

La Vega Independent School District



**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
with
McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy LLP
June 2010**

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

JUNE 2010

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LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Robert E. Johnson Bldg.
1501 N. Congress Ave. - 5th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

512/463-1200
Fax: 512/475-2902
<http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>

June 25, 2010

Dr. Sharon Shields
Superintendent
La Vega Independent School District

Dear Dr. Shields:

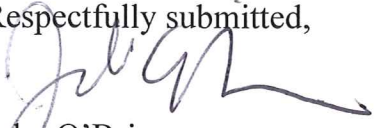
The attached report reviews the management and performance of La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD) educational, financial, and operational functions.

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,


John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Henry C. Jennings
Mr. Kevin P. Harris
Ms. Mildred Watkins
Mr. Phil Bancale
Mr. Randy Devorsky
Mr. Rodney Outlaw
Mr. Floyd Wayne Samford

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD's) school performance review notes 20 commendable practices and makes 80 recommendations for improvement. This Executive Summary highlights the district's significant accomplishments and recommendations. A copy of the full report is available at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- La Vega Intermediate School has implemented two mentoring projects, the Classroom Mentors Project and the Operation Starfish Project, to assist students academically and provide them with friendship, encouragement, and positive role models. The Classroom Mentors Project, started in 2003, has 30 mentors who have been matched with classroom groups. These mentors attend the Lunch Bunch each month, participate actively in Career Week, work on the annual School Supply Drive at a local company, assist with the Thanksgiving lunch for parents, and work on Project Christmas Spirit. The second mentoring program, The Operation Starfish Project, was created in 2006 to meet the special needs of struggling fifth graders. The program pairs up volunteer teachers and staff members to work individually with fifth graders who did not pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in fourth grade in reading or math. The goal is to boost these students' self-confidence and to let them know often that someone cares about their academic success. The program creates special bonds between the participating students, nicknamed "starfish", and the adult volunteers. The two mentoring projects have had a positive impact on both the students and the mentoring adults. The mentoring programs help to fill a void in the student's life, making it an important piece in the education of the children.
- La Vega ISD's secondary schools have created Saturday Academies in an effort to increase students' interest and involvement in the four core content areas as well as improve test performance in these subject areas. To address students' low passing rates on the science TAKS, in spring 2010, La Vega Junior High implemented a series of Super Saturday Science Extravaganza Academies for eighth graders that meets 12 times during the spring semester. In 2010–11, the academies will take place throughout the year. The topics of focus at the academy were determined based on the analysis of campus wide benchmark test data. The academies offer high interest, hands-on lessons that reinforce what students learn during the week in their regular science classes. To attract students to participate, attendance at the weekly academies provides students an opportunity to earn prizes. Each Saturday academy utilizes between 10 and 12 teachers. Teachers are La Vega Junior High staff from different departments including Science, English, Language Arts, Math, and electives, and Science teachers and administrators from other campuses also assist in instruction. Following the success of the La Vega Junior High Science Academy, La Vega High School initiated academies in all four core content areas for its students. While the impact of the academies on student performance on the Science TAKS test is not yet known, the six-week assessments show an increase in student scores. Teachers report that students who have participated in the academies ask more thoughtful questions and connect and transfer knowledge they have learned in the academies and in the classroom. The district provides transportation, breakfast, and lunch to participating students.
- LVISD nurses and health aides work as a team to provide unified health care across all schools. Each of the schools in LVISD either has a Registered Nurse (RN) or a Certified Nurse Aide health aide. The three RNs and two health aides work as a team. They have developed and use uniform documentation on all campuses, including all health forms, letters to parents, and doctor order forms. They meet as a team about four times a year with their supervisor, the director of Elementary Education, and get updates and discuss policy and procedures, health related issues, and concerns. The RNs and health aides also communicate frequently by e-mail and telephone, seeking information and advice from each other as needed. The three RNs work closely in a supervisory role with the two health aides. The health aides' responsibilities include entering immunization data

into the computer, performing vision and hearing screenings, administering medication, providing diabetic care, and giving CPR/first aid. The health aides, with the approval of the principal, also identify and train school staff such as the receptionist and substitutes in medication administration. To ensure quality of care, each of the RNs reviews all tasks that the health aides performed and validates the information the health aides recorded. For example, the RN reviews the original immunization records the health aide prepared against a computer printout to make sure that all information is correct and validates by signature if all students are compliant with the immunization laws. By working together, the nurses and health aides ensure that the same quality of service and care is delivered to students on all LVISD campuses.

- LVISD implemented measures to improve its financial condition and as a result increased its General Fund balance from a negative \$67,000 at the end of Fiscal Year 2006 to a positive \$2.7 million at the end of Fiscal Year 2009. This turnaround occurred because in each fiscal year between 2006 and 2009, the district imposed fiscal discipline on the budget process. During the 2006–07 school year, campus and departmental budgets were reduced by 10 percent. In addition, to ensure that budgeted revenues would not be overstated, the district developed its budget on a reduced average daily attendance (ADA) number. By underestimating ADA for budget purposes, the district lowered budgeted revenues below what would actually be received from the state. Budgeted expenditures were reduced accordingly. Additionally, the Finance Department, in cooperation with the superintendent's office, carefully reviewed actual purchases and disbursements to ensure that only necessary expenses were being incurred. For the 2007–08 school year, campuses and departments were asked to establish a 5 percent budget reserve to be used only if necessary. These practices, combined with enrollment increases and salary freezes for auxiliary, paraprofessional, and professional employees not on the teacher salary schedule, lifted the district's fund balance to more than \$2.7 million over the three-year period.
- LVISD's three new campus buildings are uniquely designed with a catwalk above the ceiling to house

air conditioning units, water heaters, electrical panels, and fresh air handlers, allowing Maintenance to make repairs without disruptions to classroom sessions or needing access to hallways. The Maintenance Department staff visited another district's campuses constructed with this design, and it was recommended to LVISD's construction contractor. This system was designed and installed in La Vega Junior High, La Vega Elementary, and La Vega Primary.

- LVISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a network infrastructure that will adequately support the district's current and future technology needs. LVISD actively participates in the E-Rate program governed by the Universal Services Administration Company's School and Library Division to enhance its network and telecommunications infrastructure. The district has used over \$1.2 million in E-Rate funds between 2005–06 and 2009–10 to improve its network infrastructure. The main features of the enhanced infrastructure include fiber-optic network connectivity that links all campuses and buildings to one centralized location, a Voice over Internet Protocol telecommunications system installed at all of the district's locations, a district network with a 10/10 megabyte fiber-optic Internet connection with one gigabyte fiber-optic connections between campuses, and wireless connectivity available throughout the district.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

Realign the organization structure to reduce the number of the direct reports to the superintendent, enhance the functional alignment of staff responsibilities, and clearly assign accountability and specific lines of authority.

LVISD executive management's multiple roles and overlapping responsibilities result in unclear lines of reporting and communication and an ineffective span of control.

- The reporting responsibility for non-curriculum functions currently is informally split between the director of Finance and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, leading to confusion and ineffective district operational management in key areas. Managers will contact the director of Finance if their needs require funding or

have financial implications, but they will report to the assistant superintendent if the decision is contractual or operational in nature.

