Cushing
Independent School District

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
with
SDSM, INC.
May 2010

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

MAY 2010

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

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May 28, 2010

Mr. Michael Davis
Superintendent
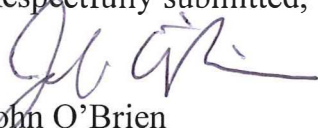Cushing Independent School District

Dear Mr. Davis:

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

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

The Legislative Budget Board engaged SDSM, Inc., 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,

John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Brett Reeves
Ms. Lynda Langham
Mr. Bobby Brashears
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cushing Independent School District's (CISD) school performance review notes 13 commendable practices and makes 44 recommendations for improvement. This Executive Summary highlights the district's significant accomplishments and presents the review team's findings and recommendations. A copy of the full report is available at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- CISD negotiated an appraised value limitation agreement to provide additional revenue for the district. The agreement was structured under Chapter 313 of the state Tax Code, also known as the Texas Economic Development Act (TEDA), which allows school districts to attract new taxable property development by offering a tax credit and an eight-year limitation on the appraised value of the property for the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) portion of the school district property tax. The district's foregone tax revenue is replaced through the state's school funding formula, and in many cases, school districts have negotiated additional payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) based on the tax savings accrued by the business receiving the tax break. The CISD agreement resulted from an application for an appraised value limitation on a biomass-fuel fired steam power plant. The net financial impact of the agreement is projected to be between $180,000 and $290,000 in revenue each year depending on the year of the agreement and the Interest & Sinking (I&S) tax rate imposed by CISD. While the appraised value limitation agreement is noteworthy for CISD, changes to TEDA during the Eighty-first Legislature, 2009, now limit PILTs to $100 per student per year in the qualifying time period. Despite these changes, CISD will receive the agreed upon PILT amount since their agreement was in place prior to the statutory change. Furthermore, the revenue increase to the district represents a cost to the state treasury, as the tax revenue the district forgoes is substantially replaced through the school funding formula.

- CISD's technology plan incorporates an instructional component that provides teachers with the training and tools to integrate technology effectively into instruction. The technology director, working with technology directors in other districts, CISD staff, a parent, and a student, developed a two-year (2009–11) strategic Instructional Technology Plan that ensures teachers have the tools and training to enhance student learning. The plan targets four goals, three of which address student learning. For example, 100 percent of students and teachers will utilize multiple technology resources to support research-based instructional strategies, instructional staff will be provided with high quality professional development that prepares them to incorporate technology in instruction, and district and school administrators will plan for and provide technology resources and services to improve student achievement and to support school operations. In response to these goals, interactive whiteboards were installed with an accompanying computer and projector in each elementary classroom in October 2009 along with software for the interactive whiteboards to assist teachers in creating, delivering, and managing interactive lessons. Secondary teachers were given wireless tablets, which act like virtual whiteboards, and received training through a power point to help teachers learn to use the tool effectively.

- CISD developed a student attendance reward program which seeks to reduce truancy and provide students with an incentive to attend college. The program, Cushing Attendance Scholarship Help (CASH), supports the district's goal to improve its 2007–08 attendance rate of 95.5 percent to 98 percent for 2009–10. CASH provides incentives for students to consistently attend school. For example, if a high school student meets the program's attendance requirements, the student can earn a homework coupon each grading period to excuse a homework assignment. Additionally, as a reward for sustained attendance, students can earn up to a $500 tuition scholarship if that student meets attendance requirements, graduates from high school, and enrolls in college or a vocational school. The program began in fall 2009, with funding for scholarships from the High School Allotment, a state appropriation for programs that improve high school graduation rates or college readiness rates. While

CASH is a new program, early figures show student attendance is increasing.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- CISD is actively working on a variety of curriculum initiatives but does not have a board policy or a curriculum plan that directs the development of a district curriculum.

- CISD lacks a strategic planning process and a clear organizational structure to better support the district's vision, goals, and budget.

- CISD does not have a defined budget process to ensure all stakeholders are aware of opportunities to participate.

- CISD does not have an objective, defined process for developing, selecting, implementing, and managing procurements and contracts.

- CISD's Child Nutrition Program lacks standards to address participation rates, food, labor, and non-food expenditures as a percentage of revenue and has not reassessed the cost of a student or adult full-price meal to determine efficiency.

- CISD's new bond construction program lacks essential elements needed for effective management and is not compliant with state regulations.

- CISD has not developed a full range of policies and procedures to guide its newly created Police Department, which could help reduce the risk of liability for the district.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

Recommendation: Implement curriculum management processes based on a formal board policy that will direct the staff in developing a district curriculum focused on student learning. CISD is actively working on a variety of curriculum initiatives but does not have a board policy or a curriculum plan that directs the development of a district curriculum. Board policy defines the curriculum philosophy of the district, components of the written curriculum, a systematic process for curriculum delivery, and directions for assessment opportunities that measure student progress in the curriculum. District teachers have developed a Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) based system of

lessons and individually developed assessments per grade level. However, no yearly course scope and sequence was developed to provide teachers and parents an overview of the course. Most teachers produced the lessons housed in binders using individual documents and resources they used for instruction. Curriculum is the guiding document in the educational process. While it is important and critical to involve teachers in the curriculum writing process, without a standard regarding expectations for curriculum, the district may be at risk of not meeting its curriculum needs. Curriculum documents left to teacher discretion and subjectivity of teachers may lead to poor articulation of the curriculum being taught. Therefore, the district should develop a board policy that will direct staff to a curriculum focused on student learning. The policy should center on the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum and include responsibilities for implementation and management of the curriculum by the board, superintendent, district curriculum staff, principals, and teachers. A process for periodic review and revision of curriculum should also be included, and the board policy should state resources needed to implement and maintain the curriculum.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Recommendation: Develop a formal organization structure that clearly describes the key administrative positions in the district and their reporting relationships and develop a strategic plan that links district goals to the budget. CISD lacks strategic planning processes and a clear organizational structure to better support the district's vision, goals and budget. The district's administrative positions do not have clear reporting relationships and well-defined responsibilities. Administrators do not understand the boundaries of their operating authority nor are they always accountable for performance. Most operating decisions are pushed up to the superintendent since most management and professional support positions, from the food service manager to the school nurse, report directly to him. The number of direct reports a superintendent has is critical to a district's organization. Too many direct reports may impede the superintendent's ability to perform effectively as the district's executive officer. In addition, the district does not have a comprehensive multiyear strategic plan to guide the instruction and operations of the district. CISD uses a variety of planning processes to guide activities in the district including the District Improvement Plan (DIP), Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs), and Instructional Technology Plan. With the exception of these plans, departments in the

district have not developed their own planning documents. For example, in the operational departments—facilities and transportation—the district has not addressed building elements of the bond construction program. Currently the district has one cafeteria that serves all the students in the district. A school cafeteria has been included in the plans for the new elementary school, however, the superintendent and the board have not decided whether to actually fund and staff two cafeterias; the current cafeteria and the new one located in the new elementary school. In addition, the Transportation Department has not developed a bus-replacement schedule to ensure the purchase of buses in a timely manner and in concert with the district's budget. By establishing a clear reporting structure and developing a strategic plan, district leadership will be in a position to more effectively govern and manage the district.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Recommendation: Develop a budget process that outlines the key components and includes a budget calendar. CISD does not have a defined budget process to ensure all stakeholders are aware of opportunities to participate. CISD staff reported different levels of involvement in the development process for the 2009–10 budget. Some budget managers provided direct input to the district' budget after consulting with department staff and projecting their own budget needs. However, other budget managers reported little or no involvement. Furthermore, when asked to rate the effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process, over one-third of teachers and over one-third of district staff responding rated the process as poor to average. By not having a defined budget process to ensure all stakeholders know their role, the district has caused stakeholders to believe the budget process is not inclusive. TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide places the responsibility for preparation of district budget guidelines and a budget calendar with district administrators and the superintendent. The superintendent should develop a budget process that outlines the key components and includes a budget calendar. The board should approve the process and ensure all participants understand the budget development process and their role.

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive process that outlines the steps and considerations necessary for successful procurement management and contract management. The district did not competitively procure its recent purchase of a new financial software system, nor did the district have detailed specifications for the selection

process or a plan for the system's implementation. As a result, the district does not have reasonable assurance that the new product will meet the ongoing needs of the district or that its data will be protected should the new program fail to deliver promised functionality. The decision to purchase the new software was made by the superintendent; however, there was no input from district staff or the technology committee regarding specifications and functionality requirements. Additionally, the district did not develop contract language to address system integration, security of financial data, and internal controls. As a result, the district is having administration issues with the contract, as it is unclear what services are included and what should be billed. Moreover, the financial system has been a challenging adjustment for district staff, and the implementation process did not consider whether adequate controls were maintained over district financial information. Accordingly, CISD should develop a comprehensive process that outlines the steps and considerations necessary for successful procurement management and contract management. The procurement process should require bids from multiple vendors and ensure that district staff provides input for desired specifications of the product or service. Finally, the district should research statutory requirements or regulations regarding procurements and the implementation schedule for the product or service so that it is aligned with existing district processes or timelines. The business manager should be tasked with contract administration to ensure services have been provided as promised.

CHILD NUTRITION MANAGEMENT

Recommendation: Increase participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), reduce the cost of labor as a percentage of revenue, and increase the prices of student and adult full-priced breakfasts and lunch. CISD's Child Nutrition Program (CNP) lacks standards to address participation rates, food, labor, and non-food expenditures as a percentage of revenue and has not reassessed the cost of a student or adult full-price meal for efficiency. The program has operated at a loss for the last two years: $36,195 in 2008–09 and $29,747 in 2007–08 respectively. It is a challenge to operate efficiently in CISD since the district does not have established standards for the department's costs as a percentage of revenue. Currently, the district's food service expenditures for food, labor, and non-food all exceed industry standards as a percentage of revenue. Commonly accepted industry standards for food and labor is a range of 40–45 percent,

whereas in 2008–09 the district's expenditure as a percentage of revenue for food was 49.3 percent and labor was 48.8 percent respectively. Additionally, student breakfast and lunch prices for full-priced meals do not cover the cost of producing and serving the meal and adult breakfast and lunch prices are less than the federal reimbursement for a free meal. Districts must ensure, to the extent practicable, that the federal reimbursements, student payments and other non-designated nonprofit CNP revenues do not subsidize program meals served to adults. CISD should increase full-priced student and adult meals for breakfast and lunch to ensure that the revenue generated by meals in these two categories is sufficient to cover the cost of producing the meals and should develop targeted standards for expenditures by category—food, labor, and non-food—as a percentage of revenue. The Food Service manager, working with the business manager, should set targeted goals for expenditures by category as a percentage of revenue. The business manager should also provide the Food Service manager current and accurate monthly profit and loss statements, and support the development of the skills necessary to use this tool for analyzing current program financial status when determining how future Food Service funds will be spent. Finally, the superintendent and the board should reassess the need to raise prices for students and adults who pay full-price for breakfast and lunch so that meals sold at these prices cover the cost of producing and serving the meals.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Recommendation: Review the processes in the new bond construction program to verify that needed monitoring and management elements are in place. CISD's new bond construction program lacks essential elements needed for effective management and is not compliant with state regulations. The district began a construction program in fall 2009 with the building of a new elementary school and improvements to the athletic fields. However, the district does not have all of the necessary documents, approvals, or processes in place to help assure a successful construction program. For example, the district is missing construction files for design of schematic drawings and construction-ready drawings for existing buildings, and the district has not established regular construction progress and solution meetings. In addition, components of the bond management program are not compliant with state regulations. For example, educational specifications were not approved by the board as required by the Texas Education Commissioner's Rules Concerning School Facilities, Chapter 61, and

architectural barriers in several recent projects with costs exceeding $50,000 were not addressed as required under Texas Government Code, Section 469.101. The successful completion of the construction program is an important district goal, and board approval and regular monitoring by district staff is an essential part of the process. Therefore, CISD should review the processes in the new bond construction program to verify that needed monitoring and management elements are in place. This should include a rebuilding of the information of record on all facilities, developing standardized educational specifications, and developing a formal schedule for construction progress and solution meetings to oversee the construction manager and architecture/engineering firm. The maintenance director should be included in all future construction meetings and communications.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive policy manual for the district's Police Department that includes policies for all areas where the district has potential liability. CISD has not developed a full range of policies and procedures to guide its newly created Police Department, which could help reduce the risk of liability for the district. The district's Police Department consists of the police chief, who was hired in 2008–09 as the district's first certified peace officer. The police chief is a full-service officer who carries both lethal and non-lethal weapons and drives a marked police car with standard law enforcement equipment such as lights and siren. In addition to his firearm, the chief has a Taser™ which allows an officer to subdue a violent or aggressive person from a distance. The chief developed a use of force policy, but other policies typically found in police agencies have not been drafted or adopted. For example, the district lacks policies regarding the use of the district police vehicle, police uniforms, and guidance on law enforcement action. The Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) advises state and local governments to adopt law enforcement performance standards to reduce the risk of liability associated with actions taken by public safety personnel in a district. CALEA advises that acting according to an established, written policy that meets accepted national standards is the best way to reduce this risk. However, neither the board nor the police chief have developed policies for adoption. Therefore, CISD should draft a comprehensive policy manual which includes polices for all areas where the district has potential liability. In consultation with the superintendent, the chief should

outline the areas for policy development and review policies from other school police departments and national standards.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Cushing ISD is located approximately 21 miles north of Nacogdoches. The district was established in 1933.

- CISD had a total enrollment of 479 students in 2008–09, slightly down from 507 students in 2007–08. Over the past five years the district's enrollment has decreased 3.4 percent.

- The district's student population in 2008–09 represents an ethnicity of predominantly White students (86.2 percent), with smaller representations of Hispanic students (7.9 percent), African-American students (4.8 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander students (0.6 percent), and Native American students (0.4 percent). The district had fewer economically disadvantaged students (40.9 percent) than the state average (56.7 percent).

- The district's academic rating fell from Recognized in 2007–08 to Academically Acceptable in 2008–09 due to the elementary school grade 4 writing scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge Skills (TAKS), a situation district staff and elementary students are working hard to improve.

- CISD is classified as a wealthy district and became subject to recapture beginning in 2006–07. The district reduces its wealth by using Option 3—the purchase of average daily attendance credits.

- CISD's average teacher salary ($41,969) was lower than the state's average teacher salary ($47,159) in 2008–09.

- In 2008–09, the district's external auditor noted that district staff lacked sufficient training in accounting to be able to accurately prepare their financial statements.

- The legislators for the district are Senators Robert Nichols and Kevin Eltife and Representatives Wayne Christian and Chuck Hopson.

SCHOOLS

The district has two schools, including the following:
- Cushing Jr–Sr High School (Grades 6–12); and
- Cushing Elementary School (Grades Pre-K–5).

FINANCIAL DATA

- Total general fund expenditures (actual) 2008–09: $8.27 million.

- General fund operating budget for 2009–10 is $6.7 million, including $1.2 million in recapture payments to the state, with a budgeted ending fund balance of $3.9 million.

- Adopted 2009–10 Tax Rate: $1.280 ($1.040 Maintenance and Operations and $0.240 Interest and Sinking).

- Final total wealth (2008): $455,152,908, with final wealth per weighted average daily attendance (WADA) at $624,310. Approximately 70 percent of total wealth came from oil and gas value.

- In 2007–08, 54.9 percent of total actual expenditures were spent on instruction while 56.8 percent of actual operating expenditures were spent on instruction.

- In 2008–09, the instructional expenditure ratio (general funds) was reported at 61.5 percent compared to the state average of 64.4 percent.

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

Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter's recommendations and associated savings or costs for 2010–11 through 2014–15.

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

The following table summarizes the fiscal impact of all 44 recommendations in the performance review.

FISCAL IMPACT

	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Gross Savings	$86,666	$86,666	$86,666	$86,666	$86,666	$433,330	$3,428
Gross Costs	($65,807)	($65,852)	($60,674)	($60,674)	($60,674)	($313,681)	($650)
TOTAL	**$20,859**	**$20,814**	**$25,992**	**$25,992**	**$25,992**	**$119,649**	**$2,778**

CHAPTER 1

EDUCATIONAL
SERVICE DELIVERY

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 1. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Cushing Independent School District (CISD) is located primarily in Nacogdoches County with a small portion of the district located in Rusk County. The county seat for Nacogdoches County is the city of Nacogdoches which is approximately 21 miles south of Cushing. The 2000 census showed a population of 637 in the town of Cushing.

CISD is composed of two schools, Cushing Elementary and Cushing Jr–Sr High School. In recent years CISD has been rated by the Texas School Accountability Rating (TSAR) System as *Academically Acceptable* in 2006–07 and again in 2008–09, and as a Recognized district in 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2007–08. CISD also met *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* performance and participation standards for 2008–09. Under the federal accountability provisions in *No Child Left Behind Act*, all public school campuses and school districts are evaluated for *AYP*. This rating is based on performance and participation in state assessments for mathematics and reading.

The 2009–10 enrollment for CISD is 495 students, fluctuating over the previous three years from slightly above to slightly below 500 students. According to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) archived reports, Cushing's enrollment has decreased over the last five years by 3.4 percent from 2004–05 with a total student population of 496 through 2008–09 with 479 students.

According to the last published AEIS report of 2008–09, the ethnic breakdown of the students in 2008–09 was 86.2 percent White, 7.9 percent Hispanic, 4.8 percent African American, 0.4 percent Native American, and 0.6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander.

Cushing Elementary, located yards from the Cushing Jr–Sr High School, includes grades Pre-kindergarten through grade 5 with an enrollment of 215 students in 2008–09. This school received *Academically Acceptable* ratings in the Texas School Accountability Rating System each for years 2004–05 through 2008–09. Cushing Jr–Sr High School includes grades 6 through 12. Enrollment in 2008–09 was 264 students. Of that number, 139 are high school students and 125 are junior high students. Cushing Jr–Sr High School's accountability rating for both 2007–08 and 2008–09 was *Recognized,* while in 2004–05 through 2006–07 the school was rated *Academically Acceptable*.

Currently both facilities share a cafeteria and library located in the Cushing Jr–Sr High School. In 2009, the district broke ground on a new elementary building to replace the current elementary originally built in 1951. The new Cushing Elementary will remain within the same area from its present site and is anticipated to open in the fall of 2011.

In the summer of 2009, the board approved hiring a curriculum director; the position was filled in the fall of 2009. The superintendent, campus principals, and the curriculum director are responsible for instructional programs for the schools. A full-time counselor, nurse, and librarian are shared by both schools.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- CISD's technology plan incorporates an instructional component that provides teachers with the training and tools to integrate technology effectively into instruction.

- CISD's library has a well established and popular reading program in grades 1 through 8, motivating a large number of students to participate in one or more reading programs.

FINDINGS

- CISD's instructional leadership team has not developed a cohesive instructional planning process that identifies student needs and defines processes to monitor student learning and teacher effectiveness.

- CISD is actively working on a variety of curriculum initiatives, but does not have a board policy or a curriculum plan that directs the development of a district curriculum.

- CISD lacks a vertically aligned instructional plan for elementary writing.

- CISD lacks a plan to ensure that more students are taking challenging courses to prepare them for college.

- CISD does not have the necessary professional library resources to maximize collaboration with classroom teachers and instruction time with students.

- CISD lacks a professional development plan that guides teachers' staff development choices with a focus geared on student learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Establish an instructional leadership team that plans strategically by meeting regularly to study, plan, monitor, and evaluate student learning and teacher effectiveness.**

- **Recommendation 2: Develop and adopt a formal board policy and vertically aligned curriculum plan focused on student learning.**

- **Recommendation 3: Develop a vertically aligned instructional plan to guide teachers in daily instruction of English Language Arts.**

- **Recommendation 4: Create a plan to ensure more students are taking challenging courses to prepare them for college.**

- **Recommendation 5: Create a librarian position.**

- **Recommendation 6: Develop a comprehensive professional development plan focused on student learning.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Cushing ISD's district technology plan incorporates an instructional component that provides teachers with the training and tools to integrate technology effectively into instruction. The technology director (currently the business manager and technology director), working with technology directors in other districts and CISD staff, a parent and student, developed a two-year (2009–11) strategic Instructional Technology Plan that helps assure that teachers have the tools and training to enhance student learning. This extensive plan is developed around four goals; three of these goals address student learning:

- Goal 1: 100 percent of students and teachers will utilize multiple technology resources to support research-based instructional strategies to i**mprove student learning** and meet diverse learning needs.

- Goal 2: All instructional staff will be provided with high quality professional development that will prepare them to effectively incorporate technology in **instruction**.

- Goal 3: District and school administrators will plan for and provide technology resources and services to **improve student achievement** and to support school operations.

- Goal 4: The district infrastructure will be configured and maintained to provide access to technology resources for the whole district.

In response to these goals, interactive whiteboards were installed with an accompanying computer and projector in each elementary classroom in October of 2009. The electronic whiteboards combine the simplicity of a whiteboard and the power of a computer. The district also purchased software for the interactive whiteboard to assist teachers in creating, delivering, and managing interactive lessons.

While the boards had only been installed a short time at the time of the school review, the review team noted that six of the eight classrooms visited were using electronic whiteboards for instruction. Below are just a few examples:

- In a grade 1 classroom studying money, students were showing different ways to make 11 cents on the interactive whiteboard. Different denomination coins were located at the bottom of the screen. First grade students went to the board with other students watching anxiously. With a hand, the student would drag the coins to make their version of 11 cents. The teacher asked questions to point out the similarities and differences in making 11 cents.

- In a kindergarten classroom, students were learning about counting by twos, threes, and fives using a 100-chart on the interactive whiteboard. The teacher could manipulate the board from her computer in the middle of the room. Several multiples of two in consecutive order would appear in red. The students would be asked individually turn over other multiples of 2 on the 100-chart. As they put a hand on the number, it would turn red. Other students would decide if this was correct for counting by twos.

- In a grade 4 class, students were playing a group game with multiplication and place value. The interactive whiteboard would ring a bell when a student had correctly placed the answer in correct place value location. Students were anxious to answer correctly to hear the bell.

Training for using these new tools has been ongoing, with more extensive training taking place in the summer of 2010. In November of 2009, elementary teachers took part in a staff development day that included many activities including strategies about teaching reading using the interactive whiteboards.

The technology director's plan is to roll out the interactive whiteboards to the junior high school teachers next and find lead teachers to begin using the boards and ultimately train other teachers. According to the Technology director, the process has been done in stages in order "to ease staff into daily use of technology to enhance the curriculum."

Currently, secondary teachers use wireless tablets, which act like virtual whiteboards. Teachers received training through a power point the technology director created with pictures to help teachers learn to use the tool effectively.

Finally, training is provided by the technology director and at times representatives from software companies representing any new software having been purchased by the district at the time. Several different software packages have recently been added to the district for use by teachers in enhancing and assessing learning for all students, including Credit Recovery software for individual learning by students seeking to recover required credits toward their graduation.

LIBRARY READING PROGRAMS

CISD's library has a well established and very popular reading program in grades 1 through 8 motivating a large number of students to participate in one or more reading programs. Cushing library personnel are particularly active in the state reading programs that encourage children to read more books.

CISD presently has one library that serves grades Pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The space is small so accommodations have been made to give students closer access to books before a new elementary school opens sometime in 2011 with a library of its own. A certified librarian works in the district; however, this person holds two other key administrative roles in the district; business manager and technology director. She still finds time to meet weekly with the library instructional aide to collaborate on needs of the library and upcoming programs. The library instructional aide, has been in this position for the last 14 years, ensures that every classroom, including gifted and talented and special education classrooms, have a full set of the state recommended book lists.

The library instructional aide also keeps all records of books read by students that are on the state lists and provides incentives for students to read multiple books. She facilitates various incentive programs that Cushing students love to attend. When deadlines are approaching to complete books, she even stands by the buses handing the appropriate age books to students to begin reading over the weekend, jotting down student names to record later. Her goal is always to place books in students' hands they will enjoy reading and seems to know every student in CISD by name and the type of reading each student enjoys.

The most popular program in Cushing ISD is the *Texas Bluebonnet Award* (TBA) program designed for students in grades 3 through 6. TBA was established in 1979 to encourage Texas children to read more books, explore a variety of current books, develop powers of discrimination, and identifies their favorite books. The 20 books eligible for this annual award are selected and publicized by committees within the Texas Library Association (TLA). These committees create and coordinate the activities associated with the TBA Program, which is jointly sponsored by the Children's Round Table (CRT) and the Texas Association of School Librarians (TASL).

Exhibit 1–1 shows the percent of students who read the twenty TBA books for 2010 by the deadline established by the TLA. At that time, students reading at least 5 books can vote on their favorite of the twenty books. It is important to note that after reading the book, a student must pass a test showing that he read and comprehended the reading.

For younger students, Cushing Library has embraced the *2X2 Reading* list. It is a project of the Children's Round Table, a unit of the TLA. The *2X2 Reading* produces a list of 20 recommended books for children, age two to grade two. This reading list can be found in many public places such as public

EXHIBIT 1–1
TEXAS BLUEBONNET BOOKS
NUMBER READ BY CISD STUDENTS IN GRADES 3–6
JANUARY 2010

TEXAS BLUEBONNET AWARD BOOK READING	READ AT LEAST 5 OF THE 20 BOOKS	READ AT LEAST 10 OF THE 20 BOOKS	READ ALL OF THE 20 BOOKS
Grade 6	65%	33%	5%
Grade 5	82%	41%	15%
Grade 4	96%	69%	4%
Grade 3	65%	19%	0%

SOURCE: Cushing ISD Library, January 2010.

libraries, school libraries, primary care facilities, day care centers, hospitals, and Head Start Locations. Cushing Elementary first and second graders participate in the *2X2 Reading Program*. There are two sets of the 2X2 books for classrooms and one for the library. The second graders use the two sets during first semester. At the time of the school review team visit in January 2010 the students had just celebrated the results of the first semester—65 percent of the grade 2 students had read all of the books. The first graders have the books in their classroom presently and will have a celebration at the end of the year. In 2010–11, plans are in place to also include kindergarten in the *2X2 Reading Program*.

A reading program not quite as popular is the *Lone Star Reading Program* that publishes a designated reading list for students in grades 6 through 8. The Texas Library Association sponsors the Lone Star Reading list solely to encourage free voluntary reading. Junior high students read the *Lone Star* books but are not pushed as much as the Bluebonnet books. There are other programs in the library that motivate these students to read. For example, junior high students were motivated to read the *Lightning Thief* series of teen books. The Cushing library instructional aide, with the help of parent volunteers and teachers, escorted 52 junior high students to a newly released movie, *The Lightning Thief*, which reflects a series of books for teens.

According to *The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines* for Texas, a library program is considered Exemplary in Standard I, principle 2B, if at least 90 percent of elementary students participate in one or more reading programs throughout the school year. CISD is meeting those standards as reflected in the reading programs being accessed by district students, along with the large collection of materials found in the library.

The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas also describe an Exemplary library under standard III, principle 1A as a library that "provides a balanced and current collection of at least 12,000 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia or 20 items per student at elementary level, at least 18 per student at middle school level, and at least 16 items per student at high school level, whichever is greater." CISD's library assistant provided the review team a list of books that have been checked out as of January 26, 2010. This snapshot of library materials showed 15,237 copies, or 30.8 items per student had been checked out, well above *exemplary* status for standard III, principle 1A. This can be attributed to district budget allocation for the library and because the library instructional aide has built a program that is literally putting books in eager students' hands daily.

Furthermore, **Exhibit 1–2** indicates responses of those CISD students, parents, and teachers having responded to the school review survey. Of those responding to the survey, most indicate satisfaction with access to library books. In combining the survey data responses, 88 percent of the students, parents, and teachers responding to the survey believe the ability of the school library to meet student needs for books is good or excellent. The exhibit also shows that only 4 percent of the parents, 4 percent of the students, and that no teachers believe that the library program needs improvement.

EXHIBIT 1–2
CISD SURVEY RESPONSES
JANUARY 2010

SURVEY ITEM: THE ABILITY OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS FOR BOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES.						
SURVEY RESPONDENTS	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR	NO RESPONSE
Parent/Community	48%	48%	4%	0%	0%	0%
High School Students	36%	49%	9%	4%	0%	6%
Teachers	61%	30%	9%	0%	0%	0%

SURVEY ITEM: PLEASE IDENTIFY DISTRICT SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT TO MEET THE STUDENTS' NEEDS. TYPICAL SPECIAL PROGRAMS ARE LISTED BELOW AND INCLUDE SPECIAL EDUCATION, SUMMER SCHOOL AND GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS. PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.			
ANSWER OPTIONS	PARENT/COMMUNITY	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS 11TH AND 12TH GRADERS	TEACHERS
Library Services	4%	4%	0%

SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board (LBB), School Review Survey, January 2010.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CUSHING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM (REC. 1)

The CISD instructional leadership team has not developed a cohesive instructional planning process that identifies student needs and defines processes to monitor student learning and teacher effectiveness.

According to an old proverb, "A vision without a plan is just a dream. A plan without a vision is just drudgery. But a vision with a plan can change the world." CISD leaders have the best intentions for student learning and teacher effectiveness. All of the district leaders respond to needs expressed by teachers, parents, board members or students. However, the needs expressed are not based on a strategic plan focused on student learning. The words *Preparing for Success—Every Student, Every Day* is on the home page of the Cushing website. This is a worthy mission but interviews with district leaders did not reveal a cohesive plan to accomplish success for all students.

In interviews with the superintendent, it was not evident that meetings with the curriculum director and principals are scheduled with a specific focus concerning any across-the-board academic issues affecting students. There was mention of frequent (almost daily) casual meetings based on proximity and immediacy, but no specific process mentioned when these entities meet. For instances, when asked about an issue about student achievement in elementary writing, the superintendent took all the blame for the problem saying that he should have paid more attention. The principal on the other hand was working to solve the issue by arranging training and interventions while the curriculum director was involved in teacher learning issues and assessment. Although everyone was concerned, it was not apparent that a united action plan had been developed and that all leaders had a clear understanding of the plan.

The instructional leadership team is a recently formed team with a new curriculum director (Fall 2009) and a fairly new superintendent (2008). All instructional leaders in CISD—the superintendent, curriculum director, and principals care deeply about the success of the students, however, the team does not seem to share a common vision or expectations for a more unified approach regarding an instructional plan. For example, in interviews with district principals and the curriculum director, the review team was told that frequent walk-through visits in classrooms occurred because they all genuinely wanted to know what was going on in classrooms and wanted to be visible to teachers and students. However,

there seemed to be a lack of common focus for the visits. It was not evident to the review team that common expectations for the observations on instruction were being shared between the instructional leaders. Additionally, there is little evidence that district staff development is planned and based on the collective instructional needs of teachers that had been observed.

An effective walk-through technique many school organizations have embraced is based on the work of Carolyn Downey and other authors of *The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School Supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time* (Downey, 2004). This concept is considered separate from a formal teacher evaluation. Rather, it is a method of collecting data and reflecting on expectations for instructional practice based on the data. The expectations are simple and easy to observe, yet critical to student learning. One example—"Is the activity aligned to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course?"

Walk-through techniques vary on criteria. Most include a question directed to two or three students such as, "What are you learning today?" The students' responses allow the observer to determine if the students know the learning objective; it is a simple yes or no for the observer. When a district decides to implement a walk-through program, they typically agree on the set of expectations that match the district's plan for instruction. Instructional leaders will have a clear, common focus in the classroom and expectations are shared with all teachers.

In training, it is recommended that walk-throughs happen in each teacher's classroom every two or three weeks. A district usually develops its own method of collecting data. Leander ISD uses a classroom walk-through process they call "snapshots." When going into a classroom, administrators wear a tag that looks like a camera. Immediately, teachers know this is a quick walk through and to expect questioning of students. It is based on seven components that are easily measured in less than four minutes. Most leaders reported that after doing snapshots for a few weeks, they could easily walk in and out of the classroom in less than three minutes. Data is collected with a handheld electronic data device using software that stores and creates charts using the data. The data provide a basis for reflection for small groups of teachers and a sharing of effective practices for the faculty as a whole. Whether data is collected and stored electronically or recorded on paper to be tallied later, the conversations among teachers based on the data is what promotes school improvement.

In *School Leadership That Works* (Marzano, 2005), a purposeful community is defined as one with the collective efficacy and capability to develop and use assets to accomplish goals that matter to all community members through agreed-upon processes. Collective efficacy is the shared belief that "we can make a difference."

The review team also noted a disconnect in the planning process regarding CISD's formal annual planning instruments, the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) for the elementary and the Cushing Jr–Sr High School. According to section 11.251 of the Texas Education Code, "The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to the academic excellence indicators adopted under section 39.051."

The district's 2009–10 DIP, while extensive, and in compliance with the requirements of the TEC, cites objectives for student achievement that seem vague, incomplete, and difficult to measure. The plan for example, includes a chart citing 2007–08 TAKS scores for student groups in every test and references a goal of scoring 100 percent for every TAKS test in every subgroup. The district's Campus Improvement Plans for the elementary and the Jr–Sr high school also mirror the exact goal and objective as the DIP.

Exhibit 1–3 compares objectives directly relating to student achievement in Cushing ISD and Hays Consolidated ISD District Improvement Plans. The site-based committee producing the DIP in Hays CISD set reasonable expectations regarding attainable TAKS scores tested areas for all subgroups. In contrast, Cushing ISD's DIP simply sets 100 percent as the goal for every TAKS test in every subgroup and bypasses academic areas identified as having the greatest need. For example, Cushing Elementary missed being rated as *Recognized* due to low scores in grade 4 writing, yet the DIP and CIP remains silent in addressing this as a targeted area for improvement.

DIP objectives should give clear direction to the district in determining how they are progressing on the goal. If the goal is unreasonable it is likely the district will not meet the goal. Instructional leadership teams often use data instruments such as the Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum system (DMAC) that help identify student assessment scores by subgroup, providing a district or campus with a true measurement that serves as a base to help project

measurable targets for improvement that meet the plans intent to meet those goals.

The district should establish an instructional leadership team that plans strategically by meeting regularly to study, plan, monitor, and evaluate student learning and teacher effectiveness. The team should address all aspects of student learning from evaluating walkthroughs to the development of goals and objectives for the DIP and the individual CIPs. Planning should begin for a school year before the previous year ends. Immediately after standardized test scores arrive, usually in May, the instructional leadership team should examine the results and begin the site-based process of revising the DIP and each of the CIPs.

In addition, to teacher effectiveness, the instructional leadership team should also focus on student achievement. CISD has purchased the DMAC system that allows the district to input data such as teacher designed benchmarks or TAKS results. This system also allows the district to create benchmarks using an item bank included in the software. DMAC can be a great tool for the instructional leadership team to measure student progress on weak objectives in curriculum and develop a plan of action that is monitored regularly.

Now is the opportune time for the leadership team to develop a cohesive plan for student success. All team members must be focused on student learning and jointly develop systems and processes that monitor and measure student achievement and teacher effectiveness. This must include studying together the current research on effective schools. In addition, attending educational leadership conferences together can provide a common vocabulary focused on student learning and give the team a more focused time to discuss and formulate plans.

An author who has written much about business leadership realized that many of his readers were leaders in the social sector. In response, he wrote a short monograph about leadership in the social sector, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, (Jim Collins, 2005). His book focuses on the reality that every organization has its unique set of problems, yet some make a leap and others do not. He ends his book with this quote, "This is perhaps the single most important point in all of *Good to Great*. Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline." Greatness at CISD can be achieved with a strategic instructional leadership team.

EXHIBIT 1–3
COMPARISON OF DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (DIP) OBJECTIVES
BETWEEN CUSHING ISD AND HAYS COUNTY ISD

CUSHING ISD 2009–10	HAYS COUNTY ISD 2008–09
DIP Objectives Directly Related to Student Achievement	**DIP Objectives Directly Related to Student Achievement**
Objectives 1.1 Student performance will increase in each of the areas listed in the chart on the preceding page until each goal is attained. (chart not included here)	**Objective 1.1** The TAKS Reading/ELA performance of all students (grades 3 – 11) will reach the performance standard of 90 percent on TAKS Reading/ELA tests and all subgroups will improve as follows (chart not included here)
Objective 2.1 Identify and address the educational needs of students in special needs groups so each student is served in the least limiting and most inclusive environment possible.	**Objective 1.2** The TAKS Math performance of all students in grades 3 – 11 will reach the performance standard of 83 percent on TAKS math test and all subgroups will improve as follows (chart not included here)
	Objective 1.3 The TAKS Writing performance of all students (Grades 4, 7) in HCISD will reach the performance standard of 90 percent on the TAKS writing test and all student sub-groups will improve as follows: (chart not included here)
	Objective 1.4 The TAKS Science performance of all students (Grades 5, 8, 10, 11) in HCISD will reach the performance standard of 84 percent on the TAKS science test and all student sub-groups will improve as follows: (chart not included here)
	Objective 1.5 The TAKS Social Studies performance of all students (Grades 8, 10, 11) in HCISD will reach the performance standard of 91 percent on the TAKS social studies test and all student sub-groups will improve as follows: (chart not included here)
	Objective 1.6 (1.7 not directly related to student achievement) The district will reach recognized performance level on the TAKS-A and TAKS-M performance targets.
	Objective 1.8 The district will reduce achievement gaps among sub-groups to a 10 percent variance or less.
	Objective 1.9 Achievement in reading and math for all subgroups will increase according to performance goals set by the District with the implementation of the Rti model.
	Objective 1.10 The TAKS district commended level will increase.

SOURCE: CISD Curriculum Director 2009–10, and Hays County ISD website.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT (REC. 2)

CISD is actively working on a variety of curriculum initiatives, but does not have a local board policy or a curriculum plan that directs the development of a district curriculum. Board policy defines the curriculum philosophy of the district, components of the written curriculum, a systematic process for curriculum delivery, and directions for assessment opportunities that measure student progress in the curriculum.

In the fall of 2009–10, the district hired a much needed Curriculum director that also serves as the state and district testing coordinator. In the short time she has been in this position, she has guided district teachers in nearly completing a set of binders for each course taught per grade level, that consist of a list of relevant Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); several lessons supporting the objectives and a teacher-made assessment for each six weeks. Most teachers produced the binders using individual documents and resources they have been using for instruction.

Exhibit 1–4 shows a list of CISD courses and the documents located within the curriculum binders for Cushing Jr–Sr High School. Additionally, it shows that no course had developed a yearly scope and sequence that gave teachers (and parents) an overview of the course.

Exhibit 1–5 shows a list of CISD courses and the documents located within the curriculum binders for grades PK–5.

The review team further examined the documents within the folders, located for the most part, in teachers' classrooms, and found that most of the six week plans consisted of a list of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to be taught by each teacher. It was not apparent that the six weeks plans were derived from an annual scope and sequence guide for the course. An annual plan provides a pacing guide for the units of study. It also presents the curriculum as "viable" by ensuring that the teacher has adequate instruction time to present the required content. The six weeks plans also lacked important documents that teachers may routinely study before teaching a unit. For example, an academic language list (vocabulary) should be included along with suggested

activities for instruction to be successful. Possible student misconceptions should also be included for teachers to be ready for student success.

In addition, the Curriculum office did not have these documents stored electronically. The curriculum director reported that teachers created their own assessment for the TEKS objectives. When teachers were asked about this process in a teacher focus group, they reported multiple ways of creating their own six weeks benchmarks. Many were using released Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) items or creating their own items for the benchmark test. Some teachers from the early grades that did not have TAKS released tests, seemed to struggle the most in creating their benchmarks.

Due to the district's small size, few courses are taught by multiple teachers to allow for horizontal collaboration in curriculum. While it is very important and critical to involve teachers in the curriculum writing process, without a standard for developing these documents or approved expectations for curriculum, the district may be at risk of not

EXHIBIT 1–4
CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS IN TEACHER CURRICULUM BINDERS
GRADES 6–12

LIST OF ALL COURSES GRADES 6–12	SCOPE AND SEQUENCE FOR THE YEAR	1ST WEEKS PLAN	2ND WEEKS PLAN	3RD WEEKS PLAN	4TH WEEKS PLAN	5TH WEEKS PLAN	6TH WEEKS PLAN	VARIOUS LESSON PLANS INCLUDED
6–8 Mathematics		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6–8 Science		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6–8 Social Studies		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6–8 English/Language Arts		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6–8 PE/Athletics		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6–8 Art		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
9–12 Mathematics		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
9–12 Science		√	√	√	√	√		√
9–12 Social Studies		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
9–12 English Language Arts		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
9–12 PE/Athletics								
9–12 Art		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
9–12 Spanish		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Band		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Theatre Arts		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
CTE Courses	completion of documents not consistent							
Speech		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Boone/Band		√	√	√	√	√	√	√

SOURCE: CISD Curriculum Director, January 2010.

EXHIBIT 1–5
CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS IN TEACHER CURRICULUM BINDERS
GRADES PK–5

LIST OF ALL COURSES GRADES PK–5	SCOPE AND SEQUENCE FOR THE YEAR	1ST WEEKS PLAN	2ND WEEKS PLAN	3RD WEEKS PLAN	4TH WEEKS PLAN	5TH WEEKS PLAN	6TH WEEKS PLAN	VARIOUS LESSON PLANS INCLUDED
PK–5 Mathematics	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PK–5 Reading	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PK–5 Writing	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PK–5 Social Studies	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PK–5 Science	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PK–5 Art							
PK–5 PE							

SOURCE: CISD Curriculum Director, January 2010.

meeting its curriculum needs. Curriculum documents left to teacher discretion and subjectivity, may lead to poor articulation of the TEKS being taught. Teachers' time can then be better spent designing engaging lessons to deliver district curriculum.

Along with the individualized assessments, the district uses Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC) purchased through Regional Education Service Center VII (Region 7) to analyze assessment data. This allows the district to input objectives and other data from teacher assessments and analyze the teacher benchmark data.

Apart from the curriculum binders with six weeks plans, the district has been studying the possibility of purchasing a curriculum management system like CSCOPE to supplement the TEKS (required learning standards for grades K–12). CSCOPE was created by the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative.

The director's training and site visits to observe other districts using CSCOPE led her to conclude that the district would be able to supplement the existing curriculum with CSCOPE and the current six weeks plans could be adjusted based on district preference and teacher input. While there was no district implementation plan at the time of the review team's visit, on how to co-mingle the curricula, the director indicated that she would develop a plan of implementation when the decision to purchase the curriculum management system was final.

During the review team's onsite visit in January 2010, the decision had been made by district staff to adopt CSCOPE but the final decision regarding whether to purchase the curriculum and support from Region 7 or Region 6 had not

been made and the board had not approved its adoption. Since onsite work, the district's board unanimously approved the implementation of the CSCOPE curriculum management system in February 2010.

While CISD has since adopted this system, it is important that the district proceed forward in developing and adopting a formal board policy and vertically aligned curriculum plan. A board policy can provide a road map for district staff and teachers in developing a curriculum management plan that is useful for all. Moreover, while the newly adopted curriculum system may fit the current needs of the district, it is important that Cushing ISD's curriculum vision focus on long term needs. Having a policy and plan centered on the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum that includes responsibilities for implementation and management of the curriculum by the board, superintendent, district curriculum staff, principals, and teachers is a win-win situation for not only the district but more importantly the district's students. A process for periodic review and revision of curriculum and its management systems should also be included in the policy and plan along with a list of all resources needed to implement and maintain the curriculum. The board could use the newly created board policy to ensure the curriculum has a sharpened academic focus on student learning. Curriculum should be adjusted to fit the needs of the teachers and students at CISD. Additionally, students are responsible for learning and understanding their strengths and needs within the curriculum while parents have a responsibility in supporting student learning of the curriculum.

Many school districts in the state of Texas have well-written local curriculum development policies. Among these are Nacogdoches ISD, White Oak ISD, Joaguin ISD, Leander

ISD, and Hallsville ISD. These are easily found in board policies typically as EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development. With a school board, district staff, teachers, and parents that continually seek increased student achievement, CISD could easily draw on some of these examples of district policies and design a policy that best fits the needs of CISD students and community.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

ELEMENTARY WRITING (REC. 3)

CISD lacks a vertically aligned instructional plan for elementary writing. Such a plan will provide teachers clear direction in preparing students, kindergarten through 4th grade and beyond, to meet tested state standards in writing.

In Texas, grade K through 4 writing is tested on TAKS only in Grade 4. However, for students to be good writers in Grade 4, the learning process begins in kindergarten and builds each grade level. For the past five years, Cushing ISD's 4th grade writing scores have been erratic. Writing scores for the state as a whole and for other similar size school districts are more consistent and static than those in CISD as shown in **Exhibits 1–6 and 1–7**. In 2008–09, the state average for writing in Grade 4 was 92 percent meeting standard with a range of 3 percent between 2004–05 and 2008–09. All students in CISD averaged 66 percent in 2008-09 with a range of 33 percent during the last five years. From 2007–08 to 2008–09, scores decreased from 82 percent to 66 percent of grade 4 students meeting standard in writing. This eliminated the opportunity for Cushing Elementary to be a *Recognized* school. Meanwhile, state scores in the same timeframe decreased from 93 percent to 92 percent meeting standard.

Exhibits 1–8, 1–9 and 1–10 depict an additional concern when the data is desegregated by gender. Grade 4 girls in Cushing outscored boys by 34 percent in 2007–08 and 19 percent in 2008–09. State averages for girls exceed boys' average during the same time by 6 percent both years. Other districts of similar size and demographics indicate similar results as the state.

Differences in writing scores between CISD boys and girls should be examined. According to research, girls tend to produce words at an earlier age, have a larger vocabulary and a higher level of language complexity beginning in early childhood (Feingold, 1993; Halpern, 2000; Hyde & Linn, 1988). The biggest differences in verbal skills during school-age years—all favoring girls—are in spelling, overall language measures, and writing (*Similarities and Differences Between Boys and Girl,* Cook, 2009). However, even with these indicators and explanations, CISD should evaluate the gender disparity.

Prior to 2009–10, Cushing Elementary mainly used the *6 + 1 Traits of Writing* for writing instruction. The traits of good writing (voice, ideas, word choice, organization, sentence fluency, and conventions) can enable elementary students to advance their writing through focusing on these strategies for good writing. The Cushing Elementary principal determined that the curriculum and instruction was not as structured as it should be and not used consistently by all teachers. She was very accurate in her conclusion. In an article, *The Trait Lady Speaks Up* (2006 *Educational Leadership),* Ruth Culham, the creator of the *6 + 1 Traits of Writing*, dispels the myth the *Traits* are a curriculum. She argues the *Traits* have no scope and no sequence that unfold from year to year. The *Traits* are used for assessment and as a shared vocabulary to describe what good writing looks like at every age.

