a certification process. The cooperative solicits bids for educational technology equipment and software, office and computer supplies, paper supplies, art supplies, custodial supplies, and other products.

The approver verifies the coding, checks for any discounts, reviews the description, and ensures that an approved vendor is being used. The CFO is the final approver in the automated workflow. Once the CFO approves the requisition, it becomes a purchase order, and the user is notified via a system-generated e-mail.

The user prints a copy of the purchase order and sends it to the vendor. The vendor fills the order and sends the goods to the campus or other district location where the user is located. A designated individual at the district location checks the purchase order against the packing slip and sends it to the user or notifies the user to pick it up. For example, at the campuses, the principal's secretary performs this function before sending the goods to the user.

The vendor sends the invoice to the Business Office then the accounts payable clerk sends the invoice to the campus for review and approval. At the campus, the principal's secretary does a three-way match of the invoice, purchase order, and packing slip. The three-way match consists of matching

details of the purchase order to the invoice, to the evidence of receipt. Such details would include purchase order number, unit price, quantity, total price, and item description. The secretary then places the invoice number and date on the campus copy of the purchase order and sends the invoice, purchase order, packing slip, and other backup documentation back to accounts payable staff in the Business Office.

Once accounts payable staff receive the invoice, purchase order, packing slip, and other backup documentation from the campus, they perform another three-way match of the invoice, purchase order, and packing slip. This process is inefficient because the three-way match is performed twice, once by campus bookkeepers and once by the accounts payable clerk in the Business Office.

Pearsall ISD should streamline the accounts payable process by eliminating redundancy in the performance of the three-way match. This could be achieved by ending the practice of sending a copy of the vendor invoice to the campuses for campus secretaries to perform the three-way match. Instead of sending the invoice to the campus, the accounts payable clerks in the Business Office should retain it while waiting on the campus to send the packing slip so that the Business Office, rather than campus personnel, can perform the three-way match. The business manager should issue a memo outlining the change in procedures and communicate the change to campus and district personnel involved in the accounts payable process.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **PURCHASING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 37)**

Pearsall ISD does not have consistent methods to effectively communicate policies and procedures associated with the purchasing process. Purchasing policies are not readily available to all staff or are out of date. The district maintains policies and procedures for purchasing and the Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) in hard copy format. The Financial Procedural Manual (Procedures Manual) was last updated in school year 2012–13. The IMA Policies and Guidelines were issued in June 2013. During onsite interviews, all four principals indicated that the purchasing procedures were not clearly communicated and that they were either unaware of the Procedures Manual or enlisted the help of their secretaries in the purchasing process. The accounting system procurement workflow automatically routes requisitions initiated by the secretary to the principal for approval. Without a clear understanding of the district's

formally-defined purchasing process or IMA policies and guidelines, the principals could unknowingly violate district or state requirements.

The Procedures Manual contains policies and procedures related to student activity funds; cash handling; vendor invoices and check processing; conflict of interest; consultants and contracted services; purchasing laws; receiving; and the requisition and purchase order process. The Procedures Manual also contains instructions that detail the steps to create a new purchase requisition in the accounting system procurement workflow.

The IMA Policies and Guidelines contain the legal requirements for making purchases using the IMA. The IMA is an allotment of state funds to each school district to purchase instructional materials that can include textbooks, technological equipment, software, registration fees, and salaries. School districts have flexibility over which instructional materials are used in their district but must follow specific purchasing requirements for spending IMA funds.

The principals of all four Pearsall ISD campuses were hired during the summer of 2013. Three of the four principals are new to the district. In addition to the district's general purchasing procedures, the principals were also not fully aware of the district's policies and strategy related to the IMA. The principals knew the individuals responsible for the administration of district textbooks and the IMA. However, the principals were not aware of how the district would allocate the IMA funds and how the decisions related to the IMA are made.

Well written manuals provide direction to district employees on the district's policies and procedures. To be effective, employees must be aware of the policy and procedure manuals and the manuals must be readily available to employees.

The district CFO should make all purchasing policies and procedures available on the district website to ensure that employees have access to them when making purchases. The district's webpage contains a portal dedicated to the business office forms. The Procedures Manual and IMA Policy and Guidelines should be posted to the Business Office Forms Web-portal and made accessible to all employees when needed. The CFO should notify staff that the policies and procedures are available on this portal of the website. Each employee should be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of these procedures. In addition, the CFO

should train the principals regarding the purchasing procedures, including the IMA policies and guidelines.

This recommendation could be implemented using existing resources.

### **AGGREGATE PURCHASES (REC. 38)**

Pearsall ISD does not have a formal process to analyze aggregate annual amounts spent with each vendor or track aggregate commodities purchases to determine if they exceed \$50,000. Without such processes, the district could be at risk of noncompliance with purchasing laws and regulations regarding competitive bidding for purchases over certain thresholds.

Pearsall ISD participates in nine different purchasing cooperatives and maintains links to each cooperative on the district's webpage. Participating in cooperatives and inter-local agreements provides access to a greater variety of goods and services, enables the district to obtain better pricing and purchasing terms, and also allows it to spend fewer labor hours on processing bids or requests for proposals for commonly purchased items.

The inter-local and cooperative agreements in which the district participates includes the following: Education Service Center, Region 2; Education Service Center, Region 18; Education Service Center, Region 20; BuyBoard Cooperative Purchasing; Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR); Purchasing Association of Cooperative Entities (PACE); State of Texas Co-op Purchasing; The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN); and The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS/TAPS).

The links to each purchasing cooperative webpage are located on the district's website through the Business Office portal. The purchasing cooperative links contains the approved vendor listings and catalogs which allows users to access supplier databases and catalogs remotely at any time.

According to the CFO, the Business Office does not perform a periodic analysis to determine if aggregate expenditures related to specific vendors, products, or services exceed the TEC required \$50,000 bid threshold because the district purchases most goods and services from suppliers under cooperative purchasing agreements. However, being a part of a purchasing cooperative may not always guarantee that all procedural procurement requirements are satisfied under all applicable local policy, regulation, or state law, including competitive bidding. Also, the district does not track which vendors are part of the cooperative agreements. At the time

of this review, 2,516 vendors were in the Pearsall ISD VMF with no flags to indicate if the vendor had gone through the bid process, was on state contract, or was part of an authorized purchasing cooperative. This information, along with commodity codes, can be tracked in TxEIS, however the district is not using this function.

By not tracking aggregate purchases made for commodities or from vendors that are not through a state contract or purchasing cooperative agreement, the district could be in violation of purchasing laws and regulations.

In school year 2012–13, Pearsall ISD purchased goods and services exceeding \$50,000 from 49 vendors totaling \$16.7 million. The review team analyzed a sample of 21 expenditures from this period. The sample included 13 of the top 49 vendors, shown in **Figure 6–18**. Of these 13 vendors, the goods and services Pearsall ISD purchased from one vendor, The Brokerage Store Inc., was not obtained through the competitive bidding or cooperative purchasing processes. The district recorded all district travel expenses, such as athletic events, conferences, and UIL trips, under the vendor name Pearsall ISD.

The Texas Education Code Section 44.031(a) (b), states “all contracts, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000 or more in the aggregate, for each 12-month period shall be made by the method, of the following methods, that provides the best value for the district:

- (1) competitive bidding for services other than construction services;
- (2) competitive sealed proposals for services other than construction services;
- (3) a request for proposals, for services other than construction services;
- (4) an inter-local contract;
- (5) a method provided by the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2267, for construction services;
- (6) the reverse auction procedure as defined by the Texas Government Code, Section 2155.062(d); or
- (7) the formation of a political subdivision corporation under the Texas Local Government Code, Section 304.001.

Pearsall ISD should establish a system to track and monitor aggregate purchases to reduce the district's risk exposure and

**FIGURE 6–18  
PEARSALL ISD  
SAMPLE SELECTION OF VENDORS PAID OVER \$50,000  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

VENDOR	AGGREGATED AMOUNT PAID FISCAL YEAR 2012–13	COMPETITIVELY BID BY PEARSALL ISD?	ON COOPERATIVE/STATE LIST?
DK Haney Roofing Inc	\$1,884,686	Yes	No
WR Griggs Construction	\$810,683	Yes	No
Cluster XII Special	\$328,511	No	Yes
Lisa S Corbin	\$234,842	N/A	No
Education Service	\$211,731	No	Yes
Gemini Office Products	\$188,032	No	Yes
Hillyard	\$169,917	No	Yes
Labatt Food Service LLC	\$155,341	No	Yes
Petty Oil Co Inc	\$125,680	Yes	No
Pearsall ISD	\$92,601	N/A	N/A
Intech Southwest	\$66,377	No	Yes
The Brokerage Store Inc	\$55,560	No	No
Marks Plumbing Parts	\$53,877	No	Yes

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Vendor Listing, Vendor Payment History, and Bid List, November 2013.

ensure compliance with state competitive procurement requirements. Compliance with purchasing requirements must be documented, such as indicating whether or not the purchases were bid or cooperative purchases. This can be done through implementing commodity codes, monitoring purchases spent by vendor, or requiring all vendors used to go through a competitive pricing process. The TxEIS system has the capability to track commodity codes and current staff can monitor the aggregated expenditure using system generated reports.

Additionally, the district should review the inter-local agreements with current and prospective purchasing cooperatives to ensure that there is language confirming that all procedural procurement requirements will be satisfied under all applicable local policies, regulations, or state law.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**BUDGET DOCUMENT (REC. 39)**

Pearsall ISD does not have guidelines in place to ensure that the budget document is presented in a format that maximizes its usefulness as a tool for educating and informing stakeholders about district operations and priorities. Pearsall ISD’s budget document is not useful as an informative narrative and communications tool. The budget does not

highlight important initiatives, communicate district goals, or provide insight into the district’s inner workings.

In the parent survey conducted by the review team, nearly 1 in 3 parents indicated that the district’s financial reports were difficult to read. The budget on the district’s website is a three-page document consisting of a cover and two pages of summarized budgeted revenues and expenditures for the General, Special Revenue, Debt Service, Capital Projects, and Governmental Expense trust funds. The document does not include any discussion of budget goals, priorities, or objectives. Also, there are no explanatory narratives, charts, or graphs to highlight important information and numerical relationships. These deficiencies limit the budget’s usefulness as a communication device, policy document, and financial plan. In its present form, Pearsall ISD’s budget does not provide insight into the district’s operations and future initiatives. Consequently, Pearsall ISD is missing an opportunity to enhance its image in the community by demonstrating a commitment to financial accountability, transparency, and stewardship.

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) is a national organization that promotes excellence in the form, content and presentation of school district budget documents. The organization establishes a number of criteria for exemplary budget documents and provides awards, known as

Meritorious Budget Awards (MBA), to school districts whose budget documents meet these criteria.

Many school districts across the country use these criteria as a tool to improve their budget document's content, format and presentation. ASBO offers the following tips to preparing a meritorious budget and these concepts are incorporated in the MBA Criteria Checklist:

- easy to read, follow, and understand
- free of mathematical, grammatical, and spelling errors
- fact and data presentation are clear and logical
- consistent formatting and form
- use of charts and graphs to enhance presentation quality and highlight financial data and historical trends

Pearsall ISD should establish guidelines to improve and regularly evaluate its budget document to ensure that it provides information to stakeholders regarding the district's financial plan, goals, and future initiatives. District staff should use the ASBO criteria as a guide when restructuring the budget document. The CFO and business manager should develop a plan to improve the district's budget document. The CFO and business manager should obtain a copy of the MBA Criteria Checklist and determine what is required to improve the district's budget document. The CFO should use the checklist to develop an outline of the sections that will need to be included in the improved document. The CFO and business manager should also identify sources, availability, and quality of information that will go into the document.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **CASH HANDLING (REC. 40)**

Pearsall ISD lacks written cash handling procedures to govern money collection for campus-based fundraising events. Student activity club sponsors, who are teachers, collect thousands of dollars in cash with no written procedures regarding how these funds should be collected, handled, or safeguarded. Accordingly, school bookkeepers depend on teachers who collect money during fundraisers to bring them all funds collected so that they can be deposited. There are no established control procedures to ensure that all money collected is accounted for and deposited. The lack of

established cash handling procedures presents a risk that funds could be diverted to unauthorized uses or stolen.

The review team visited all campuses to discuss student activity fundraisers. The elementary and intermediate schools have one fundraiser event per year while the middle and high schools have many fundraisers each year. The cash collection process for all campuses is essentially the same. Information about the event is documented on a fundraising information form. The information describes the nature and timing of the event and which school club is sponsoring the fundraiser. The elementary school publishes fundraiser deposit instructions; however, none of the campuses have established cash-handling procedures. All campus bookkeepers receive cash from student club sponsors that has been collected through fundraisers. The bookkeepers have no way of knowing if all monies have been submitted because no documentation against which to reconcile the cash receipts is required. Each of the bookkeepers interviewed acknowledged this weakness in the cash collection procedures. In addition, for fundraisers in which a product is sold, such as cookie dough sales, there are no procedures requiring a reconciliation of sales orders to inventory records. The amount of cash collected and deposited in the student activity account during fiscal year 2013 was approximately \$140,000.

Peer districts are districts similar to Pearsall ISD that are used for comparison purposes. The review team identified and surveyed peer districts for comparison purposes to Pearsall ISD. All of Pearsall ISD's peer districts, which include Carrizo Springs CISD, Fabens ISD, and West Oso ISD, have written cash handling procedures for activity funds. For example, Carrizo Springs CISD publishes an Activity Fund Handbook that has a section on fundraising that includes, among other procedures, the following:

- fundraiser approval requirements;
- club sponsor responsibilities;
- fundraiser Operating Report instructions;
- receipting collected funds instructions;
- examples of how procedures are to be implemented; and
- instructions for use of tickets and product sales.

Pearsall ISD should develop student activity fundraising procedures that include written cash-handling guidelines. The business manager should obtain best practice examples of student activity fundraising procedures and use the

information obtained from these examples to develop Pearsall ISD’s procedures. The procedures should require reconciliation of product sales inventory to cash collected. Forms should be provided to facilitate the reconciliation and school bookkeepers and club sponsors should be trained on how to maintain product inventory and complete the proper forms before cash is turned in for deposit.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**STUDENT ACTIVITY FUND REPORTING (REC. 41)**

Pearsall ISD does not have an account code structure in place to efficiently produce student activity fund expenditure reports by campus. As a result, campuses must prepare summary reports manually or work from detailed transaction reports. The inability to produce system-generated summary reports by school limits a campus’s ability to produce reports that enable them to manage student activity funds effectively. In review team interviews the business manager reported that this deficiency makes analysis of student activity expenditures inefficient and difficult.

In the district’s account code string, there are fields that identify the fund, function, object, sub object, and organization. All student activity transactions are coded to fund 865. The organization code for all campuses is zero and therefore cannot be used to differentiate between specific transactions. The sub object is the only differentiator that indicates to which campus a transaction belongs. However, the system does not use sub objects to summarize expenditures

by campus. Therefore, a summary by campus using the sub object would have to be done manually.

**Figure 6–19** shows an example of how the district’s system aggregates student activity fund transactions. Sub object A4 identifies high school cheerleader transactions while sub object D6 identifies junior high student council transactions. Specific campus transactions can be seen; however, since both groups have an organization code of zero, the system cannot generate a summary report by campus.

Accounting systems are most effective when they are designed with maximum flexibility and functionality.

Pearsall ISD should develop a coding system for student activity funds that would allow expense reports to be generated by campus. The district’s current coding system can easily be modified to allow reports to be generated by campus. To accomplish this, the district should assign unique organization codes for each campus to enable the system to generate expenditure reports by campus and avoid having to summarize detailed transactions manually.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FIGURE 6–19  
PEARSALL ISD  
STUDENT ACTIVITY FUND REPORT  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

FUND	FUNCTION	OBJECT	SUB OBJECT	ORGANIZATION	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	EXPENDITURES
865	0	2190	A4	0	HS Cheerleaders	\$219
865	0	2190	A4	0	HS Cheerleaders	\$105
865	0	2190	A4	0	HS Cheerleaders	\$3,773
865	0	2190	A4	0	HS Cheerleaders	\$16,808
865	0	2190	D6	0	JH Student Council	\$80
865	0	2190	D6	0	JH Student Council	\$34
865	0	2190	D6	0	JH Student Council	\$50
865	0	2190	D6	0	JH Student Council	\$243
865	0	2190	D6	0	JH Student Council	\$464

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Student Activity Fund Detail Report, January 2014.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 6: BUSINESS SERVICES</b>							
28. Establish a budget development process that aligns district spending with the educational priorities identified in the district improvement plan and factors in the implications of the Eagle Ford Shale Play as well as other district priorities and initiatives.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
29. Provide training to campus administrators and budget managers regarding the budget process and establish procedures to allow principals to make their own budget transfers between object codes within the same function without obtaining the approval of the Business Office.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
30. Establish a fund balance policy to protect the district's fund balance and ensure that it remains adequate for unforeseen future events.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31. Develop a system of internal controls and segregation of duties in the Business Office to deter and prevent fraudulent activity.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
32. Develop a comprehensive fixed assets management system to guide the identification, recording, inventorying, tracking, and disposal of the district's fixed assets.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
33. Devise guidelines and procedures for identifying, collecting, storing, and disposing of surplus equipment and obsolete warehouse items.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
34. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to business office staff to ensure that employees are cross trained.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
35. Establish guidelines and procedures for the reconciliation process that include a timeline for completing regular reconciliations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36. Streamline the accounts payable process by eliminating redundancy in the performance of the three-way match.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 6: BUSINESS SERVICES</b>							
37. Make the purchasing policies and procedures available on the district website to ensure that employees have access to them when making purchases.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
38. Establish a system to track and monitor aggregate purchases to reduce the district's risk exposure and ensure compliance with state competitive procurement requirements.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
39. Establish guidelines to improve and regularly evaluate its budget document to ensure that it provides information to stakeholders regarding the district's financial plan, goals, and future initiatives.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
40. Develop student activity fundraising procedures that include written cash-handling guidelines.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41. Develop a coding system for student activity funds that would allow expense reports to be generated by campus.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

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# **CHAPTER 7**

# **FOOD SERVICE**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 7. FOOD SERVICE

An independent school district's food service operation provides meals to its students and staff. The district may provide meals through the federally funded Child Nutrition Programs, which include the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The School Breakfast Program is a federal entitlement program administered at the state level by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Participating schools receive cash assistance for breakfasts served that comply with program requirements. Districts receive different reimbursement amounts based on the number of breakfasts served in each of the designated benefit categories: free, reduced-price, and paid. Texas state law requires schools to participate in the School Breakfast Program if at least 10 percent of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals. The NSLP serves low-cost or free lunches to students. Like the breakfast program, lunches must comply with federal nutrition guidelines and are reimbursable to schools based on the number of meals served within the benefit categories. A district's food service operation may also offer catering services as a way to supplement the food service budget or as one way to provide training for students interested in pursuing careers in the food service industry.

Pearsall Independent School District (ISD) operates its Food Service Department using a self-managed model. The three primary models for school districts' food service operations are self-management, contracted management, and contracted consulting. Using the self-management model, a district operates its food service department without assistance from an outside entity. In the contracted management model, a district contracts with a food service management company to manage either all or a portion of its food service operations. In this arrangement, a district may rely on the company to provide some or all staff, or it may use district staff for its operations. A district using the consulting model contracts with a food service consulting company to provide guidance on food service operations. For example, the consulting company may provide guidance regarding menus, sales and marketing plans, and ordering processes based on industry standards. In this arrangement, district staff operates the food service department.

Effective food service operations provide students and staff with appealing and nutritious breakfasts and lunches at a

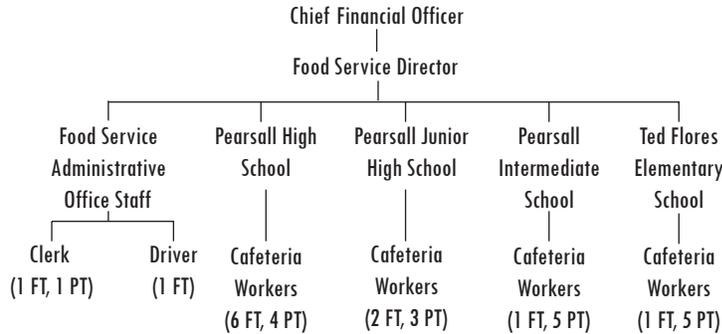
reasonable cost in an environment that is safe, clean, and accessible. The goal of each food service operation is to be self-supporting such that revenue generated from meals served covers all operational and staffing costs with no assistance from the district's General Fund.

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department reports to the chief financial officer (CFO). The district's Food Service Department is centralized and managed by the food service director, who is responsible for all food service functions, including meal reimbursement claims, staffing, menu planning, purchasing, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities ordering and usage, and cafeteria operations. In addition to the director, there are 25 employees who operate the four kitchens and three staff positions in the food service administrative office who also assist with Pearsall High School cafeteria food preparations. Each of the district's four schools has a cooking and serving facility. Employees are staffed at schools according to the number of meals served per day, the number of serving lines operating in the respective cafeterias, and principal requests. **Figure 7-1** shows the district's Food Service Department organization.

Pearsall ISD operates closed campuses, meaning that students are not allowed off school property once classes begin for the day. Cafeteria staff prepares all food that is served for breakfast and lunch. The high school operates a central kitchen that prepares and sends meals to the elementary and intermediate schools. The elementary school does not prepare food, and the intermediate school prepares a limited amount of food, both due to their small kitchen sizes.

Students enter serving lines for breakfast and lunch and select items they would like, including milk or juice from beverage coolers. After receiving their meals, students enter their student identification numbers on a keypad, tell the cashier their student ID numbers, or scan cards embedded with their student ID numbers. The Food Service Department uses Systems Design as its point-of-sale (POS) system at each school to account for all meals served. The POS system identifies students as eligible for full-priced, reduced-price, or free meals. Students who are required to pay for meals may pay in advance and have the credit placed in personal meal accounts or pay for each meal as they pass through the serving lines. Each school's cafeteria operations are connected

**FIGURE 7-1**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION, SCHOOL YEAR 2013-14**



NOTE: FT = Full-Time, PT=Part-Time. Total office and cafeteria staff reflects more than 28 as two staff work PT at two locations to make two FT positions.  
 SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Food Service Department, January 2014.

to the district’s wide area network (WAN). **Figure 7-2** shows a summary of the district’s cafeteria operations.

Pearsall ISD participates in the NSLP and the School Breakfast Program. In school year 2013-14, 83 percent of the district’s students qualified for free or reduced-price school meals. In school year 2012-13, the Food Service Department served 131,270 breakfasts and 306,903 lunches. The district participated in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and served breakfast and lunch at four campuses during the summer. This program served 10,568 meals in school year 2012-13.

According to Pearsall ISD’s NSLP District Profile for school year 2012-13, Pearsall ISD’s breakfast participation rate was 27 percent and the lunch participation rate was 64 percent.

The district is on a universal breakfast program, which means free breakfast is offered to all students.

Pearsall ISD schools met the eligibility criteria for severe need breakfast as defined by the USDA (60 percent or more of the students qualified for free or reduced-price meals) and received an additional \$0.06 for every lunch served and an additional \$0.31 for every reduced-price or free breakfast served. During school year 2012-13, Food Service revenues were \$1,195,536, and expenditures were \$1,260,110. Federal reimbursements made up 86 percent of the total school year 2012-13 revenue. State reimbursements made up 1 percent, and local sales contributed 13 percent of total revenue. The Food Service Department had a fund balance of \$305,083 as of August 31, 2013. **Figure 7-3** shows a summary of revenue, expenditures, and fund balances for school year 2010-11 to school year 2012-13.