- In addition, the superintendent has too many direct reports and assumes too many responsibilities to maintain an effective leadership team. Currently, there are 15 direct reports plus two contractor supervisors who report to the superintendent.
- Under the proposed reorganization, the superintendent would have six direct reports, and the director of Finance would be elevated to a new position entitled assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations. Responsibility for the administrative and operational functions would be allocated between the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration and the proposed assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations. The fiscal impact would be \$60,000 over five years for the increase in compensation tied to elevation of the director of Finance position.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Develop written, comprehensive policies and procedures manuals for more effective operations in the financial and operational functional areas. LVISD lacks policies and procedures in the financial and operational areas. Policies provide authorized guiding principles for daily decision-making while procedures define the tasks to perform. Without documented policies and procedures, functions may be carried out in an inconsistent, ineffective, and inefficient manner. Department directors should identify functions or activities that require a policy or procedure to be compliant or make a process more effective and develop comprehensive policies and procedures which address these functions and activities. These policies and procedures should become a part of department and districtwide standard operating procedures manuals and implemented districtwide.

- Personnel and Administration Department employees perform their daily functions based on over ten years of experience in their current positions; they do not utilize any guiding policy or procedural documents to perform their functions.
- The district lacks policies and procedures for the maintenance, custodial, and grounds functions, and has a lack of established department standards and clearly defined operational methods for each craft

and type of project for which maintenance staff is responsible to complete.

- The Finance Department lacks documented procedures for critical functions, and knowledge of critical business processes will be lost if it is not documented while experienced employees are still employed with the district.
- The purchasing, textbook management, contract management, and IT functions lack written policies and procedures.
 - In the absence of written policies and procedures, the accounts payable/purchasing clerk distributes lists of approved vendors throughout the school year to campus and department requisitioners.
 - With respect to textbook management, LVISD does not have written policies requiring fines assessed for lost and damaged textbooks to be submitted to the district office.
 - Regarding contracting, the district does not have written policies and procedures to guide how its child nutrition, transportation, and depository contracts will be executed and administered.
 - In Technology, the IT Department has not developed policies and procedures for most information technology functions.
- The district lacks comprehensive, up-to-date safety and security policies and procedures. There is no safety coordination among campuses nor a review process to determine if each principal is effectively performing this responsibility. The police chief has prepared and submitted a draft Police Department General Orders Manual which articulates detailed daily operating procedures to the superintendent for review, but it has yet to receive approval.

PLANNING

Develop and implement planning processes and policies to ensure effective functioning of the district's financial and operational areas. LVISD does not conduct adequate planning activities in the financial and operational areas. Lack of planning leaves the district open to unexpected situations and expenditures for which it might not have the resources to address. The implementation of planning

processes and policies districtwide will ensure effective functioning of the district's financial and operational areas.

- While the LVISD board of trustees establishes specific goals and objectives on an annual basis, the district does not:
 - have a comprehensive districtwide strategic plan to guide the district in decision-making;
 - effectively implement site-based decision-making (SBDM) at its campuses with respect to budgeting; or
 - have a districtwide community/parental/volunteer involvement and communication plan.
- Related to facilities planning, the district lacks:
 - a comprehensive long-range facility master plan or documented planning process to provide for future facility needs;
 - a space utilization plan to optimize existing classroom and building space; and
 - preventive and deferred maintenance plans to effectively assess conditions, identify maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the district's existing facilities and vehicles.
- Planning is also lacking in the Technology Department, where there is no comprehensive:
 - long-range technology plan or a Technology Committee of key stakeholders to develop such a plan;
 - replacement strategy for the district's computing hardware; or
 - disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the network server facility is rendered inoperable.

TRAINING

Provide training for staff to ensure effective district operations and comply with legal requirements. LVISD lacks adequate training for district staff, limiting their performance capabilities and leaving the district open to noncompliance with statutory requirements. Lack of adequate training decreases the ability of district staff to perform their jobs effectively.

- Training is lacking in a number of areas across the district, including:
 - Leadership development for the executive leadership team, principals, assistant principals, and key administrative staff;
 - Specialized human resources training for Personnel and Administration Department staff;
 - Use of technology by instructional staff;
 - Specific, job- and safety-related training plans for Maintenance Department employees;
 - Safety awareness seminars to reduce or avoid worker's compensation claims; and
 - Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) training and certification for transportation personnel.

The total cost related to employee training in all areas of the district would be \$25,940 over five years.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

LVISD district administrators should ensure that the Special Education Department works closely with the campuses in all matters relating to the education of students with disabilities, including: reviewing the Response to Intervention (RtI) process and identifying areas where implementation is lacking or incomplete and developing procedures to be implemented districtwide that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation; and developing a documentation and tracking system to ensure the required expenditure of special education funds. The LVISD Special Education Department is not adequately and appropriately utilized by campuses, resulting in weak Response to Intervention (RtI) campus processes and a high rate of inappropriate referrals to special education along with under spending of its special education funds. By not making the Special Education Department an equal partner in providing services to identified special education students, district campuses under utilize the resources and expertise that the department can provide to enhance the educational program and benefit students with disabilities.

- The need for full collaboration between LVISD campuses and the Special Education Department is evident in light of the improvement areas in the special education program the Texas Education Agency (TEA) identified as part of

its monitoring system. According to TEA's 2009 Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) Special Education Indicators, LVISD lags behind the state in the percentage of its special education students who passed in 2008–09 TAKS science and social studies, in the percentage of special education students across all ages who are placed in the least restrictive environment, and in the percentage of special education students who drop out. Campus administrators do not keep the director of Special Education informed about special education issues on their respective campuses. Campus administrators should actively involve district special education staff in working with their staff on effectively implementing RtI strategies; providing professional development to all their teachers on how to work effectively with students with disabilities; and increasing collaboration between general education and special education teachers.

- As established by the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, RtI is a TEA multi-tiered service delivery model addressing the academic and behavioral needs of all students through a continuum of services. To implement RtI, local education agency (LEA) general and special education staff must coordinate and collaborate to develop a process for implementing this framework. Struggling students are identified using data-based student progress monitoring and provided intensive instruction which should result in academic and/or behavioral progress for the majority of the students. LVISD has a Student Intervention Team (SIT) on each campus that considers speech, academic, and emotional/behavior concerns about students that teachers or parents refer to them. In LVISD, each campus has developed its own RtI procedures without input from the Special Education Department, and the procedures are neither consistent nor sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous. The lack of a comprehensive RtI process has led to a high rate of inappropriate referrals to special education in LVISD. From 2006–07 to 2009–10, 149 students were referred to special education. Over this four-year period, 31.5 percent of the referrals, 47 out of 149 referrals, did not qualify (DNQ). The district's campus Student Intervention Teams (SITs) and director of Special Education should review the RtI process identifying areas where implementation

is lacking or incomplete and develop procedures to be implemented districtwide that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation.

- LVISD has not been spending its special education funds as required. According to a December 2009 report issued by the district's external auditors, LVISD did not spend \$65,674 in funds that it had carried over from the previous year and spent only 67.6 percent of the current year special education funds it received from TEA; it is required to spend at least 85 percent of such funds the year in which they are received. Continued under spending of funds may result in a reduction of the special education allotment from TEA to the district. LVISD's under spending of special education funds stems from lack of tracking of special education funds at the campuses and lack of district monitoring as to whether campuses spend these funds as planned. The district should develop documentation and a tracking system to ensure the required expenditure of special education funds.