EXHIBIT 1–6
COMPARISON OF GRADE 4 WRITING SCORES
AMONG PEER DISTRICTS AND THE STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09

	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
State	90%	91%	91%	93%	92%
Campus Group	95%	96%	97%	97%	95%
Rocksprings ISD	85%	93%	94%	88%	95%
Sudan ISD	90%	99%	98%	96%	98%
LaPoynor ISD	91%	97%	95%	95%	89%
Cushing Elementary	**72%**	**99%**	**69%**	**82%**	**66%**
Cushing Elementary Eco.Disadv.(ECD)	40%	99%	50%	79%	53%
Cushing Elementary Rating	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2004–05 through 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 1–7
COMPARISON OF CUSHING ELEMENTARY GRADE 4 WRITING SCORES TO THE STATE
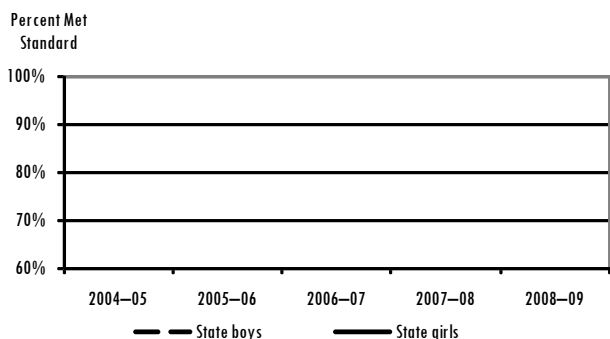**2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09**

Percent Met
Standard
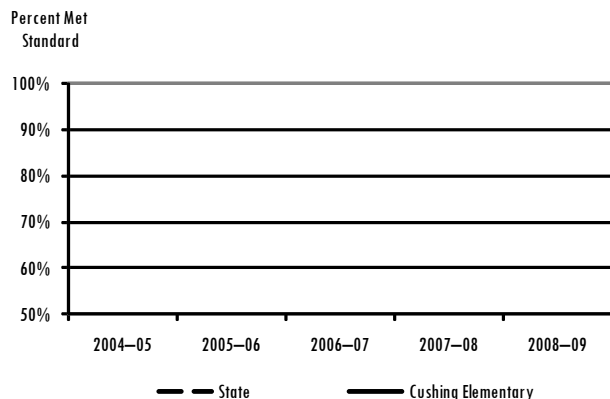
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 1–8
COMPARISON OF BOYS AND GIRLS
GRADE 4 WRITING SCORES CISD, PEERS AND THE STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09

|	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Cushing boys	77%	99%	63%	60%	56%
Cushing girls	69%	99%	77%	94%	75%
LaPoynor boys	77%	99%	94%	87%	81%
LaPoynor girls	85%	99%	83%	99%	88%
Rocksprings boys	80%	99%	90%	67%	99%
Rocksprings girls	90%	92%	89%	89%	99%
Sudan boys	75%	99%	93%	80%	99%
Sudan girls	92%	99%	99%	99%	92%
State boys	88%	90%	97%	90%	89%
State girls	94%	94%	89%	96%	95%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 1–9
COMPARISON OF GRADE 4 WRITING SCORES
FOR STATE GIRLS AND BOYS
2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09

Percent Met
Standard

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2004–05 through 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 1–10
COMPARISON OF GRADE 4 WRITING SCORES
CISD BOYS TO CISD GIRLS
2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09

Percent Met
Standard
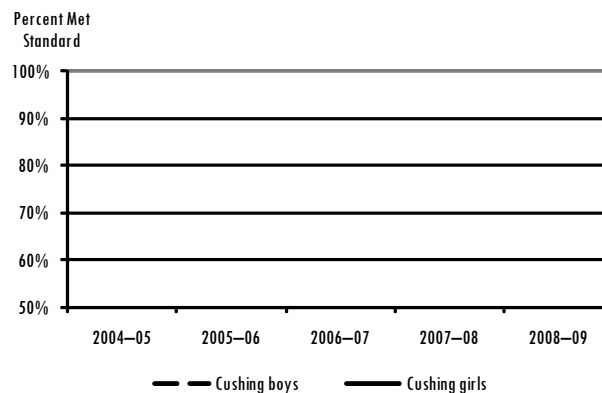
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2008–09.

After disappointing scores in 2008–09, CISD explored the *Kemah Writing Academy*. Four CISD teachers attended training in September of 2009 from Grades 2 through 4. Two of those teachers also attended the *Grammarvelous* training provided by the same company. One of those teachers provided training for all of the other CISD elementary school teachers on both components of writing.

According to the *Kemah Writing Academy* website, *The Writing Academy* is a brain-based program and addresses the six traits of writing. The training workshops model the process teachers will use with students. Once students gain the broad overview of the writing process, effective writing is taught in "chunks". Each step of the writing process is measured by a rubric called the *4-Square Rubric*. There is also a final, more detailed rubric providing students with additional feedback.

With the training, some positive changes have been made in CISD writing instruction in 2009–10. The principal reports that teachers in Grades Pre-K through 5 are using writing academy strategies daily and Grade 4 students are writing daily. Lesson plans are reviewed for evidence of daily writing activities. Walk-through observations occur often in the elementary to observe progress in writing instruction. All grades turn in writing process papers for each student every six weeks. Positive notes and suggestions for improvement are provided to teachers about student writing. Teachers are conferencing with students individually about their writing. Outstanding papers are chosen for students to read aloud on the school intercom system.

While writing certainly should be enjoyable, and children should have opportunities to choose their own subjects and methods of writing, the importance of writing in developing children's cognitive and communication skills cannot be underestimated (Tompkins, 1982). Writing is critical to student learning. Students can be poor readers because participation in writing has been neglected. If not developed, both these skills will have a negative effect on learning in all areas. Even with increased teacher training and implementation, CISD does not have a sustainable aligned instructional plan for success in elementary writing and in particular Grade 4 writing. The district lacks a systemic plan to guide teachers in daily instruction of English Language Arts. In an interview with the principal, she stated that teachers in Grades Pre-K through 5 are using writing academy strategies daily, however, only the Grade 4 students are writing daily. This is contrary to current research on building student writing skills beginning in kindergarten. Good writing for all students will not make progress if students are asked to write only when it can fit into the day.

CISD should develop a vertically aligned instructional plan to guide teachers in daily instruction of English Language Arts. The plan should include all components of best practices in literacy instruction with an expectation that students will be engaged in authentic reading and writing opportunities *daily*. In all grade levels, students should be involved in a writing workshop daily with opportunities to write in a variety of genres for a variety of audiences. Writing across the content areas should be encouraged. Teachers make instructional decisions and adjustments based on regular progress monitoring of students.

In creating a district plan for English Language Arts in elementary, CISD should base the plan on the new Texas required English Language Arts Essential Knowledge and skills. All ELAR (English Language Arts and Reading) elementary teachers received training in the new ELAR TEKS during the spring of 2010. Changes in the TEKS are significant. Unlike previous draft versions provided by TEA for review, it is considered a brand new version rather than just "revised TEKS." The new TEKS build upon each other with very little repetition in the skills and concepts taught from grade level to grade level.

A major complaint in previous English Language Arts TEKS was the repetition across many grade levels making district scope and sequence writing extremely difficult. These new TEKS specify not only *what* will be taught and but now *how* and *in what order*. Teachers should not use old lessons since

they will not be adequately preparing students for the 2012 state standardized test. The five strands of the ELAR TEKS (Reading, Writing, Research, Oral and Written Conventions, and Listening and Speaking) work together and should be integrated in a literacy classroom. Once the plan is developed, CISD can then decide which resources to utilize that align with state standards and district philosophy for language arts instruction. Any instructional training or programs used or purchased in the district must be aligned with the district philosophy in reading and writing instruction.

Critical to the plan's success, and ultimately students' success, are teacher guidelines for daily implementation. According to *Writing Workshop* (Fountas, 2001), the goal of any writing program is to help all students make consistent progress. To assure that progress happens, it is recommended that CISD ELAR elementary teachers:

- Allow time for writing every day for all grades;

- Provide mini lessons that offer specific instruction on all aspects of writing;

- Confer with students and offer assistance specific to their work;

- Provide feedback on writing;

- Help students set goals and assess their own progress;

- Expose students to different genres; and

- Support membership in a writing community that accepts an individual's present abilities and communicates high expectations for improvements.

With 45 minutes of writing instruction each day, a writing workshop can be organized with a 10 minute mini-lesson, 30 minute student writing time (while the teacher has writing conferences with individual students or pulls small groups of students to focus on targeted writing skills), and a 5 minute sharing time. Students should have opportunities to write in various genres (as identified in the ELAR TEKS), on topics of their own choice. In a writing workshop students learn what it means to be a writer, how writers think, plan, compose, revise, and share their work. Daily writing is as necessary as daily reading. Setting aside sustained time for writing communicates to students that it is valued.

Grade 4 teachers should collaboratively study the TAKS Scoring Guide and sample papers. It is recommended that teachers share the scoring guides with students (even in third grade), so that students know the expectations.

Collaboratively, teachers and students analyze sample papers. Students should be very familiar with the writing of an exemplary essay and a poor essay. Students grading their writing pieces and that of their peers can help in that understanding. The state offers opportunities for districts to copy their student writing at a specific time after the testing. This resource can be extremely helpful in improving writing instruction when a teacher can match an essay score with the student's piece of writing.

Considering CISD's Grade 4 writing data, the curriculum director, the elementary principal, and teachers should research and study distinctions in the instruction for boys in writing. Author Ralph Fletcher in *Boy Writers: Reclaiming Their Voices gives teachers some suggestions (Fletcher, 2001) to better support boys as good writers. Below are a few examples:*

- Boys need an audience more often than girls. Allow them to read their writing to the class, small group, or during a pair share.

- Provide more wait time for boys to talk about their reading and writing with the teacher.

- Boys need to feel at home. This usually means reading/writing in a corner, on the floor, or outdoors.

- Be generous with their humorous writing style and encourage them to find other authors who write in the same manner.

When planning writing instruction, reading and writing must work together. Guided reading is not round-robin reading or whole group reading—it is reading that is done with a teacher and a small group of students reading books at their *instructional* level (*Best Practice,* Zemelman, 2005). It addresses skills for an individual student needing additional help or extends readers to higher levels. It does not replace the core instruction occurring in reading, but rather supports it. Writing instruction must work closely with guided reading programs. Guided reading is the targeted instruction for individuals, just like a writing small group or an individual writing conference where students' needs are being met.

Teacher support for the implementation and for monitoring student progress must be included in the plan. A meeting each six weeks should be scheduled with teachers, the curriculum director, and elementary principal to discuss student progress and reflect on classroom implementation. A proven help to teacher learning is observing other teachers, even within different grade levels. According to *Leading in a Culture of Change* (Fullan, 2001), change in instructional

practice involves working through problems with peers and experts, observation of practice, and steady accumulation over time of new practices anchored in one's own classroom setting. The role of the principal and curriculum director is to observe classrooms frequently, lead discussions with teachers on implementation, monitor student progress, continue to provide teachers professional development, and celebrate progress.

Finally, the district should also incorporate any objectives or strategies from their English Language Arts plan into the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) to further ensure all areas needing improvement are addressed. Good plans should remain fluid and should be reviewed and updated periodically throughout the school year to help ensure successful strategies are adopted where appropriate and less successful strategies are dropped or modified.

In 2009–10, Cushing Elementary has developed into a focused group of educators wanting to see students successful in writing and reading and has devoted significant time and resources to improving these important skills. Hopefully this success will be recognized in the 2009–2010 TAKS scores; however, to achieve sustainable success, CISD must develop a vertically aligned plan for writing in elementary that ensures implementation and measures student progress. Building a balanced literacy classroom helps children become readers and writers who enjoy and value literacy. Using several different trainings, book studies, and reading specialists on campus, they have learned much about needed changes in classrooms and have begun implementing changes. To make these changes sustainable, CISD leaders must embrace strategy with strategic written plans that assist teachers and are focused and provide consistent monitoring and evaluation. (*Leading Change in Your School*, Reeves, 2009) With collaborative study, on-going training to develop a deeper understanding of effective literacy practices and with developing a vertically aligned instructional plan for writing, Cushing can make sustainable gains.

This recommendation can be accomplished using existing resources.

COLLEGE READINESS SYSTEM (REC. 4)

CISD lacks a plan to ensure that more students take challenging courses to prepare them for college. While the district offered five Advanced Placement (AP) courses as shown in **Exhibit 1–11**, the appropriate course syllabus required by the College Board to audit courses for consistency, was not submitted by the district, therefore, two of the five

courses; Chemistry and Calculus, will not be recorded on transcripts as AP credit courses for those students having taken them.

The College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Program is recognized as a powerful tool for increasing academic rigor, improving teacher quality and creating a culture of excellence in high school. **Exhibit 1–11** shows the 2009–10 Cushing School schedule and enrollment of advanced placement courses.

EXHIBIT 1–11
CISD ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND ENROLLMENT 2009–2010

COURSE NAME	NUMBER ENROLLED
Calculus	*
Chemistry AP	7
Biology AP	14
English Language and Composition	7
English Literature and Composition	8

*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 procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: CISD Curriculum Director, January 2010.

In addition to AP courses, Cushing students also have the opportunity to participate in Dual Enrollment courses. Students enrolled in high schools across the country may also be dual enrolled at a local college such as a community college or university. These students may take classes at either facility for credit toward their high school diploma, as well as for college credit.

CISD currently offers only two dual credit courses for students; college math and trigonometry as shown in **Exhibit 1–12**. CISD students access these courses through Stephen F. Austin University (SFA) located about 20 miles from Cushing ISD.

In 2008, a study conducted on a large scale in Texas; a state that has significant numbers of students participating in both AP and dual enrollment; enabled researchers to compare educational outcomes of AP and dual enrollment, by following and contrasting participating students' subsequent college performance as shown in **Exhibit 1–13**.

The district not only has few AP and Dual Enrollment courses being offered to high school students, it is apparent that students lack high interest in taking these classes. Other than AP Biology, all AP and Dual Enrollment courses have

EXHIBIT 1–12
CISD ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND ENROLLMENT 2009–2010

COURSE NAME	NUMBER ENROLLED
College Algebra	*
College Trigonometry	*
Students enrolled in dual enrollment classes on SFA campus	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and SOURCE: CISD Curriculum Director, January 2010. Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

EXHIBIT 1–13
COMPARISON OF STUDENTS WITH VARYING AP AND NON-AP EXPERIENCES WHO EARN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITHIN FOUR YEARS
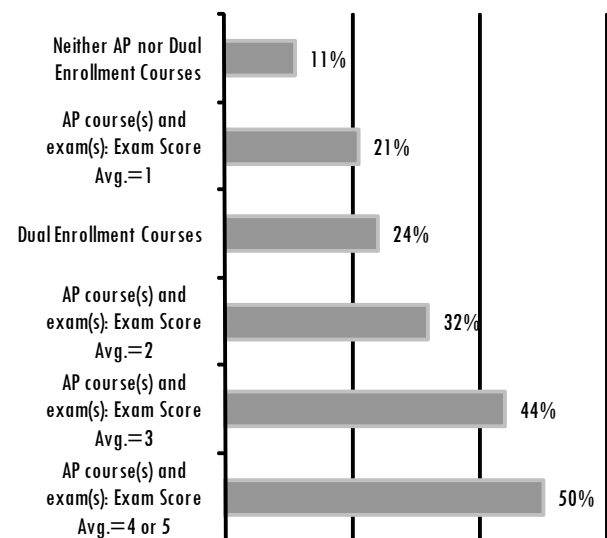
SOURCE: College Board, February 2010.

fewer than nine students enrolled. In contrast, the review team found that five juniors and 27 senior students were acting as student aides for at least one period each day.

As noted in **Exhibit 1–14**, physics while not an advanced course, is certainly a challenging course that can prepare students for college, yet again, fewer than five students were enrolled in physics. In contrast, chemistry had 26 students taking the class.

The state requires four credits of science that includes biology and courses that will provide instruction in physics and chemistry. A college bound student should be taking biology, physics and chemistry while in high school, however, the district's Jr–Sr high school offers variations in taking the required instruction in physics and chemistry, so many

EXHIBIT 1–14
CISD ADVANCED AND PRE-AP CLASSES
AND ENROLLMENT
2009–2010

COURSE	NUMBER ENROLLED
Pre Calculus	7
Chemistry	26
Physics	*
Spanish 3	8
Pre AP English, Grade 6	40
Pre AP English, Grade 7	40
Pre AP English, Grade 8	37
Pre AP English, Grade 9	54
Pre AP English, Grade 10	42
Advanced Math, Grade 8	37

*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 procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: CISD Curriculum Director, January 2010.

Cushing students are choosing less rigorous pathways such as Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC).

Exhibit 1–15 compares Advanced Course (includes AP courses plus other courses such as Pre-Calculus the state deems advanced) and Dual Credit course *completion* in CISD with the state, and peer districts of similar size and demographics. The percent of students completing at least one advanced course in the state and districts of similar size is more than twice the percent in CISD (twenty-three percent of non-special education 2008 graduates in Texas completed at least one advanced course or dual enrollment course compared to 10 percent of Cushing ISD students).

EXHIBIT 1–15
COMPARISON OF COURSE COMPLETION
SIMILAR DISTRICTS AND THE STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09

	2006 GRADUATES	2007 GRADUATES	2008 GRADUATES
State	21.0%	22.1%	23.1%
Rocksprings ISD	17.9%	22.2%	22.5%
Sudan ISD	23.2%	17.2%	23.6%
LaPoynor ISD	21.4%	16.7%	21.4%
CISD	**11.8%**	**15.4%**	**10.1%**
Cushing School Rating	AA	Recognized	Recognized

NOTE: Calculated as a count of non-special education students who completed and receive credit for at least one advanced course.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2008–09.

Exhibit 1–16 describes the results of the AP/IB Results tested indicator. This refers to percent of grade 11 and grade 12 students who took at least one AP or IB exam (International Baccalaureate). Cushing Jr–Sr High School is not an IB school; therefore no students took IB tests. In the state, 20.9% of students took at least one AP/IB test while 1.6 percent of Cushing students took an AP test.

EXHIBIT 1–16
COMPARISON OF AP/IB RESULTS FOR TESTED STUDENTS
SIMILAR DISTRICTS AND THE STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09

	2006 GRADUATES	2007 GRADUATES	2008 GRADUATES
State	18.9%	20.0%	20.9%
Rocksprings ISD	38.0%	29.6%	18.4%
Sudan ISD	23.8%	19.6%	1.9%
LaPoynor ISD	0.0%	23.0%	12.1%
CISD	**0.0%**	**24.6%**	**1.6%**
Cushing School Rating	AA	Recognized	Recognized

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2008–09.

With only 167 high school students (grades 9 through 12), it is challenging for the district to offer a large number of advanced courses but students should be able to choose from an AP course in each of the content areas and an elective course such as computer science or Spanish.

According to the Technology Director, CISD has just purchased distance learning technology equipment that will allow Cushing to offer additional AP or dual enrollment courses through Region 7. **Exhibit 1–17** is a list of AP Courses and exams available for students in Texas. Highlighted are courses CISD students will receive advanced placement credit on their transcripts; Biology, English Language and Composition, and English Literature and Composition.

As listed in **Exhibit 1–17**, the College Board offers a science course called Environmental Science that many students across the nation have experienced great success. CISD does, however, offer Environmental Systems, a less rigorous course. It will require creative planning and the use of other instructional delivery methods to offer students more choice.

Based on AEIS reports, Cushing School has many more capable students who can be successful in advanced courses and dual credit than are currently enrolled. According to the

EXHIBIT 1–17
2010 AP COURSES AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS IN TEXAS

SCIENCES	MATHEMATICS	SOCIAL STUDIES	ENGLISH LANGUAGE/ ECONOMICS	FOREIGN LANGUAGES	OTHER ELECTIVES
Biology	Calculus AB	Comp Government & Politics	English Language and Composition	French Language	Studio Art
Chemistry	Calculus BC	U.S. Government & Politics	English Literature and Composition	German Language	Art History
Environmental Science	Statistics	Human Geography		Latin: Vergil	Music Theory
Physics C		U.S. History		Spanish Language	
Physics B		World History	Macroeconomics	Spanish Literature	Psychology
		European history	Microeconomics	Japanese Language and Culture	Science A
				Chinese Language and Culture	

SOURCE: College Board website, February 2010.

AEIS ratings for 2008–09, Cushing School is a Recognized school. Also important to note, Cushing had two "++" acknowledgements in 2009 for Gold Performance in College-Ready and Commended Writing. According to the AEIS accountability manual, a new indicator, College-Ready Graduates, has been added to the Gold Performance Acknowledgment (GPA) system for the 2009 rating cycle. To be considered college-ready as defined by this indicator, a graduate must have met or exceeded the college-ready criteria on either the TAKS exit-level test, the SAT test, or the ACT test. This indicator has been reported (but not part of rating until 2008–09) on the AEIS reports since 2006-07. Presently as a GPA indicator, it will be evaluated only for performance on both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics combined. Districts with graduates in the class of 2008 having a rating of Academically Acceptable or higher are eligible. The method of calculating this percent is as follows:

> Number of graduates scoring at or above the college-ready criteria on both ELA & Mathematics
>
> Number of graduates (class of 2008) with results in both subjects to evaluate

A student must score greater than (or equal to) 2200 on the TAKS Mathematics Exit exam and the TAKS ELA Exit exam in order to be included. A score of 2100 was passing on the 2007 TAKS exit test. The state recognizes these students should do well in college level courses. Yet, only 1.6 percent of Cushing students are taking courses that have potential to give them college level credit while still in high school.

Writing skills are another example and are essential for succeeding in high school, college, and on the job. As noted in an earlier recommendation, Cushing Elementary struggles with student writing in the grade 4 TAKS test. However, 97 percent of Cushing Jr–Sr High School students met standard on the grade 7 TAKS writing test. The Commended Writing GPA indicator of "++" for Cushing Jr–Sr High School means at least 30 percent of students scored commended in writing (for Cushing Jr–Sr High School, this refers to only grade 7 students since there is no other writing test in grade 6 through 12). In 2009, 48 percent of Cushing Jr–Sr High School students scored commended (above 2400). Also worth noting, 54 percent of grade 7 economically disadvantaged students scored commended. That proficiency indicates many more students in Cushing Jr–Sr High School have the capacity to be successful in more rigorous courses.

Interesting results came from surveys conducted with district teachers, students, and parents. A few of those questions that relate to college and career readiness are shown in **Exhibits 1–18** and **1–19**. Surveys were completed by teachers, parents, and eleventh and twelfth graders in CISD in January of 2010. **Exhibit 1–18** shows responses to a survey question about the district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student. 60 percent of parents and community, 46 percent of student, and 40 percent of teacher respondents say CISD's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-

EXHIBIT 1–18
CISD SURVEY RESPONSES

SURVEY ITEM: THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT.						
SURVEY RESPONDENTS	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR	NO RESPONSE
Parent/Community	0%	28%	32%	16%	12%	12%
High School Students	8%	30%	40%	6%	0%	16%
Teachers	18%	24%	24%	16%	0%	18%

Source: LBB School Review Survey, January 2010.

EXHIBIT 1–19
CISD SURVEY RESPONSES

ANSWER OPTIONS	PARENT/COMMUNITY	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS 11TH AND 12TH GRADERS	TEACHERS
Career Counseling Programs	37%	36%	37%
College Counseling Programs	41%	60%	33%
Advance Placement Programs	29%	12%	18%

Source: LBB School Review Survey, January 2010.

bound student is average or below. In responding to a question about programs that need improvement, 47 percent of parent and community, 60 percent of students, and 33 percent of teacher respondents believe that CISD college counseling programs need improvement.

CISD should create a plan to ensure more students are taking challenging courses to prepare them for college. The new technology for distance learning is a start. Simply making more rigorous courses available to students does not necessarily lead to increased participation. CISD should begin to create a college-going and career preparation culture. District administrators, campus principals, teachers, parents, and students must together build awareness by sharing information about the correlation between challenging courses and college success and about the existing gaps in the district. The following guidelines will help to begin that process:

Create a District Academic Leadership Team. Members of this team should include at least one board member, Superintendent, CISD principals, counselor, effective AP and advanced course teacher leaders (grades 6 through 12), parent of a pre-AP or AP student, and most important, a few AP and Pre-AP students.

- **Appoint a "Champion"** of AP expansion.

- **Ensure that the District Academic Leadership Team** addresses these questions, "How is your district helping students achieve College and Career Readiness? What are some tangible practices that you have in place that help achieve that goal?"

- **Ensure that the Leadership Team read and study a book together.** One recommendation is David T. Conley's book, *College Knowledge: What it takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready*.

- **Develop a mission, vision and plan of action** to determine what College and Career Readiness looks like in CISD.

- **Set clear and aggressive goals for the AP expansion** effort that is shared widely throughout the district (K–12).

  o Short term (0–3 years) should focus on intervention strategies proven effective for identifying, preparing, and motivating numbers of students to succeed in AP Programs. Visiting other school districts or attending an AP Forum conference can help with ideas.

  o Long term (3 or more years) goals should focus on comprehensive strategies such as curriculum re-design from K–8, better alignment across yearly transitions, and help for teachers writing their course syllabus.

Finally, another method that may assist in identifying students for AP courses is using AP potential data. The data can be available to CISD by funding and requiring all

students in grades 9, 10 and 11 to take Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, PSAT/NMSQT. It is administered in October each year. CISD can partner with the College Board to be a site for the PSAT, eliminating the need for students to travel elsewhere.

The cost of the test is only $13 per student, minimal cost for a wealth of information. AP Potential is a free, web-based tool that allows schools to generate rosters of students who are likely to score a 3 or better on a given AP exam. Based on research that shows strong correlations between PSAT scores and AP exam results, AP Potential is designed to help schools increase access to AP and to ensure that no student who has the chance of succeeding in AP is overlooked. These studies show that PSAT scores are stronger predictors of students' AP exam grades than the more traditional factors such as high school grades, grades in previous same-discipline course work, and the number of same-discipline courses a student has taken. It should never be used to discourage a student from registering for an AP course.

The cost to implement this recommendation is $1,365 [$13 per test times 105 students (number of CISD students in grades 9–11 in 2008–09)]. The total fiscal cost for testing over five years is $6,825.

LIBRARY STAFFING CAPACITY (REC. 5)

CISD does not have the necessary professional library resources to maximize collaboration with classroom teachers and instruction time with students.

In 2009–10, the library located at the Cushing Jr–Sr High School, serves the 495 students in the district. A new elementary, tentatively scheduled to open in 2011, is under construction and according to the plans, a much larger library has been included in the elementary school's design. At the time of the school review visit, January 2010, it was unclear whether the new library would serve both campuses or would only serve the elementary students grades Pre–K through grade 5. However, district officials noted later that the new library is planned to house only the elementary

students and the Cushing Jr–Sr High School will continue to use their current library for students in grades 6 through 12.

CISD has one certified librarian and one library instructional aide. The library instructional aide in CISD has more experience and training than most library instructional aides. She has attended training and conferences with librarians for more than 14 years with opportunities to collaborate and learn best practices for a school library. She has made great efforts to increase the library's collection while working during the summer to remove outdated and damaged books and has also managed a strong reading program in grades 1 through 8. In collaboration with the district's librarian, the library recently purchased *Destiny*, a powerful tool that combines circulation, cataloging, searching, reporting, and management in one software system. It gives Cushing parents, teachers, and students access to information about the collection from home.

In addition, CISD meets the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) *Recognized* standards for library staffing as shown in **Exhibit 1–20**. However the district's certified librarian has multiple areas of responsibility as the district's business manager with additional duties in Human Resource functions, and is the district's technology director and technology trainer. The district's records list her assignments as the district's librarian, but it is uncertain how much time is allocated to this function. During onsite work, the review team observed a lack of time spent on collaboration with teachers and students regarding the instructional side of a librarian's responsibilities. As the technology director, however she has collaborated with teachers on the integration of technology into the curriculum.

A large, and growing, body of research establishes a clear link between strong school library programs and student achievement. In the decade leading up to 2008, 19 states, including Texas and one Canadian province have conducted extensive studies that demonstrate the significance of this link. As reported in *School Libraries Work!* (Scholastic, February, 2010) a research foundation paper summmarizing

EXHIBIT 1–20
CAMPUS LEVEL PROFESSIONAL STAFF STANDARD
TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

CAMPUS-LEVEL ENROLLMENT	EXEMPLARY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	RECOGNIZED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	BELOW STANDARD PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
0–500 ADA	At least 1.5 Certified Librarians	At least 1 Certified Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	Less than 1 Certified Librarian

SOURCE: Texas State Library and Archives Commission Standards.

the findings of these 20 studies, schools achieve the highest degree of impact on student achievement when libarians are able to:

- Provide leadership in the school for achieving school Mission, Objectives, and Strategies

- Manage information by providing intellectual and physical access to information in print, media, and online resources, either local or Web-based

- Collaborate with teachers to meet the intellectual needs of students

- Collaborate with teachers regularly to provide resources and activities for course, unit, and lesson integration.

This body of research has informed standards for school library service at both national and state levels.

National standards for school libraries are outlined in *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*. The nine standards detailed in *Information Power* are divided into three major areas: learning and teaching; information access; and program administration. The placement of learning and teaching as the first of the three sets of standards is intentional, as the following excerpt makes clear:

> The primary goal of any school is learning. As effective teaching and learning theory has shifted from a teacher-centered to a student-centered perspective, the school library media program has adapted and has become more important than ever in achieving the school's goal. The quality of library media programs is inextricably linked to the quality of education offered in the schools. Schools have evolved to focus on learning, and effective school library media programs have also changed their focus from collections to learning that engages students in pursuing knowledge within and beyond a formal curriculum. A professional school library media specialist is essential to create a dynamic program that challenges students to create personal meaning from information and to participate in a collaborative culture of learning. (American Library Association, 1998)

Recognition of learning as the primary school function is reflected in the changes to school library certification across the nation. Where once a master's degree in library and information science was sufficient in order to be considered highly qualified, school librarians must now also be certified as experienced teachers. This dual certification requiring

expertise in both teaching and information literacy in a 21st century world makes them a powerful instructional resource for any campus.

In 1997, Texas adopted its first school library standards, the need for which was supported by the findings of the 2001 Texas study (included in the Scholastic research foundation cited above) which concluded that:

> Librarian activities that have an impact on student performance include planning and teaching collaboratively with teachers and training teachers. In libraries with professional librarians and aides, staff expends a larger portion of time engaging in these high-priority collaborative activities (e.g., curriculum integration), which are associated with higher TAAS performance.

The standards underwent a revision beginning in 2001; adopted in 2005, the revised standards established guidelines for school library programs. As with the national standards, the first of the six newly revised standards addresses learner-centered teaching and learning activities of the librarian. To meet any program level beyond *below standard*, collaborative instruction must occur, a minimum of 55 percent of the time, underscoring the state's value of, and resulting emphasis on the need for collaboration between classroom teacher and teacher-librarians.

For example, Manor ISD's librarian instructed a group of middle school students in the use of interactive blogs. Using a projector, the librarian showed the students how to access an educational blog (*Young Authors Workshop*) she created for their use. The students were shown how to navigate the blog and provide constructive feedback to a writer posting a story on the blog. Students were engaged and excited about the opportunity to participate in this type of learning experience. One student stated that she looked forward to coming home each day to check her email and the Young Authors Blog. The librarian plans to collaborate with teachers in using blogs to stimulate their own students with the use of new tools to expand student's writing opportunities.

Instruction on research strategies is not provided to CISD students by the librarian or library instructional aide. CISD's library instructional aide reported that responsibility for direct instruction to students is left up to the English language arts teachers.

As mentioned earlier, the first standard focuses on librarian strategies for teaching of learning of students. To meet *acceptable* standard, a librarian must also:

- Integrate a research process model into at least 55 percent of the research projects by collaboratively developing plans, activities, and assessments for learning experiences

- Instruct at least 55 percent of the students in the effective use of print and electronic resources related to curricular and/or independent learning needs to assist students in developing their own research strategies, in compliance with ethical standards

- Differentiate instructional strategies according to multiple learning styles of at least 55 percent of students with consideration to individual and cooperative grouping and aligned with students' prior learning and experiences

- Collaboratively assists at least 55 percent of students in developing research strategies and communicating findings in a variety of formats

CISD should ensure the campus library (or libraries if a new library is added) has a librarian on staff that can provide collaboration with classroom teachers and direct instruction time with students. Given the conclusions of the research in the field, and the credence given those findings as reflected in the national and state standards, it is recommended that districts leverage the teaching capacity of its uniquely qualified and certified librarians by providing the support system necessary to maximize both their collaboration with classroom teachers and instructional time with students.

The cost to implement this recommendation is $51,987 plus $2,712 in benefits, for a total of $54,699 annually based on the average actual salary of professional support staff. Benefits include $225 for health insurance and $1 for life insurance = $226 x 12 months = $2,712. The total fiscal impact to hire a librarian over five years is $273,495.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (REC. 6)

CISD lacks a professional development plan that guides teachers' staff development choices with a focus geared on student learning.

CISD board policy on staff development contains limited direction to educational staff in professional development. **DMA (LOCAL)** states,

- **Staff Development Equivalency**—With the principal's prior approval, professional and paraprofessional personnel may attend conventions, conferences, workshops, and seminars on weekends, holidays, summer vacation, or other non instructional time and be excused from designated staff development activities.

- **Meetings, Conferences, and Workshops**—Professional personnel may attend and participate in meetings, conferences, and workshops that will contribute to their professional growth and development. When attendance at such events is recommended or required by the administration, the Board, TEA, or UIL, personnel may attend with the Superintendent's approval. No salary deduction or loss of leave shall occur when attendance is recommended or required. The Superintendent may grant additional absences to employees for attendance at meetings, conferences and workshops that are of special interest to the employee.

CISD provides staff training during the summer with all staff expected to attend. Training includes how to use new technology or software, benefit selections for the upcoming year and dissemination of new employee information. Evidenced by CISD agendas and teacher use of technology in both elementary and secondary, it was also obvious to the review team that technology training coupled with ongoing technical support has occurred under the direction of the technology director. Agendas examined by the review team specify technology training in the following: word processing and multi-media software, software management of student information such as grading and attendance, and use of instructional tools such as interactive whiteboard and wireless tablets.

However, few staff development records are kept in a central location. Instead, non-electronic files of an individual's professional development are kept by their respective campus. In interviews with the review team, some staff members indicated that they keep electronic records of their own individual training sessions attended at their Regional Education Service Center VII (Region 7) along with any certificates issued as a result of the class. In a teacher's focus group, teachers stated that much of the staff development they attend is through their own choosing and is content specific. For example, in September of 2009, four Cushing Elementary teachers attended staff development relevant to the need to improve grade 4 writing skills. Teachers choose many opportunities offered through Region 7. This type of training focused on the relevant needs of student learning, in particular, are the types of training teachers should aim at in a more proactive rather than a reactive manner.

Many districts' instructional leadership teams, create professional development plans to ensure that their staff is maximizing professional development opportunities that would improve learning for all students. The district should develop a professional development plan focused on student learning. Below are recommendations in developing a professional development plan:

A comprehensive professional development plan should be based on needs of students, guide teacher choices for learning, and track records of professional development courses attended and include planning for follow-up sessions with the teachers regarding teacher learning. *Texas Education Code 21.451* states that staff development provided by a school district must be conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district and designed to improve education in the district.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment for district professional development should focus first on identified district priorities for student learning as identified in student data and the learning needs of educators in supporting student learning. In looking at student data, the team must drill deep into assessment data. In analyzing state TAKS data, additional information can be gathered from objective data, district item analysis as it correlates to student expectations, special education TAKS-M (an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards designed for students receiving special education services), sub-group data (in Cushing, economically-disadvantaged students makes up largest sub-group), English Language Learner data (ELL), college readiness data, graduation and dropout data. The team must sort through gathered information and determine learning needs of educators in meeting needs of CISD students. For example, if student expectations involving problem solving and higher level thinking are showing weakness across content data, it becomes apparent this is an area educators could benefit by learning. Areas such as these typically touch all or most content. Teachers can benefit by learning and sharing progress. Attending training together can follow up with peer observation and collaboration on improvement. Presently, professional development at CISD could be described as "random acts of improvement" rather than "coordinated acts of improvement." The teachers at CISD are well meaning teachers that want to be the best they can be. They are satisfying the district requirement of four days in the summer.

SETTING MEASURABLE GOALS

From established needs, setting goals for professional development can set directions for teacher learning. These goals should ensure that areas of weakness directly tie to improved student learning and should be re-evaluated each year. They must be goals that are measureable and easily tracked for progress using student achievement data. In developing these professional development goals, SMART goal format can be used.

- **Specific.** Be specific about what is to be accomplished.

- **Measurable.** Identify how the goal will be measured.

- **Attainable.** Ensure the capacity exists to accomplish the goal.

- **Results Based.** Identify the benchmarks and outcomes of the goal.

- **Time-bound.** Set a specific timeframe for completing the goal.

DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Important considerations concerning teacher learning are outlined in a research review entitled *Teacher Learning: What Matters (Educational Leadership*, February, 2009) by Linda Darling-Hammond and Nikole Richardson.

- Describe professional development structures and processes that will be used in the district.

- Define strategies for staff development that will be available to teachers such as professional learning communities, workshops, conferences, online learning, campus staff development, etc.

- Describe how educators will follow up and evaluate their learning after implementation has begun.

In the last two decades, research has defined a new paradigm for professional development—one that rejects the ineffective "drive-by" workshop model of the past in favor of more powerful opportunities (Stein, Smith, & Silver, 1999). One factor mentioned in the research article is time. Although time is not the only variable that matters, it is often a prerequisite for effective learning. In review of work by Yonn, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007), it was found that sustained and intensive professional development was related to student achievement. The three studies concluded that professional development lasting 14 or fewer hours showed no effects on student learning, whereas other studies of

programs offering more than 14 hours of sustained teacher learning opportunities showed significant positive effects. The largest effects were found for programs offering between 30 and 100 hours spread over six to twelve months. Research in educational professional development indicates that sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative teacher learning strategies have greater impact on student learning.

Other structures and processes should include connections between student learning goals and professional learning opportunities, supporting team structures for learning, and how the district will offer sustained support for implementation of new skills. The plan must also define professional development for teachers new to the district and new to the profession. A one day training agenda for 2008 included emergency procedures, technology overview, attendance and grade reporting, campus procedures, campus tours, and employee benefits.

Every new to profession teacher is assigned to a mentor. Texas Administrative Code, Section 153.1011 on school district personnel states:

> A beginning teacher induction and mentoring program must be a research-based mentoring program that, through external evaluation, has demonstrated success in improving new teacher quality and teacher retention. Such a program must provide orientation and mentoring specifically tailored for beginning teachers that includes the following:
>
> (1) a process for the recruitment of mentor teachers
>
> (2) a structured mentoring component based upon research in:
>
> (A) teacher induction;
>
> (B) beginning teacher development; and
>
> (C) quality professional development;
>
> (3) regular teacher observations and standards-based assessments;
>
> (4) continuous support and ongoing professional development tailored to the needs of beginning teachers
>
> (5) continuous support and ongoing professional development tailored to the needs of mentor teachers that includes topics listed in paragraph (4) of this subsection and scheduled release time in order for a mentor teacher to fulfill mentoring duties as described in this section; and
>
> (6) training for administrators on implementing and supporting an induction and mentoring program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

This section of the plan is where the educational leadership team lists all resources needed to support district professional development. The plan should include a description of time allocation and supporting resources needed to meet the professional learning goals. Is time going to be made available to groups of educators for collaborative professional learning? How much of staff meetings should be focused on student learning as opposed to information? Identify other resources that will support educators in improving practices, such as research, professional publications, consultants, and conferences linked to the needs of the district.

ONGOING EVALUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Effective evaluation provides important information about the implementation of the professional development plan. Evaluation processes should be included that collects data aligned to the measurable goals of district professional development. Tools for evaluation should be described and included in the plan. It should also include teacher evaluation responses to staff development activities and impact of teacher professional development on teacher learning.

Another part of evaluation is collectively examining teacher professional development records. This will require the district to establish a method of collecting and storing this data electronically. Also necessary in professional development records must be evidence that trainings did occur and a list of teachers and staff that were in attendance.

When school districts support teacher learning with a well designed professional development plan, teachers are able to create the same type of rigorous and engaging opportunities for students—a foundation for student success in school and beyond.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

	RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
1.	Establish an instructional leadership team that plans strategically by meeting regularly to study, plan, monitor, and evaluate student learning and teacher effectiveness.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
2.	Develop and adopt a formal board policy and vertically aligned curriculum plan focused on student learning.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3.	Develop a vertically aligned instructional plan to guide teachers in daily instruction of English Language Arts.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
4.	Create a plan to ensure more students are taking challenging courses to prepare them for college.	($1,365)	($1,365)	($1,365)	($1,365)	($1,365)	($6,825)	$0
5.	Create a librarian position.	($54,699)	($54,699)	($54,699)	($54,699)	($54,699)	($273,495)	$0
6.	Develop a comprehensive professional development plan focused on student learning.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS		**($56,064)**	**($56,064)**	**($56,064)**	**($56,064)**	**($56,064)**	**($280,320)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 2

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial managers must ensure that a school district receives all available revenue from local, state, and federal government resources and that these resources are spent in accordance with law, statute, regulation, and policy to accomplish the district's established priorities and goals. Asset management ensures the district's cash resources and physical assets are managed in a cost-effective and efficient manner; identifies, analyzes, and reduces risk to the district's assets and employees through insurance and safety programs; and ensures the district complies with bond covenants while outstanding bonds pay the lowest interest rate possible. Purchasing management provides districts with quality materials, supplies, services, and equipment in a timely manner and at the lowest price.

The superintendent is responsible for financial management in CISD, supported by a business manager and an accounts payable clerk. The business manager is responsible for the day-to-day financial operations, accounting, and payroll. The accounts payable clerk is responsible for processing purchase orders, pay authorizations, and processing accounts payable checks. The business manager and accounts payable clerk are also responsible for technology in the district.

CISD's general fund operating budget for 2009–10 is $6.7 million, including $1.2 million in recapture payments to the state, with a budgeted ending fund balance of $3.9 million. In 2008–09, CISD expended $1.5 million from the general fund for construction projects and designated $2.0 million of the fund balance for construction projects in the district. As of August 31, 2009, the district's fund balance of $3.8 million was $224,000 above the optimum fund balance calculation. **Exhibit 2–1** presents summary financial

information for the general fund from 2005–06 through 2009–10.

CISD received a rating of superior achievement on the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) in 2008–09. FIRST is the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) financial accountability rating system that ensures that school districts are held accountable for the quality of their financial management practices and achieve improved performance in the management of their financial resources. The district contracts with the Nacogdoches Central Appraisal District (NCAD) for tax collection. The district adopted a Maintenance and Operation (M&O) tax rate of $1.04 and an interest and sinking (I&S) rate of $0.24 per $100 property valuation for 2009–10. Taxable property values have increased 126.9 percent from 2004–05 through 2008–09.

CISD was classified as a wealthy district and was subject to recapture beginning in 2006–07. Wealthy districts are those subject to the equalized wealth provisions under Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 41, where the property value per weighted average daily attendance (WADA) exceeds $319,500 for 2009–10. These districts are generally referred to as Chapter 41 school districts. WADA values may change frequently. Under TEC, Section 41.003, school districts have five options to equalize district wealth. Simply stated, Chapter 41 districts must either send funds back to the state or select other options to dilute their property value per WADA. CISD utilizes Option 3—the purchase of average daily attendance credits—which requires a district to reduce its wealth by sending money to the state. These funds are used to help finance the Foundation School Program (FSP) payments that are made to property-poor school districts.

EXHIBIT 2–1
CISD GENERAL FUND SUMMARY
2005–06 THROUGH 2009–10

YEAR	REVENUES	EXPENDITURES	OTHER SOURCES (USES)	CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	ENDING FUND BALANCE
2005–06 Actual	$4,732,276	$3,965,220	($17,000)	$750,056	$2,365,142
2006–07 Actual	$6,096,830	$4,824,308	$137,897	$1,410,419	$3,775,561
2007–08 Actual	$6,615,398	$5,564,534	$5,571	$1,056,435	$4,831,996
2008–09 Actual	$7,277,486	$8,267,463	($10,000)	($999,977)	$3,832,020
2009–10 Budget	$6,720,883	$6,642,562	$0	$78,321	$3,910,341

SOURCE: CISD, Audited Financial Statements 2005–06 through 2008–09, Adopted Budget 2009–10.

WADA is a value calculated by TEA and a measure of student need, recognizing that certain types of students require additional resources to meet their educational needs. TEA gives special weightings by type for special education students and gives other weights for students that participate in compensatory, bilingual, and gifted and talented education programs. For Chapter 41 districts, WADA is reduced by the WADA attributable to non-residence students attending the school district if the district charges tuition.

The TEA *Manual for Districts Subject to Wealth Equalization* states that the current funding system is "based on the premise of providing all school districts with 'substantially equal access to similar revenue per student at similar tax effort.' Providing districts with this equal access was achieved through a system that provides a guaranteed yield on each penny of M&O tax effort levied by property-poor districts and recaptures revenue on the tax collections of property-wealthy districts whose wealth per student exceeds the equalized wealth level." **Exhibit 2–2** presents the property value, WADA, wealth per WADA, tax collections and recapture payments for 2006–07 through 2008–09 for CISD.

CISD invests excess funds with its depository bank and one investment pool and insures the district against loss for real and personal property, liability, school professional legal liability, and vehicle loss or damage. The district also insures itself for workers' compensation claims through an interlocal agreement; contributes to health insurance for its employees; provides student accident insurance; and provides employees with access to a variety of employee funded insurance options. The district maintains inventories of the fixed assets and oversees textbooks with textbook custodians at each campus.

CISD voters approved a $10.7 million bond package in May 2009 and sold the bonds in two issues at a competitive sale in August 2009. The Unlimited Tax Building Bonds, Series 2009 were issued in the amount of $9.0 million with a 4.3 percent interest rate and the Unlimited Tax Building Bonds, Series 2009A were issued in the amount of $1.7 million with a 4.75 percent interest rate. Both of the issues were sold on a 20-year amortization schedule. The Series 2009 bonds have a call date of August 15, 2014 and the Series 2009A bonds are callable at any time.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- CISD negotiated an appraised value limitation agreement to provide additional revenue for the district.

FINDINGS

- CISD does not have a business procedures manual to provide guidance for business office staff and other district employees for continuity in the event of employee turnover.