**FIGURE 7-2**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**CAFETERIA OPERATIONS, SCHOOL YEAR 2013-14**

CAMPUS	KITCHEN PREPARATION TYPE	SERVING CAPABILITIES	MEAL SERVING TIMES	
			BREAKFAST	LUNCH
Pearsall High School	Central Kitchen	Student and Staff: 400 for Breakfast or Lunch	7:15 AM to 7:50 AM	11:35 AM to 1:00 PM
Pearsall Junior High School	Self-Preparation Kitchen	Student and Staff: 500 for Breakfast or Lunch	7:15 AM to 7:50 AM	11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Pearsall Intermediate School	Limited-Preparation Kitchen	Student and Staff: 700 for Breakfast or Lunch	7:00 AM to 8:05 AM	10:50 AM to 12:30 PM
Ted Flores Elementary School	Receiving Kitchen	Student and Staff: 450 for Breakfast or Lunch	7:15 AM to 7:50 AM	10:55 AM to 12:20 PM

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Food Service Department, November 2013.

**FIGURE 7-3**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES ANALYSIS**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2010-11 TO 2012-13**

CATEGORY	2010-11 ACTUAL	2010-11 PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL REVENUE	2011-12 ACTUAL	2011-12 PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL REVENUE	2012-13 ACTUAL	2012-13 PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL REVENUE
<b>Revenue</b>						
Local	\$144,354	11%	\$129,816	11%	\$155,001	13%
State	8,142	1%	8,634	1%	7,667	1%
Federal	1,105,158	88%	1,033,045	88%	1,032,868	86%
Total Revenue	\$1,257,654	100%	\$1,171,495	100%	\$1,195,536	100%
<b>Expenditures and Fund Balance</b>						
Total Expenditures	\$1,249,057	99%	\$1,363,729	116%	\$1,260,110	105%
Net Profit (Loss)	\$8,597	1%	(\$192,234)	(16%)	(\$64,574)	(5%)
Transfer In	\$0		\$5,387		\$0	
Fund Balance	\$556,504		\$369,657		\$305,083	

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Annual Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2013, November 2013.

## ACCOMPLISHMENT

- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department has established a relationship with the City of Pearsall to increase Summer Food Service Program participation.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not implemented effective practices for monitoring and managing the operations of the Food Service Department.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department's practices for staffing cafeteria operations do not allow for efficient use of labor and result in high overtime pay.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department has not implemented procedures to determine the cost of menus to ensure that food expenditures are not exceeding revenue.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department does not monitor meal participation rates throughout the year to take corrective action when rates increase or decrease.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD's process for tracking expenditures associated with catering activities is not consistent with the USDA's Child Nutrition Program regulations.

- ◆ Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department lacks a method for scheduling and budgeting to replace equipment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 42: Develop reporting requirements and short- and long-term planning processes to guide Food Service operations.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 43: Establish staffing standards to keep total labor costs in line with industry standards.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 44: Establish a process for pre-costing and post-costing menu items.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 45: Establish procedures to monitor meal participation rates by school each month and make adjustments when rates increase or drop.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 46: Establish a process to capture labor and overhead costs of preparing food for catering events.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 47: Develop an equipment replacement plan.**

## DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

### SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department has established a relationship with the City of Pearsall to increase Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) participation. The SFSP was established by the USDA to ensure that children in low-income families continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals meeting federal nutrition guidelines are provided to all children age 18 and younger.

In school year 2011–12, the district served 6,218 SFSP meals. The district realized that the lack of transportation to the serving sites contributed to the low participation in this program. The Food Service Department decided to add an additional serving site to the previous summer's locations and worked with the City of Pearsall Parks and Recreation department to transport children to the sites. As a result, the department served 10,568 SFSP meals across four serving locations in school year 2012–13. Opening the additional school for SFSP increased the number of meals served by 70 percent.

By establishing additional serving sites and developing a relationship with the City of Pearsall for transportation, the district provides a valuable service to the children and families of the community through its SFSP.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### MANAGEMENT TOOLS (REC. 42)

Pearsall ISD has not implemented effective practices for monitoring and managing the operations of the Food Service Department. The department lacks a long-term planning process and does not effectively use reporting tools to guide management decisions and operations. Long-term planning encompasses identifying operational needs, setting priorities to address those needs, and monitoring operations and financial results to ensure that the plans are being implemented as intended and that outcomes are meeting expectations.

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department does not manage its financial operations through traditional management-level financial reports such as balance sheets, budget-to-actual comparisons by campus, profit and loss summaries by campus, cash flow statements by campus, and year-to-year comparisons by campus. The department generates a budget report using the district's financial information system, TxEIS. However, this report does not show profit/loss or

fund balance. As a result of not having long-term plans and traditional balance sheets and income statements, the department cannot be certain that it is effectively managing its funds or staying in compliance with the NSLP fund balance requirements.

Although the Food Service Department had a positive fund balance in school year 2012–13, it has incurred annual net losses for two of the past three school years (2011–12 and 2012–13). Fund balances are the accumulated profits at the end of each school year. The NSLP requires that a food services operation maintains no more than three months of operating expenditures in its fund balance, unless there is a documented plan that indicates the accumulation purpose. The district received an audit finding from its external auditors in school year 2010–11 because its fund balance had accumulated 4.5 months of operating expenditures, more than the allowable 3-month threshold. As a result, the district was required to prepare a corrective action plan to reduce the fund balance and submit this plan to the TDA for approval. Part of the plan included expending funds in school year 2011–12 to purchase vehicles for food service operations. These vehicles include a pickup truck to deliver items to schools, a cargo van to deliver food to schools in warmers, and a sports utility vehicle for catering and local travel.

The need to reduce fund balance could explain the \$192,234 operating loss in school year 2011–12 but not the \$64,574 loss in school year 2012–13. The Food Service Department has reduced its fund balance from 4.5 months' expenditures in school year 2010–11 to 2.4 months' expenditures in school year 2012–13. The department's failure to generate and analyze financial statements to guide the management of operations could have contributed to this decline in fund balance.

**Figure 7–4** shows a summary of fund balance calculations for school years 2010–11 to 2012–13 based on the respective year's annual audited financial statements.

Additional examples of how the lack of long-range planning and traditional management tools has impacted food service operations include:

- The Food Service Department purchased a new POS system based upon price and ease of use. However, the department did not include the inventory, menu planning, and purchasing modules in the purchase and implementation. As a result, these remain manual processes that are not integrated to ensure that food

**FIGURE 7-4  
PEARSALL ISD  
EXPENDITURE AND FUND BALANCE EVALUATION  
SCHOOL YEARS 2010-11 TO 2012-13**

MEASURES	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Total Expenditures	\$1,249,057	\$1,363,729	\$1,260,110
Operating Months	10	10	10
Average Monthly Expenditures	\$124,906	\$136,373	\$126,011
Fund Balance	\$556,504	\$369,657	\$305,083
<b>Average Number of Months in Fund Balance</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Annual Operating Budget, November 2013.

purchases are tied to planned menus and available inventory.

- The Food Service Department failed to implement its breakfast in the classroom program in a timely manner. Pearsall ISD received a grant in October 2013 to implement breakfast in the classroom. However, this program was not implemented until December 2013. According to the food service director, implementation was delayed due to teacher reluctance and coordination issues. The program was implemented at the intermediate school (grades 2 through 5) with 91 percent participation and the junior high school (grades 6 to 8) with 81 percent participation.

Florida’s Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) issued *Best Practices Could Help School Districts Reduce Their Food Service Program Costs* in January 2009. This report stated that it is crucial for school districts to establish strong management systems that provide the framework for short-term and long-term decision making for food service programs. Effective long-term planning includes documenting what the food service program plans to accomplish, the timeframes for accomplishment, and quantifiable objectives and strategies. For example, a meaningful objective would be that the program will increase student breakfast participation by 20 percent by implementing grab-and-go breakfasts, and reduce food costs by 3 percent by preparing more items from scratch. Another example includes the number or percentage of equipment that will be replaced each year and the amount of funds budgeted to this goal.

Best practices in the food service industry recommend that four financial and operating reports be distributed to district management and the board so they can monitor and evaluate the cash flow of operations and take corrective action if needed. The reports are: (1) budget, (2) profit-and-loss statement, (3) balance sheet, and (4) cash flow statement.

According to *Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition*, July 2000, the number one requirement for cost control management is an accounting system and procedures that provide accurate and timely financial information and reports. Profit and loss statements should be compared each month, and to the same month one year earlier, to spot sudden changes or possible errors. Additionally, profit and loss statements should be distributed to each district campus within 10 days of the month’s end. **Figure 7-5** shows seven best practice financial reporting tools, the optimal frequency, and whether Pearsall ISD uses and distributes them to its cafeteria managers.

When used effectively, financial statements can control costs by:

- highlighting areas of strength and improvement needs;
- comparing prior periods to spot trends, improvements, and decline, allowing management to take appropriate steps in a timely manner;
- reporting key operating and financial measures (for example, net profit or loss, student participation, meals per labor hour, food costs, and wages); and
- providing a management tool to hold campus food service staff accountable for operations.

Pearsall ISD’s food service director should work with staff and the district’s CFO to develop reporting requirements and short- and long-term planning processes to guide Food Service operations. Areas to address include: developing processes to determine staffing levels, identifying technology needs, implementing innovative feeding programs, determining when to replace equipment, and remodeling and construction needs. Short- and long-range plans should serve as a source for budgeting decisions and be updated each year.

Pearsall ISD’s food service director should regularly prepare financial reports to enhance financial controls, operations monitoring, accountability, and long-term planning. The director should develop financial report templates for monthly profit and loss statements, budget reports, and key

**FIGURE 7–5  
PEARSALL ISD  
FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING EVALUATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

REPORT/ DESCRIPTION	USES	OPTIMAL FREQUENCY	USED BY THE DISTRICT	DISTRIBUTED TO CAFETERIAS
Budget: Illustrates a plan for financial management according to each account.	Allows informed decisions and financial forecasts for the next year through the use of historical, economic, and demographic data, projected enrollment, menu changes, and changes in operational procedures. Forecasts financial performance for the next year. Compares actual and forecasted performances.	Annual with monthly monitoring	Yes, but it is not prepared by campus and is not used for monthly monitoring by department or campus level.	No
Costing food and service.	Allows for informed decision making about purchases and the continuation of products and services.	Daily	No. The food service director plans menus based on overall food cost but does not have a formal meal cost model that includes food and labor.	No
Revenue received from lunch and breakfast.	Identifies major sources of revenue such as free, reduced-price, paid, a la carte, or other.	Daily	No. Food Service office staff enters daily deposits into an Excel sheet and prepares the meal reimbursement claim but does not track revenues.	No
Balance Sheet: Illustrates the financial position of the account at a given time.	Compares current balances with balances at the end of the month of the prior year.	Monthly	No	No
Profit and Loss Statement: Illustrates what is left after all expenditures are paid.	Identifies and analyzes increases or decreases in participation or expenses. Identifies school making a profit or experiencing a loss. Allows administrators to determine where key issues/problems exist.	Weekly or Monthly	No. District generates the budget as its profit and loss statement on an as-needed basis. The budget is not prepared by campus.	No
Statement of Changes: Shows changes in working capital from year to year.	Monitors net increases in working capital requirements.	Annually	Limited to the annual financial report prepared by district's external auditor.	No
Key Operating Percentages: Trends, expenditures and revenues over time.	Allows management and staff to monitor expenditures including: Food cost percentage Labor cost percentage Other costs percentage Break-even point Inventory turnover Participation rates Average daily labor costs Average hourly labor costs	Monthly	No	No

SOURCES: Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition by Dorothy Pannell-Martin (2000); Pearsall ISD, Food Service Department, November 2013.

operating comparison reports such as labor and food costs, meals per labor hour (MPLH) and meal participation rates. The financial information should be extracted from the district's financial system, and the operational statistics should be generated from daily sales reports and participation rates. The financial and operational reports should then be distributed to the district's CFO and cafeteria managers on a monthly basis. Cafeteria managers should take corrective action based on results as necessary.

Since the time of the onsite review, Pearsall ISD staff have developed a spreadsheet to calculate and track the cost of operations, MPLH, sales, ADA, and average daily participation. These data will be used to calculate cost and revenue projections to inform the budget development process.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **STAFFING (REC. 43)**

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department's practices for staffing cafeteria operations do not allow for efficient use of labor and result in high overtime pay.

The department employs a staff of 28 to fill 30 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Staffing levels are determined by the food service director and are based on student population, kitchen type (cooking or receiving), and kitchen layout. However, there are no formal, documented guidelines established for staffing, such as the number of full-time and part-time employees that will be hired per average number of students served each day and the average MPLH.

To attract and retain employees, the Food Service Department attempts to provide full-time status (six hours or more a day) to most staff. This sometimes requires that an employee be assigned to different locations or positions during the school day. For example, one dishwasher works at the high school for 4.5 hours and at the junior high school for two hours each day. The office clerk is assigned to the office for four hours a day and as a cook at the high school for another four hours per day. Excluding the two employees who are assigned multiple positions, 40 percent of the staff are full-time employees assigned eight-hour shifts. **Figure 7-6** shows a summary of cafeteria staffing by location for school year 2013-14.

Overtime is paid when an employee works more than 40 hours a week. During interviews with the review team, the food service director said that overtime can be used by

employees or managers as a way to increase their annual salaries. The department paid \$13,435 (3 percent of total salaries) in overtime to 18 employees in school year 2012-13. The amount that each individual employee received in overtime ranged from 1 percent to 12 percent of annual salary.

The department's total payroll costs, including overtime and benefits for school year 2012-13 were \$548,131 (46 percent of their operating revenues). Labor costs have increased from 44 percent in school year 2010-11 to 46 percent in school year 2012-13. School food service industry standards published in *Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence, Second Edition*, (2008) suggest that labor costs make up no more than 40 percent of operating revenues.

Other districts use productivity metrics to determine staffing needs. Elgin ISD uses an industry productivity standard—MPLH—to determine and measure food service productivity. MPLH is calculated by comparing the number of meals served in a given period with the labor hours used to generate those meals in the same period. According to industry analysts, 16 to 20 meals per labor hour is a reasonable level of productivity given the large variation in food preparation systems and type of foods served. After applying this standard to its food service operations, Elgin ISD maintained an overall average of 16.82 meals per labor hour.

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department should establish staffing standards to keep total labor costs in line with industry standards. These standards could be based on the average number of meals served. A staffing model based on MPLH involves:

- determining labor cost per meal/meal equivalent;
- calculating MPLH;
- calculating the current total hours of labor paid daily at each school site if labor cost is high and MPLH are low;
- analyzing staffing needs based on services offered; and
- benchmarking internally and setting goals.

The food service director should also monitor employee overtime, require that all staff overtime work be approved in advance, and generate weekly reports of staff overtime.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FIGURE 7–6**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**CAFETERIA STAFFING BY SCHOOL**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

TYPE OF SHIFT	HIGH SCHOOL	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	OFFICE	TOTAL STAFF	PERCENTAGE OF STAFF
8-Hour	6	2	1	1	2	12	40%
7-Hour			1			1	3%
6.5-Hour			1			1	3%
6-Hour		2				2	7%
5.5-Hour				2		2	7%
4.5-Hour (1)	1*					1	3%
4-Hour	3*				1*	4	13%
3-Hour		0	3	3		6	20%
2-Hour (1)		1*				1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Percentage of Total Staff Positions</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

NOTE: \* Total office and cafeteria staff reflects more than 28 as two staff work PT at two locations to make two FT positions.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Food Service Department, January 2014.

#### **MENU COSTING (REC. 44)**

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department has not implemented procedures to determine the cost of menus to ensure that food expenditures are not exceeding revenue.

The district does not pre-cost menu items. Pre-costing menus is a financial tool used to determine available revenue and appropriate budgeting of food costs. Pre-costing menus involves identifying the per serving cost of each item on the menu. Menu costs include purchased food, commodities, labor, and overhead. At the time of the onsite review, the food service director looked at the food vendor's website to determine the cost of food items for annual menus.

Additionally, there has not been any post-costing of menus prepared. Post-costing menus is a tool used to monitor efficient food usage and minimize food waste. This process includes determining the actual costs to produce the meal based on production and labor records and the number of meals served. Post-costing is conducted to ensure that actual meal costs match the estimated costs anticipated in the menu planning phase. Pearsall ISD controls the portion size of all food served by using serving equipment that enables food to be portioned in the appropriate amounts, such as scoops, and by pre-plating most menu items. Pre-plating is placing serving portions into individual containers. The food service director plans menus on an annual basis, and production

records are required to be prepared by each campus on a daily basis. However, the production records are not used to evaluate and make adjustments to menus and portion sizes to minimize food waste and more efficiently allocate the department's resources.

Districts are able to ensure that food costs do not exceed revenue by pre- and post-costing menu items. Failure to pre- and post-cost menu items could raise food supply costs and lower revenue. Pearsall ISD's food and supply costs have risen from 48 percent of revenues in school year 2010–11 to 51 percent of revenues in school year 2012–13. **Figure 7–7** shows a summary of the district's food and supply costs for school years 2010–11 to 2012–13. **Figure 7–8** shows the district's 51 percent of revenue for food costs compared to industry standards identified in the *Cost Control for School Food Services, Third Edition*. Compared to the industry standard, the district spent 11 percent more on food and supplies in school year 2012–13 than recommended.

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department should establish a process for pre-costing and post-costing menu items. The department should also target menu costs to align with industry standards. The food service director should determine the cost of each menu option by identifying the per serving cost of food and commodities included in the daily menu, then adding labor and overhead. The per serving

**FIGURE 7-7  
PEARSALL ISD  
FOOD AND SUPPLY EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE  
SCHOOL YEARS 2010-11 TO 2012-13**

	2010-11	PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE	2011-12	PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE	2012-13	PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE
Total Food and Supplies Expenditures	\$597,278	48%	\$641,408	55%	\$609,466	51%
Total Revenue	\$1,257,654		\$1,171,495		\$1,195,536	

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Food Service Department, February 2014.

**FIGURE 7-8  
PEARSALL ISD  
FOOD AND SUPPLY COSTS COMPARED TO INDUSTRY STANDARDS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012-13**

CATEGORY	TARGET PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE	PEARSALL ISD PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE 2012-13
Food and Supply Costs (including paper supplies and detergents)	40%	51%

SOURCES: Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition, by Dorothy Pannell-Martin, (2000); Pearsall ISD budget, November 2013.

costs should be compared to the per meal revenue generated, and menu items should be adjusted to not exceed revenues. This can be done by either changing the menu item or selecting lower-cost food items.

The fiscal impact for this recommendation assumes that the Food Service Department will reduce its annual food and supply costs by 6 percent. Food and supply costs from school year 2012-13 were used to estimate savings. A 6 percent reduction in food and supply costs would result in an annual savings of \$36,568 (\$609,466 food and supply expenditures for 2012-13 x .06 targeted cost reduction) and a five-year savings of \$182,840 (\$36,568 x 5 years).

**PARTICIPATION RATES (REC. 45)**

Pearsall ISD’s Food Service Department does not monitor meal participation rates throughout the year to take corrective action when rates increase or drop. Federal reimbursements

for the food service program are based on the number of meals served each day, more commonly referred to as participation. The NSLP District Profile reports a food service department’s average daily participation (ADP) as a percentage of ADA.

Pearsall ISD’s Food Service Department identifies and reports meal participation rates in October each year, the official reporting period for the NSLP. Pearsall ISD’s NSLP District Profile for school years 2010-11 to 2012-13 show that breakfast participation decreased 7 percent from school year 2010-11 to 2012-13. The lunch participation rate increased 59 percent from school year 2010-11 to school year 2011-12. However, the lunch participation rate decreased 15 percent from school year 2011-12 to school year 2012-13. **Figure 7-9** shows the meal participation rates from school years 2010-11 to 2012-13.

**FIGURE 7-9  
PEARSALL ISD  
MEAL PARTICIPATION RATES AS REPORTED IN NSLP DISTRICT PROFILE  
SCHOOL YEARS 2010-11 TO 2012-13**

	LUNCH			BREAKFAST		
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
ADP as a Percentage of ADA	23%	79%	64%	34%	34%	27%

SOURCE: Texas Department of Agriculture, NSLP District Profile, November 2013.

Effective food service programs monitor meal participation rates by school to take corrective action when trends show more or less participation than anticipated. If participation was low one month, food and supply purchases can be adjusted to avoid overspending. Failure to monitor this information could result in loss of revenue. Similarly, if participation was high one month, food and supply purchases can be adjusted to ensure that there are enough meals to meet student demand.

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI), part of the School of Applied Science at the University of Mississippi, is the only federally funded national center dedicated to applied research; education and training; and technical assistance for child nutrition programs. NFSMI stresses the importance of establishing and monitoring performance indicators, such as participation rate by program and MPLH, to evaluate the effective financial management of a school food service operation. Performance indicators may be stated in dollars, percentages, or ratios to facilitate the analysis process.

NFSMI also stresses that food service department administrators must have accurate information about the average number of students who will participate in the school lunch and breakfast programs on a daily basis as a foundation for making decisions regarding staffing needs, food and supplies purchases, and food production schedules. Knowing the average participation during a given time period can assist food service department administrators in making better financial management decisions that strengthen their programs' resources. The ADP can be used as a forecasting tool to prevent wasting labor hours and overproducing food, or to reduce customer dissatisfaction because of inadequate staff or not enough food.

Pearsall ISD should establish procedures to monitor meal participation rates by school each month and make adjustments when rates rise or fall. Meal participation rates should also be used to assist in decision making for staffing, purchasing, and production scheduling. To do this, the food service director should develop a report that compares the current month's participation rates by campus to the prior month's and also to the same month of the previous year. The report should include year-to-date participation and compare to the previous year-to-date participation. This report would help identify trends and allow the director to make cost control adjustments. Once the report has been generated, the food service director should distribute copies to the respective cafeteria managers and to the district's business office.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **CATERING OPERATIONS (REC. 46)**

Pearsall ISD's process for tracking expenditures associated with catering activities is not consistent with the USDA's Child Nutrition Program regulations. Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department provides catering to internal organizations as a convenience to administrators planning staff events and activities. The department catered 25 activities in school year 2012–13 for a total charge to schools and departments of \$7,495. Although food, salaries, and overhead costs are associated with catering, only the food costs are tracked separately from the department's cafeteria costs. The revenues received from catering activities are recorded in a separate budget account. As a result of not including all costs associated with catering, such as labor and overhead, the net revenues associated with catering activities may be overstated.

The food service director oversees Pearsall ISD's catering operations. The department office staff works with catering customers to develop the desired menu, then orders the food from the district's vendors using the food for sale budget code that is established by the district's Business Office to track food costs in the financial system. Schools and departments pay for the catering through the district's purchase order process so that the funds come directly from their respective budgets. The food is prepared in the high school kitchen by Food Service Department staff during their normal working hours and is delivered to the requesting school or office. All labor and overhead costs are paid from the Food Service Department budget instead of being tracked separately and recorded in a budget expense account specific for catering operations.

A catering menu with prices had not been developed at the time of the onsite review. Instead, the food service director priced each order as it was received by looking up the food cost on the vendors' websites. Not having a catering menu with established prices can lead to instances when not all costs associated with producing the item—such as food, labor, and overhead (electricity, equipment usage, waste management, etc.)—are covered.

*Federal Register, Vol. 69, No 250, Dec. 30, 2004, Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, 7 CFR Parts 210, 215 and 220* states that a school food service authority is permitted to engage in activities that are outside of the scope of the nonprofit school food service; however, the school

food authority must ensure that none of the resources from its nonprofit school food service subsidize the costs of such activities. Direct and indirect costs must be fully funded by the revenues received from such activities or from sources outside the nonprofit school food service account.