RETENTION, HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION, AND DROPOUT

Review the retention procedures that each school follows and analyze their academic and social/behavioral impact on retained students and on the relationship between retention and high school completion, and develop and implement a comprehensive dropout prevention and high school completion plan involving all grade levels. High retention rates in grades 2, 7, and 8, academic failure, and lack of student engagement in school have led to a high dropout rate and low high school completion in LVISD. In 2009–10, 74 students out of the 262 students in grade 9 (28.2 percent) are 16–17 years old—two to three years over age.

- A high percentage of LVISD students do not progress beyond grade 9, and only slightly over one-half of those in grade 9 graduate. LVISD's high school dropout rate has exceeded both the Region 12 and state percentages from the Class of 2003 through Class of 2008. Of the students who dropped out 74 percent were retained one or more years, 80 percent had excessive absences, 24 percent had discipline problems; 26 percent failed TAKS, and 8 percent were teen parents. It does not appear that there was a clear recognition and awareness on the part of principals and teachers in the lower grade levels on how the level

- of instructional rigor and decisions to retain students have a negative impact in higher grades.
- In a focus group the high school principal conducted with students, TAKS failure emerged as the primary cause for dropping out. LVISD has started to take action to reduce dropout and improve high school completion. LVISD specified in its La Vega High School Campus Improvement Plans from 2007–08, 2008–09, and 2009–10 a range of strategies to address dropout. The strategies target high school students and include academic supports, mentoring, development of personal graduation plans, and a credit recovery program. To be effective, the strategies to reduce dropout and improve high school completion cannot reside in high school alone. Strategies should address all grade levels, starting in first grade or even earlier.
 - The district should develop and implement a comprehensive dropout prevention and high school completion plan involving all grade levels. Each school and its staff should clearly understand their role in contributing to and affecting high school completion, be accountable, and take proactive measures. The district should strengthen its vertical alignment not only with its curriculum but also in regards to students' engagement, attendance, and behavior. LVISD should estimate the probability of high school completion for students at each grade level based on their academic performance, engagement, and behavior. Consequently, each school should implement appropriate strategies to facilitate high school completion and not just completion of grades at that respective school.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- LVISD is located in east central McLennan County in the city of Bellmead, two miles northeast of Waco. The district was formed in 1927 from the consolidation of the Pecan Grove, Oak Grove, and West Brook Schools.
- The district's student enrollment in 2008–09 was 2,778, with a student population of:
 - 27.0% White
 - 43.7% Hispanic
 - 28.5% African American
 - 0.3% Native American
 - 0.5% Asian/Pacific Islander

- The district's superintendent is Dr. Sharon Shields. Prior to her appointment as superintendent in July 2006, Dr. Shields served LVISD as the assistant superintendent for Instructional Services. Dr. Shields started her career as a teacher, then counselor, then principal in LVISD and has also worked as an educational specialist at the Regional Education Service Center – Region 12. She returned to LVISD in 1999 as the executive director for Instructional Services, and has remained with the district in the eleven years since.
- LVISD had more economically disadvantaged students (81.9%) than state average (56.7%) in 2008–09.
- In 2008–09, LVISD employed 369.8 full-time equivalent staff, with 47.6 percent or 176 being teachers.
- LVISD received an *Academically Unacceptable* accountability rating for 2008–09 from the Texas Education Agency. During that school year, one campus received an *Exemplary* rating, one campus received an *Academically Acceptable* rating, two campuses received an *Academically Unacceptable* rating, and the Primary campus was *Not Rated*.
- LVISD is served by the Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) located in Waco.
- The legislators for the district are Senator Brian Birdwell, Representative Jim Dunnam, and Representative Charles “Doc” Anderson.

SCHOOLS

- La Vega Primary School (Pre-K–K)
- La Vega Elementary School (1–3)
- La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus (4–6)
- La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (7–8)
- La Vega High School (9–12)
- La Vega Learning Center Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (1–12)

FINANCIAL DATA

- Total actual expenditures (2008–09): \$26.2 million.
- Fund balance: 10.5 percent of 2008–09 actual expenditures.
- Tax Rate (2009–10): \$1.239 (\$1.04 Maintenance and Operations and \$0.1989 Interest and Sinking).
- In 2008 LVISD's property wealth per student was \$206,741 with a wealth per weighted average daily attendance of \$163,206.
- The percentage of total actual expenditures spent on instruction (2008–09) was 46.5 percent; total actual operating expenditures spent on instruction (2008–09) was 53.0 percent. The district's per pupil actual operating expenditure (2008–09) was \$8,272.
- Instructional expenditure ratio (2009–10 budgeted): 52.0 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 80 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	\$86,028	\$87,104	\$87,104	\$87,104	\$87,104	\$434,444	\$0
Gross Costs	(\$82,694)	(\$111,394)	(\$110,374)	(\$110,374)	(\$110,374)	(\$525,210)	(\$51,000)
TOTAL	\$3,334	(\$24,290)	(\$23,270)	(\$23,270)	(\$23,270)	(\$90,766)	(\$51,000)

CHAPTER 1

DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 1. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

La Vega Independent School District (LVISD) is located in east central McLennan County in the city of Bellmead, two miles northeast of Waco. Bellmead was founded in the mid-1920s when the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad chose the site for its locomotive stops. The La Vega Independent School District was formed in 1927 from the consolidation of the Pecan Grove, Oak Grove, and West Brook Schools. Board members of the new district turned over the task of finding a name for the district to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of the former Oak Grove and Pecan Grove Schools. Pecan Grove PTA favored Bellmead Schools, but Bellmead was not an incorporated city at the time. The Oak Grove PTA suggested La Vega Schools, taken from the Mexican land grant of Tomas de la Vega which encompassed the area where the new school was to be built. The community was incorporated in 1954 after an initial unsuccessful attempt in 1939. In 1965, when the Waco Air Force Base was closed, Texas A&M University established a technical college in the area presently known as the Texas State Technical College.

Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12), located in Waco, provides support services to the district in areas including administrative, curriculum, business, and informational services. These include participation in the Administrators' Institute, provision of the CSCOPE curriculum and data analysis using AEISIT© software, video streaming, payroll, and financial benchmarking services. Peer districts the review team used for this review were the Cleveland, Madisonville Consolidated, Sweetwater, and Taylor ISDs. Peer districts are school districts similar to LVISD that are used for comparison purposes.

LVISD's student enrollment for 2008–09 was 2,778 students, which represents an increase of 200 students since 2005. The district serves students primarily from Bellmead as well as parts of Waco. In 2008, Bellmead encompassed a land area of 6.23 square miles and had a population of 9,579 comprised of 59.7 percent White, 14.6 percent African American, 23.8 percent Hispanic, and 13.2 percent other races. The estimated median income for a household was \$33,346 compared with \$50,043 statewide, and the estimated per capita income was \$16,002. About 16.1 percent of the families and 19.8 percent of the population were below the poverty line.

District management should be a collaborative effort between the community, board of trustees, superintendent,

administration, and staff. The LVISD Board, superintendent, and key administrative staff are fully engaged in managing the district and acknowledge that their top priority is the academic success of the students. Board members do not micromanage the day-to-day activities of the district and are supportive of the superintendent's efforts to make the district academically *Recognized*.

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

Key responsibilities of school board members typically include establishing district policy and direction, supporting and empowering district staff, and ensuring resources are appropriately allocated to accomplish district objectives. Board members must also work collaboratively with each other and the superintendent to form the basis of an effective district leadership team.