- CISD does not have a defined budget process to ensure all stakeholders are aware of opportunities to participate and understand the timing of the process.

- CISD does not provide budget managers access to the district's financial software.

- CISD does not have an experienced and trained staff in the business office to prevent errors in financial reporting and ensure compliance with laws, rules, and regulations.

- CISD does not have deposits fully collateralized or covered by Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insurance at all times.

- CISD does not have a centralized review of competitive procurements to ensure that all solicitations contain the required elements.

- CISD does not have an objective, defined process for developing, selecting, implementing, and managing procurements and contracts.

EXHIBIT 2–2
CISD WEALTH EQUALIZATION
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09

YEAR	ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE	WADA	WEALTH PER WADA	TAX COLLECTIONS	RECAPTURE PAYMENTS
2006–07	$335,457,773	774.98	$432,860	$4,931,958	$197,018
2007–08	$399,339,534	761.80	$524,205	$4,234,397	$743,666
2008–09	$455,152,908	729.05	$624,310	$5,032,359	$1,532,743

SOURCE: CISD Audited Financial Statements, Texas Education Agency (TEA) Cost of Recapture Report.

- CISD does not have contract language that allows for the bonus paid to employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 7: Create and adopt a comprehensive business procedures manual to provide guidance for business office staff and other district employees for continuity in the event of employee turnover.**

- **Recommendation 8: Develop a budget process that outlines the key components and includes a budget calendar.**

- **Recommendation 9: Provide the budget managers access and training for the financial software.**

- **Recommendation 10: Provide training opportunities for the business office staff to prevent errors in financial reporting and ensure compliance with laws, rules, and regulations.**

- **Recommendation 11: Monitor the amount of securities pledged by the depository bank and the amount of cash in the bank to ensure that all cash balances are protected from risk of loss.**

- **Recommendation 12: Review all competitive procurements to ensure the solicitations include all required elements.**

- **Recommendation 13: Develop a comprehensive process that outlines the steps and considerations necessary for successful procurement management and contract management.**

- **Recommendation 14: Include contract language that allows for the bonus paid to employees.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

APPRAISED VALUE LIMITATION AGREEMENT

CISD negotiated an appraised value limitation agreement to provide additional revenue for the district. The agreement was structured under the state's Tax Code, Chapter 313, also known as the Texas Economic Development Act (TEDA). The agreement resulted from an application for an appraised value limitation on a biomass-fuel fired steam power plant located in the district's tax base, and meets all the requirements of TEDA.

TEDA allows school districts to attract new taxable property development by offering a tax credit and an eight-year limitation on the appraised value of the property for the M&O portion of the school district property tax. The district's foregone tax revenue is replaced through the state's school funding formula. Additionally, in many cases school districts have negotiated payments in lieu of taxes (PILTs) based on the tax savings accrued by the business receiving the tax break.

The power plant will add a maximum of $321 million in taxable value to CISD. The agreement limits the taxable value for M&O taxes to $40 million for the period from 2012–13 through 2019–20, but does not limit the taxable value for I&S taxes. After 2019–20, the value limitation of the plant ends and the plant is taxed at its full value.

The financial impact of the agreement is most significant for the debt service requirements of the 2009 bond issues. The additional taxable value added by the power plant will allow the district to significantly lower the I&S tax rate and reduce the tax burden on CISD taxpayers. The district should be able to reduce the I&S tax rate to nearly half of the adopted I&S tax rate in 2009–10 based on calculations by the review team.

The agreement also includes revenue protection for the district from lost revenue in the general fund. Based on the current funding system for school districts, CISD would lose approximately $80,000 in general fund revenue during each year the value limitation is in effect. The district will be compensated for this loss by the plant.

Finally, the CISD agreement includes PILTs, which are not reported in the state's school finance system. The power plant will pay an annual fee of $600,000 to the district—less the amount of the revenue protection payment and the I&S taxes paid by the plant—beginning in 2012–13 and ending in 2029–30. The net financial impact of the agreement is projected to be between $180,000 and $290,000 in additional revenue each year depending on the year of the agreement and the I&S tax rate imposed by CISD.

Changes to TEDA during the Eighty-first Legislature, 2009, now limit PILTs to $100 per student per year during the qualifying time period. However, CISD will receive the agreed upon PILT amount, since their agreement was in place prior to the statutory change. Furthermore, while the appraised value limitation agreement is noteworthy for CISD, the revenue increase to the district represents a cost to

the state treasury, as the tax revenue the district forgoes is substantially replaced through the school funding formula.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BUSINESS PROCEDURES MANUAL (REC. 7)

CISD does not have a business procedures manual to provide guidance for business office staff and other district employees for continuity in the event of employee turnover. A comprehensive business procedures manual serves as documentation of the district's accounting policies and procedures and defines the processes used to create and complete financial transactions.

The district experienced significant turnover in the business office during the past year, hiring four different business managers since March 2009. Accordingly, neither the business office staff nor the superintendent were well versed in the business procedures of the district. Without a business procedures manual, the learning curve for running the district's financial operations has been steep. As a result, the district engaged a consultant to help them with the business processes.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommended practice regarding documentation of accounting policies and procedures states, "A well-designed and properly maintained system of documenting accounting policies and procedures enhances both accountability and consistency. Procedures should be described as they are actually intended to be performed rather than in some idealized form. The resulting documentation also can serve as a useful training tool for staff."

Karnack ISD has a business procedures manual that covers all areas of its business operations, contains business forms and instructions, and includes the student activity fund procedures. The business procedures manual communicates policies and procedures to district employees, describes procedures as they are actually performed, and serves as a useful training tool for employees. The business manager reviews the procedures contained in the manual with new employees with assigned business-related responsibilities and provides a copy of the manual to the employee for a reference guide.

CISD should create and adopt a comprehensive business procedures manual to provide guidance for business office staff and other district employees for continuity in the event of employee turnover. The business procedures manual

should include all functions the business office controls or supports. An electronic version of the manual should be maintained for easy access by all district personnel. This will also allow the procedures manual to be updated when changes are made without having to distribute new copies.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUDGET PROCESS (REC. 8)

CISD does not have a defined budget process to ensure all stakeholders are aware of opportunities to participate and understand the timing of the process.

The review team received conflicting responses when asked about the budget development process used in CISD for the 2009–10 budget. Some budget managers reported that the business manager and superintendent sent a printout to budget managers showing the current year's budget and blanks for the upcoming year's budget. Budget request forms for contracted services, supplies, travel, and capital outlay were also provided to describe the budget needs of the district. These budget managers met with their staff and formulated their own budget needs. Other budget managers reported that no real process was used for the budget, but that they had an opportunity to review the proposed budget for 2009–10. Still other budget managers reported little or no involvement with the budget process.

The review team surveyed parents, teachers, and staff to obtain input on district operations regarding the budget process. Survey respondents rated the district's operations based on survey statements for all functional areas of the district. **Exhibit 2–3** presents the respondents' views of the budget process. When asked to rate the ability of the public to provide input during the budget process, 52 percent of parents surveyed rated the process as poor to average. When asked to rate the effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process, 38.4 percent of administrative and professional support staff and 36.4 percent of teachers rated the process as poor to average.

By not having a defined budget process to ensure all stakeholders know their role in the budget process, the district has caused stakeholders to believe the budget process is not inclusive.

The Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) is a TEA publication that describes the rules for financial accounting for school districts, charter schools, and Education Service Centers. FASRG states, "Responsibility

EXHIBIT 2–3
CISD SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
JANUARY 2010

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.						
Administrator Auxiliary/ Professional Support Staff	7.7%	0.0%	26.9%	30.8%	3.8%	30.8%
Teacher	3.0%	6.1%	27.3%	21.2%	6.1%	36.4%
Parent	12.0%	12.0%	28.0%	12.0%	8.0%	28.0%
The effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.						
Administrator Auxiliary/ Professional Support Staff	11.5%	3.8%	23.1%	30.8%	7.7%	23.1%
Teacher	6.1%	9.1%	21.2%	36.4%	6.1%	21.2%
Parent	12.0%	4.0%	32.0%	16.0%	8.0%	28.0%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: CISD, School Review Surveys, January 2010.

for preparation of district budget guidelines and the budget calendar lies primarily with district administrators and the superintendent. Because these guidelines and the calendar create a framework for the entire budget development process, their careful design is critical to an efficient and effective process."

Many school districts use a budget calendar to outline the components of the budget process and ensure all stakeholders are aware of opportunities for involvement.

The superintendent should develop a budget process that outlines the key components and includes a budget calendar. The board should approve it so that all participants understand the budget development process and their role in the process.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION (REC. 9)

CISD does not provide budget managers access to the district's financial software. In order to know what funds they have available, the budget managers must ask the business office. The lack of current financial information makes it difficult for the schools and departments to independently manage their budgets.

The district converted to new financial software in December 2009. The software is capable of generating reports for the general ledger, subsidiary ledgers and budget-to-actual expenditure reports. The budget-to-actual reports include expenditures, encumbrances, and budget balances.

The software is also capable of providing multiple users with view-only access to different information. The software allows multiple users to be established with access to only their organization code or to particular function codes. The security level for each user can be established based on the budget manager's authority over budgeted funds.

Many school districts have financial information available online to all budget managers in the district and have trained the budget managers to use the system. These school districts' budget managers make more informed decisions when they are able to have current financial information available at their school or department.

CISD should provide the budget managers access and training for the financial software. This will allow the schools and departments to independently manage their budgets and eliminate the potential need for schools to maintain a second set of books to determine if they have funds available. This will also reduce the number of requests for information from the business office and allow the business office to focus on other duties.

The financial software company used by CISD will assist with the establishment of additional users as part of the agreement at no additional cost to the district.

STAFF TRAINING (REC. 10)

CISD does not have an experienced and trained staff in the business office to prevent errors in financial reporting and ensure compliance with laws, rules and regulations. The business manager started in this position in November 2009

and is the fourth business manager the district has had since March 2009.

In addition, the business manager serves as the technology director and certified librarian, and has no background and limited training in business. The accounts payable clerk is also the district's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) clerk and is responsible for the student data system. The review team found nothing to indicate the business office employees were not diligent in their efforts to fulfill the responsibilities of the business office. However, without intensive training for the business office employees, the district is at risk of not complying with the laws, rules and regulations that govern business operations in Texas school districts.

In the 2007–08 and 2008–09 audit reports prepared by the district's external auditor, the lack of accounting knowledge of the business office staff was cited as a material weakness in internal controls. A material weakness in internal controls is a significant deficiency that results in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the financial statements will not be prevented or detected by the district. A significant deficiency adversely affects the district's ability to initiate, authorize, record, process, or report financial data reliably.

Additionally, the 2008–09 audit report noted two findings reported in the schedule of findings and questioned costs:

- "The district does not have an accountant and other personnel with sufficient training in accounting to prepare the financial statements and related disclosures, thus resulting in a weakness in internal control over the preparation of the financial statements; and

- Financial data was incorrectly reported in the general ledger records."

The auditor made material adjustments to the financial statements in order to report data accurately.

Training on school business and accounting is available from a variety of sources, including regional education service centers, school related associations, local universities, and private companies. Some training courses are based on the FASRG, which combines financial management requirements from a variety of sources into one guide for Texas school districts. Other topics include investments, school finance, business administration, supervision, purchasing, appraisal, district operations, personnel, and payroll.

Many school districts provide training for the business office staff. These districts find that adequately trained employees help ensure the district remains in compliance with the FASRG, purchasing laws, and other rules and regulations. Regular training helps the staff remain aware of changes in various laws, rules, and regulations that affect day-to-day activities. This reduces the possibility that the district may inadvertently violate laws, rules, or regulations and expose the district and its employees to possible criminal and civil penalties.

CISD should provide training opportunities for the business office staff to prevent errors in financial reporting and ensure compliance with laws, rules, and regulations. The training should be provided to each staff member in their areas of responsibility.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on each staff member attending 40 hours of training each year with a cost of $250 for each eight hour training course along with travel expenses of $121 for each day of training ($85 for hotel plus $36 for meals). The total fiscal impact of this recommendation is $3,710 each year ($371 for each day of training times 5 days of training each year for two employees equals $3,710).

PLEDGED SECURITIES (REC. 11)

CISD does not have deposits fully collateralized or covered by Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insurance at all times. In order to ensure against the risk of loss in the event of a financial institution failure, deposits must be fully collateralized by pledged securities or covered by FDIC insurance.

CISD's contract with the depository bank states, "The amount pledged shall be in a total market value sufficient to adequately protect the funds of the District as directed at anytime by the Board of Trustees of the District in accordance with standards acceptable to the Texas Education Agency." The depository is required to notify the district when pledged securities are exchanged or the amount of pledged securities is reduced.

CISD has excess funds not needed in the cash checking accounts automatically swept to the trust account each business day. This allows the district to earn interest on the funds which are invested in federal institutional treasury obligations.

The management letters provided to the district in conjunction with the 2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09

audits all disclosed that cash deposits at some time during the year exceeded the amount of pledged securities and FDIC insurance. Several of the instances occurred when the district received a large deposit that was not moved to the sweep account by the close of business. Those deposits were at risk for at least one banking day. **Exhibit 2–4** presents the cash and investments for CISD as of August 31, 2007 through 2009.

EXHIBIT 2–4
CISD CASH AND INVESTMENTS
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09

DESCRIPTION	AUGUST 31, 2007	AUGUST 31, 2008	AUGUST 31, 2009
Cash	$411,253	$172,107	$5,559,041
Investments	$3,757,169	$5,292,704	$10,791,743
Total	$4,168,422	$5,464,811	$16,350,784

SOURCE: CISD Audited Financial Statements, 2006–07 through 2008–09.

During the review team visit, the district had a list of pledged securities from the depository bank for December 31, 2009 that covered all cash balances in the bank.

Many districts ensure that their deposits are collateralized or covered by FDIC insurance by monitoring the securities pledged by the depository bank and the cash balances in the bank. The listing of pledged securities is reviewed monthly and cash balances are reviewed daily to ensure adequate coverage exists. If a large deposit is anticipated by these districts, they notify the bank so additional securities can be pledged to cover the deposit.

The district should monitor the amount of securities pledged by the depository bank and the amount of cash in the bank to ensure that all cash balances are protected from risk of loss. The district should require the depository to provide a list of pledged securities on a monthly basis and anytime the amount or type of the pledged securities change. This will allow the district to compare cash balances to the amount of pledged securities and FDIC insurance.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT (REC. 12)

CISD does not have a centralized review of competitive procurements to ensure that all solicitations contain the required elements. The district does have a central purchasing function that issues purchase orders for all procurements, including activity funds. However, various employees of the district issue competitive procurement solicitations depending on what is being procured. For example, the superintendent issued the solicitation for a construction manager; the maintenance director issues solicitations for maintenance items; and the technology director issues solicitations for technology items. The secretary to the superintendent publishes notifications in the newspaper. No one individual oversees the entire process.

Competitive procurement for school districts is governed by a number of statutes, including TEC, Section 44.031. This section states, "except as provided by this subchapter, all school district 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;

(2) competitive sealed proposals;

(3) a request for proposals, for services other than construction services;

(4) an interlocal contract;

(5) a design/build contract;

(6) a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter, or repair facilities that involves using a construction manager;

(7) a job order contract for the minor construction, repair, rehabilitation, or alteration of a facility;

(8) the reverse auction procedure as defined by Section 2155.062(d), Government Code; or

(9) the formation of a political subdivision corporation under Section 304.001, Local Government Code."

Each competitive procurement method has different requirements for the elements that must be included in the solicitation. The FASRG lists the following required elements for a request for proposals:

- "Notice to proposals;

- Standard terms and conditions;

- Special terms and conditions;

- Scope of work

  - Scope and intent

  - Definitions and applicable documents

  - Requirements

  - Quality assurance;

- Acknowledgment form/response sheet;

- Felony conviction notice; and

- Contract clause."

The *Handbook on Purchasing for Texas Public Schools, Junior Colleges and Community Colleges* (Handbook) is a resource that includes definitions of terms, various statutes, attorney general opinions and examples related to competitive procurement. The Handbook also contains models for the competitive procurement process.

Many districts have centralized the competitive procurement process to ensure that all required elements are contained in the solicitations they issue. The specifications for products and services are developed by employees with knowledge of what is needed and the centralized competitive procurement process includes these in the solicitations. These districts assure they comply with all laws, rules and regulations for competitive procurement.

Without a centralized competitive procurement function, the district is at risk of violating the laws, rules, and regulations that govern competitive procurement. The review team did not find any evidence that any of the purchases made violated Section 44.031 of the TEC. However, competitive procurements may have provided the district with greater value for the financial software, landscaping services, and business consulting services the district purchased.

The superintendent, with assistance from the business office, should review all competitive procurements to ensure the solicitations include all required elements. Using the FASRG

and Handbook as reference tools will ensure compliance with the laws, rules, and regulations governing purchasing.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 13)

CISD does not have an objective, defined process for developing, selecting, implementing, and managing procurements and contracts. Recently, the district switched its financial software from a Region 7 product to another vendor; however, the new product was not competitively procured. The district did not have detailed specifications for the selection process or a plan for its implementation. As a result, the district does not have reasonable assurance that the new product will meet the ongoing needs of the district or that its data will be protected should the new program fail to deliver promised functionality.

In September 2009 the districted signed a contract for a new financial system. The superintendent made this decision unilaterally following a period of rapid turnover in the business office between June and September 2009. This turnover resulted in a lack of staff experience with the technology and process required to produce the monthly payroll. In an interview, the superintendent referred to that period of time as "rough" and said he had to prepare payroll. "Service issues" was the reason cited for changing the financial system provider. Furthermore, the district's existing technology plan, updated by a committee including the superintendent, the business manager, and various district staff, did not identify a change in financial software as a technology need.

CISD did not convene the technology committee or survey financial system users to determine the minimum functionality for a new financial system. Specifications were not developed, documented and submitted to the vendor. The vendor has not had to document any promises of functionality made during the selection process. The contract specifically states that any agreements, understandings, inducements, or conditions not documented as part of the contract are superseded by the contract.

Every vendor develops a product that has similar as well as unique ways of functioning. Since the district did not engage in a competitive selection process based on documented specifications, CISD does not know if any other vendors offer products that are better suited, or if the vendor they selected has the best product for meeting district needs.

The new financial system was a substantial technology departure for the district. Previously, the district's financial data was maintained on district-owned servers and accessed through the district network. The new provider is a web-based service. The provider owns the server where district data resides, which is accessed through the internet.

In addition, CISD did not develop comprehensive contract language to address system integration, security of financial data, and internal controls. The contract with the new provider is only one and a half pages. The most detailed provision of the contract relates to training and support for the district business manager and for payroll services. The contract states that it covers both web-based student service and financial service software, although only the financial system has been implemented. The contract term is two school years.

District staff is also having administration issues with the contract. The vendor has not provided complete system manuals as requested by staff, nor will the vendor provide a list of clients so staff can develop mentor relationships with more experienced users. Moreover, a review of the contract and invoices suggests the vendor is billing for additional support services that, by the plain language of the contract, may already be included in the annual $20,000 fee. Currently the district is being billed an average additional $1,600 per month.

Exhibit 2–5 provides a sample of technology specifications that should be addressed in a technology selection and contracting process, and compares them to the process used for the district's new financial system.

The lack of district procurement planning resulted in a financial system that does not consider best practices or increased efficiencies for staff. For example, the district prepares payroll information in spreadsheet format, which then must be reentered into the financial system. Payroll spreadsheets are prepared at the department level, forwarded to the business office, and then entered by the business manager into the web-based program. With upload capabilities the district business manager could audit the spreadsheets to ensure correct calculations then upload the information once instead of the employee-by-employee time entry process required by the present system. Interested in a more efficient process, district staff asked the vendor if the program would work with electronic timekeeping systems, but was told electronic timekeeping systems would not

necessarily be more efficient when integrated with the vendor's web application.

The new financial system did not appear to be user–friendly for district staff. The review team observed frequent error messages when business office staff attempted to search or report data. Additionally, the location of information within the system did not appear to be intuitive to users. When staff looked for information related to payment processing, they used the industry term "accounts payable" and searched the index under "A." Not finding it, they searched under "I" for "invoice." They eventually found it under "U" for "unpaid bills."

In addition, the implementation schedule developed by the vendor and the district was not coordinated with major district financial events—it was not timed with the district's fiscal year or with the district's calendar year. Both events affect critical financial activities such as federal tax reporting and the district's annual financial audit. The district will need to extract and merge financial information from both systems to meet financial reporting requirements in 2010.

The implementation process did not consider whether adequate internal controls were maintained over district financial information. Original district financial documents such as bank account statements were given to the vendor and taken off-site while the data was loaded into the new system. The vendor also had real-time access to the system in order to extract and report financial data required by the state's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The regular district process for confirming the accuracy of the submission was not utilized by the vendor. TEA holds superintendents responsible for inaccurate PEIMS submissions and for proper retention of the data or documents that support the submission.

The superintendent is currently researching electronic storage solutions for district records. Specifications have not been developed and a potential implementation timeline has not been considered. The selection process consists of site visits to view vendor products.

Many technology organizations advocate for a purchase process that works with users to determine the needs of the organization. The steps may vary slightly among the different advocates depending on the target audience. Identifying system requirements, developing specifications, and thoughtfully scheduling the implementation are consistently cited as key steps for effective integration of technology into an organization.

EXHIBIT 2–5
TYPICAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIFICATIONS COMPARED WITH CISD'S CURRENT FINANCIAL SYSTEM CONTRACT
2009–10

SPECIFICATIONS	PURPOSE	CISD STATUS	POSSIBLE RESULT
Ownership of data	To ensure the rights and remedies belonging to an owner are retained by the district.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	If the position of the vendor to the data is not clearly identified, data requests/subpoenas could be served and filled without district notification.
Confidentiality of data	To ensure the various privacy and confidentiality laws affecting school districts are followed by the vendor.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	The vendor may hire staff or contractors who are unaware of the requirements for securing confidential data. Confidential data may be compromised.
Return of data at end of service period	To ensure that the district can retain the data in a format acceptable under state retention statutes.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	The district could lose two years worth of data, or receive the data in a format they cannot continue to access.
Security of application	To ensure that the information transmitted and retained meets applicable security standards.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	Confidential payroll information on district employees could be hijacked and used in identity theft crimes. The district may be responsible for not taking reasonable steps to protect the data.
Accessibility of data	To ensure the information in vendor servers can be accessed in a useable format.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	Currently, the end-user application only creates reports in portable document format (PDF), which cannot be configured for analysis without purchasing additional software. The ability to require the vendor to produce additional custom reports is unclear.
Response time	To ensure the vendor provides timely response to priority calls for service.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	Payroll is a deadline driven process. Without defined service response expectations the vendor does not have an obligation to respond quickly if the system crashes, or is off line for scheduled maintenance during payroll preparation periods.
Data migration	To ensure a solution for accessing past and current information has been developed.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	Historical financial data was not transferred. Staff must search two systems to analyze historical trends, employment history, or payroll history.
Crisis Management	To ensure adequate protection of data in the event of an emergency.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	Should there be a catastrophic event at the vendor's location, the district does not know if its data is backed up, if it is stored in an alternate and secure location, or how long before services will be restored.
District specific requirements	To ensure the application meets or can be easily configured to meet district needs.	Not documented in contract or other enforceable agreement.	The program does not allow for uploads from database applications. The lack of import and export capabilities leaves the district with less flexibility to design more efficient processes.

Source: Interviews with district staff January 2010, and financial system contract September 29, 2009.

Security is a critical concern for any new technology. The federal E-Government Act requires federal agencies to develop, document and implement agency-wide standards for information systems, including those provided by a contractor or other source. The National Institute of Standards and Technology suggests having a process that includes planning and implementation of information security policies for information systems. Evaluation of a system's security should determine to what extent it reduces risk of unauthorized access, misuse, inappropriate disclosure, disruption, tampering, or destruction of the information that resides in the system.

CISD should develop a comprehensive process that outlines the steps and considerations necessary for successful procurement management and contract management. The procurement process should include the following steps:

    (1) Require bids from multiple vendors;

    (2) Ensure that staff who will use the product or services identify desired specifications and capabilities that they want included in a new product;

    (3) Research statutory requirements or regulations that may affect functionality; and

    (4) Align the implementation schedule of the procurement with existing district processes or timelines related to the procurement.

Requirements for products and services should be prioritized as required or preferred, and a proposed timeline for implementation should be included. Interested vendors should provide written responses relating the capabilities of their products or services to the identified specifications. The specifications and promised capabilities can be attached as an exhibit and incorporated in the contract to ensure promises made during sales negotiations are enforceable. Vendors should provide an opportunity for staff to view how the system performs essential functions. Staff concerns should be addressed with the vendor and the negotiated results incorporated into the final contract. The business manager should be tasked with contract administration to ensure services have been provided as promised. Contracts for purchasing districtwide goods or services should be reviewed by counsel.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BONUS (REC. 14)

CISD does not have contract language that allows for the bonus paid to employees. The district paid a bonus to all employees in December 2008 and December 2009.

Board Policy DEA (Legal) states, "The District shall not grant any extra compensation, fee, or allowance to a public officer, agent, servant, or contractor after service has been rendered or a contract entered into and performed in whole or in part." The payment of the bonus is extra compensation and was made after the contracts for employment had begun.

Board Policy DEA (Local) states, "A contract employee's pay shall not be increased after performance on the contract has begun unless there is a change in the employee's job assignment or duties that warrants additional compensation. Any such changes in pay during the term of the contract shall require Board approval." The payment to employees was approved by the board, but it did not relate to a change in assignment.

CISD employment contracts state, "If employee qualifies, employee may receive incentive pay or pay for performance under the District's compensation plan, federal law, or state law, including Education Code Chapter 21, subchapters N and O." The bonus was not incentive pay or pay for performance.

CISD should include contract language that allows for the bonus paid to employees. The superintendent should amend employment contracts and the board should approve the contracts to include language that allows for the bonus to be paid to the employees. When considering the bonus for all employees, the board should determine the bonus payments serve a public purpose, that controls are in place to ensure the public purpose is carried out, and that CISD receives a return benefit. This determination will ensure bonus eligibility for both contract and non-contract employees.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
7. Create and adopt a comprehensive business procedures manual to provide guidance for business office staff and other district employees for continuity in the event of employee turnover.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
8. Develop a budget process that outlines the key components and includes a budget calendar.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
9. Provide the budget managers access and training for the financial software.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
10. Provide training opportunities for the business office staff to prevent errors in financial reporting and ensure compliance with laws, rules and regulations.	($3,710)	($3,710)	($3,710)	($3,710)	($3,710)	($18,550)	$0
11. Monitor the amount of securities pledged by the depository bank and the amount of cash in the bank to ensure that all cash balances are protected from risk of loss.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
12. Review all competitive procurements to ensure the solicitations include all required elements.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
13. Develop a comprehensive process that outlines the steps and considerations necessary for successful procurement management and contract management.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
14. Include contract language that allows for the bonus paid to employees.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS	**($3,710)**	**($3,710)**	**($3,710)**	**($3,710)**	**($3,710)**	**($18,550)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 3

FOOD SERVICES

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 3. FOOD SERVICES

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulates the states' child nutrition programs (CNPs) but allows states to administer their program in a manner that best works for each state. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers the program. Both of CISD's two schools, Cushing Elementary School (Grades K–5) and Cushing Jr–Sr High School (Grades 6–12) participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Each school is housed on a separate closed campus. Closed campuses indicate that students are not allowed to leave campus for lunch.

Elementary school children travel a short distance to and from Cushing Jr–Sr High School cafeteria for breakfast and lunch service. The district is beginning construction on a new elementary school that may contain a fully equipped kitchen intended for on-site preparation and service.

During 2008–09, the CISD K–12 enrollment was 479; 40.9 percent of which was identified as economically disadvantaged as compared to 56.7 percent of statewide enrollment.

The federal program reimburses school districts for providing meals to students who qualify to eat a free or reduced-price meal. Minimal reimbursements are also given for students who pay full price. Districts report their meal counts, student enrollment and Average Daily Participation (ADP) in the month of November to TDA. The average daily participation rate for all students (free, reduced-price and full price) in the NSLP for November 2009 was 332 students or 67.6 percent participating in eating lunch; and 140 students eating breakfast or 28.5 percent for SBP. Also during the reporting month of November 2009, CISD's enrollment was 491 students with 273 or 55.6 percent of the students approved for free and reduced-price meal benefits.

In 2009–10, districts received a reimbursement of $1.46 for a student qualifying to eat a free breakfast, $1.16 for those eating a reduced-price meal and $0.26 for a student who paid full price for his meal. Reimbursement prices for lunch are as follows: $2.68 for a free meal, $2.28 for a reduced-price meal, $0.25 for a student paying full price, and $0.20 for USDA donated foods for each category (free, reduced-price, full price) for lunch.

In addition to breakfast and lunch reimbursable meals, CISD sells a la carte offerings at breakfast, lunch, and during the Cushing Jr–Sr High School's morning breaks. Schools are also allowed to sell other meals (a la carte meals) as an alternate choice for lunch or as snacks. All a la carte foods are selected based on their nutrient content.

The CISD food service department is managed by a director who currently reports to the superintendent. The director is the only supervisory employee in the department. She has been employed by the district for three years; one as a kitchen employee and two as the director of Food Service. Prior to working at CISD her professional background was in the medical field.

The district's food service operating budget for 2009–10 is $207,000. According to CISD, the program has operated at a loss for the last two years; $36,195 in 2008–09 and $29,747 in 2007–08 respectively.

FINDINGS

- CISD administration has not developed standards for food, labor, and non-food expenditures as a percent of revenue and the business manager has not developed monthly profit and loss statements on which to base financial decisions.

- CISD student breakfast and lunch prices do not cover the cost of producing and serving the meal; adult breakfast and lunch prices are less than the federal reimbursement for a free meal and some a la carte meals do not cover the cost of the product.

- CISD does not have a formal policy for charging meals when students or adults forget their money or meal.

- CISD does not have goals or strategies regarding participation rates for breakfast or lunch and lacks marketing strategies to increase meal participation rates.

- CISD Food Service staffing standards exceed commonly accepted standards for staffing school kitchens.

- CISD does not have a Food Service standardized management system in place, limiting the ability of the Food service manager to ensure that consistent quality meals are offered on a cost effective basis.

- CISD does not always observe food portions served to students or adults as compared to accepted standards.

- CISD has not effectively implemented the "Offer versus Serve" provision to help prevent plate waste.

- CISD does not include procedures to ensure that the prices paid for food items are the prices established on the Education Service Center (ESC) Region 7 Purchasing Cooperative bid award.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 15: Develop targeted standards for expenditures by category (food, labor, and non-food) as a percentage of revenue.**

- **Recommendation 16: Increase the prices of student and adult full-priced breakfasts and lunches.**

- **Recommendation 17: Implement a board policy on charging in the cafeteria.**

- **Recommendation 18: Increase participation in the NSLP and SBP by marketing the programs.**

- **Recommendation 19: Reduce the cost of labor as a percentage of revenue.**

- **Recommendation 20: Develop a standardized management system based on a cycle menu, including recipes for every preparation, accurate food production records, and menu specific work schedules.**

- **Recommendation 21: Reduce the cost of food by planning portion sizes by grade level as specified in the Traditional Meal Patterns standards.**

- **Recommendation 22: Eliminate excessive tray waste by effectively implementing the "Offer versus Serve" provision at both breakfast and lunch.**

- **Recommendation 23: Purchase food from the ESC Region 7 bid award and check invoices weekly to ensure that bid prices are charged.**

DETAILED FINDINGS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (REC. 15)

CISD administration has not developed standards for food, labor, and non-food expenditures as a percent of revenue and the business manager has not developed monthly profit and loss statements on which to base financial decisions.

All Food Services operate on a very slim profit margin, and prices on goods and services continually rise. There are no district-established standards for costs as a percentage of revenue. The Food service manager is unaware of the ongoing financial status of the programs; and is made aware of any losses incurred at the end of the school year when it is too late to take any corrective action on deficit spending.

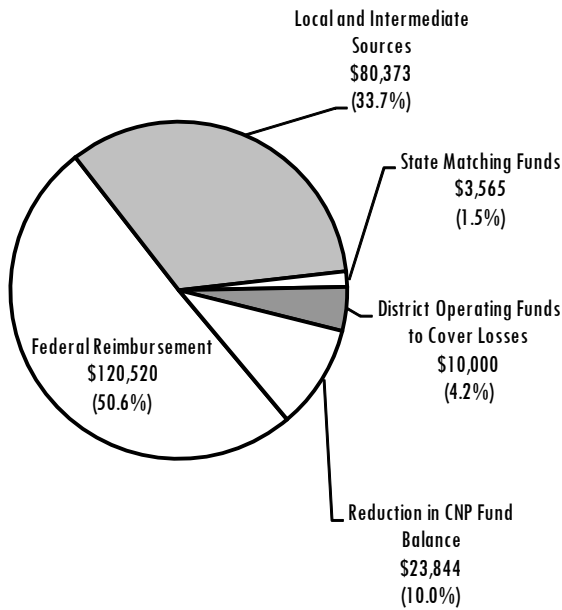During 2008–09, CISD received funds to support its Food Service operations from five sources:

1. federal reimbursements through the NSLP and the SBP;

2. state matching funds required by federal law;

3. cash payments from students, teachers, and parents who pay full price for their meals and a la carte sales;

4. local general funds to cover Food Service operating losses; and

5. Food Service fund balance in reserve to cover Food Service operating losses.

Exhibit 3–1 shows the amount and percentage of each of these sources of funds for the fiscal year ending 2009. At 51 percent of total revenues, federal funds made up the most significant source of funding for CISD's Food Service; followed by local funds at 34 percent. State matching funds contributed one percent, $3,565 leaving a deficit of $33,844 or 14 percent. Four percent, $10,000 was transferred from the district's operating funds; the other ten percent reduced the Food Service fund balance by $23, 844. On a per-student basis, CISD is contributing $20.88 in general operating funds to cover the operational losses of Food Service. These are funds that could be spent in the instructional program.

Exhibit 3–2 compares the total Food Service revenue generated; and food, labor, and non-food expenditures over a three year period, from 2006–07 through 2008–09. Revenues have dropped significantly while expenditures have increased.

Food costs have steadily risen over the past several years due to the increasing fuel costs which may be one possible

EXHIBIT 3–1
SOURCES OF CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS FUNDING
2008–09

Local and Intermediate
Sources
$80,373
(33.7%)

State Matching Funds
$3,565
(1.5%)

District Operating Funds
to Cover Losses
$10,000
(4.2%)

Federal Reimbursement
$120,520
(50.6%)

Reduction in CNP Fund
Balance
$23,844
(10.0%)

SOURCE: Cushing ISD audited financial statement for fiscal year 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 3–2
COMPARISON OF FOOD SERVICE REVENUE AND
EXPENDITURES
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09

□ 2006-2007   □ 2007-2008   ■ 2008-2009
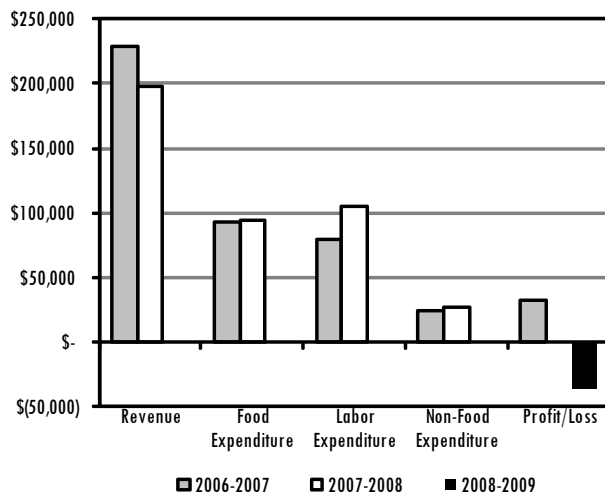
SOURCE: Cushing ISD audited financial statement for fiscal years 2006–07 through 2008–09.

contributing factor to the increased cost of food. However, the increase in labor between 2006–07 and 2007–08 is identifiable. The district underwent a Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) which is the Texas Department of Agriculture

(TDA) routine administrative review of the district's regulatory compliance. At that time the director was new to her position so she was granted overtime and additional kitchen staff hours to better prepare for the district's CRE. The overtime has since ceased; however, the additional employee hours have remained. The increase in non-food expenditures in 2008–09 is due to the one-time unbudgeted purchase of $18,340 for kitchen equipment and dining room furniture.

Exhibit 3–3 demonstrates commonly accepted industry standards for food, labor, and other expenditures as a percent of revenue. There is a range of 40–45 percent for food and labor. Schools that use convenience products typically have a higher percentage of food costs and lower percentage of labor costs. The reverse is true for kitchens that use a conventional system, kitchen preparation of most foods. As shown in **Exhibit 3–3**, CISD Food Service expenditures for food, labor, and non-food all exceed industry standards as a percentage of revenue.

If the Food service manager does not routinely monitor revenue and expenditures according to established goals, the programs can quickly slip into operating at a deficit.

CISD should develop targeted standards for expenditures by category (food, labor, and non-food) as a percentage of revenue. The Food service manager, working with the business manager, should set targeted goals for expenditures by category (food, labor, and non-food) as a percentage of revenue. The business manager should provide the manager current and accurate monthly profit and loss statements, and support the development of the skills necessary to use this valuable tool for analyzing current program financial status when determining how future Food Service funds will be spent.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

STUDENT AND ADULT MEAL PRICING (REC. 16)

The student breakfast and lunch prices do not cover the cost of producing and serving the meal; adult breakfast and lunch prices are less than the federal reimbursement for a free meal and some a la carte meals do not cover the cost of the product.

Exhibit 3–4 identifies current student and adult meal pricing for school districts in the surrounding area. Excluding USDA established reduced-prices, CISD has the lowest prices when compared to the average, in all but one category; the CISD's adult price for breakfast is two cents higher than average.

EXHIBIT 3–3
COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES VERSUS INDUSTRY STANDARDS
2008–09

	REVENUE	EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE	EXPENDITURES	COMMONLY ACCEPTED INDUSTRY STANDARDS	PROJECTED EXPENDITURE USING INDUSTRY STANDARDS	VARIANCE FROM STANDARD	DOLLAR VALUE OF VARIANCE
Local, State, Federal Revenue	204,458	**NA**	NA	**NA**	NA	NA	NA
Food	NA	**49.3**	100,838	**40-45**	$92,006	(4.3–9.3)	$8,832
Labor	NA	**48.8**	99,850	**40-45**	$81,783	(3.8–8.8)	$18,067
Non-Food	NA	**19.5**	39,965*	**5–15**	$20,446	(4.5–14.5)	$19,517
Profit/Loss	NA	**-17.7**	-36,193	**0–5**	$10,223	(17.7–22.5)	-$46,416
Totals	NA	**117.7**	240,653	**100**	$204,458	-17.70	-$36,195

*Non-food expenditure includes a one-time unbudgeted expenditure of $18,340 for kitchen equipment and dining room furniture.
SOURCE: Cushing ISD Inquiry Information for Expenditure Accounts, 2008–09 and Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Leadership by Excellence, 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 3–4
SCHOOL MEAL PRICES OF DISTRICTS IN THE SURROUNDING AREA
2009–10

MEAL PRICING	BREAKFAST				LUNCH			
SCHOOL DISTRICT	REDUCED-PRICE	FULL-PRICE ELEMENTARY	FULL-PRICE HIGH SCHOOL	STAFF/ VISITOR	REDUCED-PRICE	FULL-PRICE ELEMENTARY	FULL-PRICE HIGH SCHOOL	STAFF/ VISITOR
Central Heights	$0.30	$1.25	$1.25	$1.50	$0.40	$1.75	$2.25	$2.75
Douglas	$0.30	$1.25	$1.25	$2.00	$0.40	$1.75	$1.75	$2.25/ $2.50
Garrison	$0.30	$1.25	$1.25	$1,50	$0.40	$1.75	$2.00	$3.00
Nacogdoches	$0.30	$1.00	$1.10	$1.10	$0.40	$1.75	$2.00	$2.75
Woden	$0.30	$1.15	$1.15	$1.25	$0.40	$1.50	$1.75	$3.00
Henderson	$0.30	$0.90	$0.90	$1.40	$0.40	$1.40	$1.60/ $1.75	$2.75
Mt. Enterprise	$0.30	$1.25	$1.25	$1.50	$0.40	$2.25	$2.50	$3.25/ $3.50
Kilgore	$0.30	$1.25	$1.50	$1.50/ $2.00	$0.40	$1.50	$1.75	$2.50/ $3.00
Manor	$0.30	Free	Free	$1.50/ $2.00	$0.40	$2.25	$2.50	$3.00/ $3.50
Navasota	$0.30	$1.10	$1.10	$1.55/ $2.00	$0.40	$1.85	$2.20	$2.75/ $3.00
Average Prices	**$0.30**	**$1.16**	**$1.19**	**$1.48/ $2.00**	**$0.40**	**$1.78**	**$2.03**	**$2.80/ $3.10**
Cushing ISD	**$0.30**	**$0.90**	**$0.90**	**$1.50**	**$0.40**	**$1.25**	**$1.25**	**$2.60/ $2.75**

SOURCE: Individual School District Web sites, Retrieved January 25, 2010.

Districts must ensure, to the extent practicable, that the federal reimbursements, children's payments and other non-designated nonprofit CNP revenues do not subsidize program meals served to adults. Breakfasts and lunches served to adults must be priced so that the adult payment in combination with any other revenues (i.e., school subsidizing as a fringe benefit) is sufficient to cover the overall cost of the meal, including the value of any USDA entitlement and

bonus commodities used to prepare the meal. An audit trail must document these revenues since meals served to adults are not eligible for federal cash reimbursement, nor do they earn USDA-donated commodities for the district.

There is a clear audit trail of CISD district funds supplementing the CNP. The value of these district-donated services subsidizes the programs sufficiently to cover the difference in pricing; however, the CISD Food Service has operated at a deficit over the past two school years.

A concern of districts considering whether or not to increase meal prices is that participation will drop. **Exhibit 3–5** demonstrates the meal price increases Early ISD implemented over a period of three years, from 2005–06 through 2007–08. **Exhibit 3–6** shows the effects on ADP of students receiving full-price meal benefits. Although breakfast prices increased by as much as $0.85 per meal from $0.75 for students to as much as $1.60 for adults and lunch prices increased a dollar from $1.50 for students to $2.50 for adults over a three year period, there was very little change in the percentage of Average Daily Participation rates. Even at the higher prices, school meals are an excellent value. There are very few places where one can purchase a balanced breakfast and lunch including milk for $1.60, and $2.25 respectively.

Additionally, CISD a la carte pricing is not always sufficient to cover the cost of the product. CISD sells the chocolate muffin at $0.50 but the cost to the district is $0.51. There are several factors to consider when pricing a la carte foods: what local commercial outlets are charging; promotion of healthy food items versus discouraging less healthy purchases; the food cost of the item; and the labor cost necessary to prepare the item for sale. There is no standard method for calculating the price of a la carte foods; however, using a 40 percent food cost is effective in many districts. Using this method, the muffin costing $0.51 would be priced at $1.25, instead of $0.50. Currently, 10 muffins are sold daily on average. Snacks costing $0.135 would be priced at $0.35 instead of $0.25. Currently, an average of 50 snacks are sold daily.

CISD should increase student and adult prices for breakfast and lunch to ensure that the revenue generated by meals in these two categories is sufficient to cover the cost of producing the meals. For CISD's meal prices to equal the reimbursement for a free meal, the student breakfast price should increase to at least $1.48 (Federal reimbursement of $1.46 + $0.28 severe need = $1.74 minus $0.26 federal reimbursement for full price breakfast = $1.48) and the lunch price to $2.43 (Federal reimbursement of $2.68 + $0.195 commodity reimbursement = $2.875 minus $0.25 and $0.195 federal reimbursement for full price lunch = $2.43); an adult breakfast price should increase from $1.50 for breakfast to

EXHIBIT 3–5
SCHOOL MEAL PRICES OVER THREE YEARS
EARLY ISD
2005– 06 THROUGH 2007–08

	BREAKFAST PRICES			LUNCH PRICES		
EARLY ISD SCHOOLS	**2005–06**	**2006–07**	**2007–08**	**2005–06**	**2006–07**	**2007–08**
Early Elementary and Primary Schools	$0.75	$1.00	$1.35	$1.50	$1.75	$2.00
Early Middle School	$1.00	$1.25	$1.60	$1.75	$2.00	$2.25
Early High School	$1.00	$1.25	$1.60	$1.75	$2.00	$2.25
Adult	$1.00	$1.25	$1.60	$2.20	$2.40	$2.50

Source: Early ISD Food Services Department, February, 2008.

EXHIBIT 3–6
THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED PRICING ON ADP
FOR FULL-PRICE MEALS
EARLY ISD
2005–06 THROUGH 2007–08

EARLY ISD ADP FULL-PRICE MEALS AFTER PRICE INCREASES			
	2005–06	**2006–07**	**2007–08**
Breakfast	25%	23%	23%
Lunch	47%	49%	50%

Source: Early ISD Records of Meals Claimed, November, 2005–06 through 2007–08.

$1.75 and lunch from $2.60 to at least $2.88. In both examples, the district would raise the prices for students and adults who pay full price for their meals, to cover the reimbursed amount for a "free" federal meal. As demonstrated in **Exhibit 3–4**, few districts in the surrounding area charge the previously identified prices; however, all districts in the exhibit are shown to charge more than CISD. **Exhibit 3–7** demonstrates the increase in revenue when the recommended prices are implemented.

The district should also evaluate the pricing on a la carte items and consider adding items. One additional a la carte food that could be a significant source of income to the district is the iced tea. It is currently purchased in a bottle for $0.45 and sold for $0.50. According to the director, instant tea costs approximately $0.19 including the cup; and brewed tea costs approximately $0.10 including the sugar and the cup. Currently, an average of 134 tea purchases are made in the cafeteria daily. Commercially, a $0.75 price for a cup of iced tea would not be considered excessive.

If the district sold a bottomless cup of brewed iced tea for $0.75 a la carte, and offered the tea to customers purchasing a reimbursable meal for a reduced price of $0.50, revenue from tea sales would increase dramatically, and perhaps participation would increase.