The food service director should work with the CFO to establish a process to capture labor and overhead costs of preparing food for catering events. All staff time should be tracked separately for catering activities. An overhead rate needs to be developed and added to all catering invoices. The overhead rate should include: utilities; equipment usage; amounts for small-quantity items such as spices, flour, and sugar; administrative costs to process and track catering requests and order food; and any other expenses associated with catering services.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT (REC. 47)**

Pearsall ISD's Food Service Department lacks a method for scheduling and budgeting to replace equipment. Many of the district's kitchens are old and are equipped with the original appliances and freezers. The district maintains a fixed assets listing for financial statement purposes, however, the Food Service Department does not maintain an inventory of each school's cafeteria equipment that includes the date of purchase or information regarding the useful life of the equipment. At the request of the review team, the department prepared inventory listings for each campus. However, the lists did not include information about the age of the equipment, its purchase price, or its useful life.

The department takes a reactive approach to address its equipment needs. Pearsall ISD uses maintenance employees to repair equipment when it breaks. External repair contractors are used if the maintenance staff cannot repair the equipment. The department replaces equipment when it breaks down and can no longer be repaired.

School cafeteria operations require staff to prepare and serve large volumes of food in a short time. When equipment breaks down, staff is required to expend additional effort to complete tasks, thereby reducing efficiency. All major equipment was working at the time of this review; however, the equipment is old.

Industry standards identified in *Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition* recommend spending 1 percent of revenue on equipment maintenance and replacement.

Pearsall ISD should develop an equipment replacement plan. The Food Service Department should use information regarding the date of purchase and the useful life of equipment based on established accounting guidelines to develop the replacement plan. The purchase date and useful life serve as guidelines to indicate when the equipment will need to be replaced due to normal use. The food service director should review the list of anticipated replacement dates each year during the budget cycle, and allocate funds for the equipment purchases to be made that year.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 7: FOOD SERVICE</b>							
42. Develop reporting requirements and short- and long-term planning processes to guide Food Service operations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
43. Establish staffing standards to keep total labor costs in line with industry standards.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
44. Establish a process for pre-costing and post-costing menu items.	\$36,568	\$36,568	\$36,568	\$36,568	\$36,568	\$182,840	\$0
45. Establish procedures to monitor meal participation rates by school each month and make adjustments when rates increase or drop.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
46. Establish a process to capture labor and overhead costs of preparing food for catering events.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
47. Develop an equipment replacement plan.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$36,568</b>	<b>\$36,568</b>	<b>\$36,568</b>	<b>\$36,568</b>	<b>\$36,568</b>	<b>\$182,840</b>	<b>\$0</b>

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# **CHAPTER 8**

# **TRANSPORTATION**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 8. TRANSPORTATION

An independent school district's transportation function transports students to and from school and other school-related activities. This function is regulated by federal and Texas state laws related to funding, vehicle type, driver education, and safety issues. Districts implement these regulations, budget and allocate resources, and establish operational procedures for bell schedules, bus routes, and transportation fleet maintenance.

Managing transportation operations is dependent on the organizational structure of the district. Districts may either contract for or self-manage their transportation departments. Using a contracted management model, a district relies on the company to provide supervision of its transportation department. In this arrangement, a district may rely on the company to provide all or some staff, or may use district staff for its operations. Using the self-management model, a district operates its transportation department without assistance from an outside entity. Managing transportation operations requires planning; state reporting and funding; training and safety; and vehicle maintenance and procurement. Primary transportation expenditures include capital investments in vehicle fleets, and annual costs of maintenance and operations. State transportation funding relies on a district's annual submission of certain transportation reports to the Texas Education Agency, which is determined by a formula that includes the number and type of students transported.

Pearsall Independent School District (ISD) provides transportation services to approximately 500 regular education and 15 special needs students at the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high school campuses. The district also provides transportation to 57 students in auxiliary/extended school programs, including a daycare program in the community and to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) located in Jourdanton, Texas. All of the district schools and programs are located in close proximity in the city of Pearsall. The district reports that approximately 2,236 students are enrolled in school across the grade levels.

The transportation function is self-managed, and all supervisory, drivers, monitors, and fleet maintenance personnel are direct employees of Pearsall ISD. The district's bus parking and maintenance facility is centrally located

within approximately a mile of each of the campuses. The facility is surrounded by a perimeter fence and monitored by a multi-camera system. Staff parking is immediately adjacent to the bus facility, which is shared with the district's warehousing and storage function. Although the facility has a single work bay, it is large enough to accommodate working on more than one vehicle at a time. In addition to the Transportation coordinator, two full-time-equivalent (FTE) fleet maintenance mechanics, and the drivers, the department recently added two bus monitors to assist drivers with student behavior issues.

Services are provided using a routing structure commonly referred to as a single-tier system. The system is facilitated by a similar bell-time structure across the educational programs. As a result of the single-tier system, kindergarten to grade 12 students are all transported on the same route bus and are dropped off or picked up at each of the schools on a sequential schedule. A single-tier system is common in many areas, especially more rural areas covering large geographical but low population density areas; Pearsall ISD has adopted a less typical methodology for the sequencing of drop-offs at each of the campuses. As an example, many single-tier operations drop off students beginning with the lower grades and finishing at the high school to lessen the ride time for the youngest students. The district's buses drop off students at the school closest to where the buses are at a given time, based on the area they serve, to reduce the overall time of each of the runs.

Based on the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) School Transportation Route Services and the Operation Reports for school year 2012–13, the district reported 19 buses in the fleet. Pearsall ISD actively uses 12 buses and has seven spares. The total transportation operating costs for school year 2011–12 were \$556,443, and in 2012–13 were \$482,561. The transportation allotment received for school year 2011–12 was \$109,365, or 20 percent of total operating costs for that year.

The key measures of cost effectiveness for a student transportation system include the annual cost per transported student and the annual cost per active route bus. It is also useful to convert the annual cost per bus to a daily cost. This metric allows for the comparison of district costs to the typical industry standard for the pricing of contracted

services. **Figure 8–1** summarizes the key measures of cost effectiveness for Pearsall ISD.

**FIGURE 8–1  
PEARSALL ISD  
KEY MEASURES OF COST EFFECTIVENESS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

MEASURE	METRIC
Annual Cost per Student	\$937
Annual Cost per Active Route Bus	\$40,213
Daily Cost per Active Route Bus	\$223
Buses per 100 Students Transported (Total Fleet of 19 Buses)	3.69
Buses per 100 Students Transported (12 Active Route Buses)	2.33

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Operation and School Transportation Route Services Reports, November 2013.

As shown in **Figure 8–2**, costs are approximately \$937 per student, or 50 percent lower than the average of peer districts. Peer districts are districts similar to Pearsall ISD that are used for comparison purposes. The lower-than-average cost is the direct result of Pearsall ISD achieving a better use of available seating capacity compared to its peer districts. Capacity utilization is measured by a calculation of the number of buses required for 100 students. The range for highly efficient operations is typically 1.0 to 1.3 buses per 100 students. The district’s value is 3.69 buses per 100 students (including spares), compared to its peer average of 5.19. Pearsall ISD’s lower ratio of buses is due in part to a higher number of

family households (households with school age children) than its peer districts. This results in the district achieving a higher rate of capacity use. According to the *2007–2011 U.S. Census Bureau, 2007–2011 American Community Survey*, Pearsall ISD had 2,704 family households compared to 1,371 for Carrizo Springs ISD and 1,948 for Fabens ISD and a peer average of 1,660 family households. Family household data was not available for West Oso ISD.

Transportation funding for regular program students is allotted using the preceding school year’s linear density and cost per mile. Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 42.155, defines regular program students as students who reside two or more miles from their school of regular attendance. The cost-per-mile allocation is based on data submitted in the School Transportation Route Services Report and the Student Transportation Operation Report. Linear density of bus routes is determined based on the number of regular riders carried per mile of regular bus routes during the school year. The amount of state funding that a district receives for transportation is based on the lower of the actual cost per mile or the maximum amount determined in one of the seven density groupings established by TEA. In school year 2012–13, Pearsall ISD’s cost per mile for regular program students was \$2.48, and its linear density was 0.63. Based on the reported annual mileage of 123,804 and the linear density allotment of \$0.79, the district received an allotment of \$97,805 for regular program transportation. The allotment for Special Program transportation was based on reported annual mileage of 10,704 and an allotment of \$1.08 per mile for a total of \$11,560. These calculations are shown in

**FIGURE 8–2  
PEARSALL ISD AND PEER DISTRICTS COST PER BUS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

DISTRICT	TOTAL COSTS	TOTAL BUSES	TOTAL HOME TO SCHOOL STUDENT RIDERS	COST PER STUDENT RIDER	ANNUAL COST PER BUS BASED ON TOTAL BUSES	BUSES PER 100 STUDENTS TRANSPORTED	AVERAGE STUDENTS PER BUS
Carrizo Springs	\$1,063,813	40	804	\$1,323	\$26,595	4.98	20
Fabens	\$612,834	15	210	\$2,918	\$40,856	7.14	14
West Oso	\$488,814	16	353	\$1,385	\$30,551	4.53	22
Peer Average	\$721,820	24	456	\$1,875	\$32,667	5.19	19
<b>Pearsall ISD</b>	\$482,561	19	515	\$937	\$25,398	3.69	27
Over (Under) Peer District Average	(\$239,259)	5	59	(\$938)	(\$7,269)	(1.5)	8.4

NOTES: The cost per bus is based on total buses reported in use, including spares. While this calculation provides a reasonable metric for comparison, it is not reflective of the actual cost per route bus. The number of buses per 100 students is based on total buses reported in use, including spares, and is not reflective of the actual number of students per active route bus.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Operation and School Transportation Route Services Reports, November 2013.

**FIGURE 8-3  
PEARSALL ISD ALLOTMENT CALCULATION  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012-13**

PROGRAM	SUBPROGRAM	ANNUAL MILEAGE	ALLOTMENT PER MILE	TOTAL ALLOTMENT
Regular Program	Home to School/ School to Home	123,804	\$0.79	\$97,805
Special Program	Home to School/ School to Home	10,704	\$1.08	\$11,560
Total School Year 2012-13 Allotment				\$109,365

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Operation and School Transportation Route Services Reports, November 2013.

Figure 8-3, and Figure 8-4 shows the linear density groups and maximum allotment per mile used by TEA beginning in school year 2010-11.

**FIGURE 8-4  
LINEAR DENSITY GROUPS  
BEGINNING WITH SCHOOL YEAR 2010-11**

LINEAR DENSITY GROUP	MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT
	PER MILE
2.40 and above	\$1.43
1.65 to 2.399	\$1.25
1.15 to 1.649	\$1.11
0.90 to 1.149	\$0.97
0.65 to 0.899	\$0.88
0.40 to 0.649	\$0.79
Up to 0.399	\$0.68

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Allotment Handbook, Effective School Year 2010-11.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT**

- ◆ Pearsall ISD has established a multifaceted approach to addressing concerns about student discipline on the bus by installing security cameras and hiring two bus monitors.

**FINDINGS**

- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s process for recording transportation data is not clearly defined and lacks a review process to ensure accuracy of data for state reporting.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not clearly defined hazardous traffic areas within the two-mile eligibility radius, and the district transports students in these areas without collecting the funding allowed by TEA.

- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s Transportation Department lacks documentation on work flow and operational policies and procedures to guide service delivery.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks an effective process to manage district vehicles and does not have a plan to provide for a consistent funding source to replace worn or aged vehicles.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s fuel management processes do not allow for adequate control of fuel cost or consumption.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks effective maintenance management procedures, including appropriate documentation, a structured preventive maintenance program, and appropriate costing tools.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks an effective method for bus drivers to communicate with dispatch for efficient daily operations or in the event of an accident or emergency.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not established a process to manage and monitor the Transportation Department budget, resulting in incomplete or incorrect accounting practices and overstating transportation costs.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD has not implemented an effective recruiting and retention plan in the Transportation Department to compete with local employers for skilled workers in the area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ◆ **Recommendation 48: Redesign the manual data management processes to ensure that the collection of transportation data is consistent and accurate for the required state transportation reports.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 49: Define hazardous traffic areas within the two-mile eligibility radius and**

determine if pick-up zones within this radius are eligible for hazardous traffic area funding.

- ◆ **Recommendation 50: Develop detailed practices and procedures to clearly define the level of transportation services that can be provided and how those services will be delivered.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 51: Establish fleet and asset management guidelines and develop a fleet replacement schedule to ensure that the district maintains an affordable fleet to meet its transportation needs.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 52: Develop fuel purchasing practices and procedures to ensure accuracy in reporting and to reduce the potential for loss due to theft or inaccurate reporting.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 53: Implement a structured fleet maintenance management program with the ability to track and schedule preventive maintenance and to track and analyze the labor, parts, and supply cost for all fleet maintenance activities.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 54: Investigate the viability of installing two-way radios or global positioning system-based (GPS-based) vehicle locating systems to support and ensure communications between the supervisor and the route buses during daily operations and especially in the event of an accident, incident, or other emergency situations.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 55: Develop budget monitoring procedures that support the accurate tracking of the cost of transportation services.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 56: Examine driver recruiting activities and job sharing practices to ensure that an essential number of drivers are readily available to support effective and efficient transportation services and to reduce the impact on other departments.**

## DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

### STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Pearsall ISD has established a multifaceted approach to addressing concerns about student discipline on the bus by installing security cameras and hiring two bus monitors.

The goal of any school transportation system is the safe transportation of its students. While the driver is primarily responsible for the safe operation of the bus on the roadways and at stop locations, the driver must also monitor and maintain an acceptable level of behavior from the students being transported. The addition of video monitoring and the employment of bus monitors in conjunction with well-defined, documented, and enforced policies work together to ensure the safety of the transported students by helping the driver to be more focused on the operation of the bus with less distraction from the students.

Pearsall ISD installed cameras on all buses during school year 2011–12 to evaluate circumstances related to student issues. In the fall of 2013, two staff members were hired as monitors to assist bus drivers with student discipline management. These two monitors are rotated among the buses to maintain some degree of random oversight and to address specific buses with issues. The hiring of the monitors was partially in response to an increase in the opportunity for driver distraction due to the number of heavy trucks that travel in the area as a result of the Eagle Ford Shale Play. Having monitors ride on the buses has allowed the drivers to be more focused on their prime responsibility of safe driving, instead of trying to address student behavior issues while the amount of traffic in the area has increased.

*Protecting Children: A Guide to Child Traffic Safety Laws*, produced by the National Conference of State Legislatures in 2002 in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, recognized the importance of maintaining student behavior to promote safety in student transportation. This report stated that bus monitors increase transportation safety by allowing the drivers to concentrate on safe driving. Interviews with Pearsall ISD staff indicate that the monitors have been able to build positive relationships with the students, and that positive interaction results in lower incidences of student behavior issues.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### TRANSPORTATION DATA (REC. 48)

Pearsall ISD's process for recording transportation data is not clearly defined and lacks a review process to ensure accuracy of data for state reporting. The Transportation Department's manual data management process has resulted in inaccuracies in the state reporting and the transportation allotment.

The Transportation Department does not use technology to support the management and administration of

transportation services. School districts are required to submit to TEA both an annual Transportation Route Services Report, for the reporting of transportation mileage and ridership, and a Student Transportation Operations Report, to report costs. These reports are the primary sources for determining a district's transportation allotment or reimbursement. In Pearsall ISD, the information necessary to complete each of these reports is provided by each individual route driver. Drivers are responsible for completing the required turn-by-turn route description log to determine route mileage and for student counts. The information is then manually aggregated to complete each report and to determine the allotment that should be received.

According to the review team's visual review of the transportation logs, there is inconsistency in how drivers record mileage. This inconsistency indicates that the process for recording the data is not well-defined, and the logs are not adequately reviewed for accuracy. Currently, the transportation reporting process is paper-based. A Support Services secretary tabulates the data by using a common office calculator.

A review of the logs used to support the school year 2012–13 TEA route services report indicated a substantial difference in the total miles on the report versus those on the manual logs. The TEA report indicated 123,804 total miles for regular home-to-school services, while the manual logs indicated 109,966 annual miles. Applying the established \$0.79 per mile allotment to the 13,838 mile difference between the two sources indicates that Pearsall ISD may have received \$10,932 in excess funding due to the inconsistency with the number of eligible miles.

Given the manual processes, the data for prior years was not immediately available for review to determine if these findings are an anomaly or indicate a pattern that is occurring over time.

The TEA School Transportation Allotment Handbook clearly establishes requirements for the reporting of route data including:

- route descriptions must be accurately maintained and updated as needed;
- measurement must begin and end at the location the bus or vehicle is parked;
- routes must be measured and recorded by each turn-by-turn segment to the nearest one-tenth of a mile and represent the total daily mileage;

- if the route segment is less than one-tenth of a mile, rounding up is not permitted;
- new route descriptions including revised measurements should be developed as significant changes occur; and
- as new routes are developed, records of the previous routes are to be maintained for inclusion in the annual reporting process.

Pearsall ISD should redesign the manual data management processes to ensure that the collection of transportation data is consistent and accurate for the required state transportation reports. The use of common productivity software, such as Microsoft Excel, is preferable to the current practice of manual calculation and recording. The use of software for the entering of data and calculation of results is necessary to ensure the accuracy of the report and to aid in the identification of discrepancies.

This process should begin with a review of the TEA requirements and how these requirements can be met within the available resources of the district. This review and implementation of the process should include:

- providing training to the drivers on how the logs must be completed to ensure accuracy and consistency;
- inserting a data verification and review step in the process to ensure the accuracy of information submitted by the drivers;
- providing training to staff on how the accuracy of the process can be improved by using software;
- assisting the department in the design of database tools to reduce the manual calculation of data; and
- performing an internal review of the report before it is submitted to TEA.

In addition, the district should consult with TEA regarding the potential impact on state funding.

This recommendation will require a commitment of time from district staff, including transportation, business office, and technology staff. This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **HAZARD AREA TRANSPORTATION (REC. 49)**

Pearsall ISD has not clearly defined hazardous traffic areas within the two-mile eligibility radius, and the district

transports students in these areas without collecting the funding allowed by TEA.

The result is a potential loss of reimbursement that may be possible through the TEA allotment process. The district has established two group stops within the two-mile limit of the schools to serve as collection points for students, but it has not formally identified those students as receiving transportation based on the presence of hazardous traffic conditions, although that was the reason for the creation of the group stops. Transportation Management Policy CNA (LEGAL) establishes the conditions that may qualify based on hazardous traffic conditions as:

- a hazardous condition exists where no walkway is provided and students must walk along or cross a freeway or expressway, an underpass, an overpass, or a bridge;
- an uncontrolled major traffic artery; and
- the presence of an industrial or commercial area or another comparable condition.

While the district has adopted a hazard area policy, interviews with the Transportation coordinator indicate that the Pearsall ISD Board has not formally defined designated hazardous traffic areas. Formal definitions are necessary to support reimbursement from TEA's allocation process.

A hazard traffic area policy that is based on the periodic assessment of the walking paths is necessary to ensure that students who are otherwise ineligible (based on distance) are provided with a safe means of transportation in the absence of safe pedestrian routes. As stated in the TEA School Transportation Allotment Handbook, funding is available for students who reside in a school-board-designated hazardous traffic area within the two-mile eligibility distance, providing that the local board has adopted a written policy that is approved by board action. The policy must define the hazardous conditions that exist within two miles of educational campuses and the areas of the district that contain the specific hazardous conditions.

The hazard traffic policy for Austin ISD provides an example of an effective policy. The Austin ISD policy clearly establishes the parameters for traffic hazard transportation. These parameters include:

- walking adjacent to or across a freeway or expressway;
- a walk path that includes an overpass or underpass or a bridge where no pedestrian path is available; and

- establishing that neighborhoods without sidewalks do not qualify for hazard-based transportation if they lack the preceding criteria.

The traffic hazard and other policy examples can be found on the department's homepage at [www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org).

Pearsall ISD should define hazardous traffic areas within the two-mile eligibility radius and determine if pick-up zones within this radius are eligible for hazardous traffic area funding.

Once these areas are identified and a policy is developed, the policy must be approved or adopted by the board of trustees. Once approved, the policy must be submitted to the TEA School Transportation Unit to establish eligibility. Eligibility is effective as of the date the policy is adopted. Eligibility for a hazardous allotment is not retroactive to the beginning of the school year if the policy is adopted after the school year has begun.

This effort could be implemented within existing resources but will require staff time to define the areas where hazardous conditions exist and to submit the documentation to the board for approval.

TEA guidelines allow for a maximum of 10 percent of the total annual allotment for transporting hazardous area students. Given that the regular service miles claimed in school year 2012–13 were 123,804 and the reimbursement rate for Pearsall ISD is \$0.79 per mile, the maximum amount of additional reimbursement that could have been received was \$9,780 ( $123,804 \times .10 \times .79$ ). This fiscal impact assumes that since the district is already transporting these students, no additional costs would be incurred.

#### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 50)**

Pearsall ISD's Transportation Department lacks documentation on work flow and operational policies and procedures to guide service delivery.

The transportation guidelines described in Pearsall ISD's Student/Parent Handbook provide a basic level of guidance for the delivery of transportation services. While the handbook describes the level of services that will be provided, it lacks definition on how services will be delivered. As shown in **Figure 8–5**, the lack of clarity introduces the possibility of misinterpretation by stakeholders and the necessity for interpretation by departmental staff as to the limits of services that can be provided and how those services are to be delivered.

**FIGURE 8–5  
PEARSALL ISD  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY EXAMPLES**

HANDBOOK STATEMENT	OPERATING PRACTICE AND POTENTIAL ISSUES
Buses and other school vehicles: School bus transportation is available to all students living two or more miles from school at no cost to the students.	<p>Transportation is being provided to students who live less than two miles from two group stops within the city due to the presence of undefined hazardous traffic conditions.</p> <p>In the absence of formally defined and designated hazardous traffic areas, students living in other areas of the community with similar traffic conditions may not be eligible for transportation. This potentially results in an inequitable level of service.</p>
Alternate pick-up/drop-off location: A parent may designate a childcare facility or relative’s residence as the regular pick-up or drop-off location.	Guidelines do not fully describe the level of consistency that must be maintained, such as same location Monday through Friday.
School-sponsored trips: Students participating in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation.	<p>Guidelines indicate that the principal, a coach, or a sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures making an exception to this requirement.</p> <p>Policy does not clearly define what circumstance would require an exception.</p>
School safety transfers: Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus.	<p>Guideline is clear that transportation will not be provided when a request is made to transfer as a result of a bullying incident.</p> <p>Policy is less clear in the instances of violent crimes or sexual assaults.</p>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Student/Parent Handbook, Staff Interviews, November 2013.

Districts with detailed practices and procedures can more effectively establish service level expectations and clearly define the responsibilities of all stakeholders of the service. This includes the drivers, building administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Without clearly defined practices and procedures, district transportation practices may be inconsistent and unclear to parents and students. The development and adoption of safety-related practices and procedures helps to ensure the safety of both transported and walking students on their way to and from their schools of attendance.

Austin ISD provides an excellent example of a district that has developed quality procedure statements. The Transportation Department’s webpage provides links ([www.austinisd.org/transportation](http://www.austinisd.org/transportation)) to English and Spanish versions of regular and special needs policies and procedures. Examples of topics that are documented include:

- eligibility: two miles or more from their campus of regular attendance and students who live within the two-mile distance who would encounter hazardous traffic conditions along their walking routes to school;
- bus stop parameters: Stops are located based on the analysis of factors such as population density, traffic patterns, and the availability of sidewalks, the number of students per stop, and the prohibition of stops on

dead-end streets to eliminate bus backing maneuvers; and

- walk-to-stop distances: elementary school, one quarter mile; middle school, one-half mile; and high school, one mile.

Special needs parameters include:

- timeline for services to be established: three to five business days;
- wheelchair requirements: the operation of chair’s wheel locks, the use of foot and arm rests, and the use of a safety belt; and
- parent responsibilities: communications, enforcement of bus rules, and having the student ready at least three minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.