Seven board members govern LVISD. Five members are elected from Single-Member districts and two members represent the At-Large vote. Board members are elected to staggered three-year terms. **Exhibit 1–1** shows the board members for 2009–10, their position, term information, and occupation.

**EXHIBIT 1–1
LVISD BOARD MEMBERS
2009–10**

NAME	TITLE	TERM EXPIRATION	LENGTH OF SERVICE	OCCUPATION
Henry C. Jennings	President	2013	17 years	Retired/Part-time Tutor
Kevin P. Harris	Vice President	2011	16 years	Equipment Depot Manager
Mildred Watkins	Secretary	2011	13 years	Acting Principal - Texas Youth Commission
Phil Bancale	Asst. Secretary	2012	31 years	Retired
Randy Devorsky	Member	2013	20 years	Automobile Shop Owner
Rodney Outlaw	Member	2012	18 years	Bellmead City Employee
Dr. Tamara Walthall	Member	2010	17 years	Veterinarian
Floyd Wayne Samford*	Member	2013	0 years	Cement Company Employee

*Elected in May 2010, replacing Dr. Tamra Walthall.
Source: Information provided by LVISD administration, February 2010.

There are many years of experience on the LVISD board. Since board leadership positions are determined every year, board members have held the different positions. Each position is in succession to the position above it.

Board meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday of each month. Regular meetings are held at 7 PM in the LVISD Administration Building located at 3100 Bellmead Drive. The public is encouraged to attend all meetings, and citizens wishing to address the board about specific agenda items or other issues must complete the public participation request form prior to the start of the meeting. Citizens may speak during the public participation portion of the agenda, and each speaker is limited to five minutes. The board will not discuss or make decisions on any issues not posted on the agenda, including public comments. Any group of five or more wishing to address the board must appoint one person to represent the group to the board. Not many parents or community members attend the board meetings. At the February board meeting there were a small number of community members and the local police chief.

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

administrative assistant provides the board packets to board members, either electronically or in hard copy binders, typically on Friday before the regularly scheduled Tuesday meeting. Prior to the meeting, each board member may contact the superintendent or key administrative staff with questions or clarifications about information in the board packet.

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

The superintendent was appointed as LVISD's superintendent in July 2006 and is the chief executive officer of the district. The superintendent started her career as a teacher, then counselor, then principal in LVISD and has also worked as an educational specialist at Region 12. She returned to LVISD in 1999 as the executive director for Instructional Services, and also served as the assistant superintendent for Instructional Services from 2002 to 2006 before being appointed district superintendent in 2006. More than 80 percent of the district administrative staff, support staff, principals, and assistant principals surveyed for this review indicated that the superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader and business manager. Additionally, the consensus among all board members interviewed indicated that the superintendent does a good job overall managing the district although she is more focused on academic responsibilities than financial or administrative duties.

The district’s Executive Leadership Team (E-Team) is responsible for day-to-day operations and administration. The E-Team consists of the superintendent, assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, the director of Finance, and the administrative assistant/Public Information Officer.

Through interviews and discussions with district personnel, the review team determined that the daily operational reporting structure is different than the official organization chart that the board revised and approved on August 3, 2009. The August organization chart shows 15 direct reports to the superintendent. Of these 15 direct reports, some report operationally to either the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration or the director of

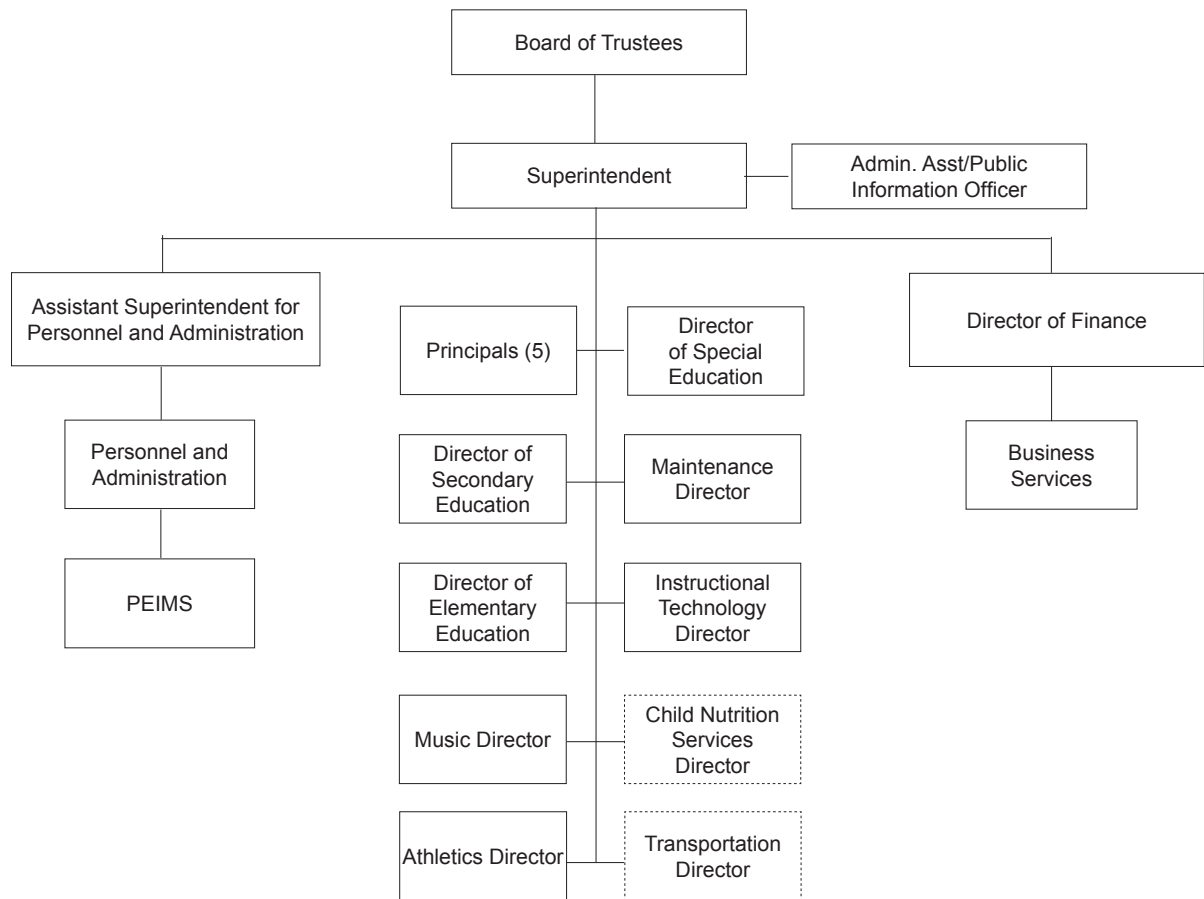
Finance. These daily operational reporting differences are reflected in the various chapters and serve as the basis for the proposed organizational change recommendation in this chapter.

Exhibit 1–2 presents LVISD’s organization for 2009–10 as approved by the board.

The superintendent meets with the E-Team weekly. E-Team meetings include discussions of issues affecting administration and district operations, status reports, and item preparation for board meetings.