EXHIBIT 3–7
PROJECTED INCREASE IN REVENUE IF STUDENT AND ADULT PRICES ARE INCREASED

CUSHING ELEMENTARY: BREAKFAST DAILY REVENUE

MEAL TYPE	CURRENT PRICING			INCREASED PRICING		
	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL REVENUE BY CATEGORY	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL REVENUE BY CATEGORY
Free	$1.74	67	$116.58	$1.74	67	$116.58
Reduced-Price	$1.74	13	$22.62	$1.74	13	$22.62
Full-Price	$1.16	18	$20.88	**$1.74**	18	$31.32
Adult Paid	$1.50	4	$6.00	**$1.75**	4	$7.00
Visitor	$1.50	0	$0.00	$0.00	0	$0.00
Elementary Breakfast Revenue			**$166.08**			**$177.52**

CUSHING JR–SR HIGH SCHOOL: BREAKFAST DAILY REVENUE

MEAL TYPE	CURRENT PRICING			INCREASED PRICING		
	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL REVENUE BY CATEGORY	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL REVENUE BY CATEGORY
Free	$1.74	29	$50.46	$1.74	29	$50.46
Reduced-Price	$1.74	5	$8.70	$1.74	5	$8.70
Full-Price	$1.16	7	$8.12	**$1.74**	7	$12.18
Adult Paid	$1.50	4	$6.00	**$1.75**	4	$7.00
Visitor	$1.50	0	$0.00	**$1.75**	0	$0.00
High School Breakfast Revenue			**$73.28**			**$78.34**
Total District Breakfast Revenue			**$239.36**			**$255.86**

CUSHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: LUNCH DAILY REVENUE

MEAL TYPE	CURRENT PRICING			INCREASED PRICING		
	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL REVENUE	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL
Free	$2.875	104	$299.00	$2.875	104	$299.00
Reduced-Price	$2.875	20	$57.50	$2.875	20	$57.50
Full-Price	$1.695	45	$76.28	**$2.88**	45	$129.60
Adult Paid	$2.60	12	$31.20	**$2.88**	12	$34.56
Visitor	$2.75	0	$0.00	**$3.25**	0	$0.00
Elementary Lunch Revenue			**$463.98**			**$520.66**

EXHIBIT 3–7 (CONTINUED)
PROJECTED INCREASE IN REVENUE IF STUDENT AND ADULT PRICES ARE INCREASED

CUSHING JR–SR HIGH SCHOOL: LUNCH DAILY REVENUE

MEAL TYPE	CURRENT PRICING			INCREASED PRICING		
	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL REVENUE	TOTAL PER-MEAL REVENUE	ADP	TOTAL
Free	$2.875	77	$221.38	$2.875	77	$221.38
Reduced-Price	$2.875	17	$48.88	$2.875	17	$48.88
Full-Price	$1.695	69	$116.96	**$2.880**	69	$198.72
Adult Paid	$2.60	12	$31.20	**$3.000**	12	$36.00
Visitor	$2.75	0	$0.00	**$3.250**	0	$0.00
Total High School Lunch Revenue			**$418.42**			**$504.98**
Total District Lunch Revenue			**$882.40**			**$1,025.64**
Total Daily Revenue			**$1,121.76**			**$1,281.50**

SOURCE: Adapted from USDA Reimbursement Schedule, CISD Meal Prices, August, 2009 and CISD Record of Meals Claimed, November 2009.

Best practices require that meal prices be evaluated and increased as necessary each year when the USDA Reimbursement Schedule is announced, to avoid unpopular large increases in any particular year. If the district does not raise prices, the CNP will continue to lose funds on meals served to students and adults paying full price. The TDA, Child Nutrition Division Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM) indicates that "in no case should the funds available to pay the cost of student meals be used to supplement the cost of adult meals." Currently, the funds provided for feeding economically disadvantaged students are supplementing student and adult full-price meals. Raising prices will help to ensure that the revenue generated by meals in these two categories is sufficient to cover the cost of preparing and serving the meals.

As demonstrated in **Exhibit 3–7**, using current ADP, the daily revenue for the NSLP and SBP increases by $159.74 daily or $28,753.20 annually ($159.74*180 days).

Changing some a la carte prices would also increase profit by $87.54 per day (10 * $0.75=$7.50 for muffins; 50 * $0.10 = $5.00 for snacks; and 134*$0.56 = $75.04 for tea); $15,757.20 annually ($87.54 * 180 days). It should be noted that the sale of reduced priced tea was not included in the calculation and would yield an additional $0.31 per cup profit.

The total increase in profits for the two actions equals $247.28 per day; $44,510.40 annually ($247.28 * 180 days). To be conservative, the calculations were done using the amounts for "at least" the federal reimbursements amounts received by the district for free, reduce-priced and full price

breakfast and lunch meal benefits. The district may decide to follow the examples of districts in **Exhibit 3–4**. It should be noted that districts round up prices so as not to deal with cents.

CISD POLICY FOR CHARGING MEALS (REC. 17)

CISD does not have a formal policy for charging meals when students or adults forget their money or meal.

At the end of the 2008–09 the CISD Food Service had $3,428 in unpaid charges; staff members owed $464 and students owed $2,964. The point of service software used identifies and denies meals served to individuals who have reached the charge limit. After meal service, twenty minutes per day is spent re-entering those meals manually.

CISD does not collect all charges for meals which further increases the operating loss of the program.

It is not clear if there is an established policy regarding charging meals in the school cafeteria; the policy could not be found in the student handbook. The current informal policy is to allow a student or teacher to charge up to five meals or ten dollars, at which time no additional credit is to be extended until past charges are paid. However in practice, individuals are allowed to continue to charge beyond that limit. The director indicated that charges are carried over from year to year.

The point-of-service software used with the cash register identifies when an individual has reached the limit, alerts the cashier, and denies the meal even though the individual is allowed to take the meal.

Below are charge policies for other school districts as noted on their Web sites:

Manor ISD—Students will only be allowed to "charge" their lunch two times. After two charges, a sandwich and milk will be provided for one day only. Students will be required to bring their lunch from home until all charges are paid. This policy will be in effect until the month of May, when no charges will be allowed.

Nacogdoches ISD—Students attending the elementary schools may charge a maximum of two meals. Middle school students may charge one meal. High school students may NOT charge for any reason. When a student has charged the maximum allowable, they are given the district alternate meal. No a la carte items may be charged at any grade level. No alternate meals are available for faculty.

Henderson ISD—There is no provision for charging meals in the cafeteria. Parents are urged not to ask for this accommodation. A notice will be sent from the cafeteria when a child's meal ticket is running out, but we ask you also assume some of the responsibilities for this, since young children sometimes lose their notes before they get home.

Providing an alternate meal is a common solution to children who need to charge a meal. The meal is often not preferred by the student such as a cheese sandwich, vegetables, and milk. As the district develops a charge policy they should be aware that these alternate meals may not be claimed for reimbursement. Any child taking a meal that will be reimbursed must have the same selection as all the other children with the exceptions of children on field trips, or when meals are transported to another area of the campus. An additional method to consider is to establish a fund in each principal's office that students may borrow breakfast and lunch money from. When they have no food from home and no money to buy the meal, they are sent to the principal's office where they are given a token. The token is exchanged for the lunch on the cafeteria line. At the end of the week the cashier takes the tokens back to the office to exchange for cash. This method is effective for a number of reasons:

- The meal the child receives is reimbursable.

- The process is inconvenient for the child, causing the child to take more responsibility for ensuring that he or she has provisions for breakfast or lunch.

- Most districts find that the number of charges immediately drops. Often the child has the money

in his pocket but it is easier to charge than to present the money.

- The principal is more aware when a particular child is having difficulty getting his or her needs met by the parents. If the problem persists, the parent may be contacted and offered the opportunity to fill out a free and reduced-price meal application if the household conditions have changed since the beginning of the school year.

- The food service manager and cashier do not have to collect money from delinquent parents.

- The food service program does not experience a loss due to unpaid charges.

CISD should implement a formal policy addressing students and staff members who arrive in the cafeteria with no money or meal, expecting to eat. Ensure that if charges are allowed, that there is a method for collecting unpaid funds so that they do not become a loss. Reprogram the point-of-sale system to reset the cash register so that meals served to people that have exceeded the charge limit will not be denied, eliminating the need to re-enter the information on those meals daily, and risking error on the reimbursement claim.

By implementing a formal policy that addresses the issue of charges by food service customers, the district's Food Service program would have a one-time savings of $3,428 based on the 2008–09 loss.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION (REC. 18)

CISD does not have goals or strategies regarding participation rates for breakfast or lunch and lacks marketing strategies to increase meal participation rates.

Comments from students, staff members, and parents on surveys conducted during the course of the review; and on other occasions by the superintendent, indicate students, parent, staff and community dissatisfaction with the food and service in the district's cafeteria.

In addition, factors observed by the review team that may contribute to inefficiencies in the CISD Food Service are:

- staff does not always follow recipes and results are inconsistent;

- belongs to purchasing cooperative but does not always use it to purchase best priced food;

- cook foods too early and hold them too long. This may explain the perception that the food is not fresh.

- portions food such as eggs and mashed potatoes into individual disposable cups which is not only less attractive but also more expensive than portioning directly onto the plate;

- menu lacks variety; and

- long waiting lines to eat.

Exhibit 3–8 (A–E) summarizes the survey of high school students taken January 21, 2010. Students were asked to rate 24 statements describing the cafeteria on a scale of 1–5; 1 being they strongly disagree and 5 being they strongly agree with the statement. One hundred and twenty students participated in the survey. The list of statements is arranged from the lowest to the highest scores in categories for the purpose of summary. The average rating is identified in the far right column.

EXHIBIT 3–8 (A)
THE SCHOOL LUNCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY
RESPONSES TO CISD FOOD QUALITY AND FOOD SERVICE
JANUARY 21, 2010

FOOD QUALITY

SURVEY NUMBER	SURVEY STATEMENT	AVERAGE RESPONSE RATE
13.	The food has a homemade quality.	1.4
11.	The food looks appealing.	1.7
22.	The overall quality (taste, appearance, temperature) of the food served is good.	1.8
5.	The food smells good.	1.9
3.	The food tastes good.	1.9
1.	The food served is fresh.	2.1
12.	Food is cooked to the proper doneness.	2.3
21.	The quality of the food is consistent.	2.3
23.	The overall quality of the food is good.	2.6

NOTE: Survey response rate 1–5; 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree with the statement.
SOURCE: School Lunch Experience Survey, National Food Service Management Institute, at the University of Mississippi, January 2010.

Best practice factors that contribute to the delivery of high quality food, including the following:

- Purchase the highest affordable quality, making decisions based on ingredient content, nutrient value, and price. Support purchasing decisions with student input. Conduct student taste tests using products within the above mentioned constraints. The district belongs to a cooperative purchasing group through the ESC, Region 7. This group has an annual student taste testing event prior to establishing the bid. The CISD director and a group of students should participate. To protect pricing, approve as many products as possible within a category to increase competition; however, ensure that the products purchased are ones that the students deemed acceptable.

- Store foods properly to protect quality. An example might be when activities such as slicing meat for the hoagies a day prior to service decrease quality, an effort should be made to store the whole loaf of meat refrigerated only as long as it takes to thaw, and slice the meat the day of service.

- Use a standardized recipe for every preparation and strictly follow the recipe. Customers expect consistency in flavors, textures, appearance, and portion sizes.

- Batch cook foods so that they are not held for long periods of time prior to service.

- Garnish pans of hot food and individual servings of some of the cold offerings, keep serving area clean and well organized, portion food carefully directly onto the plate whenever possible to save the cost of portion cups and to present the food more attractively. Individual portion cups are an effective way to portion less popular foods that fewer students will select or a wide variety of salads and fruit. The appearance and aroma of food are important contributors to the customer's perception of quality.

EXHIBIT 3–8 (B)
THE SCHOOL LUNCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY
RESPONSES TO CISD FOOD QUALITY AND FOOD SERVICE
JANUARY 21, 2010

MENU

SURVEY NUMBER	SURVEY STATEMENT	AVERAGE RESPONSE RATING
4.	There is a variety of food items that I can choose from.	2.1
8.	The flavors of the food go well together.	2.1
10.	There is variety in the menu from day to day.	2.3
6.	The menu provides healthy meal options.	2.4

NOTE: Survey response rate 1–5; 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree with the statement.
SOURCE: School Lunch Experience Survey, National Food Service Management Institute, at the University of Mississippi, January 2010.

In addition, CISD's menu lacks variety; a factor that may affect participation rates. The smaller the school, the less daily variety it can afford to offer unless the choices are carefully planned based on prior production; and left over foods are properly stored, reheated, and incorporated safely into future menus.

To the department's credit, they do offer an alternate meal each day, an entrée salad or a baked potato plate. As long as these items are popular, they can be healthy additions to the menu. To increase variety, food service directors often develop an array of salads that include different mixtures of greens, and toppers; and accompaniments to the potato, sometimes substituting yams. By designing and offering variations customer interest increases. All variations should be standardized, written into a recipe, and analyzed for contribution to the meal patterns.

Adding a third option that is very popular every day also encourages participation. Items such as pizza, hamburgers, and chicken wings are foods that most students will eat most days. When offering this option, it is important to research the products available on the market and select those with a nutritional profile that will not adversely affect the nutritional analysis of the total menu. Many school products are formulated to be lower in fat than those manufactured for the general public. Serving such popular items as a choice each day does not necessarily raise the fat content of menus, but will increase the number of students participating.

The easiest way to increase variety is within the Vegetables/Fruits (V/F) component of the meal pattern. Preparing and offering two or more vegetables, salads, and fresh and canned fruits greatly improves student satisfaction. Crackers, hot rolls and sliced bread can be easy choices in the Grains/Bread (G/B) category, but kitchen- prepared quick breads such as cornbread or muffins are an appreciated change.

EXHIBIT 3–8 (C)
THE SCHOOL LUNCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY
RESPONSES TO CISD FOOD QUALITY AND FOOD SERVICE
JANUARY 21, 2010

PORTION SIZES

SURVEY NUMBER	SURVEY STATEMENT	AVERAGE RESPONSE RATING
7.	The amount of food I get is enough.	1.9
17.	The serving portions are consistent.	2.8

NOTE: Survey response rate 1–5; 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree with the statement.
SOURCE: School Lunch Experience Survey, National Food Service Management Institute, at the University of Mississippi, January 2010.

A common complaint among high school students and adults is that the serving sizes for school meals are too small. School portions may appear small because portion sizes in commercial restaurants have become so exaggerated over the past few decades. The school breakfast and lunch patterns are established by the USDA based on the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for students by age or grade group; it is the intent of the USDA that students select and eat all components of the meal.

Reimbursement for meals is provided accordingly. Adults typically don't need the additional calories but are served the same portion sizes as secondary students. By no means should adults receive portion sizes that are larger than what high school students receive. The targeted caloric value of a high school lunch is 826 calories. CISD often serves portions in excess of what is required.

EXHIBIT 3–8 (D)
THE SCHOOL LUNCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY
RESPONSES TO CISD FOOD QUALITY AND FOOD SERVICE
JANUARY 21, 2010

DINING EXPERIENCE

SURVEY NUMBER	SURVEY STATEMENT	AVERAGE RESPONSE RATING
24.	The overall quality of my dining experience is good.	2.1
15.	I know that I can offer suggestions.	2.4
20.	I have enough time to eat.	2.5
19.	I could purchase other a la carte items if I don't want the full meal.	2.7
18.	I know what is being served before I get to the cafeteria.	2.9
16.	There is enough seating space in the dining area.	3.5

NOTE: Survey response rate 1–5; 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree with the statement.
SOURCE: School Lunch Experience Survey, National Food Service Management Institute, at the University of Mississippi, January 2010.

A long wait in a cafeteria line increases dissatisfaction with the meal. The line in CISD's cafeteria is often out the door and some students observed by the review team had as little as seven minutes to eat once they were served. Many districts remedy a situation like this by reconfiguring the food service space. By cutting an opening in the wall and placing two cashiers, it allows students to enter the serving line from both sides and exit through the middle, doubling the line's capacity. If scheduling allows, staggering classes also reduces time spent waiting in line, even if it is just by ten minutes per group. Finally, a breakfast line would move more quickly if students had meal cards to scan.

EXHIBIT 3–8 (E)
THE SCHOOL LUNCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY
RESPONSES TO CISD FOOD QUALITY AND FOOD SERVICE
JANUARY 21, 2010

STAFF

SURVEY NUMBER	SURVEY STATEMENT	AVERAGE RESPONSE RATING
2.	The staff understands my meal time needs.	2.1
9.	The staff looks like they enjoy their work.	2.4
14.	The service is friendly.	2.9

NOTE: Survey response rate 1–5; 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree with the statement.
SOURCE: School Lunch Experience Survey, National Food Service Management Institute, at the University of Mississippi, January 2010.

Moreover, one of the most important goals of a merchandising plan is making sure that each customer who comes through the line feels special and is served quality food in pleasant surroundings by compassionate people. This may be the most important element in building the students desire to eat school meals. Child nutrition personnel who know the importance of their jobs in relation to the students' health and education will go that extra mile to provide service with a smile and to promote healthy food habits for a lifetime.

Children are a school district's customers and expect respectful treatment, just as one would in a commercial restaurant. Speaking in a loud stern voice should always be avoided. When asking children to make an additional selection, move the line more quickly, or limit their selection of condiment packets to a reasonable number, gently urge them. It works well and the child will feel better about his or her cafeteria experience.

The NSLP requires that students and parents have involvement in the operation of the programs. This often takes the form of a focus group to provide direction for the Food Service staff. This group of representatives from a variety of grade levels may also serve as taste testing participants. Soliciting the input of a focus group can identify areas for needed change and improvement. Navasota ISD has a cafeteria advisory committee called SLAM (Students Learning about Meals). These students take field trips, do taste testing and spread the word about the benefits of school meals.

Exhibit 3–9 shows the untapped revenue using current meal pricing and the number of non-participating students by meal category for breakfast and lunch.

Exhibit 3–10 provides an overview of the increase in revenue when using current meal pricing and an ADP increase of ten percent in free, reduced-price and full-price for both breakfast and lunch.

CISD should increase participation in the NSLP and SBP by marketing the programs. Participation typically increases as the number of students approved for free and reduced-price meals increases; however, the right combination of menu offerings, student input, and implementation of other factors discussed in this recommendation could also increase participation significantly.

EXHIBIT 3–9
POTENTIAL FOR INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION AND REVENUE

CUSHING ELEMENTARY			BREAKFAST				LUNCH				TOTALS
BENEFITS CATEGORY	ENROLL-MENT	APPROVED	CURRENT ADP	CURRENTLY NOT PARTICI-PATING	PER MEAL VALUE	POTENTIAL REVENUE	CURRENT ADP	CURRENTLY NOT PARTICI-PATING	PER MEAL VALUE	POTENTIAL REVENUE	
	208										
Free		121	67	54	$1.74	$93.96	104	17	$2.68	$45.56	
Reduced-Price		24	13	11	$1.74	$19.14	20	4	$2.68	$10.72	
Full-Price		63	18	45	$1.16	$52.20	45	18	$1.50	$27.00	
Elementary Potential Additional Daily Revenue						$165.30				$83.28	$248.58
Actual Elementary Revenue						$160.08*				$399.82	$559.90
CUSHING SECONDARY			**BREAKFAST**				**LUNCH**				**TOTALS**
Free	280	100	29	71	$1.74	$123.54	77	23	$2.68	$61.64	
Reduced-Price		28	5	23	$1.74	$40.02	17	9	$2.68	$24.12	
Full-Price		152	7	145	$1.16	$168.20	69	48	$1.50	$72.00	
Secondary Potential Additional Daily Revenue						$331.76				$157.76	$489.52
Actual Secondary Revenue						$67.28				$355.42	$422.70
Total District Potential Daily Additional Revenue											$738.10
Total District Current Daily Revenue											$982.60

*This amount is reflected in Exhibit 3–10.
SOURCE: CISD Record of Meals Claimed, November 2009.

Additional strategies used by some districts to increase participation and revenue include the following:

Make it more convenient to participate:

- Offer breakfast during the Junior and Senior High School break. Many students purchase snacks; however, nutritional value as well as federal funding would increase if instead they would select a reimbursable breakfast. Regular meal times specified in regulations for the NSLP have been identified as 10 AM to 2 PM Breakfast hours are identified as meal service prior to 10 AM.

- Research the potential for serving breakfast on the bus to students who travel a long distance.

- Allow the Food Service Department to provide meals for field trips. Currently, when a class leaves school during meal periods, the Food Service Department is losing money in two ways. It loses the opportunity to serve those students, and often they are unaware that the students will be gone and prepare food for them. This creates leftovers which are costly to the program. Allow the Food Service Department to prepare take-out meals for students on field trips or at the very least, alert the kitchen two days in advance so that they may scale back production and prevent leftovers that often must be discarded.

Add variety:

- Offer a popular food every day as a choice so that without looking at the menu, students will know that something that they like to eat will be on the menu.

EXHIBIT 3–10
REVENUE WITH 10% INCREASED PARTICIPATION

BREAKFAST USING CURRENT PRICING

CUSHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

	ENROLL-MENT	APPROVED	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	REVENUE	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	POTENTIAL REVENUE
			CURRENT 47. 1%					**10% INCREASED ADP**		
Enrollment	208									
Free		121	67	55.0%	$1.74	$116.58	79	65.0%	$1.74	$137.85
Reduced-Price		24	13	54.0%	$1.74	$22.62	15	64.0%	$1.74	$26.10
Full-Price		63	18	29.0%	$1.16	$20.88	25	39.0%	$1.16	$29.00
Daily Elementary Breakfast Revenue						$160.08				$192.56

CUSHING SECONDARY SCHOOL

	ENROLL-MENT	APPROVED	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	REVENUE	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	POTENTIAL REVENUE
			CURRENT 14.6%					**10% INCREASED ADP**		
Enrollment	280									
Free		100	29	29.0%	$1.74	$50.46	39	39.0%	$1.74	$67.86
Reduced-Price		28	5	17.9%	$1.74	$8.70	8	27.9%	$1.74	$13.92
Full-Price		152	7	4.6%	$1.16	$8.12	22	14.6%	$1.16	$25.52
Daily Secondary Breakfast Revenue						$67.28				$107.30
Daily Total District Breakfast Revenue						**$227.36**				**$299.86**

LUNCH USING CURRENT PRICING

CUSHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

	ENROLL-MENT	APPROVED	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	REVENUE	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	POTENTIAL REVENUE
			CURRENT 81.2%					**10% INCREASED ADP**		
Enrollment	208									
Free		121	104	86.0%	$2.68	$278.72	116	96.0%	$2.68	$310.88
Reduced-Price		24	20	83.3%	$2.68	$53.60	22	93.3%	$2.68	$58.96
Full-Price		63	45	71.4%	$1.50	$67.50	51	81.4%	$1.50	$76.50
						$399.82				$446.34

CUSHING SECONDARY SCHOOL

	ENROLL-MENT	APPROVED	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	REVENUE	ADP	% OF PARTICI-PATION	PER MEAL CASH REVENUE	POTENTIAL REVENUE
			CURRENT 58.2%					**10% INCREASED ADP**		
Enrollment	280									
Free		100	77	77.0%	$2.68	$206.36	87	87.0%	$2.68	$233.16
Reduced-Price		28	17	60.7%	$2.68	$45.56	20	70.7%	$2.68	$53.60
Full-Price		152	69	45.4%	$1.50	$103.50	84	55.4%	$1.50	$126.00
Daily Total Secondary Lunch Revenue						$355.42				$412.76
Daily Total District Lunch Revenue						**$755.24**				**$859.10**
Daily Total District Revenue						**$982.60***				**$1,158.96**

*This amount is reflected in Exhibit 3–9.
SOURCE: CISD Record of Meals Claimed, November 2009.

If participation on a particular menu item declines, rotate it out and replace it with another popular item.

- Increase the variety of foods offered within a category; for example, offer a choice of fresh and canned fruits each day. Add several side salads such as congealed fruit, garden salad, and raw vegetables with dip (none of which are difficult to prepare).

Merchandise the programs:

- Garnish foods on the service line; shake some with cinnamon onto the applesauce, a sprig of parsley on a side salad; or a quarter of a maraschino cherry on every other serving of peach slices.

- Plan special events such as drawings, place a sticker on random tray bottoms and award a small prize, celebrate monthly birthdays with a special low fat dessert, decorate the cafeteria not only seasonally but at other times with colorful posters that promote good nutrition, and display student artwork. Make the cafeteria an exciting and dynamic place to be.

- Establish a Food Service Department uniform in school colors with ball caps or visors, and coordinated tee shirts to look more like commercial fast food employees.

- Post sanitation scores in a prominent location and share them with the community. The kitchen has high sanitation scores; the most recent one was 100%. Customers should know that.

- Develop a catering menu for use by school district employees for special events. This provides the Food Service Department staff members an opportunity to show their skills and increase customer confidence in the work that they do, as well as establishing an additional source of revenue. Adopt a color scheme, place a logo, or slogan on printed materials that presents a consistent appearance that is easily identifiable with the program.

Burleson ISD has done an excellent job of marketing their programs to the students. The dining room at the high school is painted with large murals depicting various "restaurants." The name of the cafeteria is the Elk City Cafés, and most of the renovations were done by members of the community. Although Cushing School would not offer as many choices as Burleson High School, seeing this operation might spur ideas for how CISD could make its CNP more exciting and popular with the students.

Exhibit 3–11 displays a copy of the current Burleson Middle School menu. Because of the size of the schools in Burleson, more choices may be offered daily; however, their menu format could be easily adapted to CISD. Burger and pizza offerings could easily be replicated; serving these two items as a choice twice a week could significantly increase participation. The Country Buffet is simply their regular reimbursable lunch listed for the month, as is the Breakfast section a list of regular offerings. A LA CARTE and The Snack Shack could reflect the offerings at CISD. In the center top CISD could promote their entrée salads and baked potato plates selections, listing the variation of each on a daily basis.

Industry best practices dictate the need to market and merchandise the CNP in order to increase and retain participation. The district could gain significant revenue to support food service by increasing participation in the NSLP and SBP through targeted goals and marketing strategies. A secondary benefit to making the cafeteria a "hot spot" for students is that it may cause some who have not applied for free and reduced-price meal benefits to apply, increasing funding not only in the cafeteria but in other state-funded programs.

If the district is not able to increase participation in the breakfast and lunch programs they will continue to operate at a deficit. By increasing participation by just ten percent in all eligibility categories for both breakfast and lunch, using current meal pricing, the increase in revenue would be $176.36 per day; $31,744.80 annually ($176.36 * 180 days). Of the increase in revenue, approximately 50 percent should be expended on food and other costs. There would not need to be any increase in labor cost, yielding an annual $15,872.40 profit from increased participation.

LABOR COSTS AND PRODUCTIVITY (REC. 19)

CISD Food Service staffing standards exceed commonly accepted standards for staffing school kitchens. Using meals per labor hour (MPLH) as the indicator of kitchen productivity, the CISD kitchen is less efficient than other school kitchens serving approximately the same number of meals.

The common measure for productivity in school kitchens is meals per labor hour (MPLH), the "meal" being one reimbursable lunch. All other sources of revenue such as reimbursable breakfasts, snacks, a la carte and catering sales are converted to the equivalent of one reimbursable lunch or meal equivalent (ME). Food service managers and school

EXHIBIT 3–11
BURLESON ISD MIDDLE SCHOOL MENU
JANUARY 2010

SOURCE: Burleson ISD website.

business managers use Meal Equivalents (MEs) as the unit measure of productivity for school food service programs when evaluating efficiency and formulating staffing patterns for the purpose of budgeting. MEs are determined from meal count categories and other sources of revenue using the following factors, rounded to nearest whole number.

- Lunch: 1 lunch = 1 lunch

- Breakfast: 3 breakfasts = 2 lunches (factor –0.66)

- Snack: 3 snacks = 1 lunch (factor –0.33)

- Non-reimbursable food sales (a la Carte and catering): Dollar amount divided by free reimbursement ($2.68) + commodity value ($0.195) = $2.875

After determining the number of MEs a kitchen is producing, the MPLH calculation is performed: MPLH = Number of daily MEs divided by the number of paid labor hours.

Prior to using the MPLH guidelines, one must identify whether the district is using a conventional system or a convenience system of food production. The determining factor is whether the majority of the menu items are kitchen-prepared ("from scratch"), or are purchased-prepared or partially prepared. An evaluation of the January 2010 menus identified that 78 percent of the food items served were purchased- prepared. CISD operates a convenience system of food preparation. This may explain why the lowest scoring statement on the student survey was "The food has a homemade quality."

The CISD Food Service department is staffed with 45.95 labor hours per day at a cost of $425.32 in wages and salaries;

and $71.34 in benefits (18 percent). The district does not use substitute employees. When an employee is out, the staff adjusts work schedules. The daily fixed cost of labor is $496.66.

Exhibit 3–12 shows the calculation of MPLH for CISD. As discussed earlier, each meal type is converted to meal equivalents (ME) and the total is divided by the number of daily labor hours, resulting in meals per labor hour (MPLH). As shown in the exhibit, the MPLH for the CISD kitchen is 10.6.

Sample staffing guidelines based on MPLH are shown in **Exhibit 3–13**. When these standards are compared with CISD's MPLH (shown in **Exhibit 3–12**), the CISD kitchen is producing significantly below the standard. The CISD kitchen is less efficient than other school kitchens serving approximately the same number of meals. It should be noted that these guidelines reflect a highly organized operation with a strong standardized management system in place. Standardized management systems will be addressed in Recommendation 20. If the district could make changes that

would increase current production to 14–16 MPLH they would compare favorably with average food service departments.

Due to the economy of scale, as the number of MEs increases, so does the number of MPLH. This is particularly important to understand when planning for the opening of the new elementary school that the district has under construction. Once the second kitchen is opened, the district will split the customer base. One kitchen may produce 200 MEs while the other produces 300 MEs, both small numbers. The smaller the number of MEs the more difficult it is to operate at a break-even point due to duplication of efforts.

The district should reduce the cost of labor as a percentage of revenue by increasing participation in the NSLP and SBP, eliminating kitchen positions, or decreasing labor hours. There are only two ways to increase MPLH; increase participation or reduce labor hours to provide the CISD food service staff members the opportunity to operate more efficiently. Some points to consider include:

EXHIBIT 3–12
MEAL EQUIVALENTS (ME) AND MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH)

MEAL TYPE	NUMBER SERVED	EQUIVALENTS	FACTORS	ME	÷	LABOR HOURS	MPLH
Breakfasts	139	3=2	(66%)	92			
Lunches	332	1 = 1	(100%)	332			
Snacks	0	3=1	(33%)	NA			
A la Carte	$179.33	1= $2.875	Total ÷ $2.875	62			
Total Daily ME				486	÷	45.95	10.6

SOURCE: CISD Record of Meals Claimed, November 2009.

EXHIBIT 3–13
SAMPLE STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE FOOD PRODUCTION
2009–10

SAMPLE STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE FOOD PRODUCTION

MEAL EQUIVALENTS	CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM		CONVENIENCE SYSTEM	
	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS
10–100	12	8	16	6
101–150	12	8–12	16	6–9
151–200	12	12–16	16	9–12
201–250	14	14–17	17	12–14
251–300	14	17–21	18	14–16
301–400	15	20–26	18	17–21
401–500	15	25–31	19	21–25
CISD–486			10.6	46

SOURCE: Adapted from Financial Management Instructor Guide (2005) Chapter 5, pgs. 5–56 NFSMI, the University of Mississippi.

1. Schools with less than 500 ME's generally have working managers. Currently the director has sufficient labor in the kitchen to use her time to begin planning a standardized management system including food production records, recipes for all preparations, job descriptions, work schedules, food costs, and product research. At some point when those management tools are established she should then regain her assigned kitchen duties. There is sufficient routine paperwork to support two hours office time daily once the systems are implemented.

2. Seldom are school food service employees, with the exception of the kitchen manager, full-time (8 hour) when they are using a convenience system for food production.

3. Student employees are a good source of labor during meal serving periods when the greatest number of employees is required. Student labor can generally only work for short periods of time.

4. The district should evaluate the potential for an employee to work less than a five day week or less than an 8 hour day.

If labor hours were reduced by 10 per day the labor cost would be reduced by approximately $90 per day (10 hours * $9 per hour including benefits) or $16,200 annually ($90 * 180 days). The decreased labor hours reduces the cost of labor to 41 percent as a percentage of revenue. This action reduces the man hours to 36 and increases the MPLH to 13.5.

STANDARDIZED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (REC. 20)

CISD does not have a Food Service standardized management system in place, limiting the ability of the Food service manager to ensure that consistent quality meals are offered on a cost effective basis.

Food production records do not accurately reflect what is being produced and served. Standardized recipes are not used consistently. There are no menu-specific work schedules.

Producing and serving consistently high quality food at an affordable price in a fiscally sound manner cannot be left to chance. Successful operation of the CNP requires a strong plan that is constructed carefully, communicated clearly, followed strictly, and adjusted constantly according to the dynamic nature of the business. The foundation of the plan is a high quality cycle menu.

The factors necessary to consider when constructing the menu are innumerable including but not limited to: Federal and state regulations regarding contribution to the meal patterns and the nutrient analysis of the menu; compatibility of selected menu items so they are aesthetically pleasing; sanitation standards; the cost of food; the number of labor hours available; the skills and knowledge of production employees; available kitchen equipment and storage areas; seasonal foods; delivery days; foods available through the USDA commodity assistance program; administration, community, and student expectations; scheduling and time restrictions of serving periods; board policy; and student participation. Once this menu is well written it should repeat or cycle, undergoing refinement each time it is served.

Any food service department that rewrites a new menu each time the last has ended is wasting precious time and risking new mistakes. Using a cycle menu builds skill and confidence in food production employees who improve the process of preparing the meal each time the menu cycles. To accommodate seasonal foods, new menu ideas, holidays, special events and available USDA donated foods the menu will change almost every cycle, but not the entire menu, just the day(s) necessary to accommodate the specific circumstance.

A standardized management system is the integration of various well developed kitchen tools into a smooth flowing menu-specific routine that directs the activities of employees; the results are predictable quality, cost, participant acceptance, and profits. Although not difficult, development of this system is time consuming and the system is never static; nevertheless, it must be done in order to professionally operate quality programs, achieve student acceptance, and break even or generate a profit.

The Food Service department should develop a standardized management system based on a cycle menu, including recipes for every preparation, accurate food production records, and menu specific work schedules. The director should also review practices to ensure that activities are in compliance with laws and regulations.

Steps in development:

1. Develop a cycle menu focusing on all of the factors that contribute to quality. When assigning portion sizes, focus on meeting minimum requirements. If additional foods are needed to round out the menu or increase the caloric value, they can be added later.

2. Identify the foods that will be used in each menu. Select products that have been deemed acceptable by students in taste testing activities; use USDA donated foods whenever possible to reduce costs; gather documentation of contribution to the meal patterns and nutrient analysis of purchased-prepared foods.

3. Pre-cost the menus to ensure that they are affordable. While completing this step, always consider whether there is a kitchen-prepared product that could improve quality while reducing price. The district does not currently have a targeted food cost per meal; nor are menus pre-costed prior to being produced and served.

4. Secure a tested standardized recipe for every menu item. If necessary, increase or decrease the recipe depending on the projected number of servings needed to prevent overproduction or errors in adjusting the recipe by the production employee. Simple tasks such as chopping lettuce should have a recipe to ensure that each time the task is performed the results will be exactly the same.

Recipes for frozen-prepared or partially prepared foods should be developed from the directions on the box and standardized to the CISD kitchen. Including preparation start time could improve on products being heated too early and held in warming cabinets too long. Add directions as to how the menu item should be presented; include serving utensil size and suggested garnishes.

The district does not currently have a written standardized recipe for every menu item and those that do exist are not used consistently. Following the recipe is imperative. If recipes are not followed; the quality of the food item will not be consistent, the pre costing activities will be meaningless, and the product may not fulfill the requirements for components or nutrients.

5. Prepare a food production record for each day of the cycle. Include the menu items and the components of the meal pattern they satisfy, portion sizes graduated by grade level, recipe numbers, and the quantity of product needed in purchase units. Note on the food production record pre-preparation tasks for future menus. Food production records are the only kitchen record that documents the content of the meals served

and claimed for reimbursement. More importantly, they serve as a form of communication between the director and the staff members; and as a kitchen tool providing an important source of information for forecasting quantities the next time the menu is served.

The district does not consistently record the necessary production information on the food production record in order to document the content of the meals, to communicate with kitchen staff, or to use as a tool when determining the amount of food to purchase and prepare.

6. Prepare a grocery list based on the food production record and containing only the items needed to produce the foods listed on the menus with quantities needed. Prepare a separate grocery list of those items that are used every week such as disposables, condiments, and cleaning supplies. Assign par values to each of these items so the weekly order may be easily developed using current inventory.

7. Purchase the food from the bid awards list provided by ESC Region 7 Food Purchasing Cooperative using current inventory. Once food is delivered check invoice pricing against bid pricing. The district has not participated in the selection process for the ESC Region 7 bid; therefore, some of the products CISD is using are not on the bid award. There is no process established for routinely checking that prices charged on invoices reflect bid prices.

8. Develop work schedules on two levels. Outline all routine tasks performed daily; place each of the tasks on an appropriate individual's work schedule, estimating the time necessary to perform the task. Post these work schedules in that they will be used daily. Outline menu specific duties and tasks for each day. Post these duties on separate schedules again estimating the time necessary to complete the tasks. Fill extra time with pre-preparation for future meals, cleaning responsibilities, or production of kitchen-prepared products. These menu-specific schedules are provided to each employee daily and collected at the end of the day to be used the next time that specific menu is served.

9. Monitor food production and service. Note items that must be changed such as assigned tasks to even out work flow. Note leftover foods and determine the

cause. Monitor the tray waste going into the garbage can. Modify the day's plan as necessary.

The director should assemble all recipes, food production records, grocery list, and work schedules into packets for each week of the cycle menu. These tools will direct production and service each time the menu is used. The director should use this information to direct daily food production. The director should continue to modify as necessary until the system is operating smoothly. The director should make necessary changes to accommodate USDA donated foods in inventory, holidays, school closings, and other special events. Once the event has passed, the director should restore the standard menu.

Industry best practices dictate that all aspects of food production are planned in advance, and committed to writing. Once a well developed plan is established, cycling the plan allows for refinement and reduces the chance of error.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FOOD COSTS (REC. 21)

CISD does not always observe food portions served to students or adults as compared to accepted standards. CISD food costs as a percentage of revenue exceed industry standards and contribute to Food Service operating at a deficit. The review team observed during the site visit that many of the menu items offered in the unit-priced meal had portion sizes that exceeded requirements. Adults receive larger portions than high school students.

The goal of the NSLP and SBP is to provide each child with 1/3 of the current Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) at lunch; and 1/4 of the RDA at breakfast. Use of the Traditional Meal Patterns plus additional USDA recommendations (i.e. offering foods rich in Vitamins A and C two to three times per week; iron-rich foods daily; and additional foods as needed to provide sufficient calories) provides a good foundation for achieving the RDA goals.

CISD menus regularly exceed these requirements in the following ways:
- providing portion sizes that are larger than required;
- allowing students to select additional items increasing the overall cost of the meal;

- providing items in the unit priced meal that should be sold as a la carte items; and
- allowing self serve on condiment items.

The district is generating an average of $2.30 in revenue per lunch. At a food cost of 45%, the district has $1.04 to spend for food for lunch. Milk, a required component of the lunch costs the district $0.275 per half pint; leaving $0.755 to spend on the remaining components of the lunch.

The service of three breakfast menus was observed during the course of the review. In each of the three menus the food costs for many of the meals served were higher than planned. These examples add significantly to the food cost of the breakfast.

A reimbursable breakfast contains: two servings of M/MA(meat/meat alternative), or two servings of G/B(grains/bread), or 1 serving of M/MA and 1 serving of G/B, and 1/2 cup fruit or vegetable or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice, and milk. The district is generating an average of $1.63 in revenue per breakfast. At a food cost of 45%, the district has $0.73 to spend for food for breakfast. Milk, a required component of the breakfast costs the district $0.275 per half pint; leaving $0.455 to spend on the remaining three components of the breakfast.

During the site visit the review team observed the following:

Menu 1: Students were offered Pigs in Blanket or cereal and toast; some students selected both. Pigs in Blanket and cereal added $0.177 to the food cost. Many students selected two jelly and/or honey portions adding from $0.036 to $0.09 to the cost of the meal.

Menu 2: Students can legitimately take cereal or egg; and biscuit and sausage (three instead of the required two food items). The extra portion of meat/meat alternative or grains/bread, adds from $0.13 to $0.19 to the food cost. Although the eggs are USDA donated, the district is paying for shipping and handling. These eggs could be used in another meal eliminating the need to purchase a product.

Menu 3: Students selected cheese sticks with the cereal and toast as well as with the cinnamon roll; this was one extra food item adding $0.24 to the cost of the meal. On the day that Menu 3 was served, plate waste was observed for approximately half of the breakfasts served. Returned to the scullery were unopened cheese sticks (14 =$3.36), milk (22 = $6.05), and cereal (15 = $2.66); untouched pineapple (23 = $4.37), toast (10 = $0.90), and cinnamon rolls (10 = $1.60).

Some students appeared to have not eaten anything on the tray. In addition, many partially eaten portions were returned. The value of the unopened or untouched products totaled $18.95 or approximately $38.00 for the entire meal assuming the waste remained consistent. Food cost for the planned menus on this day was $0.865 per meal. The value of the waste as indicated above was $0.262 per meal served or 30 percent of the planned food cost.

If this was a typical day and waste could be eliminated, the district would save $6,818 per year on breakfast waste.

The examples used pertain to breakfast; however the same behaviors are demonstrated at lunch. On the day hoagies were served, at least 50 percent of the sandwiches were returned untouched or partially eaten. The same was true of the mashed potatoes that were over-peppered; the pork and beans that were not aesthetically pleasing when combined with spaghetti and meatballs; and the oranges which were cut in half and the children could not eat them as easily as if they had been cut in smaller pieces. If measures are not taken to control tray waste, the district will continue to put CNP funds that could be spent for higher quality foods into the garbage can.

The district should reduce the cost of food by planning portion sizes by grade level as specified in the Traditional Meal Patterns and plan portion sizes to meet, not exceed program requirements. The district should serve high school portion sizes to adults. The Food service manager should plan the number of menu items to prepare based on prior participation; batch cook when possible to reduce overproduction; and preserve leftover foods as directed by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The director should limit student selections to the required four food items at breakfast, and five food items at lunch. Variety within components is encouraged; however, the content of a unit-priced meal must be clear to customers. Additional foods selected should be priced as a la carte.

Meal portions should meet, not exceed the minimum requirements of the Traditional Meal Patterns; plan decreased portion sizes for M/MA and V/F for students in grades Pre-K–3; observe tray waste and reduce portion sizes for students in Grades 4–12 accordingly. There are 135 Pre-K–3 grade students typically participating in the NSLP. **Exhibit 3–14** illustrates the savings that would be realized if CISD reduced its portion sizes.

It is recognized that USDA actively promotes increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables by all, and particularly by young people. This recommendation should not be misinterpreted as cutting the food children may eat for breakfast and lunch to reduce costs; the point is to cut tray waste to cut costs. The funds taken from the trash can then be used to continually improve the quality of offerings. Ingredients that currently may not be affordable, such as kiwi, blueberries, strawberries, avocado, and star fruit bring

EXHIBIT 3–14
EXAMPLES OF SAVINGS REALIZED WHEN MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE PORTION SIZES ARE REDUCED FOR GRADES PRE-K–3

	CURRENT PORTION	COST	SUGGESTED PORTION	COST	PORTION COST REDUCTION	DAILY COST REDUCTION
Spaghetti and Meat Balls with Cheese Cup	5 Meat Balls plus 1 oz Cheese	$0.29 $0.10	3 Meat Balls plus ½ oz cheese	$0.174 $0.05	$0.216	$10.42
Beef Fingers	4 Fingers	$0.47	3 Fingers	$0.353	$0.118	$15.93
Corn Dog Macaroni and Cheese	1 1 oz cheese*	$0.36 $0.10	1 Eliminate Mac and Cheese	$0.36	$0.10 All grade levels	$13.50
Fish Portion Add Mac and Cheese	1 oz cheese	$0.86 $0.05	½ Fish Portion 1/2 oz cheese	$0.43 $0. 05	$0.43 -$0.10	$44.55
Hoagies	1 bun**	$0.173	½ sandwich	$0.085	$0.085	$11.48
Chicken Nuggets	5 Nuggets	$0.286	4 Nuggets	$0.229	$0.057	$7.70
Chicken Rings	5 Rings	$0.369	4 Rings	$0.295	$0.074	$9.99
Ravioli w/Cheese	1 portion	$0.314 $0.050	0.75 portion	$0.273	$0.091	$12.29

*USDA donated foods should be used and protected as purchased foods. The cheese may be used in another meal so that the entrée for that meal does not have to be purchased.
**The USDA donated turkey, ham, and cheese in this menu item far exceed requirements.
Source: CISD CNP Invoices, 2009.

interest to the cafeteria even when they are used only to garnish other foods.

Exhibit 3–15 shows the cost of 1/4 cup, 3/8 cup, and 1/2 cup vegetable portions. The last column shows the daily savings when students in grades Pre-K–3 receive 1/4 cup instead of 1/2 cup portions of vegetables. Few vegetables are popular enough with students to warrant 1/2-cup portions, particularly in the Pre-K–3 grade levels. When this change is made, the food cost for those meals is reduced by nine percent.

Exhibit 3–16 shows the cost of condiment packets. Condiments that come with the meal such as jelly, honey, salad dressing and ketchup packs should be limited to a reasonable number such as one jelly or two ketchup packs and any additional should be sold at a minimal price to discourage students picking up more than they need. When students are allowed to self-serve condiments and there is no limit on the number they may take, a significant number will be discarded, unopened, needlessly increasing food cost.

EXHIBIT 3–15
SAVINGS REALIZED WHEN VEGETABLE PORTION SIZES ARE REDUCED FOR GRADES PRE-K–3

VALUE OF COMMON PORTION SIZES OF VEGETABLES

	RECOMMENDED LEVEL 1/4 CUP	3/8 CUP	1/2 CUP	DAILY COST REDUCTION
Green Beans	$0.075	$0.113	$0.151	$10.125
Baked Beans	$0.088	$0.132	$0.176	$11.880
Mixed Vegetable	$0.100	$0.151	$0.201	$13.500
English Peas	$0.118	$0.178	$0.237	$15.930
True Recipe Ins Potatoes	$0.119	$0.178	$0.238	$16.065
Sliced Potatoes	$0.115	$0.173	$0.231	$15.525
Pork N Beans	$0.077	$0.115	$0.154	$10.395
Peas N Carrots	$0.111	$0.167	$0.223	$14.985
Yams	$0.151	$0.227	$0.303	$20.385
Chopped Spinach	$0.157	$0.235	$0.313	$21.195
Garden Fr Blend Peas & Carrots	$0.078	$0.117	$0.157	$10.530
Broccoli Crown (fresh)	$0.079	$0.118	$0.158	$10.665
Classic Carrots Sliced	$0.091	$0.137	$0.182	$12.285
Garden Fr Broccoli Cut	$0.066	$0.098	$0.131	$8.910
Garden Fr Broccoli Florets	$0.093	$0.140	$0.187	$12.555
Classic Cut Green Bean	$0.088	$0.132	$0.176	$11.880
Garden FR Corn Cut Whole	$0.070	$0.105	$0.140	$9.450

SOURCE: CISD CNP Invoices, 2009.