Some districts use the *National School Transportation Specification and Procedures* publication for the development of more concise policies and procedures. This publication was adopted by the Fourteenth National Congress on School Transportation and was co-sponsored by groups including the National Association of State Coordinators of Pupil Transportation Services, the National Association for Pupil Transportation, and the National Safety Council, School Transportation Section. The publication provides examples of policies, procedures, and forms. A comprehensive listing

of policies and procedures to be considered for development include eligibility requirements, a description of the types of transportation that are available, a description of special needs services, and responsibilities of stakeholders.

Pearsall ISD should develop detailed practices and procedures to clearly define the level of transportation services that can be provided and how those services will be delivered.

The district should begin a review of current policies, undocumented practices, and the Student/Parent Handbook to identify operational areas where further development of practices and procedures is necessary. Pearsall ISD should then identify areas for which no policy currently exists. Practices and procedures should address the primary areas that directly impact costs, levels of service, and safety. This process would require a commitment of time from district staff, including transportation staff, building and senior administrators, and special education staff.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FLEET MANAGEMENT (REC. 51)**

Pearsall ISD lacks an effective process to manage district vehicles and does not have a plan to provide for a consistent funding source to replace worn or aged vehicles.

Fleet replacement standards including maximum age and mileage parameters have not been developed or documented by the district for school buses or other vehicles, such as those used by the district’s security guards. Without defined age and mileage replacement parameters and a corresponding dedicated funding source, the average and maximum age of a district’s fleet of vehicles is likely to increase.

Currently, there are 19 buses in the fleet, with an average age of nine years. The oldest bus is a 1997 model (17 years of age). The newest buses are 2009 models (five years of age). On average, Pearsall ISD buses are three years older than the industry guideline of six years.

The age of the fleet can have a direct impact on the number of spare buses that are required. As the age and mileage of the fleet increase, reliability can become a factor. As the fleet becomes less reliable, the number of spares may need to be increased to ensure that a ready replacement is available in the event of equipment failure. The increase in the number of spares has a direct impact on costs for parts and repair labor. The fleet includes seven spare buses to support 12 active route buses, resulting in a spare-to-active ratio of 58 percent,

compared to the industry standard developed by the National Association of State Coordinators of Pupil Transportation of 10 percent to 15 percent. These results are shown in **Figure 8–6**.

**FIGURE 8–6  
PEARSALL ISD FLEET STATISTICS**

METRIC	PEARSALL	INDUSTRY GUIDELINES
Average bus age	9 Years	6 Years
Maximum bus age	17 Years	12 to 15 Years
Percentage of active to spare buses	58%	10% to 15%

SOURCES: Pearsall ISD, Fleet Data, National Association of State Coordinators of Pupil Transportation; Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, November 2013.

In addition to buses, the vehicles assigned to Pearsall ISD’s security guards are more than 10 years old and are not reliable. In review team interviews, security staff said they use their personal vehicles because their vehicles are more reliable, but staff members are not reimbursed for mileage. Additionally, fleet inventory is not being updated and maintained.

Districts with a well-defined and fiscally supported fleet replacement plan maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of transportation operations. While no national mandates have been established for the replacement of school buses or security vehicles, industry standards or recommendations have been developed based on the observations of transportation coordinators across the country. In a 2002 position paper by the National Association of State Coordinators of Pupil Transportation Services, a 12- to 15-year maximum age for large buses and 8- to 10-year maximum age for smaller buses was recommended.

**Figure 8–7** shows a best practice example Vehicle Management Plan published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts in May 2010, which provides best practices for new vehicle requirements and replacement analysis.

Pearsall ISD should establish fleet and asset management guidelines and develop a fleet replacement schedule to ensure that the district maintains an affordable fleet to meet its transportation needs.

The first step is to determine a reasonable maximum age and mileage standard for the district. Next, to ensure that vehicles are replaced in accordance with determined standards, a dedicated funding source should be established. The sample Vehicle Management Plan (**Figure 8–7**) shows the process

**FIGURE 8-7  
SAMPLE TEXAS STATE VEHICLE FLEET MANAGEMENT PLAN  
TEXAS PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLIER SERVICES**



SOURCE: Comptroller of Public Accounts, May 2010.

that Pearsall ISD could follow to evaluate requirements and replace its fleet of vehicles. **Figure 8–8** shows an example of a bus purchase plan (based on a 15-year replacement cycle) that could be followed during the next 10 years to budget the funding required in any one fiscal year. This sample plan would also ease the fiscal burden of funding the replacement of eight buses during school years 2023–24 and 2024–25. The number of buses required to be purchased during these two years is the direct result of purchasing four buses in both 2008 and 2009. Two buses would be required to be replaced in 2014. This is at a cost of \$185,400, based on an estimated average of \$92,700 for a model 2014 bus. A single bus would be required for replacement in 2015 at an estimated cost of \$95,500. Two additional buses would be required for purchase in years 2016, 2017, and 2019 at an estimated combined total of \$614,212. The increase in purchase prices is reflective of the cost per bus being escalated at a rate of 3 percent per year.

**FIGURE 8–8**  
**SAMPLE FLEET REPLACEMENT PLAN EXCLUDING**  
**REDUCTION IN SPARE BUSES**

YEAR	NUMBER OF BUSES	REPLACEMENT COSTS	FUNDING REQUIRED	FUND BALANCE
2014	2	\$185,400	\$200,000	\$14,600
2015	1	\$95,481	\$180,000	\$99,119
2016	2	\$196,691	\$190,000	\$92,428
2017	2	\$202,592	\$190,000	\$79,837
2018	0	\$0	\$190,000	\$269,837
2019	2	\$214,929	\$190,000	\$244,907
2020	1	\$110,689	\$190,000	\$324,218
2021	1	\$114,009	\$190,000	\$400,209
2022	0	\$0	\$190,000	\$590,209
2023	4	\$483,810	\$190,000	\$296,399
2024	4	\$498,324	\$190,000	(\$11,925)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>\$2,101,924</b>	<b>\$2,090,000</b>	<b>(\$11,925)</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Transportation Department; Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, January 2014.

The example in **Figure 8–8** does not include a reduction in the number of spares that should be possible through the more regular replacement of the fleet and is likely to represent the worst case scenario for the replacement of the fleet as currently operated. An established and followed replacement plan should reduce the number of spares that are required by reducing the number of aged buses and increasing the overall reliability of the fleet. Based on that plan, the number of spares should be able to be reduced by at least three vehicles

as new vehicles become available. The negative fund balance in the example shown in **Figure 8–8** would be offset by the sale of excess buses.

The development and approval of a replacement plan for school buses and general purpose vehicles could be achieved within current resources. Annual expenditure requirements can only be determined after the plan is developed and the most beneficial method of financing is determined. New revenue would be generated in school years 2016–17, 2017–18, and 2018–19 amounting to \$5,000 per year from the sale of the three excess spare buses.

**FUEL PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES (REC. 52)**

Pearsall ISD’s fuel management processes do not allow for adequate control of fuel cost or consumption.

The district’s vehicles are fueled off-site at a local commercial service provider. For each transaction, the vehicle operator must sign a receipt indicating the date and number of gallons pumped into the vehicle. There is no requirement for vehicle operators to document vehicle numbers on the receipt, although this sometimes occurs. Until recently, the vehicle operator was required to retain a copy of the receipt to submit to the supervisor, who would forward the copies to accounts payable. Some drivers did not retain and submit the receipts in a timely basis, so the current practice is that all receipts are retained by the vendor and forwarded directly to accounts payable for payment. This diminishes the supervisor’s ability to perform a timely verification of the receipts as the fuel is purchased and consumed. This manual process prevents any rigorous analysis of fuel consumption, including the number of transactions, the total gallons pumped, or the number of transactions by employee. The failure of this process is evident in an analysis of data recorded in school years 2011–12 and 2012–13. During this period, the total miles recorded decreased by 11,659 miles while fuel costs increased by \$5,047. These totals are shown in **Figure 8–9**.

Many districts and public entities have replaced the use of open purchase orders with the use of district-issued credit or purchase cards (P Card). The use of these cards reduces the manual processes that are necessary to monitor and track regular and ongoing purchases within a district. Issuing an individual purchase card to each authorized purchaser provides a ready means to track all purchases by each employee and provides the supervisor with the data necessary to monitor fuel purchased by the driver and consumed by each vehicle. This information can be used in the fleet maintenance process to help identify mechanical issues that

**FIGURE 8–9**  
**PEARSALL ISD FUEL ANALYSIS**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2011–12 AND 2012–13**

PROGRAM	ANNUAL MILEAGE			ANNUAL FUEL CONSUMPTION		
	2011–12	2012–13	CHANGE	2011–12	2012–13	CHANGE
Regular Program	135,630	123,804	(11,826)	\$82,945	\$87,040	\$4,094
Special Program	10,537	10,704	167	\$4,783	\$5,736	\$953
<b>Totals</b>	<b>146,167</b>	<b>134,508</b>	<b>(11,659)</b>	<b>\$87,728</b>	<b>\$92,776</b>	<b>\$5,047</b>

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Operation and School Transportation Route Services Reports, November 2013.

may negatively impact a vehicle's fuel efficiency. Veribest ISD is an example of a district that implemented the use of credit cards for fuel after its district-owned fuel tanks were removed. Implementation of the system was an inexpensive way to track fuel use and to identify buses or vehicles with mechanical issues. As a result of the district's ability to readily monitor fuel consumption by vehicle, Veribest ISD was able to identify a bus inefficiently using fuel without any obvious operational issues. In the absence of fuel consumption monitoring, the mechanical issues may have not been assessed. Those mechanical issues may have incurred additional costs over the operational life of the bus or created a major component failure.

Pearsall ISD should develop fuel purchasing practices and procedures to ensure accuracy in reporting and to reduce the potential for loss due to theft or inaccurate reporting.

The district should investigate the use of purchase cards as means to be able to readily track and analyze fuel purchase and use for all of its vehicles, especially its school transportation fleet. Once it is determined that local suppliers can accommodate the use of this technology, procedures should be reviewed and modified to reflect the use of the purchase card system. This should include the purchase parameters, accounts payable procedures, and reporting requirements for both expenditure tracking and fleet maintenance.

While this recommendation could be implemented with existing resources, it will require a dedicated amount of district staff time to establish the process with local vendors and to develop the internal practices and procedures.

#### **FLEET MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT (REC. 53)**

Pearsall ISD lacks effective maintenance management procedures, including appropriate documentation, a structured preventive maintenance program, and appropriate costing tools.

Currently, there are no structured procedures to schedule vehicle preventive maintenance services. The transportation coordinator is responsible for manually tracking bus mileages and scheduling buses for service. The district has no forms or systems to record transactions and no methods to establish order or reorder points for repair parts and supplies. The maintenance system is almost wholly lacking in documentation, with the exception of purchasing transactions. This represents a risk management-related issue in both cost and operations. The department has recognized this issue has not been addressed and has begun the process to implement a manual tracking system. The system is in the early stages of development and is not yet beneficial to the operation. The solution appears to be without a fully developed strategic plan to include available technology that would support scheduling, tracking, and the analysis of both cost and employee performance.

Districts that develop preventive maintenance (PM) programs and establish reactive maintenance procedures are best able to support efficient transportation operations. In the absence of a well-defined, documented, and monitored PM program, both costs and service levels can be impacted. An effective PM program supports the fundamental objective of preventing equipment failure by identifying and correcting equipment defects at the earliest stage of failure or on a predetermined replacement schedule. Without an effective PM program, more expensive repairs may be required to replace defective components and other components within the vehicle's system that may have become compromised. The timely correction of minor defects reduces the costs of major repairs and the risk of vehicle failure while providing services to students. The diligent tracking of a vehicle's maintenance history also supports district risk management practices and improves the district's ability to respond to inquiries in the event of an accident or incident. An incomplete maintenance history prevents the district from demonstrating that it has acted prudently in maintaining its

vehicles. The Fort Bend and Austin ISDs are two districts that have benefited from implementing fleet maintenance tracking software. Examples cited in their respective School Performance Reviews include:

- increased productivity and efficiency;
- the ability to track and analyze employee productivity;
- the tracking of vehicle repair histories;
- the coordination between pre-trip reports and the scheduling of work; and
- the tracking of non-fleet maintenance tasks to justify scheduling overtime work.

Pearsall ISD should implement a structured fleet maintenance management program with the ability to track and schedule preventive maintenance and to track and analyze the labor, parts, and supply cost for all fleet maintenance activities. While the department's intent to implement its own procedure using currently owned word-processing software is well-intentioned, it should not be done in isolation. While a word-processing-based procedure is desirable over no method or system of tracking, the information obtainable from a basic word processing program must first be converted to some form of a data table before it can be useful for analysis.

As with any software solution, the department should first determine what it expects from a system and then compare the system's capabilities against those expectations. As recommended, those expectations should at a minimum include:

- the ability to track and schedule preventive maintenance activities;
- the tracking (by vehicle) of all labor, parts, and supplies for each repair for the life of the vehicle; and
- the ability to generate reports to understand costs and performance or at the least the ability to extract data for reporting or analysis.

Given the size of the district, a costly commercial system may not be justifiable. The district should investigate the resources that are available from their bus or parts vendors. As an example, many of the major bus manufacturers offer some form of web-based PM and reactive maintenance tracking software that could be considered by the district. Another possibility may be expanding the Eduphoria SchoolObjects work order system, currently being used for technology work orders, to include transportation work orders. If a district-

designed program is implemented, it should at minimum use common database software to enable the ready extraction of data for analysis and reporting. A central server should host the system to ensure that the data is routinely backed-up.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation cannot be fully determined before additional conversations with the district's bus and parts vendors to determine what level of support can be provided at either zero or minimal costs. In any event, this recommendation will require a dedicated amount of staff time both during the initial phase of implementation and as an ongoing task as part of routine fleet maintenance activities. No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation.

#### **COMMUNICATION (REC. 54)**

Pearsall ISD lacks an effective method for bus drivers to communicate with dispatch for efficient daily operations or in the event of an accident or emergency.

The district's buses are not equipped with two-way radios or other communication technology; instead, drivers are provided with district cell phones to communicate with Transportation Department management. If a driver elects to use her or his personal cell phone in lieu of the district-provided phone, no reimbursement is provided. A log of cell phone assignments and use is maintained by the Business Office. The use of a cell phone represents an operational risk in the event of an accident or incident, particularly in the event of driver impairment, that occurs at any distance from the center of Pearsall. Given the rural characteristics of the district, this is a particular concern. Although cell phones provide a means of communication in lieu of a two-way radio system, the use of cell phones is not without concern and risk. Examples include:

- failure to follow federal and state law regarding the use of cell phones while the bus is in motion or in a school zone;
- the reliability of cell phone coverage throughout the district's service area; and
- the reliability of the cell phone network during an extreme weather event.

Two-way communications between route buses and management supports effective and safe bus operations and is imperative during emergency situations. Having on-board two-way radios could allow immediate contact between each bus and its dispatch or management office to communicate basic operational information while the bus is on its assigned

route. Examples of the information that is communicated daily include:

- notification to the driver that an assigned student will not be riding the bus;
- re-routing a bus due to a traffic accident;
- reporting a student incident or behavior issues when assistance from school administrators is necessary; and
- reporting of a mechanical failure and the need for a replacement bus.

While cell phones can be an alternative means of communication, distracted driving while using a cell phone or texting has become a national focus for legislators and public safety offices. This concern has led to legislation across the country to either ban or restrict the use of cell phones in both private vehicles and school buses. Texas Transportation Code, Section 545.425, prohibits school bus operators from using cell phones while driving if children are present. Additionally all drivers are prohibited from using handheld devices in school crossing zones.

Pearsall ISD should investigate the viability of installing two-way radios or global positioning system-based (GPS-based) vehicle locating systems to support and ensure communications between the supervisor and the route buses during daily operations and especially in the event of an accident, incident, or other emergency situations.

The district should begin by investigating the radio system that local and county police departments, fire departments, and other first responders are using. Given the size of the district's transportation operation, there may be an opportunity for the district to join a consortium of governmental agencies at a lower cost. Secondly, school safety grants may be available to help offset the cost of installing bus radios. One source for the exploration of grant opportunities is the Federal Emergency Management Agency—Homeland Security Grant Program. Information can be found at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

Investigating opportunities for collaboration with local governmental agencies and exploring grant opportunities could be implemented with existing resources. If the district installs a system, however, this will have a cost. As a comparison, the Mount Pleasant ISD received an estimate of \$2,025 per year based on a lease/purchase agreement starting in the year 2000. Using this as a baseline and applying a 3 percent escalation factor, it is estimated that an annual cost

for the equipment would be approximately \$3,060 per year. The total cost of a system cannot be determined before initial investigation of collaboration with local governments and potential grant funding. No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation.

#### **BUDGET MONITORING (REC. 55)**

Pearsall ISD has not established a process to manage and monitor the Transportation Department budget, resulting in incomplete or incorrect accounting practices and overstating transportation costs.

Currently, the transportation coordinator is not involved in the budget development and monitoring process. The responsibility for budget development and monitoring of expenditures rests with the Pearsall ISD Business Office. A transactional assessment of costs allocated to the Transportation Department between school years 2010–11 and 2011–12 showed a series of one-time expenses (primarily associated with camera purchase and installation) and construction costs that were incorrectly allocated to operating line items. These allocations resulted in artificial increases to maintenance and repairs and to supplies and materials line items. As shown in **Figure 8–10**, the result of this was an increase in the Transportation Department expenditure accounts from \$151,855 to \$274,693, an increase of about 81 percent. The transactional assessment found that approximately \$48,053 was directly attributed to construction-related activities, while \$55,300 included one-time expenditures for equipment such as a transmission jack, a vehicle lift, the bus cameras, and security cameras for the shop.

The subsequent adjustment of the total expenditures based on the transactional assessment resulted in adjusted expenditures for fiscal year 2012 of \$171,330, for a lower difference of \$19,475 (13 percent).

The allocation of costs by function or department enables managers to more accurately understand the cost of providing a program or service. As an example, Corpus Christi ISD found that with better allocation of utility costs to each department and campus, they achieved a more accurate accounting of costs and ultimately the actual cost of the services that were provided.

Pearsall ISD should develop budget monitoring procedures that support the accurate tracking of the cost of transportation services.

**FIGURE 8–10  
PEARSALL ISD  
TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES  
SCHOOL YEARS 2010–11 AND 2011–12**

ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION	2010–11	2011–12	DIFFERENCE	PERCENTAGE INCREASE OR (DECREASE)
Maintenance and repairs	Fiscal Year Total	\$26,616	\$64,461	\$37,845	142%
Maintenance and repairs	Construction Costs		\$48,053		
Adjusted Maintenance and repairs less construction costs		\$26,616	\$16,408	(\$10,208)	(28%)
Shop supplies and parts	Fiscal Year Total	\$18,618	\$82,893	\$64,275	345%
Shop supplies and parts	Equipment and Bus Transmission		\$55,310		
Adjusted Shop supplies less equipment costs		\$18,618	\$27,583	\$8,965	48%
Total Year over Year Expenditures	Maintenance, Repairs, Supplies, and Parts	\$151,855	\$274,693	\$122,893	81%
Adjusted Year over Year Expenditures		\$151,855	\$171,330	\$19,475	13%

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, November 2013; Pearsall ISD, Transportation Department.

The first step is to review the account code structure for the Transportation and Support Services departments to determine if they have the currently established codes. Once this review is completed, departmental procedures and training processes should be reviewed to ensure that the Transportation coordinator understands the coding structure and the allocation process.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING (REC. 56)**

Pearsall ISD has not implemented an effective recruiting and retention plan in the Transportation Department to compete with local employers for skilled workers in the area. Specifically, the department must compete for skilled employees within the Eagle Ford Shale Play. As a result, the district’s Transportation Department is not adequately staffed to support daily operations.

The Transportation Department does not have any spare bus drivers in the event of driver absences. The Transportation coordinator drives a bus route almost daily, which prevents him from addressing some management concerns, and one of the two mechanics is assigned to a daily route. The Support Services secretary also drives if there is a need. In the event of multiple driver absences, the department must make extraordinary efforts to double trip buses and revise established routes to support daily operations. Several of the

drivers assigned to daily routes have other positions within the district, including the Support Services and school secretaries and maintenance and grounds staff. However, there is no consistent process to determine which staff obtain a commercial driver’s license (CDL) with a school bus endorsement. The result is that one of the mechanics and neither of the bus monitors have been required to obtain a CDL and cannot be assigned to driving duties, while non-transportation staff such as school custodians, maintenance workers, and Food Service staff are required to drive. The performance of daily route driving responsibilities may compete with staff’s primary responsibilities which, as in the case of the Transportation coordinator, may prohibit or reduce staff ability to address issues within their primary functions. As an example, the Support Services secretary is primarily responsible for the tracking of Transportation Department expenditures and preparing reports that support transportation allocations and reimbursements. It is imperative that a high level of accuracy is maintained to ensure that the district receives the appropriate allotment; assigning those same personnel to driving routes may jeopardize this level of accuracy.

The shortage of drivers, and in particular substitute drivers, is the direct result of competition for skilled employees due to the influence of positions available within the energy industry, specifically the Eagle Ford Shale Play. Interviews indicate that wages in the energy industry are approximately

\$20.00 per hour compared to a maximum of \$15.95 per hour for district drivers.

On-call substitutes, permanent substitutes, and cross-training are common strategies used within the industry to ensure that a pool of substitute drivers is readily available. Although establishing a ready pool of on-call substitutes can be an effective method to ensure that substitute drivers are available, it requires an ongoing effort to maintain. Permanent substitutes, on the other hand, would be required to report on a daily basis and would be paid regardless of whether there is an absence requiring a substitute driver. This plan could ensure that district-employed staff members are readily available for route and run substitution without conflicting with other employment responsibilities outside of the district. Increasing the total number of drivers in the department to include permanent substitute positions may be the most effective method to ensure the availability of substitute drivers; but it can be costly, and it requires an additional allotment of an FTE in addition to the baseline number of active route drivers. For example, given the 12 daily district routes and considering a 10 percent absenteeism rate, one to two additional drivers would be required. The additional drivers represent a 10 percent to 17 percent increase for driver labor.

Cross-training between Support Services staff (e.g., school custodians, maintenance workers, and Food Service staff)—requiring a number of staff to obtain and maintain a commercial driver’s license with a school bus and passenger endorsement—is a strategy that is commonly used by smaller districts and is currently used by Pearsall ISD. In the event of a driver shortage, trained and readily available district staff are reassigned to transported students in a timely and safe manner. While this strategy can be effective, it must be structured so that it does not interfere with the responsibilities of the employee’s primary position.

Pearsall ISD should examine driver recruiting activities and job sharing practices to ensure that an essential number of drivers are readily available to support effective and efficient transportation services and to reduce the impact on other departments.

An ongoing and sustained driver recruitment process should be established. Methods of recruiting could include:

- ongoing advertisements for drivers in local print or media;
- signs on the bus facility or enclosure;
- postings on school information signs;
- outreach to local churches and service organizations; and
- strategically parked bus at school and community events with an attached recruitment banner.

As a component of the hiring process, the interview should include a discussion of how the prospective driver became aware of the opportunity. Knowing how the applicant found the open position could help the district determine the effectiveness of these and other recruitment methods.

In conjunction with the implementation of recruitment activities, a review of the cross-training or job sharing positions should also be conducted. This could include establishing timing guidelines to schedule work that is not time-sensitive during less critical hours. As an example, some of the maintenance and grounds work could be performed on the second shift or during non-critical times for transportation to free up those additional personnel for driving responsibilities.