The superintendent meets with the Administrative Leadership Team (A-Team) on the Thursday after the monthly board meeting. Those meetings include the E-Team, principals,

**EXHIBIT 1–2
LVISD ORGANIZATION
2009–10**



NOTE: The Child Nutrition Services and Transportation directors are outsourced positions.
SOURCE: LVISD Organization, March 2010.

assistant principals, and other directors such as the Athletic director, director of Secondary Education, director of Elementary Education, director of Special Education, director of Technology, Maintenance director, Child Nutrition Services director, and Transportation director. During these A-Team meetings, the superintendent communicates information resulting from decisions made by the board that affect LVISD's administration and operations and encourages them to discuss issues related to campus-specific administration and operations.

Community involvement is an important part of a quality education system. It enables parents, civic and business leaders, community organizations, public officials, and community members with a stake in public education to understand the challenges and opportunities facing a district and become involved in activities and partnerships that support and promote student learning and achievement. Effective community involvement programs build upon the unique characteristics of the school district and the community. An essential component of community involvement includes methods for recruiting volunteers and soliciting business support for school events and outreach activities designed to encourage community participation in the district.

External and internal communication strategies for communicating with the community and within the school district are also critical. Successful communication strategies strive to involve businesses, community organizations, and parents. Strategies may include newsletters, brochures, articles and reports in the local media, meetings and public forums, websites, and school calendars. In districts with an ethnically diverse population, efforts must be made to involve and coordinate with the non-English speaking community. Effective and timely communication builds trust in and support for the district and its programs and influences how residents view the district. School districts need the support of local organizations and businesses to strengthen educational programs. Outreach programs help district administrators become familiar with community needs and priorities.

Districtwide communication is critical to the successful growth and development of any school district. The local newspaper, *The Bellmead Bulletin*, is printed monthly and is a key communication tool used to disseminate district and campus news, including academics and athletics news, throughout the LVISD community. One of the superintendent's responsibilities is to keep board members

informed about district activities and key decisions. Information gathered from the on-site visit, board member and staff interviews, and the review team employee survey indicates that superintendent and board communication is very good; however, communication between school district administration, staff, and community members could be improved.

La Vega ISD is doing many things well. Board members understand their role is to govern and do not try to micromanage district operations. LVISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a robust network infrastructure that will adequately support the district's technology needs. During the 2008–09 school year, LVISD began using the Continuous Improvement Continuums (CICs) developed by the Education for the Future Initiative. Use of the CICs enables the district to assess progress in the following areas: Information and Analysis, Student Achievement, Quality Planning, Professional Development, Leadership, Partnership Development, and Continuous Improvement and Evaluation. Despite the implementation of the CICs, there are still opportunities for operational and academic improvement. For example, a weak organizational structure and alignment exists in the district. Executive management's multiple roles and overlapping responsibilities result in unclear lines of reporting and communication and an ineffective span of control. The reporting responsibility for non-curriculum functions currently is informally split between the director of Finance and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration. Moreover, LVISD's Maintenance director does not have a direct reporting relationship to a single individual on the district's executive leadership team. After the review team's on-site visit, LVISD proposed and the board approved a revised organization structure to minimize overlapping reporting and supervisory relationships which becomes effective July 1, 2010. However, opportunities for improvement in the district's organization structure remain.

Of additional concern is LVISD's lack of a districtwide, long-range strategic plan to identify academic, operational, and financial goals for all district operations, and no long-range facility master plan or documented planning process to provide for future facility needs. Nor is there a long-range technology plan that includes a hardware replacement strategy. Formal, documented policies and procedures are also missing in critical areas. A detailed procedures manual is needed for human resources processes and procedures as well as for Finance Department business processes and

maintenance and custodial activities. The lack of training is also a recurring theme. Safety training does not occur to reduce workers' compensation claims, and Finance Department staff are not cross-trained to perform critical functions. Additionally, Child Nutrition Services Department (CNS) staff do not have an annual training schedule.

Opportunities to improve the use of automation and technology exist throughout the district. Non-teaching staff performance evaluation instruments are not comprehensive enough to help in addressing job description updates and performance measures. Also, the Maintenance Department lacks an automated work order system to process, prioritize, and analyze work order requests; the district also lacks a formal contract management process to oversee outsourced operations. In addition, the district is not performing cost/benefit analyses of in-house versus outsourcing operations. Site-based decision making and collaborative budget development are not emphasized in the district. Budget managers do not participate in collaborative budget workshops and are not allowed to enter their budgets into the system or make their own budget transfers online. Finally, there is no budget for the central warehouse, and CNS staff need improved access to financial reports of operations to enhance accountability.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Board members understand that their role is to govern, and not manage, district operations.
- LVISD has ongoing relationships with major community businesses and civic organizations that benefit the district financially, academically, and socially.
- La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus has implemented two mentoring projects to assist students academically and provide them with friendship, encouragement, and positive role models.

FINDINGS

- Executive management's multiple roles and overlapping responsibilities result in unclear lines of reporting and communication and an ineffective span of control.
- LVISD does not have a comprehensive districtwide strategic plan to guide the district in decision-making.

- LVISD's executive leadership team and management personnel lack sufficient leadership development and management training.
- LVISD has not effectively implemented site-based decision-making at its campuses with respect to budgeting.
- LVISD does not have a districtwide community/parental/volunteer involvement and communication plan nor a budget to fund community-related activities.
- LVISD is not effectively using its website to communicate with parents and community members or to recruit volunteers.
- LVISD's board meetings are not well attended by parents or the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Realign LVISD's organization to reduce the number of the direct reports to the superintendent, enhance the functional alignment of staff responsibilities, and clearly assign accountability and specific lines of authority.**
- **Recommendation 2: Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to provide goals and guide the district in decision-making.**
- **Recommendation 3: Provide leadership development and management training for district management employees including principals.**
- **Recommendation 4: Implement and enforce site-based decision-making practices to address budgeting.**
- **Recommendation 5: Create a community/parental/volunteer involvement and communication plan to improve the community, volunteer, and parent recruitment and involvement.**
- **Recommendation 6: Develop community and parent web pages for the district and campus websites with up-to-date information describing the different initiatives, programs, and activities of interest to parents and community members.**
- **Recommendation 7: Develop ideas for improving parent/community attendance and participation at board meetings.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BOARD SUPPORT

Board members understand that their role is to govern, and not manage, district operations. Board members share the consensus that their overall mission is to improve and support the education of all students. The board has a harmonious working relationship with each other and the superintendent, and it is collectively supportive of the superintendent as the district’s leader. The board members are open to the suggestions, recommendations, and solutions presented by the superintendent.

Survey responses indicate that board members and staff have a great deal of confidence in the superintendent’s ability to manage the district successfully. **Exhibit 1–3** summarizes selected board member and staff survey responses.

Board members recognize that the superintendent has set lofty goals for the district’s accountability rating, but they are willing to support her efforts 100 percent. A board that understands their overall fiduciary duty and works well

together enhances the district’s ability to effectively manage, operate, and advance the academic needs of their students.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

LVISD has ongoing relationships with major community businesses and civic organizations that benefit the district financially, academically, and socially. These major organizations include the City of Bellmead, Bellmead Chamber of Commerce, American Bank, and L-3 Integrated Systems Group—a global company with 23,000 employees worldwide headquartered in Rockwall, Texas.