EXHIBIT 3–16
COST OF INDIVIDUALLY PORTIONED CONDIMENTS
2009–10

CONDIMENTS	PORTION COST	CONDIMENTS	PORTION COST
BBQ Sauce	$0.031/each	Ketchup	$0.013/each
Butter	$0.063/each	Marinara Dipping Cup	$0.209/each
Honey	$0.090/each	Picante Sauce Cup	$0.047/each
Honey Mustard Cup	$0.175/each	Salad Dressing	$0.037/each
Jelly, Grape	$0.040/each	Sour Cream	$0.105/each
Jelly, Strawberry	$0.040/each	Syrup	$0.078/each

SOURCE: CISD CNP Invoices, 2009–10.

Use the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to analyze district recipes and plan food production. Upon examination of the food production records and district recipes it was found that often an excess amount of food is prepared. This is demonstrated in **Exhibit 3–17**.

The director should batch cook to reduce over production; preserve leftover foods for use in future menus, observing all health rules and district quality standards. It appears that the Food Service Department staff members are doing an adequate job of taking care of leftover foods and using them. A few examples from the food production records of leftover foods that were thrown away are represented in **Exhibit 3–18**. Food production employees should focus on batch cooking (preparing) to need, whenever possible. This

includes heating vegetables, and portioning salads and fruits as needed. Not only will less food be used but in the case of pre-portioning salads and fruits, over a penny per serving will be saved on the disposable cup.

The district can reduce food costs by reducing portion sizes to meet minimum requirements; charging a la carte prices for foods selected outside of those included in the unit-priced meal; using the FBG to plan the amount of food to be purchased and prepared and to evaluate the contribution of recipes currently used in the district; and by preparing and cooking foods in batches to need, to avoid overproduction, leftovers, and foods needing to be disposed of.

The potential savings in food costs for Recommendation 21 are reflected in Recommendation 22, Offer Versus Serve.

EXHIBIT 3–17
EXAMPLES OF EXCESSIVE FOOD PRODUCED
2009–10

DATE	MENU ITEM	PREPARED AND SERVED	MEALS PREPARED	MEALS SERVED
11/2/09	Cereal Toast Cheese	314 servings of G/B plus 90 M/MA	202 – 2 component breakfast	131
11/5/09	Quesadillas Chicken Rings	40 lb diced chicken 320 2-oz M/MA and 16 lb cheese 128 – 2 oz M/MA plus chicken rings 200 2 oz M/MA	648 – 2 oz M/MA	359
11/6/09	French Fries	90 lb fries = 720 ½ cup servings (using Food Buying Guide which is optimistic) however, still over produced	720-1/2 c servings	339
11/9/09	Baked Beans Mixed Fruit Salad	8-#10 cans baked beans 9-#10 cans mixed fruit	376 1/4c servings 422 servings of mixed fruit	332 332
11/11/09	Hoagies	50 lb turkey=262-2 oz M/MA 40 lb ham=262 2 oz M/MA 20 lb yellow cheese=160 2 oz M/MA 20 lb white cheese=160 2 oz M/MA	844 2 oz M/MA	377
11/13/09	Nachos	50 lb Ground Beef=295 2 oz M/MA 30 lb Cheese=240 2 oz M/MA	535 2 oz M/MA	366

SOURCE: CISD Food Production Records, November 2009 and CISD CNP Invoices, 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 3–18
EXAMPLES OF EXCESSIVE FOOD PRODUCED AND THROWN AWAY
2009–10

DATE	MENU ITEM	AMOUNT THROWN AWAY	COST PER PORTION	TOTAL COST
1/14/10	Yeast Roll	107	$0.120	$12.84
11/6/09	Tossed Salad	63	$0.055	$3.47
11/12/09	Enchiladas	40	$0.242	$9.68
11/13/09	English Peas	60	$0.118	$7.08
11/11/09	Chili Beans	35	$0.154	$5.39
11/4/09	Soup	45	$0.201	$9.05
11/4/09	Tossed Salad	29	$0.055	$1.60

SOURCE: CISD Food Production Records, November 2009 and January 14, 2010; and CISD CNP Invoices, 2009–10.

OFFER VERSUS SERVE (OVS) (REC. 22)

CISD has not effectively implemented the "Offer versus Serve" provision to help prevent plate waste. There is excessive tray waste at both breakfast and lunch. Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a type of school meal program designed to decrease food waste and give students greater flexibility in choosing what they eat for school breakfast or lunch. The USDA provided the OVS provision as a tool schools may use to reduce tray waste from meals served under the NSLP and SBP. This provision allows students to refuse one of the four required components at breakfast; and up to two of the five required food items at lunch, and the meal can still be claimed for reimbursement. The district may not require students to take a particular component such as M/MA or Milk. The students must be allowed to refuse any of the offered components.

In addition to the examples of breakfast and lunch tray waste observed, and described in Recommendation 21, it was noted that excessive milk was returned unopened. When OVS is implemented effectively almost no milk is returned unopened because students who don't intend to drink it don't select it. Food service employees do not understand that children may refuse milk; and some appear confused about the students being able to refuse M/MA. M/MA and Milk are the most expensive components of the meal.

It follows that CISD students also do not understand what they must select to receive a reimbursable unit-priced meal. It appears that some students select items they don't intend to eat to ensure that they have sufficient components to claim the meal for reimbursement. One high school student returned a full breakfast tray with everything on it untouched except the juice. When asked why she picked up all of those foods she did not intend to eat, she said "because they were there." Additionally, students are allowed to select an additional juice if they do not select milk, however, juice is not an allowable substitute for milk under the Child Nutrition Program guidelines.

CISD should eliminate excessive tray waste by effectively implementing the "offer versus serve" provision at both breakfast and lunch. The Food Service department should retrain all employees in the requirements of OVS to ensure that each understands that any component of the meal may be refused as long as the student takes three components of the breakfast and three components of the lunch. The USDA printed and distributed an OVS manual in the fall of 2004 that can be used for training. The materials can be downloaded from the following Web site: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/offer_v_serve.html.

The Food Service staff should promote OVS with students. Emphasize that it is good when students take and eat everything offered, but if they do not intend to eat the food item, they should not pick it up. Offering more choices within each component of the meal will make it easier for students to remember to take only what they choose to eat.

The food service manager should reduce tray waste by effectively implementing the OVS provision at both breakfast and lunch. The menu should be displayed to clearly identify the choices within the offerings of a unit-priced meal. This information should be reinforced at the cash register by charging a la carte prices for extra food items selected. A Food Service department employee should stand in the scullery area to gently remind students to take only what they plan to eat.

If the district does not effectively implement the OVS provision, they will continue to purchase and prepare food that will ultimately be disposed of by students as tray waste.

It is not possible to predict the dollar value of proper implementation of OVS from the visit. Studies of the amounts, costs, and reasons that the food is thrown away must be done to get an accurate prediction of the savings. Some districts do food waste studies to influence future menus. Whenever students begin eating all of the foods they take and little uneaten food is thrown away, good district dollars have been saved.

A conservative estimate of the potential saving when implementing Recommendations 21 and 22 is a 10 percent reduction in food costs ($100,838 in 2008–09 See **Exhibit 3–3** Food Expenditures) or $10,084.

PURCHASING (REC. 23)

CISD does not include procedures to ensure that the prices paid for food items are the prices established on the Education Service Center (ESC) Region 7 Purchasing Cooperative bid award. Food items included on the CISD menu are not represented on the ESC Region 7 Cooperative bid.

Although the CISD belongs to the ESC Region 7 Food Purchasing Cooperative, the Food Service Department does not benefit fully from this valuable service. Not all foods purchased by the district are those represented on the bid award; weekly invoices are not checked routinely to ensure

that bid prices are charged; and the district does not participate in taste testing events with students.

The director indicated that she has not followed the necessary procedures to ensure that all of CISD's needed items are included in the bid. A result is that purchases of non-Child Nutrition (CN) labeled products have been made unknowingly. Although the required documentation of such products may be secured, it does put the district at risk of losing reimbursement of meals for which undocumented products were served if after the fact, the product is found to not perform as expected.

The benefits of school food purchasing cooperatives can only be fully realized when members participate actively. The ESC needs the input of district personnel and students, and the

support of district directors in ensuring that the vendor(s) perform according to the conditions outlined in the award.

CISD should purchase food from the district's purchasing cooperative ESC Region 7 bid award and check invoices weekly to ensure that bid prices are charged. If the district does not become active in supporting the ESC Region 7 Food Purchasing Cooperative, they may not achieve the full potential savings in purchasing through this organization; and they will continue to risk purchasing products that have not been documented with a CN Label or a product formulation sheet by the ESC.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

	RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
15.	Develop targeted standards for expenditures by category (food, labor, and non-food) as a percentage of revenue.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
16.	Increase the prices of student and adult full-priced breakfasts and lunches.	$44,510	$44,510	$44,510	$44,510	$44,510	$222,550	$0
17.	Implement a board policy on charging in the cafeteria.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$3,428
18.	Increase participation in the NSLP and SBP by marketing the programs.	$15,872	$15,872	$15,872	$15,872	$15,872	$79,360	$0
19.	Reduce the cost of labor as a percentage of revenue.	$16,200	$16,200	$16,200	$16,200	$16,200	$81,000	$0
20.	Develop a standardized management system based on a cycle menu, including recipes for every preparation, accurate food production records, and menu specific work schedules.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
21.	Reduce the cost of food by planning portion sizes by grade level as specified in the Traditional Meal Patterns.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
22. Eliminate excessive tray waste by effectively implementing the Offer versus Serve provision at both breakfast and lunch.	$10,084	$10,084	$10,084	$10,084	$10,084	$50,420	$0
23. Purchase food from the district's purchasing cooperative ESC Region 7 bid award and check invoices weekly to ensure that bid prices are charged.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS	**$86,666**	**$86,666**	**$86,666**	**$86,666**	**$86,666**	**$433,330**	**$3,428**

CHAPTER 4

DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 4. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Effective school districts have goals based on rigorous planning; clearly defined roles for both the board and management; and processes in place that provide appropriate resources to meet the needs of student learning. Effective school districts also have processes in place to ensure community participation and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Board members serve as policy makers—approving policies, the budget and specific program goals and initiatives that help the district achieve its mission. Board members hold the district superintendent and staff accountable for performance as defined in various planning documents and the budget. The board hires the superintendent, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), of the district and evaluates his performance at least annually. The superintendent and staff use the goals, budget, and policies approved by the board to operate the district in an effective manner.

The Texas education system is structured to assure the local community is a major influence in the education process. In fact, the term "local control" is commonly used in describing this system, and the word independent is the middle name of most Texas school districts. Community involvement is an important part of the district day-to day operations.

CISD is governed by a seven-member board elected at-large who serve four-year terms with elections held biennially. The terms of one-half of the board members, or as near to one-half as possible, expire every other year. One board member, Susie Owens, resigned in November 2009, prompting the appointment of Tim Hardy to serve out the remainder of her term. **Exhibit 4–1** describes the 2009–10 CISD board members, their position, term information and occupation.

Board meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the school cafeteria. The public is welcome to attend all meetings and are designated a specific time to voice opinions or concerns. Community members who wish to address the board about specific items on the agenda or other issues sign up with the board president or superintendent prior to the meeting. Community members are allotted five minutes to speak, but in practice most speakers are allowed additional time if needed. The board does not discuss or make decisions on any issues not posted on the agenda, including public comments.

The superintendent, in consultation with the board president, prepares the agenda and any board member may request that an item be included on the agenda. The deadline for submitting agenda items is six calendar days before regular meetings and three calendar days before a special meeting. The superintendent meets with the board president, in person or by phone, to review the agenda prior to each board meeting. The agenda is posted at least 72 hours in advance of regular meetings on the door outside of the Cushing Jr–Sr High School which is the location of the district's administrative offices.

The superintendent prepares a letter to the board as part of each board agenda packet that outlines events since the last board meeting, upcoming events and information about

EXHIBIT 4–1
CISD BOARD MEMBERS
2009–10

NAME	TITLE	TERM EXPIRATION	DATE OF ORIGINAL ELECTION	OCCUPATION
Brett Reeves	President	2012	May 2008	Probation Officer
Sherry Moore	Vice President	2010	May 2007	Elementary Teacher
Bobby Brashears	Secretary	2012	May 2008	Printing Business Manager
Dwayne Goldsberry	Member	2010	May 2006	Vending Business Manager
Tim Hardy	Member	2010	Appointed December 2009	Trucking Business Manager
Lynda Langham	Member	2012	May 2008	University Registrar
Lynn Moore	Member	2010	May 2006	Retired Principal

SOURCE: CISD Superintendent's Office, January 2010.

items in the agenda. The superintendent's secretary collects information for the board packet, including the superintendent's letter and supporting documentation for posted agenda items. Board packets are delivered on the Friday before the regularly scheduled Monday board meeting. Any board member may contact the superintendent with questions or clarification about information in the agenda packet.

Communication is critical to the success of all school districts. Cushing ISD is an integral part of the close knit Cushing community and surrounding area. As in many similar Texas communities, school activities are key gathering points for all community members.

During the school review team visit, it was evident in interviews, survey responses, and focus group meetings that the Cushing community greatly appreciated and was supportive of the district. For example, the community gives generously to school fundraising requests and supports student events. The band booster club recently gave a $13,000 donation resulting from fundraising efforts conducted by the club. Several local business owners such as the owner of the local grocery store were cited as someone who always supports student events—financially and by providing food.

In addition, the community has ample access to school facilities for various events, and meetings at no cost. Examples included the Little Dribblers (a children's basketball team) and Boy Scouts who use the gym. Walkers and runners exercise on the track regularly; summer leagues use the baseball field; and, at various times, the facilities are used for fundraising for specific emergency family needs. These uses comply with written policy and show a willingness on the part of school administration to support the community just as they often request community support for the schools.

Another example of community involvement includes a spring 2009 parent survey developed and implemented by the elementary principal. The survey included topics regarding the school environment, problem solving, communication, student progress, and overall satisfaction with the schools. Significant thought and effort is required in creating an unbiased survey instrument. While the process of distributing, collecting, and analyzing survey data can at times cause potential surveyors to declare "too much," but CISD parents were undaunted.

The survey provided an opportunity for additional comments from the respondents with a large number of written

comments being received. The survey results not only provide a wealth of data for analysis and use, but gives parents' confidence that their thoughts and perceptions are valued.

The district uses technology extensively as part of its instructional program as well as to communicate with parents who use the Parent Connection, an online accessible reporting mechanism, to monitor their student's progress and attendance in the classroom. The information is security protected for access only by the appropriate parent. The Parent Connection was cited in interviews and focus groups as being a worthwhile initiative that proved helpful to teachers and concerned parents.

Finally, the district obtains legal services through a cooperative created by Region 7. Attorneys in this cooperative charge fees based on negotiated rates established by the cooperative and also provide answers to questions from a district over the phone at no charge. Legal fees in small districts such as CISD can vary significantly from year to year as even one or two adverse employee actions can increase legal costs. **Exhibit 4-2** shows that legal fees in CISD have declined each year over the past.

EXHIBIT 4–2
CISD LEGAL FEES
2005–06 THROUGH 2008–09

YEAR	EXPENDED	COST PER STUDENT
2005–06	$35,487	$73.17
2006–07	$26,570	$52.41
2007–08	$23,443	$46.89
2008–09	$20,153	$42.07
September through December, 2009	$2,853	NA

SOURCE: CISD Business Office and Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), January 2010, and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2005–06 through 2008–09.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- CISD's board and administration systematically provided information to the community to gain support of the 2009 bond referendum.

- *Bearkat News*, a monthly district publication, provides not only parents but the community a way of staying connected with district and community events.

- CISD has developed an innovative weekly parent-teacher communications initiative; Fabuolus Five, to inform five elementary parents about successes their children are experiencing.

FINDINGS

- CISD's administrative positions do not have clear reporting relationships and well-defined responsibilities.

- CISD does not have a leadership plan for employees in key administrative positions new to their positions that may lack experience or training to effectively manage major functions in the district.

- CISD does not have a comprehensive multiyear strategic plan to guide the operations of the district.

- While CISD enjoys great support from parents and community members, it does not have a formal methodology or established leadership that engages more parents' and community members' efforts with a focus to expand joint student learning opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 24: Develop a formal organization structure that clearly describes the key administrative positions in the district and their reporting relationships.**

- **Recommendation 25: Develop leadership growth plans for key administrative staff in new positions.**

- **Recommendation 26: Develop a strategic plan that links the district's goals to the budget.**

- **Recommendation 27: Expand and coordinate community and parent volunteer efforts in providing more student learning opportunities.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2009 BOND ELECTION

A $10.7 million bond referendum was approved in May 2009 with 84.2 percent of voters approving the bond. A key measure of the support of the Cushing community is indicated by the most recent bond election. While some Texas school districts have either struggled with bond elections or have delayed facility upgrade plans because of fear a bond issue would fail, Cushing ISD voters approved a bond program with overwhelming support. This was the first bond election in the district since 1978. The voters also approved a bond in 1971 after two failed attempts. The proceeds of the bond issue will be used to finance the construction of a new elementary school.

The superintendent, board and staff provided extensive information through written communications and meetings. CISD staff prepared an information flyer that described the projects to be completed with the bond funds, the estimated tax impact of the bonds, the planned amortization of the bonds, the tax rate history of the district and the impact of an increasing or decreasing tax base.

The superintendent and board members held a town hall meeting to discuss the bond election with citizens. The presentation at the meeting included a history of the district and its facilities, issues concerning the current elementary school, plans for a new elementary school, the amount of the bond, the planned amortization of the bond, voter qualifications, the ballot language, voting schedule, financial impact of a tax increase to property owners, and the proposed layout of the elementary school. The superintendent also attended a number of community meetings for organizations such as the Lion's Club and meetings at local churches.

The ability of the district to pass a bond program for the first time in more than 30 years and in difficult economic times is a tangible vote of confidence for the superintendent, his administration, and to the widespread support in the community for CISD and its students.

BEARKAT NEWS

The *Bearkat News* (**Exhibit 4–3**) is a new publication mailed monthly to all residents in the district. Four issues have been published. Community members and district staff perceive the publication as filling a real gap in a community that does not have a local paper. Senior citizens were singled out as most appreciative because they did not usually have children in the schools and were often unaware of the activities in the district.

Bearkat News is researched, written and published by high school business students at Cushing School. It is a 6–8 page color document with clear resolution pictures and informative articles primarily relating to the school's recent activities or planned events. The September 2009 inaugural publication included a message from the Superintendent stating, "We would like to communicate our plans and future happenings to you (the students, staff, parents, community, and business

EXHIBIT 4–3
BEARKAT NEWS

Bearkat News

C.I.S.D. Publication Number 3

November 2009

New Elementary School Ground Breaking Ceremony

Tuesday, November 3, 2009, was a "once-in-a-lifetime event" that we will all remember. Community members, political officials, representatives for Cox Construction, board members, administrators, teachers, staff and students gathered on the elementary playground to celebrate the ground breaking for a new elementary school that should be finished and ready in 15 months. For this historical event, elementary students, teachers, administrators and board members wore hard hats. The fourth graders read statements about the challenges of being competitive with other countries around the world. Superintendent Mr. Davis stated, "We're going to be the best elementary school in Nacogdoches County because it's not the building that makes the school; it's the people inside it." Davis introduced the board members and Board President Mr. Reeves spoke about the importance of remembering the 59-year-old building and the memories that were made there as well as the necessity to move forward to meet technological demands for this new century. In May, a bond was passed that will pay for the new school. The district has up to 20 years to pay off the bond, but school officials expect to pay it off early. In that same 20-year period, CISD will receive $10.8 million from the new owners of the biomass power plant that had its own ground breaking in Sacul a week after the school groundbreaking.

SOURCE: CISD Superintendent, January 2010.

owners). We as a district feel it is vital to have each of these groups informed as much as possible to create a democratic learning community for our District which will enable us to have optimum success……This newsletter is one of many ideas we have to make our school better for you."

FABULOUS FIVE

A fall 2009 communications initiative by the principal and staff at Cushing Elementary is a teacher-to-parent contact effort known as "Fabulous Five." The "Fabulous Five" is a commitment by elementary teachers to contact a minimum

of five parents each week to commend actions by their children. This service resulted from comments received during the spring 2009 elementary parent survey commending teachers who communicated with them regularly. The contact may also be accomplished by email.

When the program was first implemented, one student came to school the next day smiling and asked the teacher if the teacher had called their parent to let them know that the student had done exceptionally well on a class assignment that week. The teacher acknowledged that she had and the student was pleased with her accomplishment. It was a win–win situation for all involved.

Additionally, the comments offered in the teacher focus group and other interviews indicated that teachers believe the phone contacts are highly valuable to the education process.

DETAILED FINDINGS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING (REC. 24)

The district's administrative positions do not have clear reporting relationships and well-defined responsibilities. Administrators do not understand the boundaries of their operating authority nor are they always accountable for performance. Most operating decisions are pushed up to the superintendent.

In an interview with the review team, the superintendent provided an organizational chart as shown in **Exhibit 4–4**, and indicated that the chart was outdated and did not depict the current reporting structure. Technically, the organizational chart indicates all positions reporting to the superintendent. The chart, for example, does not reflect positions whose duties currently are being conducted by several staff members. The Human Resources function currently is covered by several positions; the superintendent, business manager, superintendent's secretary and the PEIMS coordinator.

The librarian position is filled on a day-to-day basis by the district's library instructional aide; however, the business manager (also the technology director) is listed in CISD's 2009–10 Budgeted Salaries' Schedule with the job assignment(s) of technology director/librarian/business manager. She is currently the only certified librarian in the district and provides limited oversight of the library function as time permits. The maintenance director also oversees maintenance/custodians and the transportation department (bus supervisor and bus drivers).

The superintendent said that most management and professional support positions, from the food service manager to the school nurse, report directly to him. Key administrative positions such as the curriculum director and principals report directly to the superintendent as well.

Additionally, two administrative positions; the athletic director, food service manager and the curriculum director have dual reporting relationships as well. The athletic director reports to the superintendent, but the superintendent stated that he tries to include the high school principal in most decisions regarding the athletic director. The superintendent stated that while the curriculum director reported to the superintendent, he needed to ensure that the new curriculum director had a peer relationship with the principals since they are the instructional leaders of the campuses. Further, the food service manager was not sure who she reported to but felt that it was directly to the superintendent.

Some managers cited instances where district employees went directly to the superintendent and succeeded in overturning decisions that the manager or supervisor had made. This may be the result of unclear reporting relationships.

Position titles were also unclear in some cases. Positions such as the food service director and the maintenance director were referred to as manager or director interchangeably. Also, the chief of police was described as the School Resource Officer (SRO) at times; however, it is not uncommon in small districts to find administrative staff wearing multiple hats as is the case in CISD.

Clear roles and responsibilities, reporting relationships and job titles are key elements in an effective management structure. Without these elements unnecessary time is spent making decisions and important decisions may be unnecessarily delayed or deferred indefinitely resulting in additional costs to the district or more often inadequate resources provided for instructional programs. The number of direct reports a superintendent has is critical to a district's organization. Too many direct reports may impede the superintendent's ability to perform effectively as the district's executive officer. A superintendent not only answers to the board, guides his cabinet members, sets goals and expectations for all professional and nonprofessional staff but also answers indirectly to parents and the community.

Along with the organizational structure, two other elements closely impact an organization: job descriptions and evaluations. It is important that both elements be clearly in

EXHIBIT 4–4
CISD ORGANIZATION
JANUARY 2010
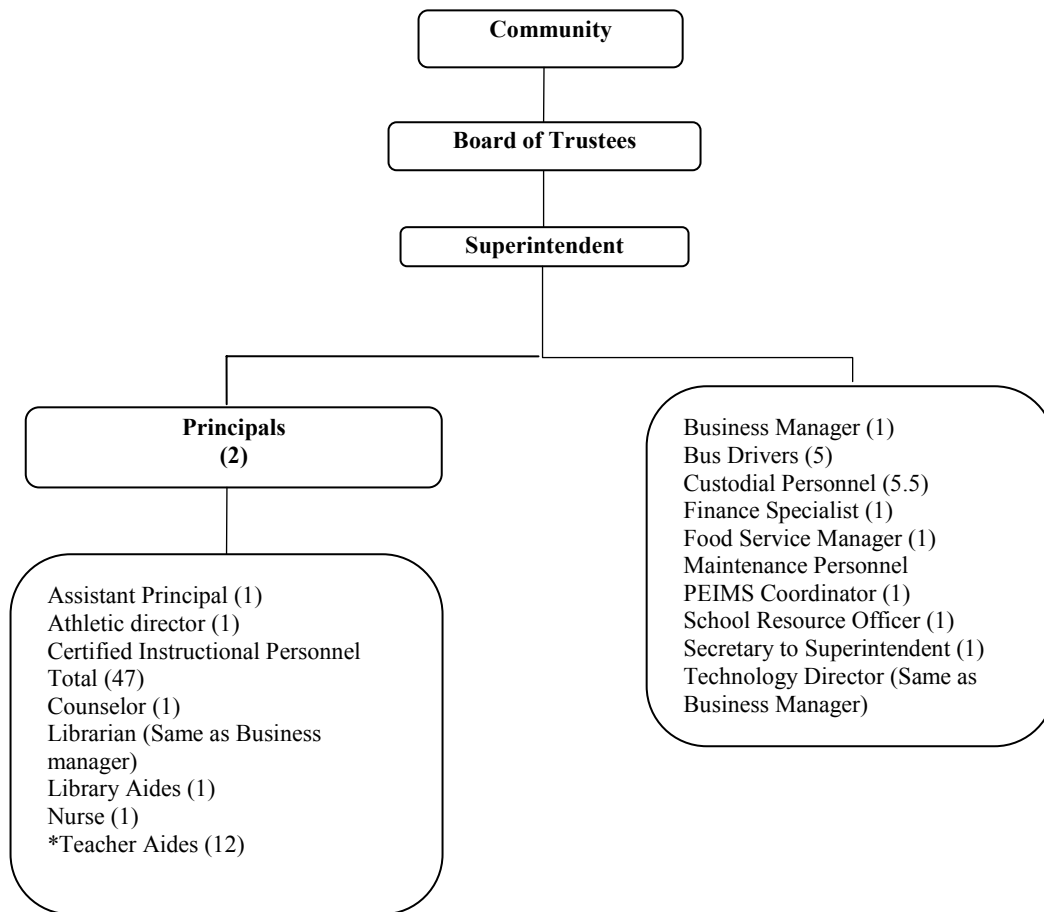
*Two teacher aides also serve as bus drivers.
SOURCE: CISD, Superintendent, January 2010.

effect and implemented in order to have an effective organization.

In CISD, job descriptions for these positions and most others in the district have not been fully developed. The district uses a Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) model that, while a good start, are not tailored to specific positions in the district. In addition, at the time of the school review team's onsite work, January 2010, the superintendent had not evaluated any of the administrators or managers who had been in their positions for a year or longer. Job descriptions and evaluations will be covered in full in the Human Resources chapter in this report.

The superintendent should develop a formal organizational structure that clearly describes the key administrative positions in the district and their reporting relationships and align only those individuals whose job depends on direct communication with the superintendent to directly report to him. The number of direct reports to the superintendent, however, should be limited, freeing him from some of the day-to-day operating decisions and allowing him to spend more time on planning and external activities. Job titles such as manager or director should be clarified and assigned based on the level of responsibility in the district. Job descriptions tailored to specific positions in CISD should be developed and the superintendent should evaluate these employees based on those job descriptions. By reorganizing the district along functional lines, CISD will ensure a seamless delivery of services to all stakeholders and provide an improved service-delivery model.

A proposed organization structure is shown in **Exhibit 4–5**. This structure limits the direct reports to the superintendent to six key administrative leader positions which is a reasonable span of control for a senior position. Five of the positions would be responsible for major functions or departments in the district such as the high school or the maintenance function. One position, the chief of police, while not responsible for a major department or function is a districtwide position with unique responsibilities. The secretary to the superintendent, while an important position, is not counted as an administrative leader position. In addition, the proposed chart identifies a new position; certified librarian, reporting to the curriculum director and working closely with principals and teachers to support curriculum. This new position is further explained in the Education Service Delivery chapter of this report.

In addition, the district should develop specific job descriptions for each administrative position in the district. Principals, the business manager and positions with director titles should have separate budgets and the authority to expend funds within policies established by the district superintendent and approved by the board. Positions with manager or supervisor titles should supervise and evaluate staff, but would not have the independent authority of a director or principal.

The organization chart should be approved by the board and distributed to all staff in the district. Staff members who approach the superintendent directly for decisions should be referred to their direct report for resolution. It is important the superintendent consistently refer employees to their direct reports to reinforce the reporting relationships established in the approved organization structure.

Exhibit 4–6 indicates the positions currently in the administrative structure, their job description, who they directly report to, and the change created by the review team's proposed organizational structure.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

EXHIBIT 4–5
PROPOSED CISD ORGANIZATION
2010
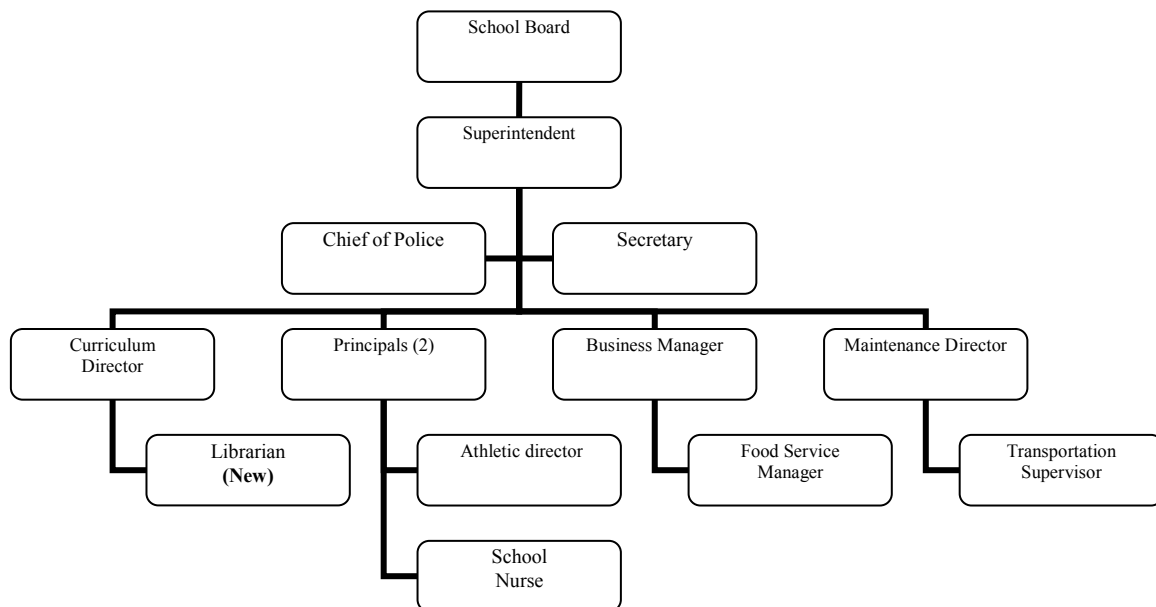
Source: School Review Team, March 2010.

EXHIBIT 4–6
PROPOSED CISD ORGANIZATION
2010–11

POSITION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGE IN TITLE , DUTIES OR DIRECT REPORT
Principals	Instructional Leaders of the Elementary and Secondary Schools.	Continue to report directly to the Superintendent and work closely with the curriculum director.
Business manager/ technology director/librarian	Responsible for district financial activities, payroll related activities, and district technology planning and implementation. Currently she also provides assistance in some Human Resource (HR) functions such as collecting employment data (I9), social security numbers, and provides salary statements to staff. This position is also designated as the district's librarian.	No title changes. Will continue in her current duties as the business manager and director of technology with continued HR duties, but will not need to function as the district's librarian. It is recommended in the Educational Service Delivery chapter of this report, that the district creates a librarian position and fills that position starting in 2010–11. The food service manager will be a direct report to the business manager providing her with financial profit and loss statements and guidance in understanding the information.
Curriculum director	Provides the district leadership in the area of curriculum instruction and acts as the district's test administrator. Works closely with principals and teachers.	No change in title. Reports directly to the superintendent and works closely with the principals. Expected to develop educator training in the future.
Chief of Police	The chief of police is a full-service officer who has been tasked by the board with providing monthly programs on law related issues that affect student conduct such as drug and alcohol abuse. He also assists the elementary and Jr–Sr high school principals with truancy.	Title clarity—chief of police. Continues to report directly to the superintendent. The Safety and Security chapter of this report recommends additional training in the area of school-based law enforcement. With board approval may research related materials that will assist him in drafting juvenile specific law enforcement policies for CISD.
Maintenance and Transportation director	Manage the maintenance and transportation departments and their staff.	No title or duty changes; reports directly to the superintendent. Continue to have the transportation supervisor report directly to him.
Athletic director	Oversee the athletic program for the district and manage appropriate staff (coaches) in direct reporting order to this position.	No title or duty changes, however, now reports directly to the Jr–Sr high school principal.
Food Service Manager	Serves as manager of the district's food service department. Supervises and evaluates food service employees. Responsible for the management and operation of the department.	Title clarity—food service manager. No duty changes. Direct report to the business manager to facilitate the transfer of financial information (profit and loss statements, budget) to ensure the department is operating within the budget. Food service staff will continue to be in direct report to this position.
Certified librarian	New Position: Certified librarian will support instruction especially in areas identified for improvement for example, reading and writing or any other instructional areas identified by the instructional leadership team. Collaborate with principals and teachers regularly to provide resources and activities for course, unit, and lesson integration.	No title change. New position. Direct report to the curriculum director. Also works closely with principals and teachers in support of curriculum.
Nurse	Serves as nurse for both of CISD's elementary and secondary schools.	No title or duty changes. Direct report to the principals.

EXHIBIT 4–6 (CONTINUED)
PROPOSED CISD ORGANIZATION
2009–10

POSITION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGE IN TITLE , DUTIES OR DIRECT REPORT
Superintendent Secretary	Manages and reports leave requests and locates substitutes. Contract preparation - Prepares tracks signature process, then files. Checks criminal history for new hires. Maintains job applications.	No title changes; reports directly to the superintendent. May provide some additional Human Resource duties.

SOURCE: School Review Team, 2010.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (REC. 25)

CISD does not have a leadership plan for employees in key administrative positions new to their positions that may lack experience or training to effectively manage major functions in the district. Some employees in key administrative positions are relatively new to their position and to the district.

Exhibit 4–7 describes key administrative positions in the district, their time in that position and their previous experience. Several positions including the superintendent, the curriculum director, the business manager and the maintenance director have been in their CISD positions for a relatively short period of time. In each of these cases this is the first time that they have held these positions. For two positions, the chief of police and the maintenance director, this is the first time that the incumbents have worked in school districts. Another position, the food service manager,

EXHIBIT 4–7
CISD KEY ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

TITLE	DATE APPOINTED	PREVIOUS OCCUPATION/POSITION
Superintendent	4 months	High School Principal
Curriculum director	5 months	Elementary Teacher
Elementary Principal	4 years	Teacher
Jr–Sr High School Principal	18 months	Superintendent/Principal
Business Manager	2 months	IT Manager/Librarian
Maintenance Director	14 months	Dallas Fort Worth Airport Facilities/Quality Control Inspector
Chief of Police	1 year	County Constable
Food Service Manager	3 years	Medical Field

SOURCE: CISD Superintendent's Office, January 2010.

has been in the position for three years but has not received training to fully manage that function.

In interviews with the review team, many of the incumbents in these positions indicated that they were unsure of the requirements of their new roles, including a lack of understanding of various state and federal requirements. Several were actively attending workshops and other training to gain an understanding. The superintendent indicated that he had selected these individuals based on their abilities, willingness to work hard and learn and their loyalty and ties to the Cushing community. He recognized that it will be necessary for them to develop in their positions to be truly effective.

For them to be successful in their new positions it is necessary for them to quickly learn the specific requirements of their new positions. They have to learn on the job so to speak and will need additional support while they are learning. If they don't receive the necessary support, the district could be at risk, by failing to comply with state regulations such as life and safety requirements. Without additional support, the length of time needed to become skilled in a position will be further extended which may adversely affect district operations and/or the instructional program.

The superintendent should work with each identified individual to develop a leadership growth plan that includes the following:

• Activities needed to learn the specifics of a given position such as workshops and training conducted by Texas professional education organizations.

• Activities that provide management development or training.

• Identification and selection of a mentor who is experienced and willing to work with the individual for a year or so to help them learn the practical aspects of their job as well as serve as a sounding board. Some Texas school organizations such as the Texas

Association of School Business Officials have formal mentoring programs.

- Activities that the CISD administrative team will do together to grow both individually and as a leadership team could include weekly or biweekly team meetings and formal participation in planning processes such as budget development.

The cost to implement this program is based on attendance at one annual statewide conference per year for six positions for two years. The cost to attend conferences will vary based on the presenting organization. For the purpose of this recommendation, the cost of a conference registration was estimated to be $500 per person plus travel expenses of $121 using state rates, for each day of the conference ($85 per night plus $36 per meals). Five-hundred dollars for conference registration times six staff members equals $3,000. One-hundred twenty-one dollars times six staff members three days equals $2,178, for a total of $5,178 annually for two consecutive years. Other specialized training for certain positions is already identified in various chapters of this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING (REC. 26)

CISD does not have a comprehensive multiyear strategic plan to guide not only the instruction but the operations of the district. Currently the district uses a variety of planning processes to guide activities in the district including the District Improvement Plan (DIP), Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) and Technology Plan. In September's regular board meeting (September 21, 2009), the district established 2010 district board and superintendent goals.

The DIP is used to an extent as a substitute for a comprehensive strategic plan. However this plan is based on instruction and focuses on student achievement. The DIP does not address transportation, maintenance, food service or other aspects of district operations. The district goals recently approved by the board also focus primarily on student achievement as well as specific initiatives such as the bond program. The strategies and initiatives listed in the DIP and CIPs are discussed at length in the Educational Service Delivery chapter. It is important to note that while these strategies have identified resources, most do not identify a specific amount and are not linked to the budget.

With the exception of the DIP, CIP and the district's Technology Plan efforts, departments in the district have not developed their own planning documents. Individuals in

these departments may have participated in the development of the DIP, but have not developed individual strategies or objectives to support the ones outlined in the DIP.

The very successful district bond program included several elements that have not been addressed by the district in a comprehensive or strategic manner. Currently the district has one library and one cafeteria that serve all the students in the district. A school cafeteria and library have been included in the plans for the new elementary school. At the time of the review team's onsite work, the decision to have two separate cafeterias had not been made. Equipment for the school cafeteria was pulled from the final funding approved by the board. If the district decides not to operate a separate cafeteria function they will have spent bond proceeds inappropriately. If they decide to fund a new cafeteria the district has not determined the cost of staff and equipment in their financial decision making.

Strategic planning is a key building block in effective governance and management of a school district. These plans are a primary tool for the board, the superintendent, staff and the community to develop a common understanding of the needs and aspirations of the district and its students. The plans should set academic, operations and financial goals for all district operations. These goals help assure that all initiatives receive adequate resources and that performance is monitored.

Many school districts use the strategic plan as a way of evaluating the overall performance of the superintendent in meeting the goals set forth in their strategic plan. The performance measure helps them in their assessment of the superintendent's ability to accomplish improvements in all areas of the district, not just in the academic realm.

Effective strategic plans become a working document that guides the activities of district management and help ensure continued support by the board.

The district should develop a strategic plan that links the district's goals to the budget. The key administrative positions in the district should work together to create goals and objectives for all district operations, identify all resources needed, determining start and stop dates and assigning staff responsibility to accomplishing the goals in the established timelines.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION (REC. 27)

While CISD enjoys great support from parents and community members, it does not have a formal methodology or established leadership that engages more parents' and community members' efforts on expanding joint student learning opportunities.

Cushing ISD currently uses volunteers to serve in various capacities within the schools. In a focus group held by the review team, parents and community members spoke consistently of their support of district programs, the superintendent, and their willingness in helping the district in anyway they could. One parent mentioned that they were not typically at their child's school on a regular basis but were more than happy to contribute their time or resources if called by someone from the district.

In further analyzing the district's efforts toward directing volunteers to a more learning-centered emphasis, the review team noted that the district did not have anyone in the administration leading or coordinating those efforts alongside a parent leader.

Statements from various sources in the district indicate the Cushing Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) could also become more active. Currently PTO meetings are typically scheduled on the same night as board meetings which may prevent campus leaders from attending the meetings. Viable PTO programs are a great asset to the education process, serve as another community access point to the schools, allow parents a comfortable entrée to their children's school, and a conduit for dissemination of accurate and pertinent information.

The district's *Texas Bluebonnet Books* reading program at Cushing Elementary is exceptional, but is not being used to its fullest potential. Parents are showing a great interest in helping their children become better readers. Many districts often use a successful program to generate a continued dialogue with parents who are excited about the learning their children are experiencing in an effort to keep that interest going. *Schools as Learning Communities*, May 2004, Volume 61, Number 8, cites several examples of successful ways to keep parents involved in their children's learning:

a. Many schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools conduct reading partner programs on a weekly or twice a month basis utilizing a variety of volunteers, including parents, senior citizens and community groups.

b. Other schools have parents, teachers, and retired teachers volunteer to listen to children retell the stories they had read and discuss plots, settings and characters.

c. One school ran a 26 day reading marathon to focus the entire community on reading. This event involved parents, grandparents, and others in the community in reading activities.

d. At one school, teachers attended a Parents as Authors workshop and then worked with students' parents on Thursday mornings for three months. Many new immigrant parents created books and videos about their lives and experiences or wrote poems about their children and then presented their work to the children.

e. Finally, one school focused on students planning for college and careers, and the education and requirements they must fulfill to meet their goals. Eleventh graders at a high school researched a career of interest, interviewed a professional in their selected field, and created a personal career path and portfolio about the career. Parents were involved in this assignment by participating in the portfolio displays, presentations, and evaluations, thus creating a shared learning experience.

Cushing ISD and the Cushing community also appear to be poised to explore establishing an educational foundation. There is momentum among community members to continue to meet the needs of the school district and there is knowledge and early thought within the Board of Trustee membership regarding establishing an education foundation.

In recent years the supporters in many Texas school districts have established an education foundation with the intent of providing an additional revenue stream for the district. The foundations are legal entities established as 501(c) (3) organizations with a clearly stated vision, mission and purpose. A volunteer Board of Directors who typically is composed of business leaders and members of the community at large manages such foundations. Funds contributed to the foundation come from tax deductible donations by alumni, citizens, the business community, other foundations, grants, and unique fund raisers. Most of these foundations are set up both with the intent of supplementing the limited state and local taxpayer dollars available to the school district and with a vision for excellence. They typically have a specifically stated

purpose for the use of its funds. Examples found from a review of established Texas education foundations show such uses as meeting extraordinary educational needs, education initiatives, teacher continuing education and exceptional teaching grants.

CISD should develop a methodology to expand community and parent volunteer efforts that are geared toward more student learning opportunities in the following ways:

1. The current parent involvement goals be expanded to not only include parent volunteers but also the community and CISD staff;

2. CISD staff should set the model in place and co-lead the effort; and

3. The joint objective should be broadened to emphasize student learning opportunities.

Establishing such a program should be carefully studied and planned to ensure it is right for Cushing and that it is properly focused and directed.

If a foundation is established; the district and the foundation's board should identify the purpose of the foundation and strongly consider efforts to assist students in their college preparation and readiness efforts. Examples of potential uses for such support would include:

a. Paying costs for students taking Advanced Placement (AP) Tests.

b. Paying costs for all 10th and 11th grade students to take the PSAT exam.

c. Paying costs for any student who desires to take the SAT or ACT tests.

d. Based upon availability of foundation funds, provide college scholarship opportunities for Cushing ISD graduates.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

	RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
24.	Develop a formal organization structure that clearly describes the key administrative positions in the district and their reporting relationships.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
25.	Develop leadership growth plans for key administrative staff in new positions.	($5,178)	($5,178)	$0	$0	$0	($10,356)	$0
26.	Develop a strategic plan that links the district's goals to the budget.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
27.	Expand and coordinate community and parent volunteer efforts in providing more student learning opportunities.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS		**($5,178)**	**($5,178)**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($10,356)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 5

FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 5. FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

Cushing Independent School District (CISD) is located approximately 21 miles northwest of Nacogdoches in Nacogdoches and Rusk Counties and encompasses 174.98 square miles. The district is rural with the town of Cushing and several smaller communities as population centers.

All of the district's facilities are located on one site and include a Jr–Sr high school, an elementary school, a transportation barn, and several smaller buildings. District buildings are described in **Exhibit 5–1**. The total number of square feet for all instructional and support facilities is 142,036.

EXHIBIT 5–1
CISD FACILITIES
2009–10

FACILITIES	SQUARE FEET
Cushing Jr–Sr High School (junior high school, high school, and administrative offices)	71,965
Cushing Elementary School (Pre-K–5)	55,321
Field House	1,000
Weight Room	1,000
Special Education Portable	1,750
Elementary Gym	3,000
Transportation Barn	8,000
Total Square Feet	**142,036**

SOURCE: CISD Maintenance/Transportation Department, January 2010.

The district's transportation fleet is comprised of 10 buses, with 6 buses used on regular transportation routes each school day. The district participates in a shared services agreement for special education services, including special program transportation.

The superintendent oversees the planning, design, and construction of facilities and is responsible for the new construction program, which was the result of a successful school bond election for $10.7 million in May 2009. The construction program will build a new elementary school and provide major improvements to existing athletic fields.