Lastly, the Transportation Department should transition to requiring that all department staff are available for driving duties, including the second mechanic and the bus monitors.

The fiscal impact of these recommendations would result in a cost of approximately \$2,408 per year to provide CDL training for new drivers. These costs include the salary costs of the trainer, a training rate for the trainee, and for miscellaneous costs for signage, advertisements, and training materials. These calculations are shown in **Figure 8–11**.

**FIGURE 8–11  
CDL TRAINING COSTS**

EMPLOYEE OR COST	RATE PER HOUR	TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL SALARY	FICA (SALARY X .0865)	TOTAL SALARY COST	FEES AND MATERIALS	TOTAL COSTS (ROUNDED)
CDL Trainer	\$22.42	25	\$560.50	\$48.48	\$608	\$0	\$608
CDL Trainee	\$11.10	75 (25 x 3 Trainees)	\$832.50	\$72.00	\$904	\$400	\$1,300
Advertisements (Estimated)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200	\$200
Signage (Estimated)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300	\$300
<b>Total Recruiting and Training Costs</b>							<b>\$2,408</b>

SOURCE: Regional Education Service Center XX, November 2013.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION</b>							
48. Redesign the manual data management processes to ensure that the collection of transportation data is consistent and accurate for the required state transportation reports.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
49. Define hazardous traffic areas within the two-mile eligibility radius and determine if pick-up zones within this radius are eligible for hazardous traffic area funding.	\$9,780	\$9,780	\$9,780	\$9,780	\$9,780	\$48,900	\$0
50. Develop detailed practices and procedures to clearly define the level of transportation services that can be provided and how those services will be delivered.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
51. Establish fleet and asset management guidelines and develop a fleet replacement schedule to ensure that the district maintains an affordable fleet to meet its transportation needs.	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$0
52. Develop fuel purchasing practices and procedures to ensure accuracy in reporting and to reduce the potential for loss due to theft or inaccurate reporting.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
53. Implement a structured fleet maintenance management program with the ability to track and schedule preventive maintenance and to track and analyze the labor, parts, and supply cost for all fleet maintenance activities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION</b>							
54. Investigate the viability of installing two-way radios or global positioning system-based (GPS-based) vehicle locating systems to support and ensure communications between the supervisor and the route buses during daily operations and especially in the event of an accident, incident, or other emergency situations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
55. Develop budget monitoring procedures that support the accurate tracking of the cost of transportation services.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
56. Examine driver recruiting activities and job sharing practices to ensure that an essential number of drivers are readily available to support effective and efficient transportation services and to reduce the impact on other departments.	(\$2,408)	(\$2,408)	(\$2,408)	(\$2,408)	(\$2,408)	(\$12,040)	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,372</b>	<b>\$7,372</b>	<b>\$12,372</b>	<b>\$12,372</b>	<b>\$12,372</b>	<b>\$51,860</b>	<b>\$0</b>



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## **CHAPTER 9**

# **COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 9. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

An independent school district's technology management affects the operational, instructional, and financial functions of a school district. Technology management requires planning and budgeting, inventory control, technical infrastructures, application support, and purchasing. Managing technology is dependent on a district's organizational structure. Larger districts typically have staff dedicated to administrative and to instructional technology responsibilities, while smaller districts may have staff responsible for both functions.

Administrative technology includes systems that support a district's operational, instructional, and financial functions (e.g., financial management, human resources, payroll, student attendance, grades, and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting). Administrative technology improves a district's operational efficiency through faster processing, increased access to information, integrated systems, and communication networks. Instructional technology includes the use of technology as a part of the teaching and learning process (e.g. integration of technology in the classroom, virtual learning, and electronic instructional materials). Instructional technology supports curriculum delivery, classroom instruction, and student learning.

Texas state law requires school districts to prepare improvement plans that include the integration of technology with administrative and instructional programs. A plan defines goals, objectives and actions for technology projects; assigns responsibility for implementation steps; and establishes deadlines. The state provides a tool for planning and assessing school technology and readiness, which identifies performance measures for teaching and learning, educator preparedness, administration, support services and infrastructure.

Pearsall Independent School District's (ISD) Information Technology (IT) Department is responsible for implementing and maintaining the technology infrastructure and telecommunications capabilities of the district. For infrastructure, this responsibility includes deployment, maintenance, and support of the server environment (network, application, and database), computers (desktop, laptop, and tablet), and printers (local and networked). For telecommunications, this responsibility includes deployment,

maintenance and support of the telephone circuits, telephones, telecommunications servers, communications switches and routers, Internet circuits, firewalls, and content filters.

Pearsall ISD's IT Department is led by a director of technology who reports to the superintendent. The network administrator and three technical support specialists report to the director. The director manages the information systems, computing infrastructure, and technology services for the district. Responsibilities include technology and information management, development of policies and procedures that govern technology activities, preparation and management of the district's IT budget, hardware and software acquisition and inventory control, and management of IT staff. The director ensures efficient and effective access to information and related technology for administrative departments and campuses. The network administrator is responsible for implementing and maintaining the district's wide area network (WAN) and local area networks (LAN). This responsibility involves the installation, testing, and oversight of all network hardware, software and related equipment. He or she is also responsible for developing and providing end-user training as needed.

Three technical support specialists provide assistance and support technology at the campus level. They provide onsite technical assistance for computing equipment and technology problems. One specialist supports the junior high school and the high school, and another specialist supports the intermediate and elementary schools. The other technical support specialist supports the more than 600 tablet and laptop computers deployed at the junior high school.

The district uses the Texas Enterprise Information System (TxEIS) as its business and student data management system that is hosted and supported by Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20). TxEIS is a web-based system that is fully integrated and supports all operational and reporting requirements for the district. TxEIS meets all compliance and reporting requirements for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and federal agencies.

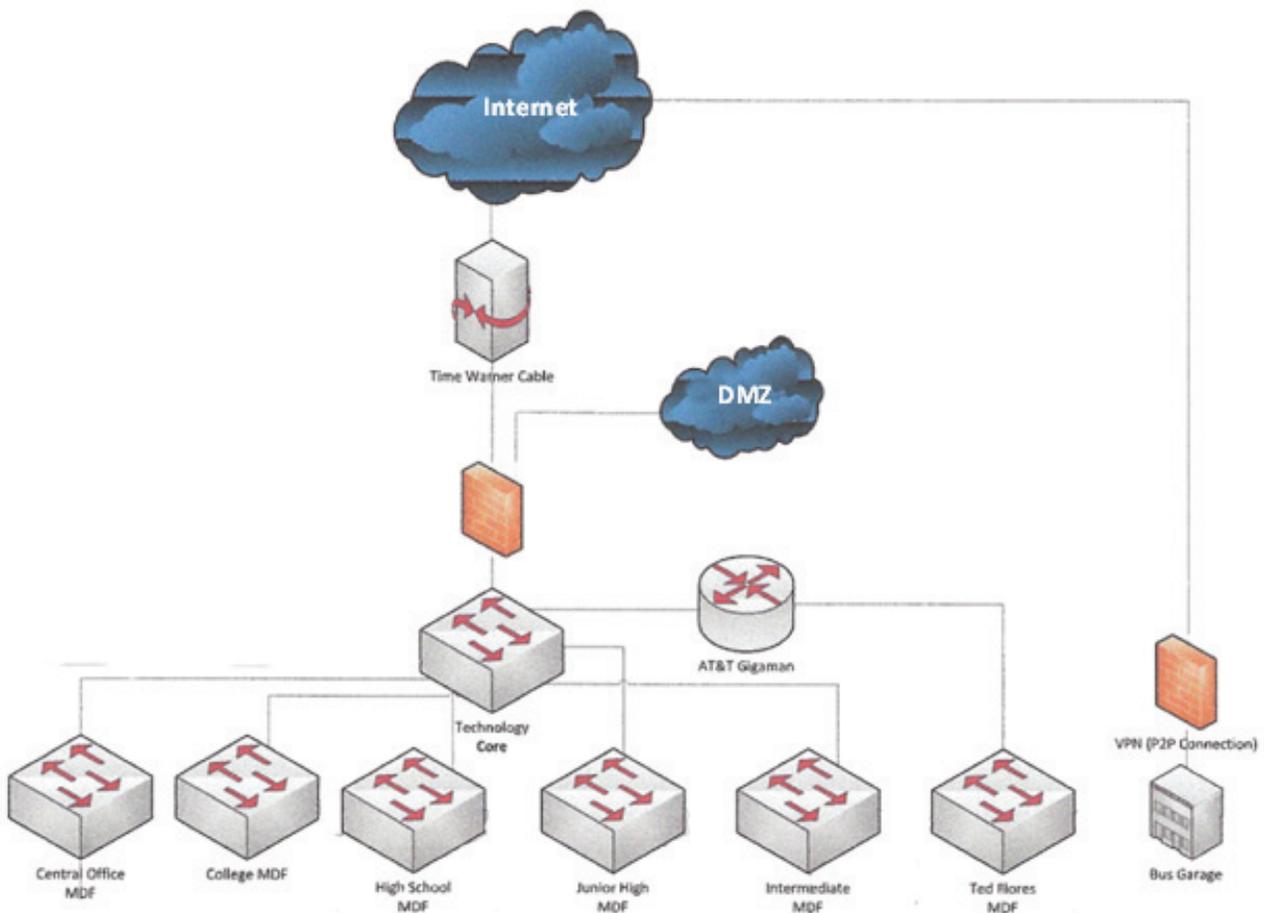
Pearsall ISD's WAN operates on a fiber-optic structure that connects three campuses to the data center building. The elementary school connects to the WAN via a GigaMan

circuit. The WAN consists of 12 file servers running Windows 2000 or 2008 Advanced Server Operating System. **Figure 9–1** shows the district’s WAN and Internet connectivity. All district locations have a LAN to provide connectivity for local hardware devices.

Pearsall ISD’s IT operational budget for school year 2013–14 is \$624,925 or \$280 per student. **Figure 9–2** shows a summary of Pearsall ISD’s IT operational budget for school year 2013–14.

Pearsall ISD does not yet meet the Texas State Board of Education 2006–2020 Long-Range Plan for Technology (LRPT) recommendation of a student-to-computer ratio of 1:1 by 2020. There are 1,050 student accessible computers in the district of 2,236 students resulting in an overall student-to-computer ratio of slightly more than 2:1. The district has met the 1:1 teacher-to-computer ratio as recommended by the Texas State Board of Education 2006–2020 LRPT.

**FIGURE 9–1**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**WAN AND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



NOTES: DMZ=Data Management Zone; MDF=Main Distribution Facility; VPN=Virtual Private Network.  
 SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Information Technology Department, November 2013.

**FIGURE 9–2**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OPERATIONAL BUDGET**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Salary/Benefits	\$209,925
Professional Services	\$120,000
Supplies and Equipment	\$269,500
Training	\$25,000
Subscriptions and Dues	\$500
<b>Miscellaneous Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$624,925</b>
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>2,236</b>
<b>Average per Student</b>	<b>\$280</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Information Technology Department, November 2013.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD actively participates in the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Schools and Libraries program (E-rate) and effectively uses Priority 1 funds to maintain and stabilize its technology infrastructure.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD was awarded a Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) grant to use Cycle 2 funds to purchase tablet computers for the junior high school to provide the school with a “real world” personalized learning culture.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s director of technology also serves as the district’s PEIMS coordinator; this dual responsibility substantially reduces the director’s time available to spend on core technology duties.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks clearly defined responsibilities for instructional technology which results in a lack of focus and coordination for the identification, integration, and training of innovative technology tools.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a process to manage its website and to ensure consistency among campus websites, compliance with state requirements, and accessibility to the district’s stakeholders.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD does not have a long-range technology plan that adequately addresses required upgrades or

replacements to the aging technology infrastructure to meet the future needs of the district.

- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks documented procedures to govern the handling of technology support activities.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD’s IT Department lacks a process to monitor and assess support effectiveness and identify areas of improvement as they relate to cost efficiency, quality of service, and staff workload allocation.
- ◆ While Pearsall ISD has established a daily backup rotation of its key file servers, it does not have a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan to protect the district’s data.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 57: Evaluate the effectiveness of having the director of technology also serve as the PEIMS coordinator at the district level.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 58: Assess the need for and, if cost effective, create a dedicated instructional technology position to coordinate and manage the identification, integration, and training for technology tools.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 59: Establish procedures for keeping the website current and compliant with state requirements and establish guidelines for campus websites to keep them consistent with the district website.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 60: Evaluate and identify new technology requirements and develop a three- or five-year long-range technology plan that considers the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs), and incorporate a computer replacement strategy.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 61: Develop written procedures to govern the handling of technology support activities.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 62: Develop key performance indicators with targets to measure technology support effectiveness and maximize the use of the HelpDesk system to monitor these indicators.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 63: Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that allows the district to continue operations in the**

**event that the data center is damaged and/or computer operations fail.**

**DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE**

Pearsall ISD actively participates in the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Schools and Libraries program (E-rate) and effectively uses Priority 1 funds to maintain and stabilize its technology infrastructure. E-rate is a federally funded program administered by USAC to provide discounts up to 90 percent to assist eligible school districts to afford telecommunications and Internet access. Eligibility for discounts is based on the poverty level and urban/rural status of the population that the school district serves. Pearsall ISD qualifies for discounts of 90 percent for equipment and services. The E-rate funds are allocated according to rules of priority. Priority 1 covers telecommunications, telecommunications services, and Internet access services. Priority 2 covers internal connections and basic maintenance of internal connections. The E-rate program is funded in cycles beginning each July and continues through the following June. Pearsall ISD annually re-evaluates eligible technology infrastructure needs and submits a funding request. The district uses Priority 1 funds to provide and maintain telephone equipment and services, network equipment and services, and Internet access. In school year 2013–14, Pearsall ISD also submitted a request for \$1.5 million in E-rate Priority 2 funds to upgrade or replace its aging infrastructure. Funding, which is pending approval, would be used to install new cabling, replace internal connections, and install new network connectivity equipment throughout the district. **Figure 9–3** shows the district’s E-rate funding for the past five school years.

**FIGURE 9–3  
PEARSALL ISD’S E-RATE FUNDING  
SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 TO 2013–14**

SCHOOL YEARS	REQUESTED FUNDING	APPROVED FUNDING
2013–14	\$1,529,342	\$122,178
2012–13	\$456,291	\$111,908
2011–12	\$146,526	\$104,861
2010–11	\$128,212	\$128,212
2009–10	\$513,944	\$513,944
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>\$2,774,315</b>	<b>\$981,103</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Information Technology Department, November 2013.

The E-rate program funds have enabled the district to effectively maintain and stabilize its technology infrastructure.

**JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION**

Pearsall ISD was awarded a Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) grant to use Cycle 2 funds to purchase tablet computers for the junior high to transform the school to a “real world” personalized learning culture. The TTIPS grant is authorized pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 with funds made available under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA). Pearsall ISD selected the transformation model to use the TTIPS Cycle 2 funds to purchase approximately 600 tablets at the junior high school. The objectives of the transformation model are to:

- develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness;
- implement comprehensive instructional freeform strategies;
- increase learning time and create a community-oriented school; and
- provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

The transformation model is a three-year program to accomplish these objectives. The three-year funding budget for the TTIPS Cycle 2 funds was \$3,706,094. **Figure 9–4** shows a breakdown of the budget categories by year.

Pearsall ISD is in the third and final year of the TTIPS grant funding. The tablet computers purchased under the grant have been embraced by the teachers, students and parents. The district adopted an Acceptable Use Policy that governs the use of the tablets that must be signed by the student and parent. The budget for the TTIPS grant included a technology technician to maintain and support the tablets and related equipment. The district must assess and determine how it will provide support when the grant funding period ends.

**DETAILED FINDINGS**

**PEIMS COORDINATION (REC. 57)**

Pearsall ISD’s director of technology also serves as the district’s PEIMS coordinator; this dual responsibility substantially reduces the director’s time available to spend on core technology duties. Currently, each campus has at least one PEIMS clerk. For PEIMS submission, the district uses a web-based application supported by Region 20. PEIMS responsibilities take more than 40 percent of the

**FIGURE 9–4**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**TTIPS CYCLE 2 FUNDS**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2011–12 TO 2013–14**

CATEGORY	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	TOTAL
Payroll Costs	\$389,850	\$663,550	\$778,550	\$1,831,950
Professional and Contracted Services	\$189,800	\$207,300	\$198,300	\$595,400
Supplies and Materials	\$56,349	\$207,689	\$110,764	\$374,802
Other Operating Costs	\$66,700	\$119,764	\$107,764	\$294,228
Capital Outlay	\$553,939	\$55,775	\$0	\$609,714
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>\$1,256,638</b>	<b>\$1,254,078</b>	<b>\$1,195,378</b>	<b>\$3,706,094</b>

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Information Technology Department, November 2013.

director's time. These responsibilities include coordinating, integrating, formatting, and correcting all data required for submission according to TEA PEIMS data standards.

Additional duties like running reports, answering PEIMS-related questions, providing training, and serving as backup for the campus PEIMS clerks adds to the time commitment. The district contracts with Region 20 to assist with PEIMS support and training. This contract includes six consulting sessions to cover any new updates, address issues or concerns, and gather any problem information that could lead to system changes.

For the director, the time spent on PEIMS detracts from his ability to fulfill his IT Department responsibilities. During onsite interviews, staff reported the director's time spent on PEIMS negatively affected their ability to do their jobs because of the director's limited availability to discuss and address technology issues.

Districts often dedicate a position solely as director of technology to effectively manage department operations. This position manages department staff, oversees the development and implementation of policy and procedures, monitors department equipment and budgets, and solves problems. Districts that use this staffing approach are best equipped to manage these responsibilities.

The district should evaluate the effectiveness of having the director of technology also serve as the PEIMS coordinator at the district level. The time required to effectively manage the technical environment and staff of an aging technology infrastructure should be strongly considered. Two organizational alternatives should be considered. One alternative is assigning and training an administrative staff member at the district or campus to be the full-time PEIMS coordinator. This approach would require some training and

oversight for at least one submission cycle. The other alternative is to assign an administrative staff member the role of secretary to assist the director of technology with PEIMS. This secretary would require some ongoing training but could also assist with the Technology Department's clerical duties.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY (REC. 58)**

Pearsall ISD lacks clearly defined responsibilities for instructional technology which results in a lack of focus and coordination for the identification, integration, and training of innovative classroom technology tools. In the absence of an instructional technology position, the chief academic officer (CAO) and the director of technology collaborate on classroom technology tools requested by the instructional staff. The CAO approves requests for instructional technology from the instructional staff, and the director of technology acquires and provides training if offered by the vendor. There is no ongoing training for the instructional staff which results in inconsistency among classrooms, and technology tools that are not being effectively used and integrated into the curriculum.

The use of classroom instructional technology enhances the teaching process and helps the students learn how to function in today's technologically advanced workplaces and society. Students need instruction for incorporating technology into their daily activities. A curriculum that incorporates technology improves instructional material and familiarizes students with computers and other technology. To be effective, the classroom instructors must be adequately trained and comfortable with the use of the instructional technology tools for integration into the curriculum. Pearsall

ISD’s 2013–14 Technology Plan incorporates objectives to enhance instructional staff skills to effectively integrate technology in the classroom. However, this plan is only being used for E-rate submission, so nothing is being done to address these issues in the district. **Figure 9–5** shows the goals and objectives of Pearsall ISD’s 2013–14 Technology Plan.

TEA developed the School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart for use by districts to conduct a self-assessment of their progress of integrating technology into the curriculum in alignment with the goals of the Texas State Board of Education 2006–2020 Long-Range Plan for Technology (LRPT). The assessment also identifies areas where training may be required. The key areas of the STaR Chart are: Teaching and Learning; Educator Preparation and Development; Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support; and Infrastructure for Technology. There are four stages of progress: Early Tech, Developing Tech, Advanced Tech, and Target Tech. **Figure 9–6** shows the key areas and scoring within each of the key areas.

**Figure 9–7** shows a summary of Pearsall ISD’s 2013–14 campuses STaR ratings depicting the level of progress and the average score for each of the four key areas.

The goal is to reach Target Tech in all key areas. Pearsall ISD’s average progress ranges from Developing Tech to Advanced Tech. No campus has reached Target Tech in any area.

Pearsall ISD has invested in administrative and instructional software to provide administrators and instructional staff access to the latest educational programs and tools. **Figure 9–8** shows a list of this software. The instructional software is being used but not in a coordinated and effective manner due to a lack of training and integration support. For example, **Figure 9–8** shows that there are multiple math instructional software programs being used by Pearsall ISD. Student math scores in the district are low and students may have challenges sequentially progressing through the levels of math, as well as between grades. The lack of a technology coordinator function to manage the use of the instructional software programs may be contributing to this problem.

**FIGURE 9–5  
PEARSALL ISD  
2013–14 TECHNOLOGY PLAN  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Goal 1: Enhance the technology skills of all staff through a comprehensive staff development system.	Objective 1.1: Provide technology literacy staff development to all staff every year to improve technology integration in the school district.
Goal 2: Improve academic achievement through the appropriate use of technology.	Objective 2.1: Improve the technology skills of all students by offering a technology curriculum at all grade levels that meets or exceeds state and national requirements. Objective 2.2: Ensure equal access to technology for all students.
Goal 3: Pearsall ISD will ensure effective communication with students, parents, and the community.	Objective 3.1: Utilize technology to improve communication with parents and community.
Goal 4: Pearsall ISD will continue to expand the use of school facilities to improve education in the community.	Objective 4.1: Expand the number of post-secondary institutions that provide dual-credit, undergraduate, graduate, certification, and adult literacy courses in the community.
Goal 5: Pearsall ISD will use technology to provide timely and accurate data for decision-making at the campus and district levels.	Objective 5.1: School district administrators will model the use of technology to improve communication and technology skills among school employees. Objective 5.2: Review and evaluate performance data annually.

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, 2013–14 Technology Plan, November 2013.

**FIGURE 9–6  
TEXAS CAMPUS STaR CHART FOCUS AREAS AND SCORING  
SPRING 2010**

KEY AREA	FOCUS AREAS	SCORES DEPICTING LEVELS OF PROGRESS
Teaching and Learning	Patterns of classroom use Frequency/design of instructional setting using digital content Content area connections Technology application TEKS implementation Student mastery of technology applications (TEKS) Online learning	Early Tech (6 to 8 points) Developing Tech (9 to 14 points) Advanced Tech (15 to 20 points) Target Tech (21 to 24 points)
Educator Preparation and Development	Professional development experiences Models of professional development Capabilities of educators Technology professional development participation Levels of understanding and patterns of use Capabilities of educators with online learning	Early Tech (6 to 8 points) Developing Tech (9 to 14 points) Advanced Tech (15 to 20 points) Target Tech (21 to 24 points)
Leadership, Administration and Instructional Support	Leadership and vision Planning Instructional support Communication and collaboration Budget Leadership and support for online learning	Early Tech (5 to 7 points) Developing Tech (8 to 12 points) Advanced Tech (13 to 17 points) Target Tech (18 to 20 points)
Infrastructure for Technology	Students per computers Internet access connectivity/speed Other classroom technology Technical support Local Area Network/Wide Area Network Distance Learning Capability	Early Tech (5 to 7 points) Developing Tech (8 to 12 points) Advanced Tech (13 to 17 points) Target Tech (18 to 20 points)

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Campus STaR Chart, Spring 2010.

**FIGURE 9–7  
PEARSALL ISD  
CAMPUSES AVERAGE STaR CHART RATINGS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

KEY AREA	CAMPUSES AVERAGE RATING
Teaching and Learning	Developing Tech – 14 points
Educator Preparation and Development	Developing Tech – 12 points
Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support	Advanced Tech – 14 points
Infrastructure for Technology	Advanced Tech – 14 points

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Campus STaR Chart Summary, November 2013.