Benefits from these relationships include:

- The district and the Bellmead Chamber of Commerce jointly publish a monthly newsletter: *The Bellmead Bulletin*. The newsletter covers city and district news, events, and accomplishments.
- The district works closely with the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce in Bellmead raises funds for scholarships through an annual

**EXHIBIT 1–3
LVISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

BOARD MEMBER SURVEY QUESTION: “WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE TOP PRIORITY FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION?”

FUNCTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Establishing school district policies and direction	7	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Monitoring day-to-day operations of the school system	7	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%

SURVEY QUESTION: “THE SUPERINTENDENT IS A RESPECTED AND EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MANAGER.”

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
District Administration and Support Staff	149	50%	32%	14%	4%	0%
Principals and Assistant Principals	10	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%
Teachers	142	62%	33%	4%	1%	0%

SURVEY QUESTION: “SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE AS POLICYMAKERS AND STAY OUT OF THE DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE DISTRICT.”

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Principals and Assistant Principals	10	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%

SURVEY QUESTION: “SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS WORK WELL WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT.”

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Teachers	142	44%	41%	15%	0%	0%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

banquet and golf tournament. The Chamber raised between \$6,000 and \$8,000 in 2008–09 and awarded scholarships of \$1,000.

- The electronic billboard at American Bank is a three-way partnership between the City of Bellmead, American Bank, and the district. LVISD advertises district and school events on the electronic billboard.
- The Lions Club and American Bank provide financial support to the Teacher of the Year award program: the Lions Club pays for the limousine and American Bank pays for the meal at the country club. They also provide monetary assistance to teachers for purchasing materials.
- The L-3 Integrated Systems Group has a long-standing informal partnership with La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus. L-3 employees serve as mentors to La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus classrooms and students. The company organizes a school supply drive each summer and provides the school with \$3,500–\$5,000 in supplies. Through Project Christmas Spirit, L-3 provides gifts worth \$100 each to 50 students and their siblings. In 2008–09, L-3 gave bicycles with helmets and air pumps to 19 students.
- Civic and business leaders visit schools and speak with the students about career opportunities. For example, a representative from American Bank visits the high school and teaches students about banking functions and operations. Also, Bellmead’s Fire Marshal and Police Chief give presentations to students about their respective fields and potential career opportunities. Through an arrangement with the La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus, fifth graders shadowed Bellmead City Council members to gain an understanding of how city government functions.
- Representatives from civic and business organizations serve on district and school committees such as the Facility Review and Planning Committee, School Health Advisory Committee, Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee, and District Quality Improvement Committee (DQIC).
- LVISD’s management team participates in Chamber of Commerce luncheons. The superintendent is involved and visible in the community through

speaking engagements and serves on boards such as the Lions Club.

LA VEGA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL H.P. MILES CAMPUS MENTOR PROJECT

La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus has implemented two mentoring projects to assist students academically and provide them with friendship, encouragement, and positive role models. La Vega Intermediate recruits mentors in July and August and trains the new mentors in August. Mentors receive training about TAKS and are very supportive of the school tutorials including Saturday School. The mentors, according to the counselor, “are avid encouragers when it comes to students.”

La Vega Intermediate School has a high percentage of minority, at-risk, and economically disadvantaged students. The percentage of these student populations is higher than the regional and state rates: 87.7 percent of La Vega Intermediate School students in 2008–09 were economically disadvantaged, 72.7 percent were minorities, and 35.0 percent were at-risk. **Exhibit 1–4** shows a comparison of La Vega Intermediate student demographic characteristics with the district, Region 12, and the state.

La Vega Intermediate School has two mentoring programs: the Classroom Mentors Project and the Operation Starfish Project. The Classroom Mentors Project, started in 2003, involves mentors working with classroom groups. The school has 30 mentors who have been matched with classroom groups. Several of these mentors remain with the same teacher year after year. These mentors continually communicate with the classroom teachers via email. There are 15 more mentors who are involved in a variety of other school activities. These mentors attend the Lunch Bunch each month, participate actively in Career Week, work on the annual School Supply Drive at a local company, assist with the Thanksgiving lunch for parents, and work on Project Christmas Spirit.

For the Lunch Bunch activity, each classroom with a mentor sends three students to have lunch with the mentor. This event is very popular and typically has 110 or more students and mentors in attendance. After eating, game carts are set up to play educational games. The counselor commends the mentors for their effort to teach new games to students and for always insisting on good manners during Lunch Bunch.

The School Supply Drive takes place each August to ensure that the school supply closet is adequately stocked with

EXHIBIT 1—4
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
LA VEGA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL, LVISD, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
2008–09

	ENROLLMENT	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	OTHER ETHNICITY	AT-RISK	ECON. DISADVAN.	TOTAL MINORITIES
La Vega Intermediate School	609	27.3%	27.6%	44.3%	0.8%	35.0%	87.7%	72.7%
LVISD	2,778	27.0%	28.5%	43.7%	0.8%	54.0%	81.9%	73.0%
Region 12	149,288	48.6%	22.6%	26.4%	2.5%	48.4%	54.1%	51.5%
State	4,728,204	34.0%	14.2%	47.9%	4.0%	48.3%	56.7%	66.1%

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

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

supplies. To prevent new students who do not have school supplies from being embarrassed, these students are permitted to “shop” in the closet for school supplies before going to class. Mentors provide the school with \$3,500–\$5,000 in supplies each August. When the inventory is low on specific items, the counselor makes contact with mentors for assistance in replenishing the items.

La Vega Intermediate School invites all parents to an annual Thanksgiving lunch. Mentors attend and assist with carrying trays for mothers with small children in attendance, serve tea, and visit with the parents. The mentors are “part of the team” at La Vega Intermediate at all times.

A local company, L-3 Integrated Systems Group, that has had a long relationship with the school, organizes the Project Christmas Spirit event annually and always includes La Vega Intermediate. The company provides a minimum of \$100 each in wrapped gifts to 50 La Vega Intermediate students. Teachers submit names of students and their siblings. During December 2009, the company gave 19 children bicycles in addition to other gifts. The school picks up the gifts at a location away from campus, so students never know that their parents “came to get gifts.” If the La Vega Intermediate counselor has a special need to add to the number of 50 recipients, the counselor has only to contact one of the mentors and the need is met.

Mentors also work with Gifted and Talented (G/T) students. Two mentors work with fifth grade G/T students. A mentor with a 15-year mentoring track record works with the boys, and a mentor who is a retired G/T specialist works with the girls. The counselor plans to make the G/T program more project-oriented in the future and involve mentors in G/T projects. In the new school building expected to open for the 2010-11 school year, the library will have a research area where mentors and G/T students will work on projects.

Many of the mentors are employees of L-3 Integrated Systems Group. The company is a systems integration organization for modernization and maintenance of aircraft of all sizes and integration of special-mission systems for military and commercial applications. While the district does not have a formal partnership with the company, its employees mentor on their own time. Mentors from the company, many of whom are engineers or former military officers, serve as role models. They not only participate in Career Week but talk to students about engineering and college to encourage students “to dream big,” according to the counselor.