The maintenance director manages the maintenance, custodial and transportation functions of the district. This position reports to the superintendent. Maintenance staffing includes a maintenance assistant, a part-time student worker, and 5.5 custodians. Transportation staffing includes a transportation supervisor, five bus drivers and one substitute driver. The transportation supervisor is also a route driver and performs routine maintenance on the fleet. Three of the five bus drivers have additional duties in the district. All bus drivers received the training required under Texas Transportation Code, Section 521.022 and participated in school bus evacuation safety drills authorized under Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 34.

CISD has one bell schedule and each route transports students in prekindergarten through grade 12. On average, CISD transported 241 regular program students each day, or 50.3 percent of students enrolled in 2008–09. The fleet ran a total of 72,388 miles in 2008–09, including extracurricular, route, and other miles. The rural nature of the district and the lack of paved roads on many routes are barriers to reducing drive time.

Exhibit 5–2 presents the route number, community served, miles, and drive time for the regular transportation program.

EXHIBIT 5–2
CISD ROUTE INFORMATION
2009–10

ROUTE NUMBER	AREA SERVED	TOTAL DAILY MILES	DAILY DRIVE TIME (HOURS)
1	Cushing Gold Mine Hollow	53	3.0
2	Cushing Flower Mountain	52	3.0
3	Trawick	62	3.5
4	Sacul	50	3.0
5	Lilbert Big Rock	52	3.5
6	Nat	57	3.5

SOURCE: CISD Transportation Department, January 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- CISD implemented a program that reduces deadhead miles.

- CISD installed camera systems on 2001 and later model buses.

- CISD refurbished three of its spare buses at the Texas Correctional Industries.

FINDINGS

- CISD's new bond construction program lacks essential elements needed for effective management and is not compliant with state regulations.

- CISD custodial staff does not participate in formal training programs and may not have the necessary knowledge to effectively clean the schools.

- CISD has not analyzed the maintenance department's major functional areas, including maintenance, grounds contracting, contracting repairs, and controlled outsourcing, in order to address campus needs and obtain the best value for the district.

- CISD did not accurately report two-or-more mile and hazardous route miles to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2007–08 and 2008–09.

- CISD does not have documentation of hazardous route designations.

- CISD does not have a bus replacement schedule.

RECOMMENDATION

- **Recommendation 28: Review the processes in the new bond construction program to verify that needed monitoring and management elements are in place.**

- **Recommendation 29: Develop a formal custodial training program.**

- **Recommendation 30: Evaluate all aspects of core maintenance duties to assure that budgeted funds are expended in the most appropriate manner and that campus needs are addressed.**

- **Recommendation 31: Ensure route services reports reflect hazardous miles to accurately report route miles.**

- **Recommendation 32: Adopt hazardous route designations to maintain funding for hazardous routes.**

- **Recommendation 33: Implement a bus replacement schedule based on a 15-year cycle for the transportation fleet.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

REDUCED DEADHEAD MILES

CISD implemented a program that reduces deadhead miles. The district allows bus drivers who live near the last stop of the route they drive to keep the bus at home overnight to reduce the number of deadhead miles. Deadhead miles are miles driven before the first student is picked up on the morning route and after the last student is dropped off on the afternoon route. The district does not receive state funding from the Transportation Allotment for deadhead miles. The driver of Route 6 lives one-quarter of a mile from the last stop of the route and 12 miles from the school. This practice saves the district $13,824 a year in transportation costs (24 miles per day times $3.20 per mile times 180 days of school).

CAMERAS

CISD has installed camera systems with passive global positioning systems (GPS) on all model 2001 and newer buses to help deter discipline incidents on the buses and provide information on the location of the bus when an incident occurs. The camera system includes two interior cameras and one exterior camera. The interior cameras are located in the front and middle of the bus to provide coverage of all areas of the bus. These cameras provide a record of incidents on the bus for disciplinary actions.

The exterior camera is located on the driver's side, below the driver's window and faces the rear of the bus. This positioning allows the camera to capture pictures of vehicles passing the bus and can be used to identify vehicles that illegally pass the bus while loading or unloading. The system uses a digital video recorder that allows the driver to capture incidents by pushing a button that saves the video for five minutes before and after the button is pushed. The GPS provides the location of the bus at all times it is running and displays the location of the bus when the video is viewed. The camera system provides the district with documentation of incidents and the location of the bus when the incident occurred.

REFURBISHED BUSES

CISD refurbished the 1991, 1992 and 1993 model buses at the Texas Correctional Industries, a department within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice that manufactures goods and provides services to state and local government agencies, public educational systems, and other tax-supported entities. The refurbishments included body repair, painting, electrical repair, flooring replacement and upholstery. The

district refurbished the buses to extend the useful life and improve the appearance of the buses in 2008. Refurbishment is also less costly than the purchase of a comparable used bus.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT (REC. 28)

The new bond construction program lacks essential elements needed for effective management and is not compliant with state regulations.

The district began a construction program in the fall of 2009 with the building of a new elementary school and improvements to the athletic fields. The board approved the use of a construction manager at-risk for these projects. A review of the construction files and interviews with the staff indicated that the district does not have all of the necessary documents, approvals, or processes in place to help assure a successful construction program. These include the following:

- Construction files for the design of schematic drawings and construction-ready drawings for existing buildings are missing. There are no records of who last had the drawings. This is a critical issue for long term record retention requirements dictated by the Texas State Records Retention Schedule in the area of facility management.

- Regular construction progress or solution meetings for the new construction program have not been established. Meeting minutes of any meetings that have taken place have not been recorded. This issue may leave the district out of any of the solutions and directions for resolution and might not be a best value for the district while under a construction contract.

- Educational specifications were not developed or provided to the architectural or engineering teams to help ensure that all instructional program needs are addressed in the new facility. These specifications should include a description of the proposed project and describe the range of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the planning and design of a new school. Teachers and other school staff should be included in the development. The specifications should be approved by the board as required by Texas Education Commissioner's Rules Concerning School Facilities, Chapter 61.

- Architectural barriers in several recent projects with costs exceeding $50,000, including high school roof repairs and improvements to the coaches viewing box, were not addressed as required under Texas Government Code, Section 469.101. Districts are required to submit a full set of construction documents for projects with costs of $50,000 or more to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to ensure compliance with the Texas Accessibility Standards.

The successful completion of the current construction programs in CISD is one of the most important goals of the district and a critical element in the performance of the superintendent. This success is made much more difficult when key processes and elements are not in place. Board approval and oversight is an essential part of the process, as is regular monitoring by district staff. If milestones are set and communicated at the start of a project, the possibility of cost overruns and the need for contract amendments and extensions can be reduced or eliminated.

The district should review the processes in the new bond construction program to verify that needed monitoring and management elements are in place. The district should research architectural and engineering firms engaged in past and present projects and rebuild the information of record on all facilities. The district should develop standardized educational specifications that direct the construction of facilities with the correct materials, the correct size and shape, and with the desired effect on local budget and long term life of the facility.

The district should also develop a formal schedule for meetings at the proper intervals in order to oversee the construction manager and the architecture/engineering firm. The maintenance director should be included in all future construction meetings and communications.

The district should conduct a full review of accessibility and egress as part of the bond construction program to provide clear resolution to the problems seen in all areas of facilities.

This recommendation can be implemented during the bond construction program using existing resources.

CUSTODIAL TRAINING (REC. 29)

CISD custodial staff does not participate in formal training programs and may not have the necessary knowledge to effectively clean the schools. There are no departmental or organizational improvement meetings. All training is

provided by the vendor and limited to product demonstrations. Vendor training is good for the specific products, but the custodial staff and the maintenance staff need to learn what other materials, supplies, and equipment are available to make them more efficient and productive. This is especially important with the opening of the new campus.

An example of this lack of training is apparent in the handling of staph infections that occurred in the Jr–Sr high school during the past year. District staff was not able to determine the origin of these infections but suspected the source to be in the restrooms and locker rooms. To address the problem the custodial staff used aerosol disinfectants while school was in session and the facilities were occupied. However, this practice is usually limited to times when the facilities are unoccupied, as this method of disinfecting can compromise the mucus membranes of most humans. This is not considered to be a cleaning approach, but merely a stop gap measure. Only deep cleaning and removal of all contaminated items, such as uniforms and practice equipment, and having those items cleaned by a proper cleaning effort will improve the areas of infection. District staff did not follow the appropriate steps in this situation.

Proper training is also essential to effective custodial operations to ensure that effective but safe practices are followed. All administrators should be concerned when a staph infection is reported and the campus nurse should have guided the actions to address the infection. The custodial staff should have had a clear understanding of how to treat the suspected areas and which products to use given the size of the area. The timing of the treatment should have been scheduled to provide sufficient time, usually 12 to 24 hours, before the space is used by teachers or students.

CISD should develop a formal custodial training program. The maintenance director should interview employees to ascertain their current knowledge level and develop a training program that addresses identified gaps and to identify efficiencies and areas of concern. The district should work with the campus nurse, campus librarian, and other district staff to acquire training materials and safety materials that support the goals of the district. Training should not be limited to cleaning methods; training should also include best practices for maintaining facilities and custodial care of the buildings.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT (REC. 30)

CISD has not analyzed the maintenance department's major functional areas, including maintenance, grounds contracting, contracting repairs, and controlled outsourcing, in order to address campus needs and obtain the best value for the district. In addition, the district lacks long-range planning for facility maintenance equipment or instructions for standardization of the equipment.

In 2008–09, the district budgeted $112,000, or $1.26 per square foot, for maintenance to address campus safety issues and the overall appearance of grounds and school buildings. However, these funds were not expended and the funding was not carried forward to the 2009–10 budget. Equipment in all areas of the schools showed a severe lack of routine maintenance and scheduled maintenance.

The Maintenance Department has no process in place to address routine and emergency work orders effectively or to schedule and perform preventive maintenance tasks in a timely manner. Work order forms are downloaded from the district's website, completed manually, approved by a principal, and then submitted to the maintenance director for action. The district had an automated system in place prior to the arrival of the new director, but decided it was not useful and discontinued its use. While the Maintenance Department is able to address most work orders in a timely manner, work order requests are addressed at the expense of other maintenance work such as preventive maintenance tasks.

Overall, the review team noted several issues regarding a lack of routine and scheduled maintenance to equipment and general school repairs that could impact the safety of students and staff. In the area of equipment the school review team noted the following:

- dirty coils on HVAC systems;

- dirty equipment;

- nonfunctioning environmental systems;

- return air grills out of place;

- non-functioning exit lights;

- broken emergency lighting and/or missing critical parts;

- an inoperable dishwasher that had not been inspected in the Food Service area; and

- campus painting and carpets well beyond life and use standards.

Moreover, the district lacks updated Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and the necessary documentation required for the annual review. MSDS are fact sheets designed to provide district staff such as maintenance workers, custodial staff, and science teachers with the proper procedures for handling a particular substance.

A number of life and safety issues were also noted by the school review team. Fire alarms lacked sufficient maintenance to assure proper operation, and coverage. Fire alarms were recently replaced in the Jr–Sr high school, but the contractor failed to remove the old system. This would conflict since there are two systems and it would be confusing as to which one was old and which one was supposed to work. Additionally, there were non-compliant smoke detectors in the elementary school classrooms. Residential level smoke detectors were being used in the elementary classrooms, which are prohibited by code and lack the proper annunciation for educational facilities. Finally, the district lacks proper chemical storage cabinetry and equipment, as chemicals were stored in the mechanical areas and cross contamination areas.

The district lacks documented analysis relating to decisions about how and when to make repairs or outsource areas of responsibility. For example, district financial reports show a cost of $1,995 per month last year for mowing the landscaped areas of the two campuses, while all athletic fields are maintained by in-house staff. For the reported amount of 37 acres, the cost breakdown per acre is $54, where it is typical to perform this activity in-house for $40 to $45 per acre. Furthermore, air filter replacement is also outsourced and there is no documented cost study to determine whether to move this task into the district's Maintenance Department. This is a core function that is most often performed in-house.

There is no long range planning for facility equipment maintenance or instructions for standardization. Equipment efficiency appears to be a low priority which further burdens the mechanical repair team or contractors.

CISD should evaluate all aspects of core maintenance duties to assure that budgeted funds are expended in the most appropriate manner and that campus needs are addressed. A comparison of value to cost is a proper and commonly exercised tool for maintaining facilities. The district should adopt a standardization plan that allows flexibility for new

and improved equipment and long term preventative maintenance issues. The maintenance director should learn the financial system and monitor funds to benefit the overall condition of the schools and fully utilize the budget provided. The district should also engage the local fire jurisdiction to make life-safety recommendations.

The district should develop a plan to replace all flooring, ceiling tiles and finishes in the high school to improve the overall hygiene and internal air quality of the classrooms and common areas. Specific areas noted were the Elementary "mini gym" and the cafeteria and kitchen flooring and ceilings. All the mechanical areas should be cleared of cleaning materials and equipment and areas where these materials and equipment are stored should be vented with the proper number of air exchanges for occupancy.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

HAZARDOUS ROUTE MILES (REC. 31)

CISD did not accurately report two-or-more mile and hazardous route miles to TEA in 2007–08 and 2008–09.

Two-or-more mile students are those students that legally reside two or more miles from his or her assigned campus of regular attendance as measured along the shortest route that may be traveled on public roads. Hazardous route miles are miles driven to transport students that live within the two-mile walk zone but encounter hazardous conditions that make it unsafe for the students to walk to school. The turn-by-turn route descriptions CISD maintains for each route contain the information to report the two-or-more mile service and the hazardous route service miles. **Exhibit 5–3** presents mileage and ridership reported to TEA from 2006–07 through 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 5–3
CISD MILEAGE REPORTS
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09

| YEAR | TWO-OR-MORE MILE SERVICE | | COMBINED TWO-OR-MORE MILE AND HAZARDOUS AREA SERVICE | |
	MILEAGE	AVERAGE DAILY RIDERSHIP	MILEAGE	AVERAGE DAILY RIDERSHIP
2006–07	54,410	258	55,472	272
2007–08	58,658	220	58,658	275
2008–09	53,164	180	53,164	241

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Route Services Report, 2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09.

The TEA School Transportation Allotment Handbook (Handbook) is an authoritative guide that determines those route services that are eligible for transportation allotments. The Handbook requires that districts file the School Transportation Route Services Report (STRSR) to report eligible mileage and ridership data for the school year. The instructions for completing the STRSR require that mileage be reported in the following categories:

(1) "Only Two-or-More-Mile Service—the eligible mileage for providing service to only the two-or-more-mile eligible students on the route. (For a route that provided service to two-or-more-mile and hazardous-area students, this is the daily mileage that would have been incurred if only the two-or-more-mile students had been transported.)

(2) Combined Two-or-More-Mile and Hazardous-Area Service—the eligible mileage for providing service to both two-or-more-mile and hazardous-area service students."

The district picks up students within the two-mile walk zone and does not document the miles as hazardous route miles, but as two-or-more miles. Hazardous route miles should be shown separately to ensure they do not exceed the 10 percent limit. Hazardous-area service miles are limited to 10 percent of the two-or-more mile service miles. The district last reported hazardous miles separately in 2006–07.

By not accurately reporting the two-or-more mile service and the hazardous-area miles, CISD is not in compliance with the Handbook. By not following the reporting requirements, CISD does not provide TEA with documentation that the hazardous-area service miles are within the established limit and are eligible for funding.

CISD should ensure route services reports reflect hazardous miles to accurately report route miles. The transportation supervisor should ensure that the STRSR accurately reflects the two-or-more mile service and hazardous-area service miles to document eligibility for state funding and ensure compliance with TEA rules.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

HAZARDOUS ROUTE DESIGNATION (REC. 32)

CISD does not have documentation of hazardous route designations. Board policy does not describe the local policy regarding hazardous routes. The administration believes the

designation of hazardous routes was done between 1993 and 1997, but was unable to provide the review team with any documentation.

TEC, Section 42.155 (d) states, "A district or county may apply for and on approval of the commissioner receive an additional amount of up to 10 percent of its regular transportation allotment to be used for the transportation of children living within two miles of the school they attend who would be subject to hazardous traffic conditions if they walked to school. Each board of trustees shall provide to the commissioner the definition of hazardous conditions applicable to that district and shall identify the specific hazardous areas for which the allocation is requested."

The Handbook states, "A copy of the policy and any subsequent changes to the policy must be submitted to the State Funding Division School Transportation Unit. The board policy may be in any written format but must be an official board action."

Without a board approved hazardous route designation, CISD is not eligible for hazardous route funding and is not in compliance with TEC.

CISD should adopt hazardous route designations to maintain funding for hazardous routes. The transportation supervisor should develop a written statement that documents hazardous routes and the board should formally adopt the hazardous route designations for submission to TEA. This will ensure the district is complying with the law and maintain funding for hazardous miles.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUS REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE (REC. 33)

CISD does not have a bus replacement schedule. The district last purchased three buses in October 2006 and has since disposed of two buses.

The CISD bus fleet ranges in age from one 1991 model bus to three 2006 model buses. The 2003 and 2006 model buses are equipped with air conditioning systems. **Exhibit 5–4** presents the bus number, year model, equipment, ending mileage, and total miles for 2008–09.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) released a report on school bus replacement in January 2002 that states, "Establishing school bus replacement policies is an important

EXHIBIT 5–4
CISD TRANSPORTATION FLEET
2008–09

BUS NUMBER	YEAR MODEL	CAMERA SYSTEM	AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM	ENDING MILEAGE	2008–09 TOTAL MILES
91–16	1991	No	No	134,583	1,377
92–18	1992	No	No	43,684	249
93–17	1993	No	No	129,096	1,138
00–16	2000	No	No	67,337	4,520
01–22	2001	Yes	No	69,083	6,366
03–24	2003	Yes	Yes	66,409	9,151
03–25	2003	Yes	Yes	66,215	9,183
06–26	2006	Yes	Yes	41,036	13,527
06–27	2006	Yes	Yes	36,695	12,396
06–28	2006	Yes	Yes	38,877	14,481

SOURCE: CISD Transportation Department, January 2010.

activity, since it directly impacts the timeliness of introducing the latest safety, efficiency and emissions improvements into the fleet." The report concludes that the anticipated lifespan under normal operating conditions for a large school bus is 12 to 15 years. The study also concluded that the lifespan of a bus is based on the number of miles driven and states, "Higher annual mileage accumulation may be used as a criterion to shorten lifetimes of individual buses, lower than average annual mileage accumulation is not necessarily a criterion to use buses for an extended number of years."

Districts that establish bus replacement plans based on an analysis of their fleet's age, mileage and condition gain maximum use of their buses. Bus purchases represent a significant expenditure of a district's resources and a replacement schedule allows the district to budget for the replacement of buses over a period of time. Without a replacement schedule, the district could face a financial hardship when the buses reach the end of their life and have to be replaced.

CISD should implement a bus replacement schedule based on a 15-year cycle for the transportation fleet. In order to reduce the impact to the budget in any one year, the replacement schedule should spread out the replacement of the 2003 and 2006 year model buses. Buses of the size and similar equipment of the 2006 year models cost about $83,500 each. The cost of replacing the buses will be lessened by selling the buses disposed of each year. **Exhibit 5–5** presents a recommended replacement schedule for buses and assumes the district operates six regular routes and keeps two spare buses.

EXHIBIT 5–5
CISD RECOMMENDED BUS REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE
2010–11 THROUGH 2024–25

YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31	BUS PURCHASES	BUS DISPOSAL
2011	1	91–16, 92–18 and 93–17
2012	0	
2013	1	00–16
2014	0	
2015	1	01–22
2016	0	
2017	1	03–24
2018	1	03–25
2019	0	
2020	1	06–26
2021	1	06–27
2022	1	06–28
2023	0	
2024	0	
2025	0	

SOURCE: School Review Team, February 2010.

Through this action, the district can avoid risking unexpected budget expenditures in the event a number of buses need replacing at one time. Developing a bus replacement schedule can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
28. Review the processes in the new bond construction program to verify that needed monitoring and management elements are in place.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
29. Develop a formal custodial training program.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
30. Evaluate all aspects of core maintenance duties to assure that budgeted funds are expended in the most appropriate manner and that campus needs are addressed.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
31. Ensure route services reports reflect hazardous miles to accurately report route miles.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
32. Adopt hazardous route designations to maintain funding for hazardous routes.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
33. Implement a bus replacement schedule based on a 15-year cycle for the transportation fleet.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

CHAPTER 6

TECHNOLOGY

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 6. TECHNOLOGY

Once affordable only by large organizations, information technology is now available to almost every person. It affects almost every aspect of daily life. Technology in education is now standard, and necessary to prepare students for the workforce of the future.

Cushing Independent School District (CISD) connects its classrooms and offices through a local area network (LAN). The LAN serves the district's education and administrative operations, and connects to the internet through two T1 lines. A T1 line is an industry term for Trunk Line One—a high speed digital transmission line which can carry voice, audio and other data traffic.

The elementary school has 51 student work stations, 19 student/teacher shared workstations, and 15 laptop computers. The elementary school also has both black and white and color printers, a scanner, digital multimedia projectors, mobile laptop computers, a digital camera and a voice recorder. These computers and equipment serve approximately 215 students.

The Jr–Sr high school has several servers that accommodate specialized software such as the cafeteria management application and a high school credit recovery program. The Jr–Sr high school also has 32 teacher workstations, 121 student workstations and an additional 17 mobile notebook computers. In addition, the high school also has flatbed scanners, digital data projectors, Elmo™ projectors and digital cameras. This configuration of equipment served 264 students in 2008–09.

Student workstations are primarily in fixed laboratory configurations. The Jr–Sr high school also has a mobile computer cart with wireless laptops, which it is piloting to determine if the configuration will be both efficient and educationally adequate.

While the district has not reached a target 1 to 1 ratio of students to computers, the district is investigating technology configurations that will help achieve that goal. The technology plan identifies as one strategy, investigating the use of servers that are capable of hosting virtual hard drives rather than purchasing stand-alone equipment. The technology director also said they were researching the addition of netbooks for students. A netbook is a smaller version of a laptop computer

that is generally less expensive, allowing the district to add more student computers for less money. The technology plan has two strategies for helping to achieve the goal by September of 2010.

One hundred percent of district classrooms are connected to the internet. The district has an "acceptable use" policy that defines how students and staff can use district computers and the internet. The district also has a software application that limits the type of websites that can be accessed by students or teachers. The program filters for inappropriate content and restricts access to sites that may contain inappropriate or harmful materials.

CISD purchases its student data management software and related support from the Regional Educational Service Center VII (Region 7). Until fall of 2009, the district also purchased its financial management software from Region 7, but recently changed to a private vendor for that application. Region 7 also hosts the district's internet connection.

TECHNOLOGY ORGANIZATION AND BUDGETS

CISD staffs its Technology Department with a Technology director/Business manager and a technology aide. The director is responsible for technology planning, hardware and software acquisition, fund raising, training and curriculum support. The technology aide helps leverage the limited availability of the interim director by providing entry level hardware and software support to district users. Prior to 2009, the district had a full time director. CISD is currently evaluating if a split position technology director/business manager can provide an adequate level of technology support.

Integrating technology and education requires more than an understanding of hardware and software configuration. Effective leaders must understand the technology horizon and be able to envision it in a classroom setting. CISD's Technology director/Business manager was previously the district technology director and librarian. This combination of technology and educator skills has allowed the district to obtain "advanced technology" status in classroom integration and educator preparation. Teachers receive 18 hours of instruction in technology subjects each year and all district

staff receives training on the type of technology they are expected to use.

The state of Texas has a Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020 (LRPT). The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) has adopted supporting technology standards for teachers. To help districts track their progress toward meeting state technology expectations, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed The School Technology and Readiness (STaR) chart. The STaR chart is a self-assessment tool designed for use in technology planning, budgeting, and monitoring progress toward goals.

The STaR Chart includes a Campus Analysis of School Technology and Readiness form. Once completed, the results reveal a district's status in meeting the state's LRPT goals. The LRPT has four developmental goals:

- Early Technology;

- Developing Technology;

- Advanced Technology; or

- Target Technology.

Each goal is recognized on the STaR chart by number. If a district ranks itself as a "1" it has identified itself as being in the Early Technology development phase. Developing Technology, Advanced Technology, and Target Technology are 2, 3, and 4 respectively. Districts rank themselves in four key areas:

- Teaching and Learning;

- Educator Preparation and Development;

- Administration and Support; and

- Infrastructure for Technology.

The ranking of Advanced Technology in "Teaching and Learning" means instruction facilitates student work with both peers and experts to evaluate, analyze, and problem solve. Additionally, Advanced Technology in Teaching and Learning also means that technology is integrated into curriculum standards; student technology standards have been met; and at least four technology classes are offered at the high school level.

The ranking as Advanced Technology in "Educator Preparation and Development" means technology is integrated into teaching and learning; online resources are used regularly; and 60 percent of educators meet the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) technology

standards; administrators recognize and identify exemplary use of technology and 30 percent of the technology budget is allocated for professional development.

The ranking as "Target Technology" in the key area of "Administration and Support" means the district has a campus plan focused on student success that is supported by the board and administration. The district would have one technical support position for every 350 computers and have campus instructional support for technology. Various funding sources are available to reach this goal.

The ranking as "Target Technology" in the key area of "Infrastructure for Technology" means the district provides on-demand access to technology for every student; there is direct connectivity in all rooms and multiple rooms have web-based resources; all rooms are connected to the network; and are fully equipped with appropriate technology.

Exhibit 6–1 summarizes CISD's STaR results for 2008–09. The district's self-evaluation is that CISD is in the Advanced Technology Stage of readiness for two areas: Teaching and Learning and Educator Preparation and Development, and is in the Target Technology stage of readiness for Administration and Support and Infrastructure for Technology areas.

For comparison purposes, LBB selected three school districts as peers for this review: LaPoynor, Sudan, and Rocksprings Independent School Districts (ISDs). **Exhibit 6–2** compares CISD's technology readiness with its peers.

As **Exhibit 6–2** shows, in Key Areas I and II, CISD is slightly ahead of Rocksprings and LaPoynor ISDs, but is slightly behind Sudan ISD. The percentage of state districts reaching target status in Key Areas I and II shows it is taking longer for Texas districts to reach the target in the areas most directly associated with classroom integration. Only 30.5 percent of Texas districts have reached advanced status in Teaching and Learning, and only 23.8 percent have reached advanced status in Educator Preparation. CISD is among a minority of state districts achieving advanced status in these Key Areas I and II in 2008–09.

The interim technology director said the district has been able to achieve this status in five years with hard work from staff and strong support from the board and administration.

Exhibit 6–3 compares CISD's per student technology expenditures to its peer districts. **Exhibits 6–3** and **6–4** do not include other technology funding used by the district. According to the technology director, in 2008–09, the district spent $370 per student for technology expenditures.

EXHIBIT 6–1
CISD TEXAS STAR CHART RESULTS
2008–09

KEY AREA I: TEACHING AND LEARNING

RATING: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 15–20)

Teacher Role and Collaborative Learning	Patterns of Teacher Use	Frequency /Design of Instruction	Curriculum Areas	Technology Application TEKS Assessment	Patterns of Student Use	Score
2	3	3	2	2	2	15

KEY AREA II: EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

RATING: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 15–20)

Content of Training	Capabilities of Educators	Leadership Capabilities of Administrators	Models of Professional Development	Under-standing and Patterns of Use	Technology Budget	Score
3	3	3	2	3	2	16

KEY AREA III: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

RATING: TARGET TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 21–24)

Vision and Planning	Technical Support	Instruction and Administrative Staffing	Budget	Funding	Leadership and Support for Online Learning	Score
3	4	3	4	4		21

KEY AREA IV: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TECHNOLOGY

RATING: TARGET TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 21–24)

Students per Computer	Internet Access Connectivity /Speed	Distance Learning	LAN/WAN	Other Technolo-gies	Distance Learning Capacity	Score
4	4	2	4	4	3	22

SOURCE: Texas STaR Chart 2008–09.

In addition, the district's Instructional Technology Plan for 2009–2011, indicates a need to expend a total of $311,300 for technology infrastructure, training and equipment.

Exhibit 6–4 lists technology expenditures from 2003–04 through 2007–08. CISD's technology budget has fluctuated over the five-year period. The exhibit does not reflect any other locally coded expenditures the district has used other than what is reported in their financial statements.

Exhibit 6–4 shows a spike in expenditures in 2005–06. In 2005–06, the district upgraded district servers and replaced every teacher and student workstation to ensure a robust network capable of running new software and equipment.

Texas school districts have several opportunities to enhance technology programs with state and federal funding. The E-Rate program provides federal funding for technology infrastructure and internet access. CISD meets the

requirements and receives E-Rate discounts. The state of Texas provides a technology allotment for the purchase of technology in support of the Long Range Plan for Technology to school districts. The technology allotment is based on the number of students and their average daily attendance. CISD also qualified for Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) funds but had not been applying for them. The district technology director received permission from the board to apply for SRSA funds and their commitment to use them for technology. The director also researched and successfully applied for other funding, including two Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Property Loss Prevention grants, and another $25,000 grant for distance learning equipment.

Exhibit 6–5 shows a few of the quotes from CISD teachers in response to a K–12 Technology in the Classroom survey developed by the district technology director.

EXHIBIT 6–2
CISD TEXAS STAR CHART RESULT COMPARISONS WITH PEER DISTRICTS
2008–09

KEY AREA I: TEACHING AND LEARNING

LaPoynor ISD	Rockprings ISD	Cushing ISD	Sudan ISD	Percent of State Reaching Target Status
12	12	15	17	0.8

KEY AREA II: EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

LaPoynor ISD	Rockprings ISD	Cushing ISD	Sudan ISD	Percent of State Reaching Target Status
11	12	16	16	0.6

KEY AREA III: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

LaPoynor ISD	Rockprings ISD	Cushing ISD	Sudan ISD	Percent of State Reaching Target Status
13	14	21	19	4.4

KEY AREA IV: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TECHNOLOGY

LaPoynor ISD	Rockprings ISD	Cushing ISD	Sudan ISD	Percent of State Reaching Target Status
14	17	22	19	6.8

RATING KEY: Early Technology (total score of 6–8); Developing Technology (total score of 9–14); Advanced technology (total score of 15–20); Target technology (total score of 21–24)
SOURCE: Texas STaR Chart 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 6–3
TECHNOLOGY EXPENDITURES
CUSHING ISD VS PEER DISTRICTS
2007–08

DISTRICT	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE
Sudan ISD	$67,423	378	$178
Cushing ISD	**$36,047**	**500**	***$72**
LaPoynor ISD	$210,447	470	$448
Rocksprings ISD	$154,407	341	$453
Region 7	**$16,223,097**	**163,808**	**$99**
State of Texas	**$476,774,083**	**4,651,516**	**$102**

*This amount does not include any other funding the district may be including, other than what is reported in the district's financial reports.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Reports, Actual Financial Report 2007. Academic Excellence Information System (AEIS), 2003–04 through 2007–08.

EXHIBIT 6–4
CISD TECHNOLOGY EXPENDITURES
2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

YEAR	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE
2007–08	$36,047	500	$72*
2006–07	$30,453	507	$60
2005–06	$53,689	485	$111
2004–05	$37,418	496	$75
2003–04	$53,308	522	$102

*This amount does not include any other funding the district may be including, other than what is reported in the district's financial reports.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS Reports, Actual Financial Report 2003–04 through 2007–08; AEIS, 2003–04 through 2007–08.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

CISD provides its teachers with computers that have 4Gb (gigabytes) of RAM (random access memory). Teachers have access to a laptop, projector, visual presenters, and either a whiteboard or wireless tablet that functions as a virtual whiteboard. Student computers have 2Gb of RAM or better. Students have access to six computer labs as well as to computers in the library.

Parents can log in and view student grades, assignments, attendance records, and even see what their child ate for lunch. Parents can pay for student lunches online with a

EXHIBIT 6–5
TEACHER SURVEY RESPONSES
K–12 TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM SURVEY

5th grade teacher	"Technology helps me meet the individual learning needs of my students. The document Elmo and Interactive whiteboard provide great opportunities to 'catch' the students' attention and keep their interest. Some of our best class discussions and class participation activities happen while using the wonderful technology tools we have in our classroom."
High School Social Studies teacher	"I use the internet a lot. We are always checking information out to answer questions that come up during class. We have done several power point projects this year. I used to go to the lab once a week but now I get to use our mobile laptop lab and it is great. The kids love it."
Agriculture teacher	"Technology helps me clarify ideas or concepts when explanation alone does not suffice. It allows students to see moving processes and procedures that still pictures in books or handouts don't always allow."
Kindergarten teacher	"I use the internet to locate interactive whiteboard activities. I use Word to do sight words on the interactive whiteboard or wireless tablet."

SOURCE: CISD K–12 Technology in the classroom survey, 2009.

credit card. Parents are also alerted to early release, emergency school closings and other events through an automated notification system.

The district is protected by a camera system located on their campuses and in district buses. Cameras allow real time monitoring of students and property by staff. The system also captures digital images to a district server which can later be reviewed if needed.

In a survey completed by district students, 85.4 percent believe the district does a good or excellent job in keeping computers up to date and useful for applying new technology. At 73.5 percent, a strong majority of students believe access to computers for learning is good or excellent. Another 65.3 percent believe access to the internet is good or excellent, although several commented on the blocking program which limits access to questionable websites.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

• CISD has developed a comprehensive set of procedures for information technology management.

FINDING

• CISD's Instructional Technology Plan for 2009–2011 does not connect the budget process with the IT planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

• **Recommendation 34: Develop a Long-Range Technology Plan that establishes priorities that are in concert with the board's goal setting and budget process.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

IT PROCEDURES

CISD has developed a comprehensive set of procedures for IT management. The procedures are short, easy to read, and cover a specific task. Staff can store them electronically and have the reference materials at hand when needed.

The technology director has drafted procedures for both IT staff and technology users. Staff procedures include the schedule for backing up the system, and how to configure new computers for the different user groups such as elementary, Jr–Sr high school and administration. User procedures include how to clean a sluggish computer, how to use the features on the new telephone system, how to merge Powerpoint™ presentations and how to use wireless tablets.

Procedures are step-by-step instructions of what to turn on, click, and navigate in order to complete the task. They may also include reminders and tips for a more successful solution. The procedures are provided to staff through email so they can use them as needed.

Documenting procedures allows users to get answers to basic questions without having to wait for a return phone call from IT staff. It also provides step by step instructions for IT functions that can be easily followed if the primary staff responsible for that function is not available. In a small organization with few staff in the IT department, how-to guides make cross training or emergency staff substitutions easier.

DETAILED FINDING

LONG RANGE PLANNING (REC. 34)

CISD's Instructional Technology Plan for 2009–2011 does not connect the budget process with the IT planning process. CISD has a planning process for technology, but it does not connect financial and strategic planning processes with the technology planning process in a coordinated format.

Various state and federal programs require districts to provide subject area plans. The Texas Education Code Section 11.251(b) requires districts to develop district and campus level improvement plans:

> (b) 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.

In order to qualify for federal technology funding, districts must develop a technology plan. As a small district, members of the various planning committees overlap providing some continuity between plans, however, while CISD meets requirements for planning, it does not connect the plans in a meaningful way that ensures the plans are in relation with the district's goals and budget process.

The district Instructional Technology Plan for 2009–11 focuses on coordinating and aligning technology in a way that maximizes effective use of technology. The plan's purpose is to help integrate new technologies into classrooms and curriculum so all students receive a quality education that prepares them for their next step in life.

In addition, the district's Instructional Technology Plan 2009–2011 correlates its goals and strategies with the state's Long Range Technology Plan of 2006-2020 and with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act but the plan does not specifically reference district or campus improvement plans in its needs assessment, objectives or strategies.

CISD's 2009–10 District Improvement Plan's (DIP) philosophy promotes a positive school climate that optimizes teaching and learning according to community values. The instructional focus is expected to support academic achievement for all children by fostering high expectations for students and staff. The district is committed to preparing students to function in a changing technological world. The DIP has the following five goals:

1. Education for all students shall reach high standards and attain proficiency or higher, in reading and math;

2. Educational needs of special populations shall be addressed;

3. Students will be taught by highly qualified staff;

4. District shall provide safe environments; and

5. Focus on raising attendance levels of all students and student groups.

Many of the strategies in the technology plan support strategies in the DIP, but they are not aligned or cross-referenced to ensure technology goals are fully supportive of the DIP's goals, objectives and strategies. There is no efficient way to identify and minimize gaps between DIP expectations for technology and the performance of the technology plan.

For example, the DIP sets a goal for recruiting. The goal does not reference the technology plan, and there is no corresponding strategy in the technology plan for assisting with the goal. Technology is a natural recruiting tool. Online applications, marketing videos, podcasts, and internet interviews are technology tools which could assist the district in recruiting locally as well as from a distance. The technology plan incorporates four goals:

1. Educational integration;

2. Staff development;

3. Educator planning; and

4. Attaining infrastructure.

The district has a replacement plan with a five year obsolescence cycle, replacing outmoded technology every five years. The plan also calls for an upgrade of existing technology every three years, to ensure the hardware can successfully run new software until it is replaced. The technology director said the replacement plan has been executed and is currently on track, but the technology plan only references two years of the five year cycle. The replacement cycle has not been incorporated into the technology plan with estimated costs for each year of the cycle.

According to district documentation provided to the Texas Education Agency and the review team, the technology plan was last updated in December 2009. Although the district applies for grants and other technology assistance programs,

like many other districts, expenditures that are not funded through grants or other funding opportunities must compete with other needs in a district's general fund.

In addition to the annual goals developed in the DIP, the district has started constructing new facilities which will take the district many years into the future. The district has not planned for all of the technology needs in the new elementary school. The school is anticipated to open when the current two year technology plan ends. Plans for the new school call for two computer labs plus mobile carts. The district currently has enough hardware to outfit one lab. As another example, construction plans call for the technology director to install all of the cable outlets in the new building. The new school does not have plans for fiber optic cables. A longer range plan could project future technology needs in new facilities so needed infrastructure can be included in the construction process.

The Texas State Board of Education adopted its first technology plan for schools in 1988 with plans that carried through to the year 2000. The rapid and substantial changes in technology as well as new national educational standards resulted in a process of periodic review and update. The current plan extends from 2006 to 2020. A long range plan is necessary to anticipate and prepare for the future, but should be regularly evaluated and adjusted to meet a changing technology and educational landscape. In its 1998 paper "Critical Issue: Developing a School or District Technology Plan" the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory observed that an effective technology plan integrates with the school improvement plan or it will be short lived.

CISD should develop a Long-Range Technology Plan that establishes priorities that are in concert with the board's goal setting and budget process. Since the proposed technology lifecycle extends to five years, the technology plan should add to its current short term goals, long term goals at least consistent with the life cycle replacement plan. The long term goals should have flexibility so it can be adapted to changes in technology, legislative requirements, and district goals. An annual review and update of the plan should ensure the plan and projected costs stay current.

CISD has taken some valuable first steps in the planning process, but in order to make the current planning documents a financial roadmap to achieving the goals, they must coordinate the technology plan goals with the DIP and other strategic plans the board may make.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
34. Develop a Long-Range-Technology plan that establishes priorities that are in concert with the board's goal setting and budget process.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

CHAPTER 7

HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 7. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Education is a service industry and its primary tool for delivery is its personnel. A school district's financial and operational structure is largely driven by its human resources. Employees are a significant asset and typically the largest percentage of a district's budget. Compared with Educational Service Center Region VII (Region 7) and the state, Cushing Independent School District (CISD) has higher payroll costs as a percentage of expenditures. In 2008–09, CISD payroll costs were 70.6 percent of expenditures, compared to 62.3 percent for districts in Region 7 and 60.5 percent for all Texas school districts. However, CISD's high payroll expenditures are offset by its lower percentage of debt and capital expenditures. **Exhibit 7–1** compares CISD expenditures to the average for Region 7 and the state.

CISD pays its teachers and central administration staff, on average, lower than its peer districts, Region 7, and the state. The district pays its professional support, on average, higher than its peer districts but lower than the Region 7 and the state. These numbers reflect an averaging of actual salaries paid, which reflect in part, the skills, education and years of experience of staff. For example, at 51.1 percent CISD has a larger percentage of teachers with five or less years of experience than the Region 7 average of 32.5 percent; and at 19.1 percent, a smaller percentage of teachers with over 20 years of experience than the Region 7 average of 22.8 percent. District compensation includes base salary, a supplement above base for teachers, a local supplement for most staff, and stipends for various additional duties. **Exhibit 7–2** compares district compensation to its peers, region, and state.

When the school review team asked teachers if salaries are competitive with the market, 12.1 percent of those responding to the survey said district pay is below average, 33.3 percent said it is average, 36.4 percent said it is good, and 15.2 said it is excellent.

When the school review team asked non-teaching staff if salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market, 15.4 percent of those responding to the survey said that district pay is below average, 23.1 percent said it is average, and 38.5 percent thought district pay is good. The survey of non-teaching staff included administrators, auxiliary staff, and professional staff.

CISD central administrators and staff interact daily as a result of the close proximity of district buildings. The district's administration is co-located in the Jr–Sr high school. The elementary school is located immediately behind the Jr–Sr high school and shares the cafeteria with administrators and older students. The close proximity of district buildings creates communication pathways not typically seen in larger schools with dispersed work locations.

According to the superintendent, the district student population has not varied much since the district opened in the 1930's. The community is small, so the district has practical knowledge of movements in and out of the area. Accordingly, the district does not have a staffing formula that ties the number of needed staff to the number of students. The district manages student population changes from year to year by tracking class sizes and anticipating needs for the

EXHIBIT 7–1
CISD PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY, ALL FUNDS
2008–09

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	CISD PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES	REGION 7 PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES	STATE PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES
Payroll Costs	70.6	62.3	60.5
Other Operating Costs	25.9	18.7	16.3
Debt Service	1.4	6.1	8.5
Capital Outlay	2.0	12.9	14.7
TOTAL	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 7–2
CISD AVERAGE ACTUAL SALARIES COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS, REGION AND STATE
2008–09

DISTRICT	TEACHERS	PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT	CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION	CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Cushing ISD	**$41,969**	**$51,987**	**$64,500**	**$65,173**
Rocksprings ISD	$42,403	$42,434	$58,843	$79,200
LaPoynor ISD	$42,670	$41,627	$62,600	$83,368
Sudan ISD	$45,215	$41,306	$69,750	$71,677
Region 7	**$42,091**	**$49,414**	**$62,377**	**$80,314**
State of Texas	**$47,159**	**$55,819**	**$68,891**	**$85,305**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2008–09.

next school year. **Exhibit 7–3** compares changes in student population between 2007–08 and 2008–09.

District losses and gains were distributed throughout all grades, with third grade having the greatest change with a loss of 21 students. Eighth grade had the biggest gain with 15 new students. The district anticipated the Grade 3 decrease and Grade 8 increase for 2008–09 by monitoring the activity in Grades 2 and 7 the previous year.

Because the district maintains smaller class sizes, a moderate fluctuation in student population can be managed by adjusting class size. For example, in 2007–08, the district had 47.3 teachers for 500 students, with the number of students per teacher at 10.6. In 2008–09, the district had 47 teachers for 479 students, with the number of students per teacher at 10.2. By comparison, the state average in 2008–09 was 14.4 students per teacher.

EXHIBIT 7–3
COMPARISON OF CISD STUDENT POPULATION BY GRADE
2007–08 AND 2008–09

GRADE	STUDENT COUNT 2007–08	STUDENT COUNT 2008–09	(LOSS) OR GAIN
Pre-Kindergarten	33	28	(5)
Kindergarten	28	37	9
Grade 1	31	24	(7)
Grade 2	20	30	10
Grade 3	40	19	(21)
Grade 4	33	40	7
Grade 5	38	37	(1)
Grade 6	34	37	3
Grade 7	47	34	(13)
Grade 8	39	54	15
Grade 9	38	39	1
Grade 10	41	30	(11)
Grade 11	42	36	(6)
Grade 12	36	34	(2)
Total	**500**	**479**	**(21)**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2007–08 and 2008–09.

Texas school districts employ a mix of staff to provide educational services. **Exhibit 7–4** compares CISD's staffing to its peer districts.

With the exception of Sudan ISD at 58.3 percent, CISD has a greater percentage of teaching staff than its peers, and a greater percentage than the average in Region 7 or the state. CISD has the lowest percentage of auxiliary staff at 22.7 percent, but is on par with its peers in the percentage of central and school administrators.

The superintendent, administrators, police officer, bus manager, athletic director, and teachers are on contract. Educator contracts are controlled by state statute. The district must notify educators when contracts will not be renewed, and educators under contract must also give notice of intent to leave. The statutory timelines for notice gives administrators an opportunity to discuss staffing needs for the upcoming year.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- CISD's superintendent is developing a cohesive work environment by providing team-based events designed to create relationships among the staff.

FINDINGS

- CISD does not have a comprehensive, documented process for compensation development and administration.

- CISD does not have a recruitment process that consistently attracts a steady and diverse workforce.

- CISD does not have district specific job descriptions, leaving the district without a foundation for communicating job expectations or supporting compliance with federal labor laws.

- CISD human resource functions are not organized and assigned for the most efficient delivery of services.

- CISD does not have an employee evaluation process that is applied uniformly and regularly throughout the district.

- CISD does not have a structured process for creating, maintaining, and storing district files.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 35: Develop a clear, documented process for setting and maintaining a comprehensive compensation program.**

- **Recommendation 36: Develop a recruitment process that incorporates strategies for attracting employees with desired characteristics, includes post-hire programs for developing position specific knowledge in recruits, and provides performance monitoring of the strategy.**

- **Recommendation 37: Develop accurate job descriptions for each position and maintain accuracy by periodically auditing positions and related job descriptions.**

- **Recommendation 38: Reassign human resource functions from the superintendent to the appropriate level of staff and train staff in personnel administration.**

- **Recommendation 39: Develop an evaluation process that provides clear expectations, scheduled**

EXHIBIT 7–4
COMPARISON OF CISD STAFFING TO PEER DISTRICTS
2008–09

DISTRICT	TOTAL STAFF	PERCENT TEACHERS	PERCENTAGE AUXILLIARY STAFF	PERCENTAGE EDUCATIONAL AIDES	PERCENTAGE CENTRAL & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS	PERCENTAGE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT
Sudan ISD	67.8	58.3	24.0	7.4	6.0	4.4
Rocksprings ISD	71.9	50.3	24.4	17.8	4.4	3.1
LaPoynor ISD	80.1	50.9	28.4	13.7	4.9	2.0
Cushing ISD	**85.4**	**55.1**	**22.7**	**12.9**	**4.6**	**4.7**
Region 7	**24,774**	**50.2**	**26.4**	**12.1**	**4.5**	**6.8**
State of Texas	**646,815**	**50.7**	**27.4**	**9.7**	**3.8**	**8.4**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2008–09.

performance reviews, and continuing feedback on progress toward goals.