The district should assess the need for and, if cost effective, create a dedicated instructional technology position to coordinate and manage the identification, integration, and training for technology tools. The position would be responsible for managing and coordinating instructional technology acquisition and training, and integration of technology into the curriculum. The instructional technology position should be filled by an individual who is well-trained in operations of instructional resources, using innovative technologies for instructional purposes, and integrating new technologies into the curriculum. The instructional technology position would be responsible for:

- advising schools regarding effective strategies and helpful educational resources;
- providing expert advice on classroom uses of technology;

**FIGURE 9–8**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL SOFTWARE**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

ADMINISTRATIVE SOFTWARE	INSTRUCTIONAL SOFTWARE
Eduphoria SchoolObjects Suite	A+ Instructional
Fitness Gram	Achieve Texas
Follett	Aware Online Testing
Raptor	CSCOPE
Sagebrush	DynED ELA
Time Clock Plus	Easy Tech
TxEIS Management	Gaggle.net
TxGradebook Management	Green Globes Graphing
	ICORE
	Inspiration 9
	Istation
	IXL Math
	LEXIA Instructional
	Pearson Success Maker
	Promethean Smartboard
	RAZ Kids
	Reading A-Z
	Reading Plus
	Renaissance Accelerated Reader
	Renaissance STAR Math
	StarFall
	Study Island
	Textbook Supplemental
	Think Through Math

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Information Services Department, November 2013.

- serving as the primary instructional technology resource on the Technology Committee;
- coordinating district-wide teacher training;
- leading the effort to implement various technology standards in schools;
- collaborating on network upgrade efforts to ensure that Pearsall ISD’s WAN and LAN satisfy instructional needs;
- monitoring the adequacy of the district’s instructional technology support; and
- facilitating the acquisition of instructional software by the schools.

If the instructional technology position is filled from outside the district, the estimated annual cost to district would be \$50,315, based on a salary of \$48,000 plus benefits of \$2,315. The total five-year cost of this recommendation would be \$251,575 (\$50,315 x 5=\$251,575).

**DISTRICT WEBSITE (REC. 59)**

Pearsall ISD lacks a process to manage its website and to ensure consistency among campus websites, compliance with state requirements, and accessibility to the district’s stakeholders. The district website was designed and implemented under the previous district and IT leadership. Having no webmaster on staff, a third-party vendor was hired to host and provide templates to maintain the website. The vendor provided training for IT, administrative, and campus staff to update the websites by using the templates, but no one has been specifically designated to maintain the district website. Therefore, no one is responsible for maintaining the district website and setting standards for the campus websites. The director of technology updates the district’s website as time permits. Also, there is no formal decision-making process for determining updates to the website. The lack of a process has resulted in the district and campus websites being inconsistent and information not being updated in a timely manner.

The layout of the district website is cluttered, information is not current, and the main menu bars are difficult to navigate. Several main menu bar items are hidden and only revealed by clicking the original menu bar on the homepage. For instance, to access the Board Policy Manual, one must click the original menu bar on the homepage which will reveal a second menu bar with the “Policy Manual” tab, then click that to get to the Board Policy manual index. Some main menus have sub-menus that do not pertain to that topic. For example, the “Schools” menu tab has links other than to the four campus websites. Also, there is no readily visible “Home” tab on linked pages to get back to the homepage. The menus are not consistent on the linked pages, which can make navigation between webpages confusing.

The website does not have a volunteer page or business page and does not have any information for volunteers. Parent focus groups indicated to the review team that some parents were not aware of the survey conducted by the review team. Although the notice was posted on Pearsall ISD’s home website, these parents have quick links to the parent portal and bypass the home page announcements.

Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) has developed a listing of all Texas Education Code and other governmental agency requirements regarding required information to be displayed on a district’s website. **Figure 9–9** shows this list of requirements. Pearsall ISD has not assessed its website for compliance with all requirements.

**FIGURE 9–9**  
**TEXAS EDUCATION CODE REQUIRED DISTRICT WEBSITE INFORMATION**  
**NOVEMBER 2013**

CATEGORY	POSTINGS ON DISTRICT'S WEBSITE	SECTION	RULE, LAW, REGULATION	NOTES
Accountability	AEIS Report	39.252	Texas Education Code	
Accountability	Performance Rating of the District	39.252	Texas Education Code	
Accountability	Definitions and Explanation of Each Performance Rating Described by Texas Education Code 39.072(a)	39.252	Texas Education Code	
Accountability	School Report Card	39.252	Texas Education Code	
Accountability	Notice of accreditation-warned or accreditation-probation status	39.052 (e)	Texas Education Code	This notice is to remain on the district's website until the rating is raised to "Accredited" status. The notice is to explain the implications of the status and steps to be taken to address the deficiencies identified by the TEA.
Accountability	Improvement plan for low-performing campuses hearing	39.106, 39.107(f), 39.110	Texas Education Code	Board is to conduct a public hearing on improvement plan for low-performing campuses and post the improvement plan on the district's website.
Accountability	Conflicts Disclosure Statements and Questionnaires	176.009	Texas Local Government Code	
Accountability	Check Register and Aggregate Payroll Amount	109.1002(b)(2)(A)	Title 19, Texas Administrative Code	Optional. Starting in calendar year 2008, this Internet posting rule applies if a school district wishes to appeal the School FIRST performance based upon fiscal year 2007 expenditure data for the new indicator 13 related to the 65% rule. If a district wishes to appeal its performance under the new indicator 13, the check register for the fiscal year is to be posted within the 30-day review period, after the release of preliminary ratings by TEA (this will occur on or about June 2008).
Accountability	Superintendent's Contract	109.1005(e)(2)(D)	Title 19, Texas Administrative Code	Optional. Starting in calendar year 2007, the school district is to provide a copy of the superintendent's contract EITHER as a disclosure in the financial management report provided to attendees at the School FIRST hearing OR by posting the contract on the district's Internet site.
Accountability	Targeted Improvement Plan	39.106(e-1)(2)	Texas Education Code	Post before Board hearing on targeted improvement plan.
Accountability	Notice of Corrective Action	6316(c)(10)	Title 20 United States Code (U.S.C.)	NCLB-related requirement.
Curriculum	Electronic Courses	29.909(f)	Texas Education Code	Requirement for ISDs participating in program to post "informed choice" report conforming to Commissioner's format for course descriptions, materials, TEKS linkage and other information.

**FIGURE 9–9 (CONTINUED)**  
**TEXAS EDUCATION CODE REQUIRED DISTRICT WEBSITE INFORMATION**  
**NOVEMBER 2013**

CATEGORY	POSTINGS ON DISTRICT'S WEBSITE	SECTION	RULE, LAW, REGULATION	NOTES
Financial	Summary of Proposed Budget	44.0041	Texas Education Code	
Financial	Post Adopted Budget	39.084	Texas Education Code	Required to maintain the adopted budget on the district's website until the third anniversary of the date the budget was adopted.
Financial	Costs and Metered Amounts for Electricity, Water, and Natural Gas for District	2264.001(b)	Texas Government Code	House Bill 3693, 80th Legislature, Regular Session.
Financial	Proposed Maintenance and Operations Tax Rate	26.05(b)	Tax Code	Required if tax rate will raise more taxes than prior year or if tax rate exceeds effective maintenance and operations tax rate.
Financial	Tax Rate Trend Information	26.16	Texas Tax Code	School districts are to provide tax rate information to the County Tax Assessor Collector for the most recent five tax years, beginning with the 2012 tax year. The information to be posted by the County Tax Assessor Collector: adopted tax rate, maintenance and operations rate, debt rate, effective tax rate, effective maintenance and operations rate, and rollback rate. This will allow taxpayers to go to a single website to view tax rate information for all taxing entities.
Financial	Federal grant awards		Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)	School districts and open-enrollment charter schools that receive federal grant awards totaling more than \$25,000 and contract awards totaling more than \$550,000, respectively, directly from the federal government on or after October 1, 2010, must report certain information, including a description of the award and, in some instances, must also report the total compensation and names of the top five school officials. A report will be due by the end of the month following approval for a federal grant or contract, and must be updated when there are changes to specific information on file. The new reporting requirements do not apply to federal awards that passed through the TEA (because TEA is covering this reporting effort for federal funds that pass through TEA). School district and open enrollment charter school are responsible for initiating their own process to ensure compliance with the FFATA reporting requirements by following instructions provided by grantor agencies other than the TEA.
Governance	Bill of rights for property owners whose property may be acquired by governmental or private entities through the use of eminent domain authority	402.031	Texas Government Code	House Bill 1495, 80th Legislature, Regular Session.

**FIGURE 9–9 (CONTINUED)**  
**TEXAS EDUCATION CODE REQUIRED DISTRICT WEBSITE INFORMATION**  
**NOVEMBER 2013**

CATEGORY	POSTINGS ON DISTRICT'S WEBSITE	SECTION	RULE, LAW, REGULATION	NOTES
Governance	Notice of a Board Meeting	551.056	Texas Government Code	
Governance	Agenda for a Board Meeting	551.056	Texas Government Code	Required if the board meeting notice does not include the agenda and the district contains all or part of the area within the corporate boundaries of a municipality with a population of 48,000 or more.
Governance	Campaign Finance Reports	254.0411	Texas Election Code	Required of members of board of trustees and candidates for the office of school board trustee for school districts located either wholly or partly in a city with a population of 500,000 or more, and with a student enrollment of more than 15,000. The campaign finance reports must be posted online no later than the fifth business day after the date the report is filed with the school district. The posting provisions apply to campaign finance reports that are required to be filed on or after Jan. 1, 2012, under House Bill 336, 82nd Legislature.
Health	Post in English and Spanish: a list of immunization requirements and recommendations, a list of health clinics in the district that offer influenza vaccine, and a link to the Department of State Health Services Internet website providing procedures for claiming an exemption from requirements in Texas Education Code, §38.001.	38.019	Texas Education Code	House Bill 1059, 80th Legislature, Regular Session.
Health	Statement for Public Inspection by School Health Advisory Council			BDF Legal.
Personnel	Group Health Coverage Plan and Report	22.004(d)	Texas Education Code	Annual report submitted to TRS and copy of plan.
Personnel	Vacancy Position Postings	11.1513(d)(1)(B)	Texas Education Code	10-day notice for vacant position requiring license or certificate.
Personnel	Posting of Vacancies	11.163(d)	Texas Education Code	Post vacant position for which a certificate or license is required or post the position at certain physical locations in the district.
Personnel	Board's Employment Policies	21.204(a)–(d)	Texas Education Code	

**FIGURE 9–9 (CONTINUED)**  
**TEXAS EDUCATION CODE REQUIRED DISTRICT WEBSITE INFORMATION**  
**NOVEMBER 2013**

CATEGORY	POSTINGS ON DISTRICT'S WEBSITE	SECTION	RULE, LAW, REGULATION	NOTES
Purchasing	Reverse Auction Scheduled Internet Location	2155.062(d)	Texas Government Code	
Students	College Credit Programs	28.010(b)	Texas Education Code	Availability of college credit courses.
Students	Physical Activity Policies	28.004(k)	Texas Education Code	Physical activity policy by campus level, health advisory council information, notification to parents that child's physical fitness assessment results available on request, vending machine and food service guidelines, and penalties for tobacco product use.
Students	Dates PSAT/ NMSQT and any college advanced placement tests will be administered and provide instructions for participation by a home-schooled pupil.	29.916	Texas Education Code	House Bill 1844, 80th Legislature, Regular Session.

SOURCE: Texas Association of School Business Officials Internet Posting On District Website, November 2013.

A limited review by the review team found that the district web site lacked required information on immunization requirements and recommendations, a list of health clinics in the district that offer influenza vaccines, and a statement of public inspection by the School Health Advisory Council.

In addition to meeting state regulations, websites can be useful and cost-effective tools for school districts and schools to reach out to parents and the community. Web pages can be easily updated with current information and communications. They can also help promote a positive image of the district and the respective schools and encourage parental and community involvement. Districts typically involve administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community representatives in the process when constructing a website. Regular content meetings are held to help ensure that all stakeholders' needs are being addressed as the project proceeds.

Fabens ISD, a peer district selected as a comparison to Pearsall ISD for this review, has a well-designed website that is streamlined and easy to navigate. Some features of Fabens ISD's website are:

- district mission statement and calendar prominently placed on homepage;
- translation input field located at top of homepage;

- quick links menu section for key areas; and
- main drop-down menus for schools, district information, departments, Board of Trustees, students, parents news, and alumni.

San Elizario ISD also has an easy-to-use website with a page dedicated to family and community engagement. The page outlines the family and community engagement mission statement, program requirements, activities and strategies, and a description of the importance of parental involvement.

Pearsall ISD should establish procedures for keeping the website current and compliant with state requirements and establish guidelines for campus websites to keep them consistent with the district website. The updated website should be streamlined, intuitive, and easy to navigate. When establishing procedures, the TASBO Required District Website Data Listing should be reviewed to ensure that all required information appears on the site. Once the district's website has been redesigned and implemented, each campus website should be redesigned to be consistent with the district website. The district should require campuses to have community and parent web pages on their websites with up-to-date information describing initiatives, programs, and activities of interest to parents and the community. The district should assign staff, at the district-level and at each

campus, to be responsible for updating the respective websites. The district should conduct an annual assessment of its websites to determine if they need updating to continue meeting the needs of the district and campuses.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

#### **LONG-RANGE TECHNOLOGY PLAN (REC. 60)**

Pearsall ISD does not have a long-range technology plan that adequately addresses required upgrades or replacements to the aging technology infrastructure to meet the future needs of the district. The district's 2013–14 technology plan is short-term (one year) and was developed by the director of technology to meet E-rate submission requirements. The plan was not based on a formal needs assessment, is not comprehensive, and does not include a computer replacement strategy.

The district's one-year plan does not provide an adequate road-map for replacing its aging technology infrastructure. The aging technology infrastructure consists of many operating systems (Windows) and network components that are outdated and no longer supported by the vendor. The district's lack of computer replacement strategy results in computers remaining in service beyond their projected end-of-life, resulting in many breakdowns and high-support requirements.

The district has a Technology Committee comprised of district and campus technology staff and teachers. The Technology Committee does not have regular scheduled meetings but meets on an as-needed basis. The Technology Committee did not play a role in developing or reviewing the current one-year plan.

Comprehensive three- or five-year long-range technology plans effectively drive investments for the required technology infrastructure upgrades and technology tools for the classroom. The best practice for school districts is to develop a three-year plan because it provides adequate time for planning, acquisition, implementation and training on any new processes and equipment required to implement the plan. Some districts use five-year plans if there is a replacement strategy or lease program that requires the plan to extend beyond three years.

Long-range technology plans that effectively meet districts' current and future technology needs include:

- involvement of a Technology Committee that meets on a regular basis during the development of the plan to provide input and review progress;
- performing a formal needs assessment of the administrative and operational systems for upgrade or replacement requirements, including those used by the Transportation and Food Service departments;
- reviewing the IT budgeting process and establishing a distinctive budget model and guidelines for district-wide IT spending managed by the director; and
- reviewing instructional technology applications and tools used throughout the district to gauge their effectiveness.

Districts often develop comprehensive plans based on the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs). Technology plans typically include goals, action plans, timelines, performance and success measures, designated staff responsible for leading the goal and monitoring progress, and financial allocations. Well-developed, comprehensive technology plans lay the foundation for effective planning and decision-making and guide a district toward achieving its stated goals. Comprehensive plans also facilitate budget planning, resource allocations, and technology acquisitions. **Figure 9–10** shows a list of key components of a comprehensive technology plan.

Boerne ISD has developed a technology plan that is comprehensive and details their needs assessment along with explicit goals and timelines for incorporating technology into learning and lesson plans, incorporating student usage of technology tools, professional development, technology competency and literacy requirements, administrative technology, and technology replacement cycles. Galena Park ISD has a technology plan that includes a comprehensive training program and technology proficiency standards.

Pearsall ISD should evaluate and identify new technology requirements and develop a three- or five-year long-range technology plan that considers the DIP and CIPs, and incorporate a computer replacement strategy. The process to develop a plan should involve conducting surveys and interviews with key stakeholders in the district, and should include a review of the current one-year plan, the DIP and CIPs, and the metrics provided by the Texas STaR Chart for the district. The output to be considered are: future technology tools for the classroom such as smartboards,

**FIGURE 9–10  
COMPREHENSIVE TECHNOLOGY PLAN KEY COMPONENTS  
NOVEMBER 2013**

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**TECHNOLOGY PLAN KEY COMPONENTS**

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District Profile—includes district statistics such as number of campuses, students, technology budget, and the current technology infrastructure

Executive summary and background information—includes technology planning committee organization, vision and goal statements

Needs assessment—the assessment process and outcome of what is needed in the district

Technology infrastructure goals and objectives including network standards

Instructional technology standards, acquisition process, and usage

Technology literacy and professional development requirements

Administrative and business operations technology standards, acquisition process, and usage

Technology replacement cycles

Hardware/software standards and acquisition process

Budget projections and funding sources

SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board, School Review Team Analysis, Best Practices as Researched and Compiled, November 2013.

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interactive tablets, projectors; funding sources required for technology infrastructure upgrades/replacements such as E-rate and grants; and increased staffing required at the district and campus levels.

The district should develop a detailed hardware migration and replacement strategy that would become an integral part of the plan. The strategy should include the establishment of hardware/software standards that would be enforced by the IT department. Some steps that can be taken in establishing the strategy are setting the criteria to be used in determining the hardware to be replaced, locating and tagging the hardware marked for replacement, and developing a timeline and preliminary budget to replace hardware.

The Technology Committee should meet on a regular basis during the development of the plan to provide input and review progress. Upon completion and approval of the plan, the Technology Committee should meet twice annually to review progress in accomplishing plan goals and to update the plan as needed;

The development of the replacement strategy could be accomplished with existing resources. The fiscal impact for the implementation of the replacement strategy cannot be determined until the timeframe and amount of equipment to be replaced is established and approved.

**DOCUMENTED PROCEDURES (REC. 61)**

Pearsall ISD lacks documented procedures to govern the handling of technology support activities. The IT Department

has not developed procedures to provide guidelines for performing information technology functions.

Pearsall ISD has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for staff and student Electronic Communication and Data Management and E-mail use. The AUP is posted on the district's website. However, there are no procedures that document the daily functions of the IT department. Pearsall ISD staff use personal judgment to handle a situation or resolve a problem without having district procedures to reference. Not having documented procedures leaves the district unprepared for emergencies and other problems that could challenge staff. Based on interviews by the review team, technology staff reported that a lack of procedures leads to inefficiency in the district.

Okeechobee County Schools in Florida provides an example of a well-structured and comprehensive information technology policies and procedures manual. **Figure 9–11** shows the table of contents for the manual.

Documented procedures, such as those shown in **Figure 9–12**, assist in daily operations and troubleshooting of non-routine problems. The procedures also enhance the efficiency and overall effectiveness of the technical staff that assist district staff on technology-related needs.

Documented procedures provide clear direction to staff and protect the district from loss of intellectual knowledge in the event of staff turnover. Written procedures can facilitate assimilation of new staff into the district in the most efficient way. Without documented procedures, functions may be

**FIGURE 9–11**  
**OKEECHOBEE COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**EXAMPLE**

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- I. Purpose
- II. Access To Policy
- III. Ownership and Use of Information Technology Resources
- IV. Technology Equipment
- V. Software
- VI. Guidelines for the Use of Technology Resources
  - a. The Following Guidelines Have Been Developed for All Users
  - b. Safety Guidelines for All Users
- VII. Access to Technology Resources
- VIII. User Accounts
- IX. Passwords
- X. Disclosure of Passwords
- XI. Network Management and Security
  - a. Bandwidth
  - b. Hacking
  - c. Port Scanning and Sniffing
  - d. Network Infrastructure and Communications Closets
  - e. Network Address Assignment and Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP)
  - f. Domain Name Registration
  - g. Wireless Networks
  - h. Anonymous File Transfer Protocol (FTP) Sites
  - i. Firewalls
- XII. Laptop Computer and Electronic Data Mobile Device Security
  - a. Policy Statement
  - b. Reason for Policy/Purpose
  - c. Protection of Confidential Data
  - d. Definitions
  - e. Policy/Procedures
  - f. Protection of Confidential Data
  - g. Reporting Loss/Theft of Equipment or Data
  - h. Disposal of Property Used to Access or Store Confidential data
- XIII. Electronic Mail
  - a. Definition of Email
  - b. Purpose
  - c. Procedures
- XIV. Student Technology Privileges and Acceptable Use
  - a. Computer Lab Scheduling/Rules
  - b. Telecommunication Plan and Electronic Communication Use Policy
  - c. Violating Internet Policy, Rules and Regulations or Inappropriate Use of the Network
  - d. Safety Guidelines for Students
- XV. Web Publishing Policy
  - a. Statement of Purpose
  - b. Design and Development Guidelines
  - c. Content Guidelines for Department, School, and Teacher Web Pages
  - d. Best Practices Guidelines for Web Page Development
  - e. Website Limitations and Restrictions
  - f. Video and Audio Podcasts
- XVI. Loss Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery

SOURCE: Okeechobee County Schools, Okeechobee, Florida, Technology Department, 2008.

**FIGURE 9–12  
KELLER ISD KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND  
TARGETS  
JANUARY 2013**

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET
Incident Acknowledgement Time	> 95%
Incident Resolution Time	> 95%
Workstation Request Completion Time	> 95%
Service Desk First Contact Resolution	< 25%
Service Desk Abandonment Rate	< 25%
Service Desk Speed to Answer	< 120 Seconds
Operating System Instance Availability	> 99.5%
Messaging Availability	> 99.5%
Core Router and Switch Availability	> 99.5%
Campus Router and Switch Availability	> 99.5%

SOURCE: Keller ISD, Information Technology Department, January 2013.

carried out in an inconsistent, ineffective, and inefficient manner. Additionally, the lack of procedures can result in situations such as district staff not being able to access email, network files, student information, or connect to the regional education service centers for services should an absence occur among technology staff.

Pearsall ISD should develop written procedures to govern the handling of technology support activities. The director, working with the Technology Committee, should identify and map out functions or activities that require a procedure to be compliant or make a process more effective. A plan should be developed to document and publish procedures incorporating standards, as appropriate. To develop these procedures, an assessment should be made of all the key processes that involve Pearsall ISD’s IT Department. With guidance from the Technology Committee and input from the appropriate IT staff members, the procedure should be written by the director or his designated individual or group. The written procedure should be reviewed and approved by the Technology Committee. These procedures should become a part of a standard operating procedures manual and should be posted on the district and campus websites.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**IT SUPPORT (REC. 62)**

Pearsall ISD’s IT Department lacks a process to monitor and assess support effectiveness and identify areas of improvement as they relate to cost efficiency, quality of service, and staff

workload allocation. The district uses the HelpDesk application that is included in the Eduphoria SchoolObjects suite of integrated applications to enter problem/service work order tickets. The HelpDesk application allows users to enter work order ticket information online using a simple interface and provides the capability to track and report statistical data on open and completed work orders. The technical support specialists access and review the application on a daily basis to manage their support workload. The application provides the district with the capability to manage problem/service request work orders from entry to resolution.

The HelpDesk application captures pertinent data to track and monitor status, build a knowledge base repository, and measure support effectiveness. Maximizing the benefit of this type of system requires all technical problems and resolutions to be entered into the system, which is not presently occurring. According to the technicians, approximately 80 percent of problem/service work orders are entered into the HelpDesk application by the requesting user. However, the technicians do not always close out work orders with the action that was taken when the problem/issue is resolved. These situations do not allow for accurate support statistics to be captured; therefore, adequate data to measure IT support effectiveness is not available. Effective evaluation measures include measurable goals and objectives, key performance indicators, quality measures, and benchmarks or standards for comparison purposes. **Figure 9–12** shows an example of key performance indicators used by Keller ISD.