The second mentoring program, The Operation Starfish Project, was created in 2006 to meet the special needs of struggling fifth graders. As part of this project, students are matched with teachers and staff from La Vega Intermediate and from other schools in the district at the beginning of the year. The program pairs up volunteer teachers and staff members to work individually with fifth graders who did not pass TAKS in fourth grade in reading or math. The goal is to boost these students’ self-confidence and to let them know often that someone cares a great deal about their academic success. The program creates special bonds between the participating students, nicknamed “starfish”, and the adult volunteers. The students and the adult volunteers lunch together and visit with each other. Five times yearly the volunteer teachers and staff have lunch for the “starfish” students. Many of the students maintain a close relationship with the volunteer teacher or staff even after they complete fifth grade. Both the participating fifth graders and the volunteer teachers and staff find the experience highly rewarding. One of the teachers who took part in the project indicated that Operation Starfish has given her “an opportunity to interact with students on an informal level. They love the special lunches and enjoy the quiet atmosphere.

It is fun to sort of ‘hang out and be cool’ during a regular school day and I think the benefits to students are immeasurable.”

The two mentoring projects have had a positive impact on both the students and the mentoring adults. One of the mentors who worked with the school for more than 15 years stated: “The thing that has impacted me the most while serving in the mentoring program is how the little things make such a huge difference, whether it is a short conversation with a student, assisting a student with coursework, or having lunch with a student. I think the fact that they see that someone cares enough to take the time to spend with them helps to build their self-esteem and motivates them to do more than they thought they ever could. I feel this is so important in breaking the “cycle” that happens so often in broken families—without motivation, without positive role models—children tend to give up and think their dreams are out of reach. The mentoring program helps to fill this void in a student’s life, making it an important piece in the education of our children.” The counselor who initiated both projects concurs that the mentoring projects have changed “children’s lives because of the caring adults who are involved.” The La Vega Intermediate principal reinforces the projects’ impact on students: “I saw my students’ self-confidence and academics soar.”

DETAILED FINDINGS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE (REC. 1)

Executive management’s multiple roles and overlapping responsibilities result in unclear lines of reporting and communication and an ineffective span of control.

The reporting responsibility for non-curriculum functions currently is informally split between the director of Finance (director) and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration (assistant superintendent). Managers will contact the director if their needs require funding or have financial implications, but they will report to the assistant superintendent if the decision is contractual or operational in nature. Employees may report to the superintendent based on the organization chart, yet receive performance evaluations from the director or assistant superintendent. This informal reporting structure and lack of direct oversight leads to confusion and ineffective district operational management in key areas.

With the reporting relationships resulting from functional responsibility and being split between operational, financial,

and educational areas of the assistant superintendent, director, and superintendent, **Exhibit 1–5** is not reflective of the board approved organizational structure but depicts the actual reporting relationships, as observed during the on-site visit, which exist for the following director positions.

Within these functional reporting relationships adequate communication between directors does not exist, and there is a lack of collaboration between the superintendent and the operational areas. There are also an insufficient number of meetings that involve these operational directors, thereby creating a silo effect where each department operates independent of each other.

In addition, there is a lack of contract management oversight and contract performance evaluations for the external contractors and vendors. Without a central point of contact for the vendors or contractors to discuss problems or concerns, the potential exists for greater operational inefficiencies, substandard work quality, inadequate service levels, potential contractual cost overruns, and inconsistencies in enforcement of key contractual or operational terms.

The superintendent has too many direct reports and assumes too many responsibilities to maintain an effective leadership team. Currently, there are 15 direct reports plus two contractor supervisors who report to the superintendent (**Exhibit 1–2**). This reporting structure exceeds the span of control “rule of thumb” of six to eight direct reports. The

**EXHIBIT 1–5
INFORMAL REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES OF LVISD
DIRECTOR POSITIONS
2009–10**

DIRECTOR POSITION	FUNCTIONAL REPORTING – DIRECTOR OF FINANCE	FUNCTIONAL REPORTING – ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Informational Technology	(A) (B)	(C)
Athletics	(B)	(C)
Music	(B)	(C)
Maintenance	(A) (B)	(C)
Child Nutrition (Contractor)	(B)	(C)
Transportation (Contractor)	(B)	(C)

FUNCTIONAL REPORTING LEGEND:
 (A) Prepares Performance Evaluation.
 (B) Supervises Daily Financial Responsibilities.
 (C) Supervises Daily Operational or Contractual Responsibilities.
 SOURCE: Review Team interviews and observations, February 2010.

rule, however, is contingent on a number of factors, including the breadth of responsibility in addition to the supervisory demands. As a result of the academic standing of the schools within LVISD, the educational directors and school principals report directly to the superintendent in an effort to closely monitor progress and consistency with established instructional goals.

These goals could still be managed by realigning the academic responsibilities to one of the educational directors who report directly to the superintendent. Although the superintendent may delegate responsibilities effectively, the organization chart does not reflect a proper distribution of reporting responsibilities. The superintendent is the former assistant superintendent for Instructional Services and although this position has been split between two directors (Elementary Education and Secondary Education), the superintendent has retained direct oversight for these directors and the campus principals in addition to assuming the chief leadership role for the district. Currently, the directors of Elementary and Secondary Education work closely with LVISD campus personnel on instructional activities. The director of Elementary works with La Vega Primary, La Vega Elementary, and La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus. The director of Secondary works with La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus and La Vega High School. While these collaborative relationships appear to be working well, they may have been created in this manner due to personality conflicts of administrative personnel and do not correlate functionally with the district's campus alignment, as La Vega Intermediate is an elementary campus and La Vega Junior High is a secondary campus.

Superintendents are responsible for a multitude of functions and results. They need to establish a balance between setting the vision and goals, garnering support, managing finances, being the instructional leader, and delegating daily activities that accomplish instructional requirements. Narrowing a superintendent's span of control allows more time to focus on critical district oversight issues and effectively address key academic concerns.

LVISD's peer district, Taylor ISD, effectively divides responsibilities and reporting structure under the superintendent's office by allocating responsibilities between five direct reports plus the principals. Some districts have an assistant superintendent or deputy superintendent for the following areas: Business/Finance, Curriculum/Instructional Services/Accountability, Student Services, or Support Services/Administrative Services.