- **Recommendation 40: Design and implement a records management procedure that captures and retains data in a format that is easily accessed, periodically reviewed against changing standards, historically sensitive and legally compliant.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

CISD's superintendent is developing a cohesive work environment by providing team-based events designed to create relationships among the staff. The district hired a new superintendent in 2008–09. Upon taking office, one goal was to develop a positive work environment for the staff. With many new staff members, developing a team atmosphere was the first challenge. Initially, the superintendent considered popular team building programs which have participants resolving challenges on obstacle courses. However, the cost and travel to attend these meetings presented its own set of obstacles.

The superintendent sought assistance from a substitute teacher, who was a former Marine, to develop an employee boot camp with team building exercises. The boot camp was held during the summer and all employees participated. During the boot camp, friendships developed and communication among staff increased. Pictures from the team building exercise were posted for employees to enjoy and remember. The only expenses incurred for the program was lunch for the participants and a thank-you gift for the instructor.

In addition, the superintendent supports employee suggestions for other friendly competitions. In 2009, after a week of employees and others providing various holiday food, the superintendent joked about needing to participate in a "Biggest Loser" weight loss competition, referencing a popular reality television show. Employees turned the comment into a suggested team competition. Employees developed the rules and the prizes, which are funded by the participants' entry fee. Individuals are weighed and losses tallied by the school nurse. Individual weights are confidential, but team losses are posted at scheduled dates to spur competition. The contest information is posted electronically allowing non-participating staff to watch the progress and root for his or her favorite team. The district is not incurring any expenses by developing this friendly and healthy competition among staff.

Work environment is a critical factor in the performance and retention of employees. The district board has recognized this by adopting a work environment goal in its District Improvement Plan for 2009–10 (DIP) that "builds an atmosphere of collaboration among staff members." CISD is reaching that goal by finding low or no cost programs that foster teamwork and engage employees.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TOTAL COMPENSATION PROGRAM (REC. 35)

CISD does not have a comprehensive, documented process for compensation development and administration. Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 21.402 establishes base salaries for teachers, nurses and counselors. In addition, the district provides a local supplement to the state required base pay. The other district positions have no official salary structure and are therefore developed by local districts.

The state mandated salary-schedule for teachers provides increases for each year of service. Periodically, the state will update the base schedule. In the 2007 legislative session, the state required additional increases to teacher salaries, although the state did not increase the mandated base pay schedule. The legislation resulted in an approximate $800 pay increase for the average 10-month teacher employment contract.

In 2009, the superintendent began developing salary schedules for non-teaching staff and presented them to the board for approval. However, CISD has not implemented a compensation methodology for all positions. Salaries are decided annually during the budget process, based primarily on what the state requires and the district can afford. However, there is no identified philosophy or documented strategies linking budgeted compensation to the desired results for the expenditure.

TEACHING STAFF

CISD provides several salary supplements to the state's salary schedule. The district pays teachers $1,750 per year above the state minimum rates as its base salary, and also pays a local supplement of $500 on top of the base salary. Furthermore, the board adopted a performance incentive program which pays teachers an additional $1,000 if their campus receives "recognized" status from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Finally, the district pays an additional $1,000 per year to teachers with a master's degree.

Although the superintendent has called local districts for area salary information, CISD does not regularly survey the local

market to determine how their teacher compensation compares with area districts. **Exhibit 7–5** below compares CISD average teacher salaries with one of its peer districts, Region 7, the state, and Douglass ISD—a district CISD previously used for comparison.

The district's current supplement practices favor less experienced teachers. CISD pays beginning teachers, on average, more than district teachers with one to ten years of experience. In addition, the district pays above the state average and Region 7 average for beginning teachers. Moreover, for 2009–10, the $1,750 supplement to the state base salary represents six percent of the base salary for a 2-year teacher and four percent of the base salary for a 19-year teacher. Favoring newer positions could be part of an organization's recruitment strategy or it could be a decision to provide equity in the amount of the supplement across all pay steps. However, the district does not document the purpose of its compensation, leaving staff to draw their own conclusions.

SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Non-teaching positions in Texas school districts have little state oversight and few requirements. CISD does not have any particular methodology for how these new employees are compensated, but has historically made the determination at the time an individual is hired. As a result, employees holding jobs of similar skill levels may not be paid similarly. For example, maintenance workers and cafeteria workers receive a $500 local support payment, while bus drivers and custodians do not. The differential could be part of a recruitment and retention strategy but without a compensation plan there is no measurable relationship between the job categories.

The district does not regularly survey the market to determine how support or administrative positions compare with the area market. In 2009, the superintendent performed a basic salary survey by calling local districts to see what they paid staff and reviewed a Texas Assocation of School Boards (TASB) statewide salary survey to create a salary schedule for various positions. After placing staff on the schedule, it became clear that district positions were not paid relative to the area market. Some positions were lower than market, others were higher.

The industry term for an employee who is outside the pay range for his or her position is "redlined." A redlined employee outside the top of the range may not receive increases to base salary until the market catches up with the salary. Redlining an employee may be the result of a conscious decision by the organization. Employers may choose to pay higher than market for a position if the position is hard to fill, or if the employee has a unique skill set that the employer finds beneficial beyond what is typically provided in the market.

After reviewing the proposed schedules and employee placements on the schedules, the board did not adopt all of the salary schedules. According to the superintendent, he and the board discussed phasing in the salary schedule over five years, as it was difficult to make the changes within the framework of both budget and employee morale in a single fiscal year. Some employees did receive a raise, but positions were not assigned to the salary schedule. No plans have been made to complete the market alignment by funding the schedule in future years.

Additionally, the district has not published official job descriptions, although the superintendent obtained model job descriptions from the TASB and presented them to the board for approval. However, the descriptions have not been

EXHIBIT 7–5
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
NACOGDOCHES AREA
2008–09

EXPERIENCE	CUSHING ISD	LAPOYNOR ISD	DOUGLASS ISD	REGION 7	STATE OF TEXAS
Beginning Teachers	**$42,111**	$31,320	--	**$34,360**	**$40,372**
1–5 Years	**$35,168**	$34,423	$33,822	**$35,340**	**$42,463**
6–10 Years	**$39,209**	$39,387	$37,324	**$39,177**	**$45,035**
11–20 Years	**$44,553**	$47,144	$43,237	**$44,889**	**$49,083**
Over 20	**$49,025**	$50,026	$47,521	**$50,812**	**$57,325**
Turnover Rate	**28.1%**	20.1%	3.2%	**16.7%**	**14.7%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2008–09.

customized to reflect the actual duties of CISD employees. Additional duties compensated by stipend are verbally communicated to the employee but have not been documented. The district does not document the work and performance expectations for earning assigned salaries.

OTHER COMPENSATION

The district offers a stipend to employees who take on additional administrative or extracurricular duties. A stipend is a common pay methodology in Texas school districts which allows a district to move duties and staff without affecting the base pay for an employee's primary duties. However, the

district does not maintain a list of stipends and does not have a way to easily generate this list. Certain positions also earn additional pay for "extra-duty" days. These days are generally provided to athletic staff. The district does not document the work and performance expectations for earning the stipend. **Exhibit 7–6** compares stipends offered at CISD to stipends offered at two of its peer districts.

CISD also provides an employer contribution toward employee healthcare. The board adopted the contribution rate an undetermined number of years ago and has not

EXHIBIT 7–6
COMPARISON OF CISD STIPENDS TO PEER DISTRICTS
2009–10

STIPEND	CUSHING PAYS	SUDAN PAYS	LAPOYNOR PAYS
Athletic director	$16,684	$3,000–$4,000	$2,000
Head coach	$1,000–$8,500	–	$1,000-$5,000
Assistant coach	$2,000	–	$2,000
Coaching Supplement	–	$2,000–$7,500	–
Extra duty days	$251	$1,500–$2,250	–
Department Head	$1,174–$2,000	–	–
Cheerleader sponsor	$1,000–$1,500	–	$3,000
Vocational Ag	$2,282–$6,850	–	$500
ESL Teacher	$1,000	–	$500
Band Director	$5,000	$3,000–$8,500	$1,500
UIL Academic Coordinator	$3,282	–	$1,500 ($500 x 3)
UIL Academic Coaches	$245	–	$7,500 ($150 x 50)
Newspaper	$4,000	–	–
One Act Play	$1,000	–	–
Math	$1,000	–	–
Pre AP and AP	$1,000–$3,600	–	–
Twirler	$1,600	–	–
Yearbook	$2,000	–	–
Assistant Principal	$4,734	–	–
Auto Tech	–	$5,400	–
Shop and Tool Use	–	$12,500	–
Grant Writing	–	$500–$3,000	–
Technology/Counselor	–	$2,500–$5,000	–
Software trainer	$2,000		
Added technology tasks	$4,680		
Payroll Aide	$2,000	–	–

NOTE: CISD documentation included extra pay for four employees that was not positively identified and was not included above.
SOURCE: CISD payroll information, Stipend listing from Sudan ISD and LaPoynor ISD, January 2010.

revisited the amount. According to staff, the contribution rate is reaffirmed each year through budget adoption.

The district provides additional compensation in the form of a bonus to employees. Prior to 2008, the compensation was a turkey or ham; in 2008 and 2009 the district decided to provide monetary compensation. Taking into consideration federal mandated deductions, the district determined what gross amount of money would result in net "take-home" compensation of $250 and the gross amount was the amount awarded to each employee. According to staff, the decision to award a mid-year bonus is usually made by the board in October or November.

District staff is also allowed to charge meals at the school cafeteria, but payment is not always collected from the charging employee at the end of the year. The district rolls the debt from year to year, and staff says it is eventually collected. Some staff is provided a district-owned cell phone; others can take home district vehicles. On occasion, the district may purchase a casual style logo shirt for its employees. Under some circumstances, the Internal Revenue Code considers these as taxable employee benefits. The district does not have policies explaining who is eligible for a particular benefit, or detailing how it is reported. Non-monetary benefits such as these are not officially adopted by the board, or reported to payroll for determination of taxability.

The lack of clearly defined compensation programs has, in at least once instance, contributed to district discord. When the district adopted the performance pay for achieving recognized status, it did not clearly document under what circumstances it would be awarded. The district as a whole did not achieve recognized status, but the Jr–Sr high school achieved recognized status; therefore the board only awarded the Jr–Sr high staff. The lack of clear definition in how the funds would be awarded resulted in unhappy employees who believed the award was not consistent with the pay for performance program as originally explained. Clear definition is also important as the Texas Constitution expects public employers to decide compensation before the work is performed and prohibits additional pay after the work has been performed if not previously agreed upon.

A comprehensive compensation program typically includes a compensation philosophy or program goals, strategies for achievement, clear expectations for each position, and a process for evaluating the success of the program. In addition, organizations are adopting "total compensation" philosophies that look beyond salary to both direct and indirect methods of rewarding employees for work performed. For example, the State of Texas provides a flow chart of its total compensation package to employees, showing the variety of programs that make up its components. The state recognizes both financial and non-financial compensation. Financial compensation can be direct, such as salary and incentives, or indirect such as leave and benefits. Non-financial compensation includes programs that support work-life balance, training, and career opportunities.

CISD should develop a clear, documented process for setting and maintaining a comprehensive compensation program. In developing its process, the district should:

- set a compensation philosophy and strategies for accomplishment;

- tie pay methodologies to compensation strategies;

- consider both internal and market equity while recognizing the maximum worth of each position;

- define pay in relation to workload and performance expectations;

- create a flexible and sustainable design, and

- document the program for clear understanding by employees.

A good compensation philosophy identifies the type of employee an organization desires, and recognizes the relationship between compensation and its ability to attract and retain that type of employee. Strategies for reaching the goal may vary according to the expectations for a particular category of employee. For example, the district's compensation philosophy might be to attract and retain the most educated teachers. A strategy for achieving that goal might be to reimburse tuition costs for teachers who successfully complete a master's degree.

If the district's compensation philosophy is to attract and retain the most effective teachers, a different compensation strategy might be needed. Because the state mandates a pay scale based on years of service, the most effective teachers are not necessarily the highest paid teachers. In addition to performance awards, adding non-monetary rewards might complete a total rewards package for this category of employee. For example, access to cutting edge training and technology might provide the right balance between salary and attractive work environment for the district's high performers.

Once goals and strategies have been developed, compensation strategies should be reviewed for internal and external equity. External equity is how a job is valued in the market; internal equity is how a job is valued within the organization. Many organizations develop and monitor salary schedules based on adopted compensation principles that identify how they relate jobs to market and to each other. Periodic market analysis helps determine what is reasonable pay for like jobs in the area, and helps to establish the minimum and maximum salary value of a position.

CISD has taken a step in the right direction by developing market-based salary schedules for its clerical and manual trade staff. Once compensation goals and strategies have been adopted, the scales should be reviewed to ensure they are consistent with the philosophy, and then the board should adopt them. The adoption of the scale does not require the district to immediately start paying positions according to the scale, but the district should develop a schedule for compensating employees relative to the market for their job and experience on the adopted scale. For those employees who are higher than market, a periodic market review and appropriate scale adjustment process will eventually bring the salary into alignment.

One of the challenges smaller districts encounter in developing compensation strategies is matching job duties to like positions in the market. Larger organizations can assign like duties to a single position, allowing for a full time employee in a particular area. Smaller districts frequently have multi-function positions that perform different types of duties in different percentages of the work day. For example, CISD has a position that functions as a data management clerk for state mandated reporting to the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The PEIMS position also functions as the accounts payable clerk.

Since positions are matched to like positions in the market based on job descriptions, CISD should customize its TASB model job descriptions to more accurately reflect district job duties. Where pay is given for extra duties, such as stipends, CISD should also develop a description of the duties associated with that pay.

Salary should also be considered in context with other compensation to ensure the right balance for total district expenditure on an employee. The process of budgeting employee salary and benefits should present a complete compensation picture. The information should provide enough detail to allow the board to make strategic decisions

about initiating and abandoning various compensation programs.

Once philosophy, strategy, methodology and market appropriate pay is aligned, CISD should regularly review the program to determine if the various components are effective and the compensation program competitive with other districts.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

QUALITY RECRUITMENT (REC. 36)

CISD does not have an employee recruitment process that consistently attracts a steady and diverse workforce. While the district fills its positions through both traditional and innovative strategies, it has not linked the type of employee it wishes to recruit with successful strategies. As a result, the district fills vacant positions but makes continuing adjustments to its organizational structure, as employees are not always the right fit for the position. In addition, the district does not have a formal exit interview process for terminating employees.

CISD's teacher recruitment process consists primarily of posting openings with professional school organizations such as Region 7, attending area employment fairs, and recruiting new teachers from Stephen F. Austin State University in nearby Nacogdoches. The majority of applicants are identified through the Region 7 job board. Candidates selected for an interview meet with a panel of teachers and administrators. Applicants may also be given tours of the school by student council members, who have an opportunity to share their impressions of the candidate.

The district's teacher recruitment efforts are not structured. The superintendent decides which recruitment fairs will be attended, and by whom. The superintendent attends some fairs, which are generally local. In an interview with the elementary principal, she indicated she would like to attend fairs and meet the applicant pool, but did not have the opportunity. The high school principal indicated he had been invited to attend a local fair, but chose not to attend. Additionally, when attending recruiting events, the district does not have an identified recruitment package that showcases the district. The superintendent said that the district had a brochure and on occasion sets up an unmanned table at a recruitment fair with a stack of handouts.

While CISD historically fills its vacancies before the start of the school year, staff acknowledged that they are not always

able to recruit at the most desired skill levels. Some positions have been filled through the superintendent's ability to negotiate career opportunities for hard to fill positions. For example, CISD had difficulty hiring a math teacher. The superintendent was aware of an experienced math teacher who was looking for area employment as a principal. The teacher was having difficulty making the career move to campus administration as she had the certification but no administration experience. The superintendent offered her an opportunity to gain administrative experience as an assistant principal in exchange for teaching math.

The Cushing District Improvement Plan (DIP) for 2009–10 establishes as goal three of its four goals, that all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers and 100 percent of highly qualified staff will be maintained. A highly qualified teacher is defined under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act as being fully certified, having a bachelor's degree, and demonstrated subject matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches. The goal's objective is to recruit highly qualified staff and maintain those qualifications by providing timely and appropriate staff development. There are 12 strategies for accomplishing the objective. Two strategies relate to recruitment, the remaining strategies are for developing and maintaining credentials of current staff.

The primary strategy for employee recruitment is to attend job fairs and promote the benefits of a small school environment. Minimum standards for the DIP target applicant are also the minimum NCLB requirements. While this initiative identifies a strategy for locating applicants and for marketing the school, attending fairs and promoting the school environment are currently the only strategies for all positions. There are no specific strategies for attracting teacher candidates.

Another DIP initiative seeks to aggressively recruit highly qualified minority professionals, but does not state how it will be accomplished. The superintendent also expressed a goal of recruiting a more diverse workforce, but there are no district recruiting strategies that target diversity candidates. For example, job fairs are not researched to determine the attendance levels of minority candidates. As another example, CISD has not established recruitment relationships with universities that historically have high minority attendance.

The recruitment process for support and administrative positions is less defined. There are no established qualifications for non-teaching positions. The district develops the position

requirements as a job becomes open, and occasionally when a potential candidate is identified. For example, when the business manager position unexpectedly opened the district had an opportunity to recruit a former employee with district specific knowledge and reputation for accomplishing given tasks. The employee did not have experience as a business manager, but rather, had been the technology director and district librarian. The district hired the former employee as both business manager and technology director.

Since 2004–05, CISD has had four superintendents, seven business managers, four Business Office clerks, three PEIMS coordinators, and three maintenance directors. One recruit worked two days before deciding the position did not match his expectations. Other positions have had internal rotation of staff to better fit employee skills with position demands.

Organizational turnover cannot always be avoided, and change can bring new ideas and energy into the organization. The administrative turnover for CISD has not been at healthy levels, however, and suggests an administration recruitment process that does not clearly communicate expectations to prospective applicants or identify candidates with the appropriate qualifications for administrative positions. The continual administrative turnover has left the district with a lack of institutional knowledge necessary for efficient operations.

The ability to solve a vacancy problem as it arises is a helpful skill, but it is not a substitute for recruitment planning. The Resource Center for the Corporation for National and Community Service refers to this as "warm body" recruitment versus "targeted" recruitment and suggests the following components for a recruitment strategy: clarifying what the organization needs and what it has to offer, identifying the type of person most likely to succeed in the organization and the type to most likely experience problems, defining the desired work environment, and developing a strategy that will uncover an applicant's core values or potential fit within the organization.

Effective strategies also match what the district can offer with the needs of the desired applicant. Some districts offer a signing incentive for desired positions, some offer additional pay for hard to fill positions such as science or math. Some districts give the teachers who make the best use of technology the "early implementers"—or the first to receive new hardware or software. These districts target their recruitment efforts by identifying the needs of the job and the skills and attitude

necessary for the job, and then develop strategies that will attract the desired applicants.

CISD should develop a recruitment process that incorporates strategies for attracting employees with desired characteristics, includes post-hire programs for developing position specific knowledge in recruits, and provides performance monitoring of the strategy.

The process should begin with identifying the characteristics of the preferred candidate. Administrators and managers should provide direction on not only desired educational qualifications for positions under their supervision, but also the desired skills and values necessary for a successful CISD employee. Job descriptions should be reviewed to ensure that identified minimum and preferred requirements are appropriately included. Job descriptions should be posted on the district website, allowing candidates to easily determine their fit for a particular job.

Strategies should be developed that focus on target groups. For example, if a culturally diverse employee population is a goal, the district might ask current and former minority employees what initially attracted them to the district and ask former employees what the district could have done to retain them. If the district is losing preferred applicants to other districts, the district might survey those applicants to determine why they selected that particular district. The information should provide a framework for developing successful, targeted strategies.

When the district decides to hire a capable applicant with limited experience in the area of hire, or to cultivate a current employee to fill the position, the recruiting plan should include a schedule of required training and a target date for completion.

Recruiting strategies should also consider using a variety of media to reach a variety of applicants. In addition to the district's hard-copy brochure, CISD should consider whether or not social media could be effectively used. Students could assist in developing a web-based brochure, podcast, or video that promotes the district. CISD should also consider the cost-value of a web-based interview process for remote candidates. Using technology to market and recruit can showcase the district's connectivity and commitment to quality education.

Finally, CISD should establish and implement a process for tracking the performance of recruiting strategies and the respective costs. Performance information should include

methods for determining which strategy is most effective. This would allow the district to target the recruiting methods that produce the greatest number of targeted employees and discontinue less successful efforts. As part of the tracking process, the district should formalize the exit interview process for terminating employees.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

JOB CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 37)

CISD does not have district specific job descriptions, leaving the district without a foundation for communicating job expectations or supporting compliance with federal labor laws. The superintendent recently obtained model job descriptions for district positions, but the general descriptions have not been adapted to reflect the actual duties expected of or performed by district employees. The descriptions were adopted by the board but have not been provided to staff for use.

Job descriptions are a primary tool for communicating district expectations for job applicants and employees. It typically includes the skills required of a competent employee, the education and experience required for the position, and identifies tasks that are essential to job performance. It can identify minimum requirements along with preferred requirements, giving neutral and clear standards for selecting one applicant over another. Job descriptions can also form the basis of an effective performance evaluation process by providing employees with basic expectations for a position.

Numerous federal and state laws regulate employment. The federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulates pay and sets reporting requirements based on an employee's job classification. The job classification is determined by an employee's duties. While the FLSA does not require a job description, an accurate description of position duties is an effective way to document compliance with FLSA classification standards.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires organizations to employ persons based on their ability to perform the essential functions of a job, either with reasonable accommodation or without accommodation. While the ADA does not require a job description, an accurate description is an effective way to support compliance with ADA regulations. Employers cannot ask an individual about possible or even apparent disabilities. However, the employer

can provide an applicant with the essential functions for a position and ask if he or she can perform those functions.

The Civil Rights Act of 1965 prohibits discrimination against persons based on certain classification such as race, ethnicity, or gender. While not required, well drafted job descriptions provide objective, defensible standards for selecting and hiring applicants.

Exhibit 7–7 compares a sample of CISD positions with the model job description associated with that position. Inconsistencies between actual tasks and model job tasks are identified.

When a job description does not accurately reflect the tasks and expectations for the position, an employer increases the risk of violations under a number of federal laws. For example, if a job description is used to determine the FLSA classification as an exempt employee, but the employee is not really performing the type of tasks that make a job exempt from overtime pay requirements the employer may not be paying the employee correctly or capturing the compliance data required by law. Violations of federal law can result in fines and penalties assessed to the employer and may provide a basis for a lawsuit. Federal agencies advocate for the use of job descriptions as a good management practice.

CISD should develop accurate job descriptions for each position and maintain accuracy by periodically auditing positions and related job descriptions. Position descriptions should document the expectations for each job in the district. Duty related stipends should also have a documented description for the duties to which the stipend attaches.

The district can customize the model TASB job descriptions by providing a copy of the model to each employee, asking that they cross out tasks not performed and add tasks not reflected in the description. Supervisors should review the

employee corrected descriptions, making additional notes on whether any tasks not currently performed should be included in the description. The information should be thoughtfully considered, then the appropriate description drafted. Final descriptions should be presented to the board for adoption, then provided to each employee.

The district should also identify the essential functions for each position. An essential function is a task that the position exists to perform, or cannot be easily separated and performed by another. For example, lifting 25 or more pounds may not be an essential function of a secretarial position. On the few occasions where a box needs to be lifted, another employee could be asked to perform the function for the secretary. It might be an essential function of a file room or warehouse clerk whose primary tasks require lifting and moving boxes throughout the workday.

Essential functions also include non-physical requirements. For example, regular and timely attendance would be an essential function of a teaching position. Highly developed organizational skills and an attention to detail might be an essential requirement of accounting positions. Communication skills sufficient to develop and present training may be essential to the position of technology or curriculum director.

In developing essential functions, the district should specify a particular method of performing a task only if that method is essential. Essential functions should first be identified as an expected result. For example, "moving" is the result of several possible actions. If moving an item is essential, specify lifting only if lifting is essential to the moving. If the item can be moved into the position by dragging or pushing the item then lifting is not essential. If a position moves items from the floor to a higher location, lifting may be essential. The district should use the expected result as much as possible,

EXHIBIT 7–7
CISD JOB DESCRIPTIONS
2009–10

POSITION	TASK INCONSISTENCIES WITH MODEL DESCRIPTIONS
Secretary to Superintendent	Does not include any personnel duties currently performed such as criminal history check, confirming teacher certification, maintaining applications for principal review.
Business Manager	Does not include the payroll duties currently performed such as time entry, leave maintenance, or check preparation.
Curriculum Director	Does not include current duties as testing coordinator.
Chief of Police	Does not include the truancy duties currently performed which includes providing statutory notice, filing complaints in JP court, attending court, or conferencing with staff and parents.

SOURCE: CISD staff interviews, January 2010, and Texas Association of School Boards model job descriptions, 2009.

and a specific method for accomplishing the result only when a necessary part of the job. Essential functions are typically incorporated in the job description, as the detailed tasks, duties and responsibilities of a position.

Descriptions should be maintained by periodically auditing positions and descriptions and making necessary corrections. An audit should include an employee update and supervisor review of current tasks, and a review of whether the essential duties of a position have changed.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

REALIGN HUMAN RESOURCE FUNCTIONS (REC. 38)

CISD human resource functions are not organized and assigned for the most efficient delivery of services. The superintendent performs a number of human resource functions, as does his secretary and the business manager. Many of the human resource functions performed by the superintendent are capable of being performed by a staff member who does not have the executive level duties of the superintendent.

Exhibit 7–8 lists activities which are typically performed as part of a school human resource management program, and who performs the activity for CISD.

EXHIBIT 7–8
CISD STANDARD PERSONNEL ACTIVITIES
2009–10

TASK	CISD PERFORMANCE	PERFORMED BY
Management of job descriptions	Job descriptions have been adopted but not distributed.	Superintendent was tasked by the board to develop job descriptions.
Market salary surveys	Performs spot surveys, but does not perform cyclic comprehensive reviews.	Superintendent performed most recent survey.
Development of essential duties for each job	Has not identified essential duties specific to district jobs.	Not currently performed.
Recruitment	Posts openings with professional organizations and attends job fairs.	Superintendent manages this process.
Management of job applications	Applications are held until vacancy then screened.	Superintendent's secretary maintains applications. Principals screen applications and call references.
Criminal history check	Performed at time of hire.	Superintendent's secretary checks new hires.
Certification confirmation	Confirm certification upon hire. Periodic checks for expired certification.	Superintendent's secretary performs checks for teaching certification. Nurse manages certification for CPR.
New hire processing	Collects data necessary to employment such as I9, social security number.	Business manager performs.
Compensation statements	Salary statements provided to staff.	Business manager provides.
Contract preparation	Drafts contracts for employees receiving recommendation for continued employment.	Superintendent's secretary prepares, tracks signature process, then files.
Leave administration	Leave is reported and substitutes located where necessary.	School secretary manages and reports leave requests; receives 6:00 a.m. calls for last minute requests; locates substitutes. Business Manager maintains leave balances as part of payroll.
File maintenance	Employee files are created and periodically updated.	Business manager and superintendent's secretary maintain.
Employee evaluation	Teaching staff evaluated annually; non-teaching staff not regularly evaluated.	Principals and superintendent perform educator evaluations.
Training	Technology training provided by district; educator training also provided through videos and attending Region 7 training.	Technology director previously developed training. Curriculum director position expected to develop educator training in future.
Payroll	Manual timesheet entry, check printing.	Business manager enters time, prepares payroll.

SOURCE: Interviews with CISD staff, January 2010.

As shown in **Exhibit 7–8**, the district is accomplishing minimum personnel processes but managerial positions are performing some non-management tasks. Previously, the district had both a business manager and a technology director. The business manager position had responsibility for accounting and payroll functions. The manager also had a financial clerk to assist with accounts payable and other daily operations. The manager received additional payroll assistance from the superintendent's secretary during periods of high volume activity such as at the start of the school year. The superintendent's secretary receives a stipend for the additional duties.

Currently, the business manager is also the technology director. She is responsible for district financial activities, payroll related activities, and district technology planning and implementation. She has a technology aide who assists with day to day technology tasks. The financial aide position that previously assisted the business manager was converted to a position that manages required data reporting for the state Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) as well as performs accounts payable functions.

The superintendent's secretary currently does not assist with monthly payroll preparation duties. In interview she said her ability to assist with personnel duties is hampered by the distance between her office and the Business Office. Also, the district recently switched financial systems and she is not currently trained on the new system. She has taken steps to make the files more accessible, and will eventually be trained on the new system.

CISD central administrators are performing tasks typically assigned to clerical or administrative staff in larger organizations. As a result, strategic functions typically executed by management are not routinely performed. For example, staff should be requesting and compiling compensation data from area districts, and presenting a comparison for superintendent review—freeing the superintendent to develop a strategic vision for district compensation. The business manager could be working with the superintendent on compensation analysis, rather than entering timesheets.

For example, many bus drivers hold another job in the district. If the employee puts in an eight hour work day plus drives the bus an additional three hours each day, the employee will have 15 hours of overtime each week. The overtime rate will not be based on the hourly rate of either position, but on a blended rate of the two positions. Analysis

might find savings by adjusting shifts and workloads so bus drivers work fewer hours in the primary position to reduce the number of overtime hours created by the bus route. Putting the highest paid drivers on the shortest routes might be another savings opportunity. The human resources function should be able to support the strategic goals of the organization.

The staffing ratio for personnel staff to employees is most commonly one staff to every 100 employees. School districts may have a larger ratio of employees to staff. Factors that organizations consider in determining the appropriate level of staff include the complexity of the functions performed and the experience and training of the staff.

It can be appropriate to decentralize personnel functions in different departments. When evaluating if a dedicated personnel position is necessary or if tasks can be assigned among several employees an important consideration is the cost of each plan. If employees earning a managerial salary perform a function typically assigned to clerical staff, it may be more cost efficient to have an experienced full time human resource position. If tasks can be organized such that the appropriate level of staff is performing the appropriate level task with the appropriate training, decentralizing the function may be more cost effective in an organization with fewer employees.

CISD should reassign human resource functions from the superintendent to the appropriate level of staff and train staff in personnel administration. Rather than combine the technology and financial functions under a single manager, a more consistent alignment of responsibility would be to include personnel management as part of the Business Office management function. These functions would include oversight of the job classification process, the compensation process, and benefit processes. Processing tasks such as timesheet entry, criminal history checks, file management, and entry of benefit selections could be assigned to one or more clerical positions.

Once realigned, positions should receive training related to the functions assigned. For critical and time sensitive functions, a backup position should be identified and trained to perform the function. The business manager should receive training in the areas of the Fair Labor Standards Act, Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, compensation, employment tax and other personnel related areas. Expertise in human resource management should

allow the business manager position to provide more strategic human resource support to the superintendent.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is affected by the number and type of training programs provided to staff. Online training minimizes travel costs and can be reasonably priced. TASB will also provide school district specific training programs which can be hosted by a district and the costs shared among several districts. One online provider covers basic personnel topics for $64.95 per training topic. Web searches can also locate near-by seminars. For example, www.findaseminar.com located a human resource basics course in Tyler, Texas for $149.00. Assuming the purchase of 10 topics, the cost of one time training to provide a basic understanding of personnel laws and processes is $649.50. [$64.95 times 10 equals $649.50 rounded to $650]

DISTRICTWIDE EVALUATIONS (REC. 39)

CISD does not have an employee evaluation process that is applied uniformly and regularly throughout the district. Teachers have a state-supported evaluation process which has been implemented by the district. Evaluation of non-teaching staff is encouraged by the district but is not regularly scheduled. Without a robust evaluation program for support and administrative staff, the district loses an opportunity to develop staff skills and encourage performance.

In interviews, the superintendent acknowledged the lack of consistent evaluations for non-teaching staff. For example, maintenance, custodial, and transportation staff have not been reviewed or evaluated since the maintenance director was hired over 14 months ago. No evaluation tools are in place to set the expectations for work outcomes or staff improvement in order to communicate any goals or objectives from the district leadership. The superintendent said he wanted to develop an interactive and ongoing evaluation process where employees and supervisors set goals and review progress toward those goals throughout the year. He has taken an initial step toward that process by developing his own goals in coordination with the board, which include administrator accountability for thorough and accurate evaluation of teaching staff. The board has also approved an administrator evaluation form.

The district's evaluation process for its employees is explained in the employee handbook, which states that job performance evaluation is a continuous process focused on improvement. Evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other criteria. Evaluations are expected at least annually on written forms approved by the district.

An evaluation process has two primary components: performance expectations and assessment of performance against expectations. Job descriptions are one method of providing employees with the basic expectations for the position, although there are other tools that may also serve this function. CISD does not have district-specific job descriptions or a formally developed evaluation process that communicates the expected tasks and standards of performance to support staff and administrative employees. Without clear expectations, there is no standard against which to measure performance.

In 1997, the National Performance Review published "Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Performance Measurement." The study found that leadership is critical in designing and implementing effective evaluation systems. The study also found that the most successful performance management systems are positive learning systems that let an organization track progress toward strategic goals and objectives.

CISD should develop an evaluation process that provides clear expectations, scheduled performance reviews, and continuing feedback on progress toward goals. Working with the superintendent, the business manager should develop an evaluation form that describes the expectations for work quality, work quantity, initiative, application of skills and knowledge, work ethics, innovation, or other values the district expects from its employees. The form should include an area for the employee and supervisor to establish and measure progress toward goals. The superintendent should develop an evaluation tool for assessing the performance of his management staff and their assistance in reaching district goals.

A schedule for the evaluation process should be developed and coordinated with the board's evaluation schedule for the superintendent. Manager goals cannot be thoughtfully developed until district and superintendent goals have been decided. Employee goals cannot be fully developed until manager goals have been decided. The schedule should include benchmark dates by which each supervisor and subordinate meet to develop goals and discuss expectations at the beginning of the year, and dates by which the evaluation must be completed and discussed.

CISD should hold managers accountable for the process by including as performance measures in the managers' evaluations, implementing a meaningful and timely evaluation

of his or her subordinates, and successfully developing employees to meet district goals.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

RECORDS RETENTION (REC. 40)

CISD does not have a structured process for creating, maintaining, and storing district files. A review of district files revealed an organization scheme in newer employee files, but less organization in older employee or general business files. Without clear procedures, files may not consistently reflect that required employment procedures have been performed and changing standards for recordkeeping may not be implemented.

CISD maintains employee and financial files in locked, fire retardant cabinets inside a locked storage vault. Several employees have keys to the vault, as the vault is currently used to store office supplies. The volume of personnel records exceeds the available cabinet space, resulting in tightly, and in some cases jam-packed cabinet drawers. The business manager said staff had been organizing district files as they had time, and planned to work on the files over the summer. However, the planned reorganization of inactive files does not have a pre-determined process to follow.

When reviewing employee files, the review team noted active employee files were generally organized. Most files included a checklist of items incident to creating an employee file, but not all items were checked on all checklists. For example, one employee's checklist did not indicate contract status. Also, on at least one checklist, the corresponding document had been inserted in the file but the document did not appear to be reviewed.

Although the active employee files have recently been reorganized, employee files are not periodically reviewed to ensure files created under a former standard meets current standards. The review team noted some older files contained an occasional medical document, which under current standards should be in a separate file. Some older files contained birth certificates. Federal law regulates retaining copies of documents provided to support proof of citizenship. While the original purpose of the birth certificate was not known, were there to be an audit, the presence could result in a negative finding.

The review team also observed files with potential historical or archival value. Original files for former employees were dated as early as the 1950's. One file included a letter from the TEA allocating a "Negro vocational homemaking teacher unit" to the segregated high school. The file includes original receipts and vouchers for purchases and travel.

District records are not all stored in a central location. Files are created and maintained throughout the district. The review team did not review campus-based files, but school administrators said they keep employee and other files on-site. In addition, security cameras record events which are stored on district servers. Staff also has computers that create and store electronic records. The school has additional technology such as mobile phones which can create and transfer electronic records, and has recently contracted with a vendor for a computer system which processes and stores financial records off-site.

The district does not currently contract for storing, imaging, archiving, or destroying its records. The superintendent is investigating an electronic storage solution for paper records, but has not defined procedures for converting paper documents to electronic or imaged versions.

Retention and destruction protocols for records created electronically by the district have not been incorporated into a comprehensive district records management program. When the district changed to an off-site financial system it did not document retention standards for the vendor and has not made provision for the return of the information at the end of the contract period.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) regulates records retention for state and local governments. TSLAC recommends that local governments have a records management program that includes both hard copy and electronic records and suggests the program start with an inventory of district records. After inventory, the records should be appraised for their organizational value and a decision made on how long that value will last. Finally, a records control schedule should be developed. TSLAC has adopted a control schedule for local governments that provides the minimum requirements for retention and destruction. Many local governments adopt TSLAC's minimum requirements rather than developing custom requirements. Destroying documents before the required retention period carries statutory penalties, and many records created by school district must be retained permanently.

CISD should design and implement a records management procedure that captures and retains data in a format that is easily accessed, periodically reviewed against changing standards, historically sensitive and legally compliant. The

superintendent should review TSLAC publications for local government to make sure any contracted services that create, maintain, or convert district documents meet state standards. District staff should identify district records, whether electronic or hardcopy, and where the records are maintained. In addition to file drawers and storage rooms, electronic media should be inventoried. Working with staff, the superintendent should determine if any category of documents should be retained for more than the minimum state retention period.

A decision should also be made regarding the format and location of archived records. As technology becomes obsolete, the district will have to transfer data to supportable technology or maintain old equipment that provides access to the data created in that format. As the district upgrades or changes its technology, decisions on migration of data from an old system to a new should be made in compliance with the district's retention policies.

A schedule should be developed that identifies when categories of records will be destroyed. Records should be either archived or destroyed on schedule, and according to state requirements.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION		2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
35.	Develop a clear, documented process for setting and maintaining a comprehensive compensation program.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
36.	Develop a recruitment process that incorporates strategies for attracting employees with desired characteristics, includes post-hire programs for developing position specific knowledge in recruits, and provides performance monitoring of the strategy.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
37.	Develop accurate job descriptions for each position and maintain accuracy by periodically auditing positions and related job descriptions.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
38	Reassign human resource functions from the superintendent to the appropriate level of staff and train staff in personnel administration.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($650)
39.	Develop an evaluation process that provides clear expectations, scheduled performance reviews, and continuing feedback on progress toward goals.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
40. Design and implement a records management procedure that captures and retains data in a format that is easily accessed, periodically reviewed against changing standards, historically sensitive and legally compliant.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($650)**

CHAPTER 8

SAFETY AND SECURITY

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 8. SAFETY AND SECURITY

School districts are responsible for providing a safe learning environment for both students and staff. Safe and secure schools require identifying threats and risks, developing plans to reduce the risk, and then implementing the plans.

In 2008, 14 percent of rural schools nationwide reported a violent crime. In 2008, independent school district Police Departments in Texas reported 5,331 offenses against property or persons. Cushing Independent School District (CISD) has a district police officer to provide crime detection and suppression services. CISD's security program reflects the risk of a criminal event, the rural location of the district, and the likely law enforcement response time should a criminal or emergency event occur on district property.

District behavior management programs also reflect a low incident rate. In 2008–09, the number of reported students sent to In School Suspension (ISS) was fewer than five, and the number of students sent to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) was also fewer than five. With a reported student population in 2008–09 of 479, five students comprise only one percent of the student population.

The town of Cushing does not have its own Police Department, but relies on county law enforcement to service the area. CISD has a school Police Department consisting of one officer who is the department police chief. The district's school grounds are open and accessible to the community after hours, although district school buildings are locked and alarmed. CISD allows community groups to use its facilities after hours with notification, allowing the district to have a staff member present to make sure district property is treated appropriately.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

The relationship between the district police chief and local law enforcement is cordial, as the chief previously worked for the Nacogdoches Sheriff's Office and was the elected Constable in the precinct where CISD is located. The crime rate in the city of Cushing is lower than the county or state for both property crimes and crimes against persons. The district does not have a formal interlocal law enforcement agreement with Nacogdoches County, but the chief is fully equipped with firearms, chemical spray, a Taser™ and a marked police unit.

The district contracts with a private company for contraband-locating dog services. The dogs have not located illegal drugs, but have on occasion located prescription medication. During hunting season, a shotgun shell in a parent's vehicle may also be located. Generally, the district does not have problems with illegal drug use or weapons. Students generally feel safe enough to leave lockers open, and many do not use locks.

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

Student attendance affects a district's ability to deliver services as state funding is calculated on the number of students in average daily attendance (ADA).

LBB selected three Texas districts as Cushing ISD peers, or similarly situated districts. **Exhibit 8–1** compares CISD attendance to its peer districts, as well as the average for Educational Service Center Region VII (Region 7) where Cushing is located, and with the average for school districts in the state of Texas.

CISD's attendance is generally consistent with the region and state, varying by one to three tenths of a point across the five year period. Peer districts have slightly better attendance rates over the same period.

Exhibit 8–2 shows the ADA factor used for calculating the amount of state aid provided to CISD from 2005–06 through 2008–09.

District ADA decreased 2.45 percent between 2005–06 and 2009–10, and 2.8 percent between 2007–08 and 2009–10.

Attendance averages do not change much over the five year period from 2003–04 through 2007–08, either at the state, the region, or among the individual districts. As shown in **Exhibit 8–2**, small decreases in attendance affect district funding. When one considers that even a tenth of a percentage point represents one or more students, even small gains in attendance are important.

The district is attempting to improve attendance by providing both positive and negative reinforcement to students. Secondary school students can earn homework coupons which excuse the student from a homework assignment. Elementary students have rewards for perfect attendance such as a skating party.

EXHIBIT 8–1
CISD AVERAGE ATTENDANCE RATE
2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

DISTRICT	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Cushing ISD	**95.5%**	**95.7%**	**95.7%**	**95.6%**	**95.5%**
LaPoynor ISD	95.9%	96.1%	96.6%	95.7%	96.2%
Sudan ISD	96.3%	96.4%	96.5%	96.4%	96.0%
Rocksprings ISD	97.6%	97.6%	97.4%	97.1%	97.6%
Region 7	**95.8%**	**95.7%**	**95.7%**	**95.6%**	**95.6%**
State of Texas	**95.7%**	**95.7%**	**95.5%**	**95.5%**	**95.5%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2003–04 through 2007–08.

EXHIBIT 8–2
CISD AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE CALCULATION
2005–06 THROUGH 2008–09

YEAR	ADA*
2005–06	461.37
2006–07	464.96
2007–08	463.09
2008–09	450.06

*Some numbers have been rounded for readability.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Forecasting and Fiscal Analysis, 2005–2009.

One of the primary responsibilities assigned to the police chief is assisting the elementary and Jr–Sr high school principals with truancy. When the principal identifies a student with excessive absences, the police chief is notified. The chief completes the statutory notice to the parents, warning of the consequences of continued absenteeism. If absenteeism continues, the chief will send additional notification and will eventually file truancy charges against the student or may file failure to compel attendance charges against the parent. Truancy charges are a Class C misdemeanor filed in the local Justice of the Peace court. The chief follows up with the court, and may attend the trial if one is requested by the student or parents.

Before the district files charges against the student or parent, the district tries to conference with the parent. The first warning letter is sent after three unexcused absences and explains the Texas compulsory attendance law. It provides a list of unexcused absence dates and gives parents an opportunity to document any excused absences. The second letter is a strongly worded warning sent at five unexcused absences. It sets a conference time for the parents to meet with school administrators. The chief may attend the conferences if the principal requests his presence. If a student is seen leaving school while it is still in session, the chief may

be sent to locate the student and return the student to school.

From September 2009 to January 2010, the district sent 113 attendance first notices and 32 second notices. Eight misdemeanor cases have been filed with the Justice of the Peace.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The district has a student code of conduct for both elementary and secondary students. The code defines acceptable and unacceptable student behavior. The district provides ISS for students and holds a Saturday school for students with minor disciplinary problems. For serious offenses the district contracts with the Nacogdoches County disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP). Because the program is located 18 miles from CISD, and because the district does not provide transportation, administrators believe the DAEP has been an effective deterrent. Administrators also believe that students who have attended the DAEP return to the district on grade-level.

The district has a progressive discipline policy which sets different levels of punishment for different levels of misbehavior. Less serious offenses or first time offenses have different consequences than serious or pattern misbehavior. The district also has a policy detailing the acceptable use of technology and sets progressive consequences for violations.

Disciplinary decisions can be appealed. Administrators say discipline is fairly decided, and the check on disciplinary consistency is the social interaction of the community. Parents are quick to contact administrators or the board if they believe discipline has been unfairly applied.

The district is also providing training to teachers on discipline management. The elementary school is implementing a

program that provides identification and targeted intervention for students with conduct control challenges. The board has tasked the police chief with providing monthly programs on law related issues that affect student conduct such as drug and alcohol abuse. The district also participates in Red Ribbon Week targeting drug and alcohol abuse. Other intervention programs include a visit from the Grim Reaper and a teen driver program targeting safe driving. CISD also participates in an inmate speaker program where prisoners talk to students about the decisions that led to their incarceration.

The school review included a survey on school safety. **Exhibit 8–3** shows the perception of CISD teachers and students on the district's ability to provide a safe, secure learning environment.

Surveyed students believe school safety is below average or poor more often than surveyed teachers. However, the majority of students, 51 percent, believe the school does a good or excellent job at providing a secure environment. A large majority of teachers, 72.7 percent, believe CISD does a good or excellent job at school safety.

At 18.2 percent, the percentage of teachers who feel discipline consistency is poor or below average is similar to the 20.4 percent of students who believe the consistency of discipline is poor or below average in the district. The percentage of students and teachers believing the consistency of district discipline is good or excellent is also similar—40.8 percent of students compared with 39.4 percent of teachers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- CISD developed a student attendance reward program which seeks to reduce truancy and provide students with an incentive to attend college.

- CISD received a risk management grant to purchase security cameras.

FINDINGS

- CISD has not developed a full range of policies and procedures to guide its newly created Police Department, which could help reduce the risk of liability for the district.

- CISD is not prepared to meet state justice standards if a juvenile arrest is made or juvenile law enforcement action is taken, leaving the district at risk for non-compliance with state law.

- CISD has not budgeted for the minimum training needs of its law enforcement officer, leaving the district at risk for regulatory non-compliance when state training funds are provided.