The district should develop key performance indicators with targets to measure technology support effectiveness and maximize the use of the HelpDesk system to monitor these indicators. Each month, the director should compile and publish the key performance indicators for IT support results. To establish the key performance indicators, a task force of representatives from the Technology Committee and IT Department should meet to identify and agree on those key areas and performance targets that would indicate how well they are supporting the district’s technology environment. Also, a procedure should be developed that requires technicians to enter all support work performed into the HelpDesk application. The procedure should include the entry of data to indicate the type of support performed and the corrective action taken to resolve the issue. Once this procedure is implemented, the district can establish evaluation measures. This data can then be used to gauge and monitor support performance and identify areas for improvement.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

### **DISASTER RECOVERY/BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN (REC. 63)**

While Pearsall ISD has established a daily backup rotation of its key file servers, it does not have a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan to protect the district's data. The backup tapes are stored and rotated at the elementary school campus. The district maintains two weeks of backups at any given time. The district's business and student data system, TxEIS, is hosted and supported at the Region 20 location, which handles disaster situations. However, there is no backup or disaster recovery/business continuity plan for the data center and network infrastructure for catastrophic events like hurricanes, floods, or electrical outages.

In addition, the data center is not secure, does not have locked doors, does not have a fire suppression system, and does not have a backup power source. This situation leaves the district's computing environment vulnerable to unauthorized access and frequent power outages.

Another critical and vulnerable area for the district is not having a redundant backup for the fiber-optic network. Currently, if the fiber-optic WAN fails, all web-based applications, email, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone service would not function. Due to the critical nature of this situation, effective districts implement an alternative land-based network infrastructure to back up a wired network.

The primary objective of a disaster recovery/business continuity plan is to protect the district if its operations and technology services become unusable. Planning and testing minimize risk and ensures a level of organizational stability and orderly recovery after a disaster. **Figure 9–13** shows the components of a comprehensive best practices disaster recovery plan.

Taft ISD has installed a highly redundant, land-based alternate network to back up its wireless network. Its architecture is based on an underground 24-pair fiber-optic ring interconnecting all campuses and the administration building. The ring provides redundancy so that if there is a failure at any point, the entire network will not be down.

Pearsall ISD should develop a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that allows the district to continue operations in the event that the data center is damaged and/or computer operations fail. The disaster

**FIGURE 9–13  
COMPONENTS OF A BEST PRACTICES DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN**

COMPONENT	
1.	Executive Summary
2.	Disaster Recovery Planning
2.1	Identification and Analysis of Disaster Risks/Threats
2.2	Classification of Risks Based on Relative Weight
2.2.1	External Risks
2.2.2	Facility Risks
2.2.3	Data Systems Risks
2.2.4	Departmental Risks
2.2.5	Desk-Level Risks
2.3	Building the Risk Assessment
2.4	Determining the Effects of Disaster
2.4.1	List of Disaster-Affected Entities
2.4.2	Downtime Tolerance Limits
2.4.3	Cost of Downtime
2.4.4	Interdependencies
2.5	Evaluation of Disaster Recovery Mechanisms
2.6	Disaster Recovery Committee
3.	Disaster Recovery Phases
3.1	Activation Phase
3.1.1	Notification Procedures
3.1.2	Damage Assessment
3.1.3	Activation Planning
3.2	Execution Phase
3.2.1	Sequence of Recovery Activities
3.2.2	Recovery Procedures
3.3	Reconstitution Phase
4.	The Disaster Recovery Plan Document
4.1	Document Contents
	Document Information
	Purpose
	Scope
	Assumptions
	Exclusions
	System Description
	Roles and Responsibilities
	Contact Details
	Activation Procedures
	Execution Procedures
	Reconstitution Procedures
4.2	Document Maintenance
	Periodic Mock Drills
	Experience Capture
	Periodic Update
5.	References

SOURCE: Cisco Systems, Disaster Recovery: Best Practices, 2008.

recovery/business continuity plan should include a procedure for retrieval and restoring of back-up data and a schedule for testing the plan. The plan would identify critical systems and data that must be protected and would help the district restore operations and technology services as soon as possible after a disaster.

Integral to implementing this recommendation, the district should establish a disaster recovery team made up of representatives from the superintendent's office, principals, teachers, maintenance staff, security, technical staff, and vendors. The district's disaster recovery team should conduct an annual review of the plan to ensure that changes in staff, organization, or systems are incorporated in the plan.

Essential elements in the disaster recovery plan should include:

- develop a complete list of critical activities performed within the district;
- identify which systems and staff are necessary to perform functions;
- list key staff for each function, and their responsibilities;
- perform and document an inventory of all technology assets including hardware, software systems and data, documentation, and supplies that correctly identify the location with sufficient information to document loss for insurance recovery;
- define actions to be taken when a pending disaster is projected;
- identify actions taken to restore critical functions;
- keep the plan simple but effective; and
- keep the plan components in an accessible location that can be accessed in the event of an emergency.

Pearsall ISD should consider remodeling the district's data center to install locks on entry doors and a fire suppression system. A backup diesel generator should also be installed to provide emergency power to the data center in case the electrical power is disrupted for an extended period. It is estimated that a 65-kilowatt diesel-powered unit would be adequate to provide enough power to keep the data center operational. The fiscal impact for this recommendation assumes that the installed cost of a unit this size would be approximately \$17,500.

Regarding the district not having a redundant backup for the fiber-optic network, Pearsall ISD could consider the Taft ISD model. If Pearsall ISD adopted this architectural concept, it would not only provide backup and redundancy for the fiber-optic network but also redundancy for the alternative land-based network. The true fiscal impact to the district for implementing this recommendation cannot be determined because of the many factors involved such as land right-of-ways, permits required, and final architecture design that drives cabling and equipment cost. However, the district should explore different methods of funding for this type of project that could provide discounted cost.

The district should pursue identifying an offsite backup facility that could be used in case the data center building is damaged and computer operations fail. This facility would be able to host and execute the district's key server-based applications. One option could be the Region 20 facility located in San Antonio. Since there are many factors involved in locating this type facility, no fiscal impact is assumed.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS</b>	<b>ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9: COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY</b>							
57. Evaluate the effectiveness of having the director of technology also serve as the PEIMS coordinator at the district level.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
58. Assess the need for and, if cost effective, create a dedicated instructional technology position to coordinate and manage the identification, integration, and training for technology tools.	(\$50,315)	(\$50,315)	(\$50,315)	(\$50,315)	(\$50,315)	(\$251,575)	\$0
59. Establish procedures for keeping the website current and compliant with state requirements and establish guidelines for campus websites to keep them consistent with the district website.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
60. Evaluate and identify new technology requirements and develop a three- or five-year long-range technology plan that considers the DIP and CIPs, and incorporate a computer replacement strategy.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
61. Develop written procedures to govern the handling of technology support activities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
62. Develop key performance indicators with targets to measure technology support effectiveness and maximize the use of the HelpDesk system to monitor these indicators.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
63. Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that allows the district to continue operations in the event that the data center is damaged and/or computer operations fail.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$17,500)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(\$50,315)</b>	<b>(\$50,315)</b>	<b>(\$50,315)</b>	<b>(\$50,315)</b>	<b>(\$50,315)</b>	<b>(\$251,575)</b>	<b>(\$17,500)</b>



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# **CHAPTER 10**

# **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## CHAPTER 10. SAFETY AND SECURITY

An independent school district's safety and security program identifies vulnerabilities and includes strategies to minimize risks to ensure a protected learning environment for students and staff. This protection includes a balanced approach of prevention, intervention, enforcement, and recovery. Risks can include environmental disasters, physical hazards, security threats, emergencies, and human-caused crises.

Managing safety and security is dependent on a district's organizational structure. Larger districts typically have a staff dedicated to safety and security, while smaller districts assign staff tasks as a secondary assignment. Safety and security includes ensuring the physical security of both a school and its occupants. A comprehensive approach to planning for physical security considers school locking systems; monitoring systems; equipment and asset protection; visibility of areas and grounds; police/school resource officers; and emergency operations. Emergency and disaster-related procedures must include fire protection, environmental disasters, communication systems, crisis management, and contingency planning. The identification of physical hazards must consider playground safety, and overall building and grounds safety. Environmental factors—such as indoor air quality, mold, asbestos, water management, and waste management—also affect the safety of school facilities.

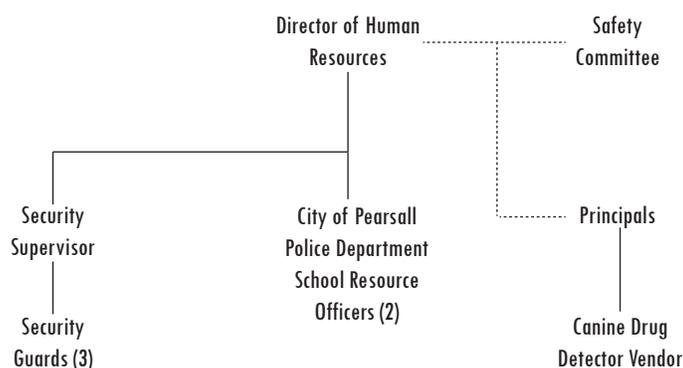
Pearsall Independent School District's (ISD's) safety and security function is administered by the district's human

resources (HR) director. The HR director has been employed by Pearsall ISD since July 2013. In addition to managing the human resource function, the director is responsible for social services, security, school resource officers, nurses and truancy. Pearsall ISD has established the district safety committee that meets monthly. The committee includes the HR director and school principals. The committee's agenda for October 2013 focused on completion of the Emergency Operations Plan.

The district's organization of key personnel responsible for safety and security is shown in **Figure 10–1**.

According to the survey of district employees conducted by the review team, more than 50 percent of district and campus staff agreed that there is a good working relationship between security personnel and district staff and that security personnel are respected and liked by students, as shown in **Figure 10–2**.

**FIGURE 10–1**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**SAFETY AND SECURITY ORGANIZATION**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**



SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Staff Interviews, November 2013.

**FIGURE 10–2**  
**DISTRICT AND CAMPUS STAFF SURVEY RESULTS FOR PEARSALL ISD**

RESPONDENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
<b>“Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.”</b>					
District Staff	9.1%	45.5%	36.4%	0.0%	9.1%
Campus Staff	8.5%	50.7%	29.6%	8.5%	2.8%
<b>“A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.”</b>					
District Staff	18.2%	45.5%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0%
Campus Staff	11.3%	52.1%	21.1%	11.3%	4.2%
<b>“Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.”</b>					
Campus Staff	5.6%	43.7%	42.3%	7.0%	1.4%

NOTES: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Survey respondents included 13 district staff, 74 campus staff, and 14 parents.  
SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board School Review Team Survey, October 2013.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a method for planning, monitoring, and implementing solutions to safety and security issues.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks a formal plan to implement the safety and security recommendations identified during regular safety audits.
- ◆ Pearsall ISD lacks comprehensive safety and security procedures to effectively and efficiently guide operations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 64: Develop a security staffing allocation model, a behavior management program, and a security guard professional development plan that work together to maximize staff availability, control discipline incidents, and ensure a well-trained security staff.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 65: Maintain a continuous action plan to address safety and security issues as they arise and conduct annual safety and security reviews to ensure that safety and security issues are being resolved.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 66: Develop a procedures manual to guide the safety and security operations in the district and to document the leadership directives in this area.**

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### **SAFETY AND SECURITY ORGANIZATION (REC. 64)**

Pearsall ISD lacks a method for planning, monitoring, and implementing solutions to safety and security issues.

The district’s security force includes two contracted school resource officers (SROs) and four Pearsall ISD unarmed security guards. The SROs were hired in fiscal year 2012 to strengthen the safety and security environment. The superintendent reported that the presence of the SROs has greatly reduced the severity of discipline incidents and student behavior. While this is an improvement, no formal process is in place to best allocate security staff, resulting in staffing levels and training that may not maximize the effectiveness of security staff.

Pearsall ISD has a district safety committee that meets monthly to: (1) identify measures for assessing discipline incidents and security threats at each campus; (2) identify the time these incidents are occurring (during or after school hours); and (3) determine the optimal staffing levels and work schedules for the district’s SROs and security guards. However, the district lacks a formal method to determine optimal security staffing levels, an effective behavior management program, and a regular training program for security guards.

### **STAFF ALLOCATION**

Pearsall ISD lacks a staffing model to assess and determine adequate staff needs to ensure the most efficient use of security staff.

Through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Pearsall, the district pays 76 percent of the salaries for two City of Pearsall Police Department SROs. The officers work on campuses during school hours. Four security guards employed by Pearsall ISD patrol the district during night shifts. Two SROs work 40 hours per week from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. One SRO is based at the high school and the other at the junior high school. The high school SRO also patrols the elementary school and assists with traffic control in the afternoon. The junior high school SRO patrols the intermediate campus and assists with traffic control in the afternoon.

The MOU states that the SROs act pursuant to the control and supervision of the City’s Chief of Police or designee and shall work in cooperation with the respective site principals. Duties include patrolling the perimeter of the campuses, checking restrooms, and monitoring areas that may serve as locations for students to gather rather than going to classes. The SROs are responsible for responding to calls from campuses concerning crisis situations, accidents and reports of crime; investigating all criminal offenses that occur within the district’s jurisdiction; and collecting and preserving evidence for criminal investigations, including witness statements and physical evidence. When the need arises, SROs are also responsible for arresting perpetrators, filing appropriate charges, and ensuring placement in jail or juvenile detention centers for law violations as necessary. SROs also document incident reports and testify in court as needed.

The district provides designated office space for the SROs to perform their duties and to allow for criminal/confidential investigations, interviews, and other police work to be completed in a sequestered atmosphere. If the district holds any activity beyond normal school hours that requires security, the district contracts with the Pearsall Police Department for security personnel as a separate measure on an hourly basis.

School principals work with the SROs and a contracted drug detection vendor to report and follow up on safety and security issues. The contract vendor provides drug detector dogs and handlers to conduct six searches for drugs during the school year.

In addition to the SROs, four Pearsall ISD security guards work from 7:00 PM to 5:30 AM to patrol and monitor facilities. The guards watch for vandalism and unauthorized use of campus facilities. Most acts of vandalism occur at night, and the night guards are best suited to monitor these types of activities on campuses. During evening hours, guards investigate if an alarm sounds or if suspicious vehicles are parked on campus grounds. They also check that doors are locked at all campuses. Guards patrol seven days a week, including holidays.

Figure 10–3 shows the staff levels for police/SROs and security guards for Pearsall ISD and peer districts during regular and after-school hours. Peer districts are districts similar to Pearsall ISD that are used for comparison purposes. The peer districts are Carrizo Springs ISD, Fabens ISD, and

**FIGURE 10–3  
PEARSALL ISD  
NUMBER OF SECURITY STAFF DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS COMPARED TO PEERS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2013–14**

MEASURES	PEARSALL ISD	CARRIZO SPRINGS ISD	FABENS ISD	WEST OSO ISD
Number of Schools	4	6	5	4
Hours of Operation During School Hours	7:30 AM to 4:30 PM	7:30 AM to 4:00 PM	No response	8:00 AM to 3:30/4:00 PM
Number of Police/SROs/Security Guards During School Hours	2	5	6 FTE; 1 PT	14 PT
Hours of Operation After School Hours	7:00 PM to 5:30 AM	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of Police/SROs/Security Guards After School Hours	4	0	0	0
Total Security Staff FTE	6	5	6.5	7
Staff Ratio During School Hours	0.5	0.83	1.3	1.75

SOURCE: Pearsall ISD, Administration, October 2013; Legislative Budget Board, School Review Peer District Survey, January 2014.

West Oso ISD. Pearsall ISD SRO staffing levels are below those of peer districts during regular school hours. Additionally, Pearsall ISD night guards outnumber daytime SROs, although none of Pearsall ISD's peer districts staff night guards.

In general, school incidents have decreased moderately since the SROs were hired in 2012, as shown in **Figure 10-4**. Although there were increases in some individual counts, the general trend has been a decrease in incidents, from 1,670 in school year 2011–12 to 1,408 in school year 2012–13. The impact of SROs on this decrease is unclear.

**FIGURE 10-4**  
**PEARSALL ISD DISCIPLINE ACTIONS**  
**SCHOOL YEARS 2011-12 AND 2012-13**

OFFENSE	2011-12	2012-13
<b>In-School Suspension</b>		
21—VIOLATED LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT	1,369	1,157
41—FIGHTING/MUTUAL COMBAT	35	0
<b>Out-of-School Suspension</b>		
04—CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE/ DRUGS	*	8
20—SERIOUS/PERSISTENT MISCONDUCT	18	0
21—VIOLATED LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT	182	163
26—TERRORISTIC THREAT	*	6
28—ASSAULT—NONDISTRICT EMPLOYEE	7	*
41—FIGHTING/MUTUAL COMBAT	19	5
<b>Disciplinary Alternative Education Program</b>		
04—CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE/ DRUGS	*	8
21—VIOLATED LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT	25	47
28—ASSAULT—NONDISTRICT EMPLOYEE	8	*
41—FIGHTING/MUTUAL COMBAT	5	7

NOTE: Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Code of Federal Regulations: Title 34, Part 99.1, and Texas Education Agency, OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), October 2013.

#### BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

An integral part of a security staff allocation plan is an effective behavior management program to identify the potential need for SROs and security guards to aid in deterring behavior incidents. Behavior management programs promote positive behavior by strategically addressing incidents that result in discipline, such as bullying, drugs and alcohol, gangs, and anger management. In lower grade levels, bullying, drugs and alcohol, gangs, anger management, and other topics can be covered by teachers in classes and by campus counselors. According to district counselors and administration, Pearsall ISD has not implemented a behavior management program.

#### TRAINING

Pearsall ISD also lacks a regular training program for the security guards it employs. While SROs receive regular training through the Pearsall Police Department, the district does not provide regular training to its security guards.

Brownsville ISD implemented a best practice security guard staffing model to develop coverage ratios based on the number and severity of incidents. The model helps to ensure that the appropriate number of security staff is assigned to each school.

Regional Education Service Center XIX (Region 19) adopted the Texas Behavior Support Initiative, which is designed to build capacity in Texas schools for the provision of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for all students. The goal of PBIS is to enhance the capacity of schools to educate all students, especially students with challenging behaviors, by adopting a sustained, positive, preventive, and effective instructional approach to schoolwide discipline and behavior management. These skills have helped educators establish schoolwide, classroom, and individual student-level systems of support.

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) is an organization established to provide best practice training to school-based law enforcement officers. NASRO is an organization for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school security/safety professionals who work as partners to protect students, faculty and staff, and school communities.

NASRO offers a Basic School Resource Officer Course, which is a forty-hour (40) block of instruction. The course is designed for any law enforcement officer with two years or less experience who works in an educational environment

and for school administrators. The course emphasizes three main areas of instruction:

- functioning as a police officer in the school setting;
- working as a resource and problem solver; and
- developing teaching skills.

NASRO also offers a 24-hour block of instruction, Advanced School Resource Officer Course, which is designed for any law enforcement officer who works in an educational environment. This course, following the SRO Triad model, advances the SRO's knowledge and skills as a law enforcement officer, informal counselor, and educator.

Pearsall ISD should develop a security staffing allocation model, a behavior management program, and a security guard professional development plan that work together to maximize staff availability, control discipline incidents, and ensure a well-trained security staff. Security personnel should be assigned to each school based on the methodology of the district's safety committee.

The district safety committee should develop and implement a formal behavior management program such as that established by Regional Education Service Center XIX (Region 19). A tailored behavior management program based on Pearsall ISD's unique discipline issues should assist campus administrators and teachers to reduce the number of incidents and maximize SRO and security resources where they are most needed.

The committee should explore training opportunities for its SROs and security guards from recognized security organizations to ensure that staff is prepared to handle routine and emergency situations.

Pearsall ISD's district safety committee can perform the analysis to determine the optimal staffing levels for SROs and security guards with existing resources. The committee can also develop and implement a formal behavior management program with existing resources.

The cost of NASRO advanced training is approximately \$400 per person. With four security guards needing the training, the annual cost for professional development is estimated at \$1,600 (\$400 x 4).

#### **ACTION PLANS AND MONITORING (REC. 65)**

Pearsall ISD lacks a formal plan to implement the safety and security recommendations identified during regular safety

audits. The district has conducted the required safety and security audits but lacks an action plan to resolve the issues.

Texas Education Code, Section 37.108, requires all school districts to conduct a safety and security audit at least once every three years. The Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) provides schools with research, training, and technical assistance to promote school safety. The last audit was required by August 31, 2011. The next security audit report is due by August 31, 2014, with results reported to TxSSC using the online reporting system no later than September 15, 2014.

Pearsall ISD had safety audits conducted in May 2011 by a risk assessment consultant who reported numerous safety and security concerns. Additional safety and security observations were reported in another consultant's facility assessment report issued in 2012, and the district's SROs submitted a report in 2013 regarding safety and security concerns.

The district has not formally monitored the status or resolved all issues identified in any of these audits. The draft version of the 2011 safety audit report included a recommendation to develop a written action plan and conduct an annual review to monitor ongoing progress. The review team requested the final version of the 2011 safety audit report that was submitted to the board and the TxSSC, but the report was not provided by the district.

A safety and security audit provides an overview of facility safety by identifying areas that are commendable or require improvement. This process ensures students attend school in a safe and secure environment.

Some of the key outstanding issues from prior audits/reports and the review team's observations include:

- incomplete Emergency Operations Plans (EOP);
- lack of training;
- lack of central reporting for anti-intruder alarms;
- lack of documentation of lockdown, evacuation, and severe weather drills;
- failure to secure facilities' fencing and gates;
- failure to monitor remote and isolated hallways with security cameras; and
- lack of connection between fire alarm system and local Fire Department or central reporting.

During the review team's onsite visit, the district's 2013–2014 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Campus Emergency Plans were drafted, but not completed. Thus, the review team could not assess whether the EOPs addressed all prior recommendations.

The review team also reviewed the district's annual fire exit drill forms and found the following:

- only the elementary school reported performing lockdown, bomb, and weather drills. However, after-action reports were not provided to review any comments or issues noted during the drills;
- the Texas Department of Insurance requires a minimum of nine drills, one per month for each month having 10 school days or more. The junior high school only conducted five fire drills in school year 2012–13 and six each in school years 2010–11 and 2011–12;
- the high school shows only 50 percent of the students participating in the fire drills;
- the intermediate school, junior high school, and high school had no documentation that they had conducted lockdown, bomb, or tornado drills;
- no forms were provided for the administration building; and
- campuses do not have emergency evacuation kits.

The review team requested an inventory of major safety and security equipment, such as alarm systems and communication equipment, but the information was not maintained.

Pearsall ISD uses a contract vendor for security camera installation and to resolve problems with the operation of the security cameras if the IT staff cannot resolve the issues. The review team observed that at least six cameras at the campuses were not operating, and there was no record that the situation had been reported or action taken. The review team also observed that the view from some of the cameras was sometimes unclear, and the cameras were angled at a corner or a wall instead of the intended area. SROs confirmed that many important areas were not covered by the cameras, including hallways, parking lots and other common areas. The camera count included 32 at the high school, 32 at the junior high school, 15 at the intermediate school, and 20 at the elementary school.

The IT director checks whether all cameras are operating properly every week by looking at the live views from each camera from a link accessed on the department's monitor. If a camera malfunctions between checks, there is no automatic notification that the camera is not operating properly. If the district cannot resolve the issue, then an outside contract vendor is contacted for assistance. The district's analog camera equipment is outdated and does not provide clear images at night. Some of the equipment maintains backup for three weeks and other equipment for only two weeks.

The IT director issued a proposal during the onsite visit for an annual surveillance maintenance contract to minimize downtime on servers and cameras throughout the district. Maintenance will include: preventive maintenance; weekly monitoring of all cameras; replacing cameras; refocusing cameras; adjusting field of view cameras that may have been moved; and updating firmware and video software.

During a tour of the district's facilities, the review team was informed that the intercom system was not working properly at the elementary school, and that the system is about 20 years old and due for replacement. There is no intercom system in the portable buildings or administration building. The intercom is working properly at the intermediate and high schools. A problem was reported with the bells earlier in the year at the junior high school, but IT staff reported that the issue has been resolved. During the onsite visit, the IT director obtained a quote of \$4,800 from a vendor to repair the intercom system. An assessment was not provided to determine if the intercom system should be replaced. In order for the district administration office to communicate with the campuses, the phone system, two-way radio, or email access is required. The IT director indicated that the phone system required modification to minimize the risk of losing phone service during an emergency. There is no inventory of the location of all two-way radios.

The district has fire alarm systems, but it does not have an intruder alarm system. Security guards must physically check doors to ensure that they are locked, or the guards patrol without knowing if there has been unauthorized access into a building.

The district uses keys to access all doors. Staff reported that teachers occasionally work late and leave the doors unlocked, creating a security risk for campuses.

The district's fire alarm systems are not connected to a service provider. If the alarm sounds during the day, campus administrators or SROs investigate before calling for

emergency assistance. If the alarm sounds at night, the security guards investigate.

Failure to address these issues hinders the district in providing a safe and secure environment. If the security camera system does not function properly, safety and security staff cannot continuously monitor campus activity or maintain video recordings of incidents. Failure to comply with recommendations regarding lockdown exercises and fire drills could yield poor results in a life-threatening situation. Fire alarm systems that are not connected to a service provider cause emergency responses to be delayed when a fire occurs.

Best practices suggest that a systematic assessment of the safety and security status in all schools and facilities should be conducted regularly. The TxSSC oversees school safety for Texas public schools. The center is directed by legislation that requires all schools to conduct at least one annual evacuation drill, lockdown drills, and shelter-in-place exercise, along with severe weather and reverse evacuation drills. The center recommends picking one drill to practice each month.

Some school districts conduct their own assessments using audit protocols recommended by TxSSC to identify safety and security strengths and weaknesses. TxSSC also offers safety training that includes legislative requirements, security criteria for instructional facilities, a model safety and security audit procedure, and assistance in developing a multi-hazard emergency operations plan. Districts that use the TxSSC training receive assistance in conducting periodic safety and security assessments as well as responding to the safety and security audit required every three years.

The Institute for Criminal Justice Studies (ICJS), a program of TxSSC, hosts free school-based law enforcement (SBLE) summits throughout Texas. The goal of these summits is for law enforcement officers to gain knowledge and skills to address campus-based issues for K–12 and higher education levels. The SBLE summits provide best practices for law enforcement officers, specifically in campus-based law enforcement, crime detection and prevention. Topics covered through August 2014 are:

- emergency management and the Incident Command System;
- preparation for and response to active shooter/killer;
- mental health issues and campus safety;
- creating community partnerships;
- leadership development for campus;

- alternatives to arrest; and
- school-based law enforcement.

Best practices for conducting periodic safety and security assessments include answering these questions:

- What level of risk does the condition present to the safety and security of students and district stakeholders?
- Can the situation be remedied with existing resources?
- If resources are not readily available, what are the options for securing resources?
- If the conclusion is to not implement a response to the condition, has the district adequately identified and evaluated all potential consequences?

Pearsall ISD should maintain a continuous action plan to address safety and security issues as they arise and conduct annual safety and security reviews to ensure that safety and security issues are being resolved.

The HR director should coordinate with security staff, maintenance staff, principals, and the district safety committee to develop an action plan to address each safety and security issue and ensure that all safety and security issues are resolved. The action plan should include a spreadsheet to list all of the recommendations and responsible individuals to follow up on the issues, risks, resources required, action plans, consequences, priorities, timelines, and monthly status. The action plan should entail careful analysis of findings by using established criteria to identify shortcomings that need immediate attention, as well as issues that do not require immediate responses. Completion of this assessment will provide the district with a better understanding of safety and security issues and their needs.

The HR director should designate staff to attend TxSSC training and provide oversight to ensure that annual safety and security assessments are conducted to identify new safety and security issues on a timely basis.

The HR director should meet with the IT director and the district safety committee to designate a timeline to inventory equipment, evaluate what equipment is needed, obtain cost estimates, and establish an implementation plan. The IT director should maintain the master safety and security equipment inventory listing and establish monitoring and testing plans to ensure that equipment is operating properly.

No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation. The actual implementation cost to the district cannot be estimated until the district determines the recommendations to be implemented. The process of identifying and prioritizing the recommendations can be performed with existing resources. The district can develop and execute a plan to inventory and evaluate the condition of all of its safety and security equipment with existing staff resources.

### **COMPREHENSIVE PROCEDURES (REC. 66)**

Pearsall ISD lacks comprehensive safety and security procedures to effectively and efficiently guide operations. Without comprehensive procedures, the district's ability to make consistent decisions and take action related to safety and security is hindered. The district's Student and Employee Handbooks provide basic guidelines, but lack detailed procedures to implement these guidelines and other policies. Examples of procedures inconsistently or not performed include:

- no written guidelines for the duties and responsibilities of security guards and the district safety committee;
- no log was maintained of incidents occurring while security guards were on night duty; the HR director had recently begun maintaining a spreadsheet to track occurrences at the time of the onsite visit;
- contracts for safety and security services are not always completed: The MOU with the City of Pearsall effective September 2013 for the school resource officers was not signed by Pearsall ISD or the city at the time of the review team's onsite visit. There is no MOU for the city's crossing guards;
- policies for access to the main entrances of all administrative and school campus buildings are inconsistent: Only the elementary school has an enclosed entrance area requiring visitors to sign in and wait to be granted access; other campuses do not have barriers and allow easy access from entrances directly into school hallways;
- policies for establishing timelines for public access to track and field are not in place: security guards said that sometimes visitors are on the track after 10:00 PM, and there is no sign indicating time available or authority for security guards to lock the areas. One security guard said that a visitor told him taxpayers should have the right to use the track at any time;

- school year 2013–14 Emergency Operations Plans were still pending completion and board approval when the school year began;
- evacuation drills were not performed monthly by all campuses and the district;
- no safety or security program evaluations or other related reports are maintained; and
- teachers and principals do not maintain emergency supplies in their classroom to include flashlights, first aid supplies, water, and food; TxSSC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommend that all classrooms have an emergency classroom "go kit."

The lack of documented procedures has resulted in a fragmented safety and security function and inconsistent practices. Until it has documented and implemented policies and procedures, the district risks responding improperly in an emergency and being unable to comply with authorized safety standards.

Leander ISD has implemented basic policies and procedures to ensure that the district's Safety and Security program meets major standards for school district safety and security. A summary of these measures and procedures are shown in **Figure 10–5**.

Pearsall ISD should develop a procedures manual to guide the safety and security operations in the district and to document the leadership directives in this area.

The HR director should draft a comprehensive safety and security manual for the district. The director should meet with the superintendent to outline the areas for procedure development, such as:

- responsibilities of security staff and district safety committee;
- reporting and monitoring incidents;
- making safety and security recommendations (e.g., signs, locked gates);
- action plan for safety and security recommendations;
- monitoring compliance with regulatory requirements (e.g., evacuation drills); and
- safety and security service contracts and vendor evaluation.

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**FIGURE 10-5**  
**SAMPLE SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES/POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**LEANDER ISD**  
**FEBRUARY 2014**

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**Visitor Access/Security Personnel**

Leander ISD implemented a new tool designed to increase the safety of students at all its elementary campuses. The Raptor V-Soft visitor management system helped to keep campuses safer by producing uniform badges for all visitors.

Each visitor will be asked to present valid photo identification (ID) card the first time he or she visits the school. (Examples of acceptable photo ID cards are: state issued driver's licenses or identification cards, official identification cards from many countries, or military identification cards.) The visitor is issued a badge with his or her photo that indicates when and where they are visiting. Once in the system, parents/visitors will not need to present their ID, and can be issued a visitor badge by simply providing his or her name. In a time where we are used to presenting our driver's licenses to write checks or rent videos, we're certain our visitors will understand that a few extra seconds is well worth the added safety our new system provides our students.

All elementary campuses limit access into the building during the school day so that no unannounced person has unauthorized access to our students.

Leander ISD secondary campuses have school resource officers (SROs) -- police officers with the Cedar Park and Leander Police Departments, as well as the Travis County Constables Office, who work at these campuses under a Leander ISD contract. In addition, each elementary campus is assigned to one of these officers. Officers are familiar, trusted faces for our students, and are knowledgeable about our district security policies and procedures.

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**Emergency Plan**

Leander ISD's Risk Management and Safety Department has worked with local emergency responders, law enforcement agencies and campus representatives to upgrade and standardize safety and security procedures at all Leander ISD campuses. This updated plan is in the hands of all district principals, assistant principals, counselors and SROs, assuring immediate, consistent action in any hazardous situation that threatens student safety.

Definitions for securing building during a normal school day:

Lockdown – means that the campus will lock all doors and not allow anyone to enter or leave the campus. This event is typically under the directive of local law enforcement and/or emergency management.

Shelter-in-Place – means that the campus may lock all doors, limit anyone from entering or leaving the campus and may allow normal movement within the building, as situation allows. Outside activities will be suspended and portables will be brought into the campus. If the event is for severe weather, additional protocols will be activated. If the event changes, a lockdown may be activated. This event is typically under the directive of local law enforcement, Fire Department and/or emergency management.

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**Student Parent Reunification**

In the event that school is closed early, the following release and reunification procedures will be followed:

No student will be released from school unless a parent (or authorized adult designated by the parent) comes for that student.

No elementary student will be bussed home from school, unless it has been established that the parent or a responsible adult is at home to receive the student.

No student will be allowed to leave with another person (even a babysitter, relative, or neighbor) unless the school has written permission on file, or that person is listed on the student's emergency record in the school files. It is imperative that each student's records are up-to-date.

All parents or authorized adults who come to the school for their child must sign him/her out at the Student Release Area. Student Release Area will be identified and staffed by the campus based on the nature and extent of emergency.

Parents or authorized adults should bring a picture ID and be prepared to show it. This may seem like a nuisance, but it is important for the child's safety. Please stay calm and be cooperative for the well-being of all staff and students on site.

The school is prepared to care for all students in the event a parent/guardian cannot be notified or are unable to respond to the school.

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**FIGURE 10–5 (CONTINUED)**  
**SAMPLE SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES/POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**LEANDER ISD**  
**FEBRUARY 2014**

**Training**

All Leander ISD teachers and staff receive ongoing safety and security measure training based on the LISD Crisis Management Plan. Refresher training continues throughout each school year. Crisis management information is posted in every Leander ISD classroom, and is included in the information folder of every substitute teacher districtwide.

Fire, tornado and disaster drills (evacuation drills) are conducted throughout the school year to train our students to react properly in these situations.

All head coaches and extracurricular sponsors are trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This training is also available to other interested Leander ISD teachers and staff.

**Equipment Enhancements**

All Leander ISD teachers have access to a phone in his or her classroom. Every LISD teacher/staff member is required to wear a district-provided security badge, which serves as that staff member's key to enter the campus. The District has systematically placed card-reader access locks on all campuses.

Leander ISD has installed automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on all campuses in order to improve the chance of survival from sudden cardiac arrest while awaiting the arrival of emergency responders.

Leander ISD has installed security cameras in all secondary campuses for property protection and asset control.

**Preventive Efforts**

Texas Education Code, Section 37.0832 – “Bullying” means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related-activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district and that:

- 1.) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
- 2.) is sufficiently severe, persistent and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described in the definition of “bullying” is considered bullying if the conduct:

- 1.) exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
- 2.) interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

SOURCE: Leander ISD, Website, February 2014.

Procedures manuals from other school districts and national standards should be reviewed to assist in identifying standards to include in the manual. The superintendent should present the outline to the board for additional input and provide examples of procedures manuals from other school districts. After the board has provided its direction, the HR director should draft the policies and procedures manual for the superintendent's review and modifications. The superintendent should submit the final draft to the board for approval and adoption.

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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

RECOMMENDATION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
<b>CHAPTER 10: SAFETY AND SECURITY</b>							
64. Develop a security staffing allocation model, a behavior management program, and a security guard professional development plan that work together to maximize staff availability, control discipline incidents, and ensure a well-trained security staff.	(\$1,600)	(\$1,600)	(\$1,600)	(\$1,600)	(\$1,600)	(\$8,000)	\$0
65. Maintain a continuous action plan to address safety and security issues as they arise and conduct annual safety and security reviews to ensure that safety and security issues are being resolved.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
66. Develop a procedures manual to guide the safety and security operations in the district and to document the leadership directives in this area.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(\$1,600)</b>	<b>(\$1,600)</b>	<b>(\$1,600)</b>	<b>(\$1,600)</b>	<b>(\$1,600)</b>	<b>(\$8,000)</b>	<b>\$0</b>



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# **APPENDIX**

**PEARSALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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# APPENDIX

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON STATE ASSESSMENTS

The following appendix shows Pearsall ISD's student performance on state assessments from school years 2010–11 to 2012–13.

**FIGURE 1**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING TAKS STANDARD BY SUBGROUP, GRADE, AND SUB-TEST**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Grade 3**	State-All	90%	88%					83%
	Pearsall ISD-All	72%	64%					58%
	White	99%	80%					80%
	Hispanic	70%	63%					57%
	EconDis	68%	61%					54%
	Special Ed	75%	50%					50%
	LEP	53%	71%					47%
Grade 4**	State-All	86%	89%	91%				78%
	Pearsall ISD-All	58%	58%	70%				44%
	White	92%	83%	92%				83%
	Hispanic	55%	56%	69%				41%
	EconDis	53%	53%	68%				38%
	Special Ed	83%	58%	54%				46%
	LEP	70%	50%	40%				10%
Grade 5	State-All	87%	86%			86%		76%
	Pearsall ISD-All	64%	55%			55%		42%
	White	82%	73%			82%		73%
	Hispanic	63%	54%			53%		39%
	EconDis	60%	53%			51%		37%
	Special Ed	57%	57%			57%		29%
	LEP	<1%	<1%			40%		<1%
Grade 6	State-All	85%	83%					76%
	Pearsall ISD-All	57%	54%					42%
	White	80%	>99%					80%
	Hispanic	56%	50%					39%
	EconDis	54%	50%					36%
	Special Ed	38%	54%					31%
	LEP	*	*					*
Grade 7	State-All	86%	81%	93%				75%
	Pearsall ISD-All	77%	58%	86%				52%
	White	60%	40%	80%				40%
	Hispanic	77%	58%	86%				52%
	EconDis	75%	55%	84%				49%
	Special Ed	84%	75%	58%				55%
	LEP	67%	33%	67%				11%

**FIGURE 1 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING TAKS STANDARD BY SUBGROUP, GRADE, AND SUB-TEST**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Grade 8	State-All	89%	80%			79%	95%	69%
	Pearsall ISD-All	73%	53%			44%	91%	33%
	White	83%	58%			64%	91%	42%
	Hispanic	73%	52%			43%	91%	33%
	EconDis	70%	50%			39%	91%	27%
	Special Ed	67%	50%			35%	67%	28%
	LEP	38%	<1%			<1%	71%	<1%
Grade 9	State-All	89%	72%					69%
	Pearsall ISD-All	72%	57%					51%
	White	89%	60%					50%
	Hispanic	72%	57%					52%
	EconDis	72%	55%					49%
	Special Ed	67%	40%					43%
	LEP	25%	44%					22%
Grade 10***	State-All		75%		91%	76%	93%	65%
	Pearsall ISD-All		63%		80%	61%	80%	51%
	White		81%		94%	75%	>99%	71%
	Hispanic		59%		78%	58%	76%	46%
	EconDis		63%		84%	62%	79%	51%
	Special Ed		27%		31%	20%	27%	13%
	LEP		*		*	*	*	*
Grade 11	State-All		90%		94%	90%	98%	84%
	Pearsall ISD-All		88%		90%	90%	97%	80%
	White		85%		>99%	>99%	>99%	85%
	Hispanic		87%		88%	88%	96%	79%
	EconDis		87%		88%	88%	96%	79%
	Special Ed		36%		38%	45%	82%	14%
	LEP		*		*	*	*	*
All Grades	State-All	90%	84%	92%		83%	95%	76%
	Pearsall ISD-All	73%	64%	78%		61%	89%	52%
	White	91%	77%	88%		80%	97%	70%
	Hispanic	72%	62%	77%		59%	88%	50%
	EconDis	71%	61%	76%		58%	88%	48%
	Special Ed	64%	52%	56%		36%	57%	35%
	LEP	45%	40%	53%		21%	57%	19%

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

NOTE: EconDis – Economically Disadvantaged; Special Ed – Special Education; LEP – Limited English Proficient

\*\* Only English.

\*\*\* In Grades 10 and 11, ELA instead of Reading.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, November 2013.

**FIGURE 2**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING STAAR/TAKS STANDARD BY SUBGROUP, GRADE, AND SUB-TEST**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2011–12**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING STAAR/TAKS STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
STAAR Phase-in 1 Level II or Above								
Grade 3	State-All	78%	69%					
	Pearsall ISD-All	62%	49%					
	White	85%	85%					
	Hispanic	59%	46%					
	EconDis	56%	45%					
	Special Ed	80%	*					
	ELL	45%	45%					
Grade 4	State-All	77%	69%	72%				
	Pearsall ISD-All	50%	27%	46%				
	White	90%	60%	80%				
	Hispanic	47%	25%	44%				
	EconDis	44%	24%	40%				
	Special Ed	55%	*	55%				
	ELL	*	*	*				
Grade 5	State-All	78%	78%			73%		
	Pearsall ISD-All	48%	44%			40%		
	White	73%	82%			64%		
	Hispanic	46%	42%			38%		
	EconDis	43%	39%			35%		
	Special Ed	58%	56%			58%		
	ELL	*	*			*		
Grade 6	State-All	76%	77%					
	Pearsall ISD-All	43%	43%					
	White	73%	73%					
	Hispanic	41%	41%					
	EconDis	38%	39%					
	Special Ed	56%	*					
	ELL	*	*					
Grade 7	State-All	77%	71%	73%				
	Pearsall ISD-All	57%	43%	50%				
	White	88%	75%	88%				
	Hispanic	55%	40%	47%				
	EconDis	54%	39%	46%				
	Special Ed	64%	45%	45%				
	ELL	*	*	*				

**FIGURE 2 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING STAAR/TAKS STANDARD BY SUBGROUP, GRADE, AND SUB-TEST**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2011–12**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING STAAR/TAKS STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Grade 8	State-All	81%	73%			71%	61%	
	Pearsall ISD-All	61%	45%			37%	38%	
	White	*	*			*	*	
	Hispanic	61%	46%			37%	37%	
	EconDis	59%	42%			30%	29%	
	Special Ed	62%	70%			67%	55%	
	ELL	*	*			*	*	
Grade 3-8	State-All	79%	77%	67%		80%	79%	77%
	Pearsall ISD-All	55%	48%	44%		56%	59%	52%
	White	76%	76%	73%		76%	68%	75%
	Hispanic	53%	45%	42%		54%	58%	50%
	EconDis	51%	44%	39%		52%	53%	48%
	Special Ed	56%	40%	42%		54%	55%	49%
	ELL	24%	27%	*		32%	*	25%
TAKS Met Standard Grade 10 and 11								
Grade 10	State-All		75%		91%	75%	94%	65%
	Pearsall ISD-All		59%		86%	48%	89%	40%
	White		80%		>99%	70%	>99%	60%
	Hispanic		57%		85%	45%	88%	39%
	EconDis		54%		85%	43%	87%	35%
	Special Ed		40%		50%	10%	50%	10%
	ELL		33%		17%	17%	80%	<1%
Grade 11	State-All		91%		93%	93%	98%	85%
	Pearsall ISD-All		80%		80%	79%	91%	67%
	White		>99%		92%	>99%	>99%	92%
	Hispanic		77%		78%	76%	89%	64%
	EconDis		82%		79%	78%	89%	68%
	Special Ed		29%		35%	35%	53%	18%
	ELL		*		*	*	*	*
Grades 10 and 11	State-All		82%		92%	84%	96%	75%
	Pearsall ISD-All		69%		83%	62%	90%	53%
	White		91%		96%	87%	>99%	78%
	Hispanic		67%		81%	59%	88%	50%
	EconDis		67%		82%	59%	88%	51%
	Special Ed		33%		41%	26%	52%	15%
	ELL		40%		10%	10%	67%	<1%

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

NOTE: EconDis – Economically Disadvantaged; Special Ed – Special Education; LEP – Limited English Proficient; ELL – English Language Learner;

2011–12 was a transition year students in Grades 3-8 took STAAR and students in Grades 10 and 11 took TAKS. No scores are available for students in grade 9. Phase-in 1 Level II or Above.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, AEIS, November 2013.

**FIGURE 3  
PEARSALL ISD  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING STAAR STANDARD BY SUBGROUP, GRADE, AND SUB-TEST  
SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING STAAR STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
STAAR Phase-in 1 Level II or Above								
Grade 3	State-All	81%	70%					
	Pearsall ISD-All	59%	62%					
	White	*	*					
	Hispanic	59%	62%					
	EconDis	55%	60%					
	Special Ed	53%	47%					
	ELL	*	*					
Grade 4	State-All	72%	69%	70%				
	Pearsall ISD-All	44%	40%	41%				
	White	91%	73%	82%				
	Hispanic	40%	38%	38%				
	EconDis	36%	33%	35%				
	Special Ed	64%	*	*				
	ELL	*	*	*				
Grade 5	State-All	77%	74%			73%		
	Pearsall ISD-All	51%	45%			49%		
	White	77%	62%			88%		
	Hispanic	49%	43%			46%		
	EconDis	46%	42%			46%		
	Special Ed	60%	40%			64%		
	ELL	8%	23%			*		
Grade 6	State-All	72%	74%					
	Pearsall ISD-All	39%	21%					
	White	70%	50%					
	Hispanic	37%	19%					
	EconDis	34%	17%					
	Special Ed	47%	*					
	ELL	*	*					
Grade 7	State-All	78%	72%	71%				
	Pearsall ISD-All	51%	36%	45%				
	White	80%	80%	90%				
	Hispanic	49%	33%	42%				
	EconDis	48%	32%	39%				
	SpecialEd	*	42%	*				
	ELL	*	*	*				
Grade 8	State-All	83%	76%			75%	64%	
	Pearsall ISD-All	66%	39%			48%	33%	
	White	73%	75%			70%	60%	
	Hispanic	65%	37%			45%	31%	
	EconDis	64%	37%			45%	32%	
	SpecialEd	22%	22%			50%	60%	
	ELL	29%	14%			*	*	

**FIGURE 3 (CONTINUED)**  
**PEARSALL ISD**  
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING STAAR STANDARD BY SUBGROUP, GRADE, AND SUB-TEST**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2012–13**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF PEARSALL ISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING STAAR STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
All Grades	State-All	80%	79%	63%		82%	76%	77%
	Pearsall ISD-All	55%	52%	36%		63%	54%	53%
	White	78%	75%	66%		85%	69%	75%
	Hispanic	54%	51%	34%		61%	53%	51%
	EconDis	51%	49%	31%		60%	50%	49%
	Special Ed	48%	39%	36%		47%	57%	45%
	ELL	*	34%	*		25%	*	21%

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

NOTE: EconDis – Economically Disadvantaged; Special Ed – Special Education; LEP – Limited English Proficient; ELL – English Language Learner.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, TAPR, November 2013.