- CISD does not have a process that regularly identifies potential and existing safety concerns, or that ensures hazards are promptly addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 41: Draft a comprehensive policy manual for the district's Police Department which includes policies for all areas where the district has potential liability.**

EXHIBIT 8–3
CISD SAFETY AND SECURITY SURVEY RESPONSES
JANUARY 2010

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.						
Teachers	0.0%	3.0%	24.2%	48.5%	24.2%	0.0%
Students	4.1%	10.2%	30.6%	38.8%	12.2%	4.1%
The working relationship that security personnel have with principals, teachers, staff and students.						
Teachers	0.0%	3.1%	15.6%	37.5%	43.8%	0.0%
Students	8.2%	4.1%	28.6%	32.7%	14.3%	12.2%
The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.						
Teachers	6.1%	12.1%	42.4%	24.2%	15.2%	0.0%
Students	10.2%	10.2%	28.6%	30.6%	10.2%	10.2%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: CISD School Review Surveys, January 2010.

- **Recommendation 42: Arrange a juvenile holding area, develop procedures for arrest and detention of juvenile students, and ensure officers are trained in juvenile law in educational settings.**

- **Recommendation 43: Develop a training budget based on state requirements for certified officers and on district goals for its Police Department.**

- **Recommendation 44: Develop an audit protocol for identifying safety and security concerns, a procedure for prioritizing and correcting them, and a quality control review to ensure projects are completed timely.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE REWARD PROGRAM

CISD developed a student attendance reward program which seeks to reduce truancy and provide students an incentive to attend college. In 2007–08, CISD had an attendance rate at 95.5 percent, which closely reflects the state and region averages of 95.5 percent and 95.6 percent respectively. For 2009–10, the district set an attendance goal of 98 percent.

As an incentive to consistently attend school, students in grades 9–12 can earn attendance rewards through a program called Cushing Attendance Scholarship Help (CASH). The program is promoted on classroom bulletin boards throughout the Jr–Sr high school. The most popular reward is the homework coupon, which students can earn each grading period and use to excuse a homework assignment. The second reward is for sustained attendance, and it provides up to a $125 tuition scholarship per year for each year the student is absent no more than two days. To receive the scholarship, a graduating student must enroll in a college or vocational school.

CASH began in fall of 2009, with a budget of $2,000 for scholarship awards. The program is guaranteed to continue through 2012–13 and will be evaluated at the end of each school year to determine if it will be extended to the entering ninth grade class. Funding for the scholarship comes from High School Allotment—appropriated in 2006 by the Texas Legislature to promote programs that improve high school graduation rates or college readiness rates. A college readiness program is one that increases the number of students enrolling in college. A performance award or incentive program for students is one of the ways a Texas school district can spend its allotment funds.

While it is a new program, early figures show student attendance is increasing. The first six weeks of 2009–10, 97 students met attendance goals; the second six weeks 119 students met attendance goals; and the third six weeks 106 students met attendance goals.

RISK MANAGEMENT GRANT

CISD received a risk management grant to purchase security cameras. The $3,000 grant was awarded in May 2009 by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund, and was the result of the district's application for funding to purchase an additional security camera for the Jr–Sr high school. The district used other funds to purchase a second camera to provide additional security for the campus.

DETAILED FINDINGS

POLICY GUIDANCE (REC. 41)

CISD has not developed a full range of policies and procedures to guide its Police Department. In 2008–09, the board hired the district's first certified peace officer to perform safety and security functions. The officer developed one policy guiding his use of force, but other policies typically found in police agencies have not been drafted or adopted.

The district officer is the chief of the department, although it is a one person department at this time. The police chief is a full-service officer who carries both lethal and non-lethal weapons and drives a marked police car with standard law enforcement equipment such as lights and siren. In addition to his firearm, the chief has a Taser™ which allows an officer to subdue a violent or aggressive person from a distance. When attending a Taser™ user course, the trainer advised course participants to have a "use of force" policy. The chief subsequently drafted a use of force policy for the district, but has not submitted it to the board for adoption. There are no policies that authorize or limit the type of weapons or ammunition used by district police. There are no policies that require an officer to be trained on the use of a weapon before using the weapon, although the chief does train on a weapon before carrying it.

The district recently purchased a marked police vehicle for the officer to drive. The vehicle is used as a visible deterrent when parked in view of persons approaching district property. The chief also uses the vehicle to pick up truant students and return them to school. However, the district does not have any written guidelines on the use of the vehicle. The district does not have policies regarding appropriate use of the vehicle

on or off-duty; regarding high speed pursuits or use of district property in off-duty employment; or regarding personal use of the vehicle or requiring waivers of liability if personal use is allowed.

In addition, there are no policies that require or limit commuting in the district vehicle. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) generally considers commuting in an employer's vehicle to be a taxable fringe benefit. There are exceptions for law enforcement vehicles, but the IRS expects the benefit to be guided by employer adopted policies and procedures for appropriate use.

The district has not adopted a uniform policy for its officers. Police agencies frequently have policies that describe the uniform, whether formal or casual, and may also limit visible display of weapons to uniforms that clearly identify the officer as law enforcement. Clothing provided by an employer can also be considered as a taxable fringe benefit. IRS provides an exception for uniforms, but one of the requirements for the exception is a uniform policy.

There is no procedural guidance on taking law enforcement action. In an interview with the review team, the chief said the process of reporting incidents and actions was informal. Sometimes he makes a report; at other times he may call local law enforcement. At times he may also assist other agencies outside of school hours, although he typically does not go off campus to perform law enforcement duties. While the discretion to take law enforcement action is central to an officer's responsibility, when and how to report to the chain of command as well as guidance on appropriate use of discretion is included in many law enforcement policy manuals. Further, the Texas Education Code, Section 37.081, authorizes school district boards to set limits on a school district officer's activities.

While law enforcement can reduce the risks associated with criminal activity, the nature and tools of the job also carry risks. The board has not given direction to the chief on developing policies that address areas of potential district liability. The chief has not presented the board with suggested policies for adoption.

The Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) advises state and local governments to adopt law enforcement standards. CALEA also advises that one of the best defenses against complaints is that an officer was acting according to an established, written policy that meets accepted national standards.

CISD should draft a comprehensive policy manual for the district's Police Department, which includes policies for all areas where the district has potential liability. The chief should meet with the superintendent and outline the areas for policy development. To assist in identifying standards that should be included, the chief should review policies from other school Police Departments as well as national standards. Once an outline has been developed, the superintendent should submit the outline to the board for additional input or direction for drafting.

Once the board has given its direction, the chief should draft the policies and procedures. The superintendent should review the draft and if acceptable, submit it to the board for adoption.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR JUVENILE DETENTIONS (REC. 42)

CISD is not prepared to meet state justice standards if a juvenile arrest is made or juvenile law enforcement action is taken, leaving the district at risk for non-compliance with state law. Texas law recognizes that the criminal justice system should not treat a juvenile and an adult in the same manner and sets requirements for law enforcement when taking a juvenile into custody. The district's law enforcement officer has not arrested a juvenile student yet, but should it occur the district does not have a certified holding area or a clear agreement with local law enforcement for transporting arrestees.

The law enforcement office is a small room at the entrance of the high school. It is large enough to hold two chairs and a narrow desk. It is partially enclosed with glass to allow the officer to view the main entrance and hallways while working at his desk. The contents of the room and its inhabitants are also visible to persons in the hallway. The room is not configured as a processing area for persons detained on suspicion of criminal activity.

The district police car is a marked law enforcement vehicle, but it does not have a cage or other protective divider between the driver and any riders in the back seat. The vehicle is not configured for transporting arrestees as its primary use is for transporting truant students back to campus. In the law enforcement community, the arresting officer is typically responsible for processing and transporting the arrestee. This generally includes providing offense reports and affidavits

necessary for the booking and magistration of the arrestee. The police chief has good working relationships with local law enforcement, but does not have any memoranda of understanding regarding the transportation and booking of district arrestees.

The Texas Family Code, Chapter 52, prescribes duties when a child is placed in law enforcement custody. A child in custody must be in a room or office approved by the local juvenile board. The child can only be temporarily detained in a juvenile processing office while waiting to be released to a parent or guardian, or while the officer takes a statement or completes the paperwork incident to the detention. The child may not be left unattended and cannot stay longer than six hours in the juvenile processing office. If the child is not taken to a juvenile processing office, the child must be immediately released to parents, taken to a designated official, taken to an appropriate detention facility, or taken to a medical facility as necessary. The Texas Family Code has other juvenile specific requirements.

State law also sets different requirements for an educator than for a law enforcement officer when taking certain actions against a student who poses a threat to himself or others. The Texas Administrative Code and the Texas Education Code prescribe procedures for the use of physical restraint against a special population student. The action must be documented and reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). These requirements do not apply to law enforcement.

Federal law also affects law enforcement in a school setting. The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) places limitations on what type of student information can be shared, and with whom. One exception to the disclosure limits is state and local authorities within the context of juvenile justice activities and pursuant to applicable state law.

The district does not have a policy to guide the use of law enforcement in a school setting. For example, should the district share student medical information with its officer to reduce the risk that chemical sprays are used on students with pulmonary or vision disabilities? Or, should less than lethal weapons be used on special populations and under what circumstances? And, can a teacher call in law enforcement to subdue a student to avoid the restraint and reporting standards for educators?

The district has hired an experienced law enforcement officer who formerly served as a deputy sheriff and as an elected constable. He has attended Chief of Police training and

completed the required Texas Commission for Law Enforcement Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) trainings. However, the chief has not taken any school specific law enforcement training courses since taking the district job. The superintendent has not identified any district required or suggested training for the chief to take.

The legal standards for juvenile justice are sufficiently distinct that the Texas Attorney General has created a Juvenile Crime Intervention Unit as well as juvenile justice training and handbooks for law enforcement. TCLEOSE has recognized the challenges of law enforcement in a school setting and created a certification course for school-based law enforcement officers.

CISD should arrange a juvenile holding area, develop procedures for arrest and detention of juvenile students, and ensure officers are trained in juvenile law in educational settings. The chief should research the minimum requirements for a juvenile processing office and work with the superintendent to identify an appropriate space and equip it accordingly. The chief should contact the county juvenile board for their approval of the space.

The chief should contact local law enforcement agencies with authority to take law enforcement action within the boundaries of CISD and discuss a memorandum of understanding for agency response. The memorandum should include transportation of arrestees, expectations for incident reports from CISD, and follow up on the resolution of the incident. The superintendent should approve the draft memorandum before submitting it to the board for approval and signature.

The chief should identify and attend school-based law enforcement training, as well as research related materials that will assist him in drafting juvenile specific law enforcement policies. The chief should meet with principals, the counselor, and relevant teaching staff in developing procedures for responding to a special or sensitive student population. The superintendent should review the draft procedures before submitting them to the board for approval and signature.

The fiscal impact for this recommendation is based on a cost of $250 for the TCLEOSE school-based officer course the first year, and $295 for the Texas School Based Law Enforcement Conference in future years. The school based officer course is sponsored by the Texas School Safety Center and is held throughout the state. The 40-hour course of training will require travel expenses of $121 for each day of

training (state rate of $85 per night plus $36 per meals) for five days. The Texas School Based Law Enforcement Conference will also require five days of travel expenses of $121 for each day of training. The total fiscal impact for the first year of implementation is $855 [$250 plus ($121 times 5 days)]. The cost of conference and hotel for subsequent years is $900 [$295 plus ($121 times 5 days)]. The total fiscal impact for this training over five years is $4,455.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING BUDGET (REC. 43)

CISD has not budgeted for the minimum training needs of its law enforcement officer, leaving the district at risk for regulatory non-compliance when state training funds are provided. While the district has paid for the police chief to attend training, the chief makes a direct request for funds rather than having a budgeted amount he can count on to meet the training required of Texas peace officers.

The Texas Occupations Code requires 40 hours of approved training in a 24-month cycle. Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) has identified a four year training cycle from 2009 to 2013. This four-year cycle has been broken into two 24-month training units for purposes of the required course offerings. **Exhibit 8–4** provides a sample of TCLEOSE training requirements.

In addition, a law enforcement agency must have its officers demonstrate firearms proficiency on an annual basis. The successful completion of the requirements must be documented and kept on file should TCLEOSE want to review the records. The minimum course of fire sets standards for handguns, shotguns, rifles and automatic weapons, depending on the firearms approved for use by the agency. CISD does not have a range, but the chief has developed relationships with local agencies who have allowed him to qualify with his weapon on area ranges.

Each agency or training provider is required to maintain proof of an officer's successful completion of mandated training. Training reports must be submitted to the commission within 30 days of the completion of the training.

The state provides training money to law enforcement agencies. The funds are allocated on a statutory formula and are administered by the Comptroller of Public Accounts. The funds can only be used by the law enforcement agency, and only as necessary for continuing education. The law that authorizes the distribution requires the agency to maintain a detailed record of receipts and expenditures which can be audited by the state. The state funds are not supposed to take the place of local funding for officers.

The chief has completed the paperwork to establish his office as an agency eligible for state training money. An agency must report its eligibility statistics annually. The chief expects to be eligible for funding in 2010.

In 2004, the State Auditor's Office reviewed law enforcement agencies across the state to determine compliance with

EXHIBIT 8–4
TCLEOSE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
2009–13

REQUIREMENT	FREQUENCY
New Chief's Education (40 hours)	No later than the second anniversary date of appointment
Chief's Continuing Education (40 hours)	During the two-year training unit for chief's who have already completed the New Chief's course
State and Federal Law Update	Each two-year training unit
Basic Certification: Cultural Diversity, Special Investigative Topics, Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) update course	During the four-year training cycle
Intermediate Certification: Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation, Crime Scene Investigation, Use of Force, Arrest Search & Seizure, Spanish for Law Enforcement, Identity Crimes, Asset Forfeiture, Racial Profiling, and either CIT or Mental Health Officer training plus one of an additional list of courses which includes chief training	During the four-year training cycle
Advanced Certification: must have met training and education requirements for basic and intermediate certification and CIT or Mental Health Officer Training (CIT required if the intermediate certificate was issued before 2005)	During the four-year training cycle

SOURCE: Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education, Peace Officer Certification Chart, Sept. 1, 2009.

statutory restrictions on fund use. The audit found that some agencies were not budgeting local funds for training and observed that when state funds make up 60 to 100 percent of training expenditures, the state funds have by definition replaced local funding. The audit also noted that even where local funds are provided, the use of state funds before using local funds can result in non-compliance with the intent of the statute. The audit included suggested practices for segregating and tracking state funds separately from local funds to ensure statutory compliance.

The district should develop a training budget based on state requirements for certified officers and on district goals for its Police Department. The chief should work with the superintendent to develop a budget that ensures minimum state training and any additional district desired training can be timely accomplished. Policies for the management of state funds received should be developed with assistance from the business manager and adopted prior to the receipt of funds. CISD has done a good job in providing funds for officer training, but by establishing a budget the district will be prepared for compliance when state training funds are received.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SAFETY AUDIT (REC. 44)

CISD does not have a process that regularly identifies potential and existing safety concerns, or that ensures hazards are promptly addressed. In 2007–08, a health department consultant performed a safety survey preparatory to the district becoming a medical supply dispensing point in the event of a disaster. The 2008–09 District Improvement Plan (DIP) identifies implementing the recommendations from the consultant's report as a safety initiative. However, the district law enforcement officer has not performed any audits since his hiring in 2008–09, so there has not been a status update of the two year old audit by the health department consultant.

A life-safety issue was identified during a review team interview with the elementary school principal. The elementary school uses a manual fire alarm process, whereby a person detecting a fire must run to the school office and alert the principal, who must then manually trigger the alarm located in her office. If the principal is out and her office locked, the office staff must get the key and unlock the door before manually triggering the alarm. Moreover, there are smoke detectors in the classrooms, but they are residential

detectors purchased at a local retail store and are not commercial grade. The principal said the office is not positioned to always hear the type of detectors purchased. She also said there had been a safety review conducted in August 2008 which alerted the district to the fire safety problem in her school; however, no changes were made. The district provided a copy of that review, but the fire safety review has not been monitored for completion.

In addition, school principals said they have a problem with unannounced visitors disrupting the school day. Both the Jr–Sr high school and the elementary school were built during a time when schools were not designed for the same security challenges faced today. District administration is co-located within the Jr–Sr high school which creates additional foot traffic into the building. A visitor using the main entrance to the Jr–Sr high school cannot easily determine where to go once inside. The door nearest the entrance is the district Business Office. During an interview with Business Office staff, several persons came into the office and had to be redirected to some other part of the building for their business.

The district has posted a sign that directs visitors to the high school principal's office to check in. However, no sign differentiates between the Business Office, the superintendent's office, or the Jr–Sr high office for purposes of check-in.

When questioned about a reference to a "safety officer" in district crisis management plans, the police chief said that he was the safety officer. The chief said he has an informal process for determining safety needs, which consists of talking to principals and the superintendent. He also said that the superintendent may ask for his input on an issue. For example, he was asked his thoughts on what security concerns should be addressed in the new building; however, the chief does not have a process that links safety issues to a solution that is submitted for budget consideration.

Exhibit 8–5 shows district safety and security concerns and how they have been addressed by the district.

When asked about the process for identifying and budgeting needed safety programs the chief stated he did not actively participate in the budget process. He said he provided some information to the superintendent but did not have ongoing interaction regarding the status of his budget suggestions. While the chief felt he could go to the superintendent if he really needed something, he does not have daily responsibility for his budget. There is no process that links identification of safety issues with a budget to correct them.

EXHIBIT 8–5
SECURITY CONCERNS AND DISTRICT RESPONSES
2009–10

CONCERN	CISD RESPONSE	STATUS
Safe playgrounds	The district relocated the elementary playground to provide distance between young students and ongoing construction.	The district did not consult the elementary principal on the new location. After the move, the principal expressed concern over a drop-off near the equipment area and suggested the addition of cushioning materials to reduce the drop. The district did not add the materials until after a child fell over the edge and was seriously injured.
Visitor identification	CISD has a policy that requires all visitors to wear a badge while on school grounds. The badge is single use, and has the name and photo of the visitor, as well as the date and intended location of the visit. The information on the badge is produced by a system that scans the visitor's driver's license and identifies any criminal convictions of the visitor.	Visitors are not consistently screened for access into the building. Additionally, the construction crew or other vendors that enter the schools infrequently are not required to obtain a pass.
Building security	Cameras were added to the interior of the high school and elementary school to allow administrators to see students and visitors as they enter and exit the school, and as a deterrent to student misbehavior.	Location of the cameras resulted in interior blind spots and little surveillance on the outside of the schools. While placement concerns have been identified, there is no clear plan for moving them. The chief said he might be asked to help move them but was not sure when it would be. The elementary school relies upon watching the parking lot for visitors through the office window and locks exits during the afternoon. The high school principal follows students who exit the building to see how they will leave campus, as cameras do not capture this aspect of truant behavior.
Crisis management	The district officer updated the crisis management plan in 2008–09, and has held at least one fire drill to test the procedures.	During the drill, one student was accidently allowed to stay in the library. The district had a debriefing to determine how it occurred and how to correct it in the future. The district has not held any group exercises with local emergency response providers but intends on holding one this summer. The district does not develop a drill schedule to ensure required and encouraged drill types are performed.

SOURCE: Interviews with CISD staff, January 2010.

Texas school districts are required to have a safety audit every three years and to report the audit to the Texas School Safety Center (TSSC). CISD reported safety audit information to TSSC in August 2008, the first deadline for school districts. However, the review team was unable to determine who performed the audit and if TSSC audit protocols were followed. The next audit is due by August 31, 2011. In the interim, school districts are expected to perform an annual status review to substantiate progress toward correcting the safety issues identified in the initial audit and determine if any new issues have developed. CISD does not have procedures in place to ensure statutory compliance, to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive audit process, or to ensure life-safety issues will be budgeted for and timely addressed.

CISD should develop an audit protocol for identifying safety and security concerns, a procedure for prioritizing and correcting them, and a quality control review to ensure projects are completed timely. CISD's police chief should obtain a copy of the TSSC suggested audit protocols to ensure a comprehensive audit process is in place and that information is gathered in an appropriate format for the mandated reporting. The TSSC audit protocols are much broader based than a fire safety review. The chief should also obtain a copy of previous fire/safety reports and review the

findings. The chief should develop a format for identifying the problem, a solution, an estimated cost, and a life-safety priority. **Exhibit 8–6** provides a suggested format.

If the superintendent or board elects not to address a finding, a notation may be entered into the completion data column so the finding does not appear to be neglected. The chief should update the checklist at least annually, and provide the superintendent and the board with a status report. The update and status report should be timed to ensure corrections that could not be funded from the past year budget can be included in the upcoming year's budget process.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

EXHIBIT 8–6
SAMPLE SAFETY AUDIT COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

AUDIT FINDING	PRIORITY	SOLUTION	ESTIMATED COST	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE COMPLETED
Visitor identification policy is not applied consistently to all visitors and vendors	1	Broaden application of the policy to all non-district employees and train students and district employees to refer unidentified persons to the office for a badge.	None	Police chief provides training at start of school assembly and summer employee training.	
Crisis drills not expansive enough	3	Develop a varied drill schedule which includes unannounced drills and at least one community response drill.	None	Police chief will develop drill schedule with approval of the superintendent.	
Camera placement needs to minimize blind spots	2	Develop schematic for minimum effective placement. Identify additional equipment as necessary.	District solicited bids for camera and data cable in December 2009	Police chief will work with technology director to move current cameras to more effective locations and cost additional cameras to complete effective surveillance grid. Technology director should submit the cost and upgrade schedule to the superintendent.	

SOURCE: School Review Team, March 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
41. Draft a comprehensive policy manual for the district's Police Department, which includes policies for all areas where the district has potential liability.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
42. Arrange a juvenile holding area, develop procedures for arrest and detention of juvenile students, and ensure officers are trained in juvenile law in educational settings.	($855)	($900)	($900)	($900)	($900)	($4,455)	$0
43. Develop a training budget based on state requirements for certified officers and on district goals for its Police Department.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
44. Develop an audit protocol for identifying safety and security concerns, a procedure for prioritizing and correcting them, and a quality control review to ensure projects are completed timely.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS	**($855)**	**($900)**	**($900)**	**($900)**	**($900)**	**($4,455)**	**$0**

APPENDICES

CUSHING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

PARENT SURVEY

N = 31

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding or multiple responses.

		NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	6.5%	93.5%

		NO RESPONSE	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	83.3%	0.0%	10%	0.0%	6.7%

		NO RESPONSE	0–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED/WORKED IN CUSHING ISD?	0.0%	25.8%	16.1%	58.1%

4.	WHAT GRADE LEVEL(S) DOES YOUR CHILD OR CHILDREN ATTEND?	GRADE LEVEL	
		Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	35.5%
		Elementary (Grades 1–5)	58.1%
		Middle School (Grades 6–8)	29.0%
		High School (Grades 9–12)	35.5%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1.	The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	8.0%	8.0%	28.0%	24.0%	12.0%	20.0%
2.	The performance of the school board in setting good policies for the district.	12.0%	4.0%	48.0%	20.0%	16.0%	0.0%
3.	The superintendent's performance as an instructional leader and business manager.	0.0%	24.0%	20.0%	24.0%	32.0%	0.0%
4.	The ability of the superintendent and the school board to work well together.	4.0%	8.0%	28.0%	32.0%	20.0%	8.0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
5.	The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	12.0%	16.0%	32.0%	28.0%	0.0%	12.0%
6.	The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	0.0%	28.0%	32.0%	20.0%	4.0%	16.0%
7.	The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	0.0%	8.0%	56.0%	24.0%	8.0%	4.0%

8. District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	4.2%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	29.2%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	50.0%	Summer School Programs	12.5%
Special Education	29.2%	Alternative Education Programs	8.3%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	4.2%	English as a Second Language Programs	37.5%
Dyslexia	25.0%	Dropout Prevention Programs	29.2%
Student Mentoring	37.5%	Career Counseling Program	37.5%
Advanced Placement	29.2%	College Counseling Program	41.7%
Literacy	25.0%	Counseling Parents of Students	50.0%

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
9.	The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	8.0%	20.0%	44.0%	20.0%	0.0%	8.0%
10.	The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	12.0%	12.0%	28.0%	36.0%	4.0%	8.0%
11.	The overall quality of district teachers.	4.0%	4.0%	28.0%	48.0%	16.0%	0.0%
12.	Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	8.0%	24.0%	28.0%	24.0%	16.0%	0.0%
13.	The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	0.0%	12.0%	20.0%	48.0%	20.0%	0.0%
14.	The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	48.0%	48.0%	0.0%

15. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	30.0%	English or Language Arts	5.0%	Physical Education	25.0%
Writing	25.0%	Computer Instruction	15.0%	Business Education	15.0%
Mathematics	40.0%	Social Studies (history or geography)	20.0%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	40.0%
Science	35.0%	Fine Arts	30.0%	Foreign Language	15.0%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
16.	The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents	28.0%	12.0%	28.0%	12.0%	20.0%	0.0%
17.	The availability of district facilities for community use.	12.0%	4.0%	24.0%	32.0%	20.0%	8.0%
18.	The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	8.0%	16.0%	32.0%	12.0%	8.0%	24.0%
19.	The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	12.0%	32.0%	20.0%	16.0%	12.0%	8.0%

D.   FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
20. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	20.0%	24.0%	24.0%	8.0%	16.0%	8.0%
21. The cleanliness of schools.	4.0%	12.0%	24.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
22. The proper and timely maintenance of campus buildings.	8.0%	12.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%

E.   FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	12.0%	4.0%	32.0%	16.0%	8.0%	28.0%
24. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	12.0%	12.0%	28.0%	12.0%	8.0%	28.0%
25. The availability and usefulness of the district's financial reports.	16.0%	16.0%	20.0%	28.0%	4.0%	16.0%
26. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	16.0%	12.0%	16.0%	24.0%	12.0%	20.0%

F.   PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	4.2%	0.0%	37.5%	41.7%	12.5%	4.2%
28. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	4.2%	4.2%	25.0%	37.5%	20.8%	8.3%
29. The condition and age of textbooks.	4.2%	4.2%	33.3%	50.0%	4.2%	4.2%

G.   FOOD SERVICES

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	29.2%	50.0%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%
31. The length of time students have to eat.	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	8.3%	4.2%	0.0%
32. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	0.0%	12.5%	45.8%	33.3%	4.2%	4.2%
33. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	17.4%	13.0%	39.1%	21.7%	8.7%	0.0%
34. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	8.3%	12.5%	33.3%	37.5%	4.2%	4.2%

H.   TRANSPORTATION

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
35. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	0.0%	0.0%	41.7%	37.5%	0.0%	20.8%
36. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	4.2%	4.2%	29.2%	33.3%	12.5%	16.7%
37. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	4.2%	4.2%	25.0%	41.7%	12.5%	12.5%
38. The arrival of buses in time for students to eat breakfast.	0.0%	0.0%	29.2%	50.0%	8.3%	12.5%
39. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	8.3%	4.2%	25.0%	37.5%	4.2%	20.8%

I.   SAFETY AND SECURITY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
40. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	4.2%	4.2%	50.0%	37.5%	4.2%	0.0%
41. The district's effectiveness in addressing gang issues if they exist.	4.2%	4.2%	25.0%	25.0%	16.7%	25.0%
42. The district's effectiveness in addressing drug issues if they exist	8.3%	4.2%	37.5%	20.8%	12.5%	16.7%
43. The district's effectiveness in addressing vandalism issues if they exist	8.3%	0.0%	29.2%	16.7%	16.7%	29.2%
44. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	0.0%	8.7%	26.1%	39.1%	21.7%	4.3%
45. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	25.0%	12.5%	29.2%	29.2%	4.2%	0.0%
46. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	8.3%	8.3%	37.5%	41.7%	0.0%	4.2%

J.   COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	0.0%	4.2%	29.2%	41.7%	12.5%	12.5%
48. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	0.0%	0.0%	20.8%	29.2%	37.5%	12.5%
49. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	0.0%	4.2%	20.8%	20.8%	41.7%	12.5%
50. Easy student access to the Internet.	0.0%	4.2%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	12.5%

TEACHER SURVEY

N = 36

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding or multiple responses.

		NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	5.7%	94.3%

		NO RESPONSE	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	96.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%

		NO RESPONSE	0–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED/WORKED IN CUSHING ISD?	0.0%	33.3%	27.8%	38.9%

4.	WHAT GRADE LEVEL(S) DO YOU TEACH?	GRADE LEVEL	
		Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	17.1%
		Elementary (Grades 1–5)	51.4%
		Middle School (Grades 6–8)	22.9%
		High School (Grades 9–12)	45.7%

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1.	The ability of staff to quickly and easily purchase needed goods and services.	0.0%	0.0%	12.1%	36.4%	51.5%	0.0%
2.	The competitiveness of district salaries with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	12.1%	33.3%	36.4%	15.2%	3.0%
3.	The effectiveness of the district's program to orient new employees.	3.0%	21.2%	36.4%	33.3%	6.1%	0.0%
4.	The district's effectiveness in identifying and rewarding competence and excellent performance.	0.0%	21.2%	27.3%	33.3%	12.1%	6.1%
5.	The district's effectiveness in dealing appropriately with employees who perform below the standard of expectation (up to and including termination)	3.1%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	21.9%
6.	The ability of the district's health insurance package to meet my needs.	3.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	15.2%	15.2%
7.	The fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.	0.0%	3.0%	15.2%	21.2%	3.0%	57.6%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A.   *DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT*

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
8. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	0.0%	0.0%	31.3%	37.5%	12.5%	18.8%
9. The performance of the school board in setting good policies for the district.	0.0%	6.3%	28.1%	46.9%	18.8%	0.0%
10. The superintendent's performance as an instructional leader and business manager.	0.0%	12.5%	9.4%	37.5%	34.4%	6.3%
11. The ability of the superintendent and the school board to work well together.	0.0%	0.0%	15.6%	46.9%	28.1%	9.4%

B.   *EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY*

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	0.0%	15.2%	24.2%	24.2%	18.2%	18.2%
13. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	0.0%	6.1%	33.3%	24.2%	18.2%	18.2%
14. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	0.0%	12.1%	33.3%	39.4%	15.2%	0.0%

15.   District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	0.0%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	40.7%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	63.0%	Summer School Programs	33.3%
Special Education	18.5%	Alternative Education Programs	3.7%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	0.0%	English as a Second Language Programs	29.6%
Dyslexia	29.6%	Dropout Prevention Programs	40.7%
Student Mentoring	29.6%	Career Counseling Program	37.0%
Advanced Placement	18.5%	College Counseling Program	33.3%
Literacy	22.2%	Counseling Parents of Students	29.6%

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
16. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	3.0%	12.1%	42.4%	36.4%	6.1%	0.0%
17. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	9.1%	15.2%	21.2%	30.3%	9.1%	15.2%
18. The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	3.0%	18.2%	42.4%	36.4%	0.0%
19. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0.0%	9.1%	30.3%	27.3%	33.3%	0.0%
20. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	0.0%	9.1%	15.2%	33.3%	42.4%	0.0%
21. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	30.3%	60.6%	0.0%

22.   District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	40.0%	English or Language Arts	16.0%	Physical Education	24.0%
Writing	36.0%	Computer Instruction	20.0%	Business Education	8.0%
Mathematics	52.0%	Social Studies (history or geography)	16.0%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	28.0%
Science	64.0%	Fine Arts	32.0%	Foreign Language	16.0%

C.   COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents	0.0%	6.1%	42.4%	21.2%	30.3%	0.0%
24. The availability of district facilities for community use.	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	24.2%	30.3%	12.1%
25. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	3.1%	28.1%	21.9%	18.8%	21.9%	6.3%
26. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	3.0%	12.1%	39.4%	30.3%	9.1%	6.1%

D.   FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	12.1%	6.1%	30.3%	18.2%	27.3%	6.1%
28. The cleanliness of schools.	0.0%	9.1%	21.2%	33.3%	36.4%	0.0%
29. The proper and timely maintenance of campus buildings.	0.0%	6.1%	27.3%	39.4%	27.3%	0.0%

E.   FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	6.1%	9.1%	21.2%	36.4%	6.1%	21.2%
31. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	3.0%	6.1%	27.3%	21.2%	6.1%	36.4%
32. The availability and usefulness of the district's financial reports.	6.1%	3.0%	27.3%	24.2%	12.1%	27.3%
33. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	0.0%	3.0%	27.3%	21.2%	21.2%	27.3%

F.   PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	0.0%	3.0%	21.2%	39.4%	36.4%	0.0%
35. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	42.4%	36.4%	3.0%
36. The condition and age of textbooks.	0.0%	9.1%	27.3%	39.4%	18.2%	6.1%

G. FOOD SERVICES

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
37. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	21.2%	42.4%	15.2%	6.1%	6.1%	9.1%
38. The amount of time students have to eat.	9.1%	6.1%	66.7%	15.2%	0.0%	3.0%
39. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	3.0%	9.1%	54.5%	24.2%	0.0%	9.1%
40. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	3.0%	18.2%	39.4%	18.2%	15.2%	6.1%
41. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	0.0%	6.1%	21.2%	42.4%	18.2%	12.1%

H. TRANSPORTATION

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
42. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	30.3%	6.1%	45.5%
43. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	0.0%	0.0%	21.2%	24.2%	12.1%	42.4%
44. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	39.4%	21.2%	21.2%
45. The arrival of buses in time for students to eat breakfast.	0.0%	0.0%	15.2%	42.4%	24.2%	18.2%
46. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	3.0%	0.0%	15.2%	33.3%	12.1%	36.4%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	0.0%	3.0%	24.2%	48.5%	24.2%	0.0%
48. The district's effectiveness in addressing gang issues if they exist.	0.0%	0.0%	21.2%	15.2%	24.2%	39.4%
49. The district's effectiveness in addressing drug issues if they exist	3.0%	3.0%	30.3%	27.3%	21.2%	15.2%
50. The district's effectiveness in addressing vandalism issues if they exist	0.0%	3.0%	21.2%	24.2%	21.2%	30.3%
51. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	0.0%	3.1%	15.6%	37.5%	43.8%	0.0%
52. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	6.1%	12.1%	42.4%	24.2%	15.2%	0.0%
53. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	0.0%	6.1%	36.4%	33.3%	24.2%	0.0%

J.   COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
54. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	0.0%	12.5%	18.8%	43.8%	25.0%	0.0%
55. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	31.3%	50.0%	0.0%
56. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	0.0%	3.1%	15.6%	28.1%	53.1%	0.0%
57. Easy student access to the Internet.	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	34.4%	53.1%	0.0%

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

N = 31

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding or multiple responses.

		NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	12.9%	87.1%

		NO RESPONSE	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	73.3%	0.0%	10.0%	6.7%	10.0%

		NO RESPONSE	0–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED/WORKED IN CUSHING ISD?	0.0%	32.3%	3.2%	64.5%

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1.	The ability of staff to quickly and easily purchase needed goods and services.	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	50.0%	39.3%	7.1%
2.	The competitiveness of district salaries with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	14.3%	25.0%	35.7%	7.1%	17.9%
3.	The effectiveness of the district's program to orient new employees.	0.0%	17.9%	21.4%	35.7%	7.1%	17.9%
4.	The district's effectiveness in identifying and rewarding competence and excellent performance.	3.6%	28.6%	25.0%	28.6%	10.7%	3.6%
5.	The district's effectiveness in dealing appropriately with employees who perform below the standard of expectation (up to and including termination).	14.3%	17.9%	28.6%	28.6%	3.6%	7.1%
6.	The ability of the district's health insurance package to meet my needs.	3.65	7.1%	28.6%	32.1%	17.9%	10.7%
7.	The fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	28.6%	10.7%	46.4%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
8. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	0.0%	0.0%	26.9%	38.5%	23.1%	11.5%
9. The performance of the school board in setting good policies for the district.	0.0%	3.8%	26.9%	38.5%	30.8%	0.0%
10. The superintendent's performance as an instructional leader and business manager.	7.7%	7.7%	3.8%	34.6%	46.2%	0.0%
11. The ability of the superintendent and the school board to work well together.	0.0%	0.0%	19.2%	19.2%	53.8%	7.7%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	7.7%	3.8%	19.2%	46.2%	11.5%	11.5%
13. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	7.7%	3.8%	26.9%	38.5%	7.7%	15.4%
14. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	0.0%	0.0%	28.0%	56.0%	12.0%	4.0%

15. District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	11.1%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	44.4%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	44.4%	Summer School Programs	27.8%
Special Education	27.8%	Alternative Education Programs	16.7%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	5.6%	English as a Second Language Programs	27.8%
Dyslexia	33.3%	Dropout Prevention Programs	44.4%
Student Mentoring	16.7%	Career Counseling Program	27.8%
Advanced Placement	16.7%	College Counseling Program	33.3%
Literacy	11.1%	Counseling Parents of Students	38.9%

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
16. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	0.0%	3.8%	42.3%	34.6%	15.4%	3.8%
17. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	15.4%	26.9%	38.5%	7.7%	11.5%
18. The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	57.7%	26.9%	0.0%
19. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	3.8%	15.4%	19.2%	42.3%	19.2%	0.0%
20. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	0.0%	3.8%	7.7%	38.5%	50.0%	0.0%
21. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	0.0%	11.5%	23.1%	65.4%	0.0%

22. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	14.3%	English or Language Arts	35.7%	Physical Education	21.4%.
Writing	14.3%	Computer Instruction	14.3%	Business Education	21.4%
Mathematics	21.4%	Social Studies (history or geography)	7.1%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	64.3%
Science	35.7%	Fine Arts	7.1%	Foreign Language	14.3%

C.   COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents.	7.7%	3.8%	26.9%	50.0%	11.5%	0.0%
24. The availability of district facilities for community use.	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	50.0%	30.8%	3.8%
25. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	0.0%	15.4%	38.5%	30.8%	7.7%	7.7%
26. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	7.7%	19.2%	26.9%	34.6%	7.7%	3.8%

D.   FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	19.2%	7.7%	23.1%	30.8%	11.5%	7.7%
28. The cleanliness of schools.	3.8%	3.8%	30.8%	26.9%	34.6%	0.0%
29. The proper and timely maintenance of campus buildings.	0.0%	16.0%	8.0%	24.0%	52.0%	0.0%

E.   FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	11.5%	3.8%	23.1%	30.8%	7.7%	23.1%
31. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	7.7%	0.0%	26.9%	30.8%	3.8%	30.8%
32. The availability and usefulness of the district's financial reports.	3.8%	3.8%	23.1%	34.6%	11.5%	23.1%
33. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	11.5%	0.0%	11.5%	42.3%	19.2%	15.4%

F.   PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%	46.2%	30.8%	0.0%
35. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	0.0%	0.0%	11.5%	50.0%	26.9%	11.5%
36. The condition and age of textbooks.	3.8%	0.0%	11.5%	57.7%	15.4%	11.5%

G. FOOD SERVICES

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
37. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	38.5%	23.1%	30.8%	3.8%	0.0%	3.8%
38. The amount of time students have to eat.	7.7%	15.4%	50.0%	26.9%	0.0%	0.0%
39. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	3.8%	11.5%	34.6%	42.3%	7.7%	0.0%
40. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	3.8%	3.8%	30.8%	50.0%	11.5%	0.0%
41. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	3.8%	19.2%	19.2%	46.2%	11.5%	0.0%

H. TRANSPORTATION

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
42. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%	50.0%	15.4%	11.5%
43. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	0.0%	0.0%	19.2%	50.0%	26.9%	3.8%
44. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%	46.2%	23.1%	7.8%
45. The arrival of buses in time for students to eat breakfast.	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	57.7%	23.1%	3.8%
46. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	7.7%	0.0%	11.5%	42.3%	19.2%	19.2%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	0.0%	4.0%	16.0%	56.0%	24.0%	0.0%
48. The district's effectiveness in addressing gang issues if they exist.	0.0%	0.0%	8.0%	28.0%	24.0%	40.0%
49. The district's effectiveness in addressing drug issues if they exist	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	36.0%	28.0%	16.0%
50. The district's effectiveness in addressing vandalism issues if they exist	0.0%	0.0%	24.0%	28.0%	24.0%	24.0%
51. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	0.0%	8.0%	12.0%	44.0%	36.0%	0.0%
52. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	12.0%	4.0%	12.0%	52.0%	16.0%	4.0%
53. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	0.0%	4.0%	24.0%	56.0%	12.0%	4.0%

J.   COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
54. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	4.0%	0.0%	12.0%	52.0%	20.0%	12.0%
55. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	52.0%	44.0%	4.0%
56. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	48.8%	48.8%	4.0%
57. Easy student access to the Internet.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	44.0%	44.0%	12.0%

STUDENT SURVEY

N = 51

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding or multiple responses.

	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	46.0%	54.0%

	NO RESPONSE	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	0.0%	84.3%	5.9%	3.9%	0.0%	5.9%

	NO RESPONSE	0–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN CUSHING ISD?	0.0%	25.5%	19.6%	54.9%

4. WHAT GRADE LEVEL(S) DO YOU ATTEND?	GRADE LEVEL	
	Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	0.0%
	Elementary (Grades 1–5)	0.0%
	Middle School (Grades 6–8)	0.0%
	High School (Grades 9–12)	100.0%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. *DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT*

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	0.0%	2.0%	37.3%	31.4%	13.7%	15.7%
2. The performance of the school board in setting good policies for the district.	2.0%	5.9%	31.4%	21.6%	23.5%	15.7%
3. The superintendent's performance as an instructional leader and business manager.	2.0%	0.0%	9.8%	19.6%	60.8%	7.8%
4. The ability of the superintendent and the school board to work well together.	2.0%	2.0%	11.8%	37.3%	33.3%	13.7%

B. *EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY*

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
5.	The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	0.0%	6.0%	40.0%	30.0%	8.0%	16.0%
6.	The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	0.0%	4.0%	32.0%	34.0%	14.0%	16.0%
7.	The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	4.0%	6.0%	30.0%	28.0%	22.0%	10.0%

8. District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	40.0%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	44.0%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	40.0%	Summer School Programs	20.0%
Special Education	8.0%	Alternative Education Programs	12.0%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	8.0%	English as a Second Language Programs	4.0%
Dyslexia	12.0%	Dropout Prevention Programs	44.0%
Student Mentoring	16.0%	Career Counseling Program	36.0%
Advanced Placement	12.0%	College Counseling Program	60.0%
Literacy	4.0%	Counseling Parents of Students	20.0%

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
9.	The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	2.0%	10.2%	26.5%	32.7%	18.4%	10.2%
10.	The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	6.1%	2.0%	18.4%	30.6%	34.7%	8.2%
11.	The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	2.0%	26.5%	42.9%	24.5%	4.1%
12.	Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	6.3%	6.3%	25.0%	41.7%	18.8%	2.1%
13.	The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	4.2%	2.1%	18.8%	45.8%	27.1%	2.1%
14.	The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	4.1%	8.2%	46.9%	34.7%	6.1%

15. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	15.4%	English or Language Arts	7.7%	Physical Education	11.5%
Writing	15.4%	Computer Instruction	19.2%	Business Education	46.2%
Mathematics	38.5%	Social Studies (history or geography)	15.4%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	34.6%
Science	11.5%	Fine Arts	11.5%	Foreign Language	34.6%

C. *COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT*

		POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
16.	The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents.	0.0%	4.1%	32.7%	36.7%	10.2%	16.3%
17.	The availability of district facilities for community use.	4.1%	10.2%	38.8%	26.5%	8.2%	12.2%
18.	The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	6.1%	4.1%	32.7%	32.7%	10.2%	14.3%
19.	The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	2.0%	4.1%	38.8%	26.5%	10.2%	18.4%

D. FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
20. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	6.1%	4.1%	30.6%	34.7%	6.1%	18.4%
21. The cleanliness of schools.	2.0%	4.1%	22.4%	55.1%	14.3%	2.0%
22. The proper and timely maintenance of campus buildings.	4.1%	8.2%	14.3%	46.9%	24.5%	2.0%

E. FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	2.0%	0.0%	22.4%	26.5%	2.0%	46.9%
24. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	4.1%	2.0%	22.4%	28.6%	2.0%	40.8%
25. The availability and usefulness of the district's financial reports.	2.0%	2.0%	20.4%	26.5%	4.1%	44.9%
26. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	2.0%	2.0%	12.2%	28.6%	14.3%	40.8%

F. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	4.1%	8.2%	34.7%	30.6%	12.2%	10.2%
28. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	0.0%	2.0%	32.7%	38.8%	18.4%	8.2%
29. The condition and age of textbooks.	10.2%	12.2%	42.9%	22.4%	4.1%	8.2%

G. FOOD SERVICES

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	46.9%	28.6%	20.4%	2.0%	0.0%	2.0%
31. The amount of time students have to eat.	8.3%	18.8%	43.8%	27.1%	0.0%	2.1%
32. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	6.1%	4.1%	38.8%	44.9%	4.1%	2.0%
33. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	10.2%	20.4%	46.9%	10.2%	10.2%	2.0%
34. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	10.2%	12.2%	38.8%	26.5%	8.2%	4.1%

H.   TRANSPORTATION

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
35. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	0.0%	2.0%	30.6%	34.7%	14.3%	18.4%
36. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	2.0%	2.0%	16.3%	44.9%	16.3%	18.4%
37. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	2.0%	4.1%	20.4%	34.7%	18.4%	20.4%
38. The arrival of buses in time for students to eat breakfast.	4.1%	2.0%	24.5%	36.7%	14.3%	18.4%
39. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	0.0%	0.0%	40.8%	30.6%	12.2%	16.3%

I.   SAFETY AND SECURITY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
40. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	4.1%	10.2%	30.6%	38.8%	12.2%	4.1%
41. The district's effectiveness in addressing gang issues if they exist.	4.2%	2.1%	25.0%	33.3%	20.8%	14.6%
42. The district's effectiveness in addressing drug issues if they exist	8.2%	8.2%	20.4%	32.7%	22.4%	8.2%
43. The district's effectiveness in addressing vandalism issues if they exist	8.2%	6.1%	22.4%	34.7%	16.3%	12.2%
44. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	8.2%	4.1%	28.6%	32.7%	14.3%	12.2%
45. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	10.2%	10.2%	28.6%	30.6%	10.2%	10.2%
46. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	2.0%	2.0%	30.6%	38.8%	16.3%	10.2%

J.   COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	2.0%	6.1%	20.4%	46.9%	20.4%	4.1%
48. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	0.0%	0.0%	14.6%	52.1%	33.3%	0.0%
49. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	2.0%	0.0%	22.4%	49.0%	24.5%	2.0%
50. Easy student access to the Internet.	8.2%	6.1%	20.4%	46.9%	18.4%	0.0%