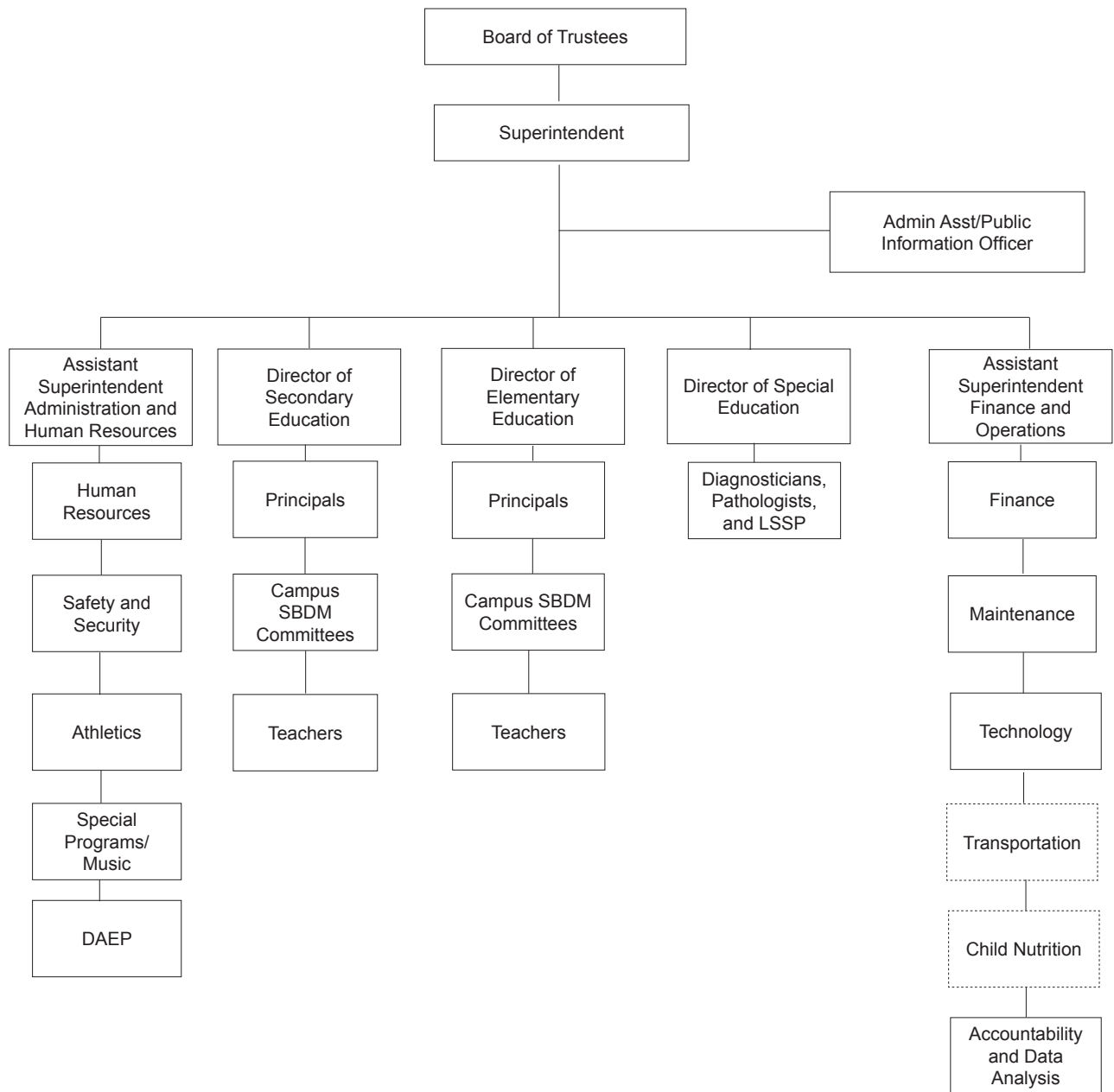
The district should realign LVISD's organization to reduce the number of the direct reports to the superintendent, enhance the functional alignment of staff responsibilities, and clearly assign accountability and specific lines of authority. LVISD should create an administrative organizational structure that ensures balanced reporting relationships, including the number of employees each manager supervises, while taking into account the skills, management styles, and statutory responsibilities involved.

Exhibit 1–6 presents the proposed LVISD organization.

In the proposed organization, the superintendent would have six direct reports, and the director of Finance would be elevated to a new position entitled assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations. Responsibility for the administrative and operational functions would be allocated between the assistant superintendent for Administration and Human Resources (new title) and the proposed assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations. Both directors of education would continue to report directly to the superintendent, but campus principals would report to the directors rather than the superintendent. In addition, the alignment of campuses with directors would change, as the director of Elementary Education would be responsible for supervision of the elementary campuses—La Vega Primary, La Vega Elementary, and La Vega Intermediate, and the director of Secondary Education would be responsible for supervision of the secondary campuses—La Vega Junior High and La Vega High School.

After the review team completed on-site work, the superintendent presented the board with a revised organizational chart to reflect a direct reporting relationship between the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration and the directors of Technology, Maintenance, Child Nutrition Services, and Transportation. This revised structure does not include the Safety and Security Department and it also still requires the superintendent to maintain thirteen direct reports including the administrative assistant and principals. In addition to revising the organizational structure, the superintendent recommended the following job title changes: assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration to deputy superintendent for Personnel and Administration and director of Finance to assistant superintendent of Finance. The board approved these revisions to the organizational chart and job title changes on May 18, 2010, and they become effective July 1, 2010, although these job title

**EXHIBIT 1-6
PROPOSED LVISD ORGANIZATION**



NOTE: The Child Nutrition Services and Transportation functions are outsourced.
SOURCE: Developed by Review Team, March 2010.

revisions were not reflected on the organizational chart approved at that meeting.

Implementing this recommendation will allow the superintendent to delegate appropriately and focus on district leadership and oversight responsibilities and will realign the responsibilities of managing operational issues between the two assistant superintendents. This proposed

reorganization will eliminate unclear reporting lines. Additionally, the E-Team would consist of the assistant superintendents and the superintendent, as they would be required to attend the regular board meetings. Other direct reports to the superintendent would comprise the Administrative Leadership Team (A-Team) responsibility for managing the district's daily operations.

The original proposed reorganization still provides the district with the optimal structure to effectively focus on leadership and operational oversight responsibilities. Balancing the superintendent's proposed assistant superintendents' and educational directors' direct reports strengthens the instructional and operational organizational structure, which provides for overall district improvement. With this proposed reorganization, the district organizational chart and job descriptions should be updated as needed.

Under the review team's proposed structure, the director of Finance would have a new title and additional responsibilities, including monitoring the Child Nutrition Services and Transportation contracts, so the salary should increase along with the proposed title change. The fiscal impact would be an annual \$12,000 increase in personnel costs (salary \$10,000 x 20 percent benefits).

STRATEGIC PLAN (REC. 2)

LVISD does not have a comprehensive districtwide strategic plan to guide the district in decision-making.

During the 2008–09 school year, LVISD began using the Continuous Improvement Continuums (CICs) developed by Education for the Future Initiative. Use of the CICs enables the district to assess progress in the following areas: Information and Analysis, Student Achievement, Quality Planning, Professional Development, Leadership, Partnership Development, and Continuous Improvement and Evaluation. Currently, the district incorporates the Continuous Improvement Continuum assessments into their educational strategic plan. Major initiatives have resulted from this plan including the 360 Walkthroughs and districtwide vertical and horizontal professional development. Additionally, the LVISD board establishes specific goals and objectives on an annual basis.

Comprehensive strategic plans provide a management tool for the board, superintendent, and community and are critical to effective governing of school districts. Sound strategic plans identify academic, operational, and financial goals for all district operations. Each goal is tied to student achievement, includes resources needed, implementation champions, timelines, action items, performance measures, and fund requirements. Many districts also use the achievement of strategic plan goals as part of a superintendent's performance evaluation.

Strategic plans should be vital documents approved by the board and updated annually. **Exhibit 1–7** provides a sample model of a strategic planning process.

Inherent within a school district's operation is an intense focus on the educational processes, which flow from the goals and objectives set by the school board. While this focus should be a part of the comprehensive strategic plan, it should not be the entire plan. Isolating the strategic vision of a district solely on the educational aspects likely will not lead to the intended results of improved operational and academic sustainability. Progress toward academic improvement will be achieved, but the district's operational support areas are critical and need to be strategically addressed as well.

The development of a strategic plan encourages more discussion of operational and financial considerations especially as it relates to utilization of bond election funds. A strategic plan developed over time provides a district with a solid basis for soliciting community support related to oversight of funds, building development, and facility upkeep.

LVISD should develop a comprehensive strategic plan to provide goals and guide the district in decision-making. The plan should include a mission, vision, and belief statements. The district should establish a comprehensive strategic planning process that outlines the goals and objectives for all of the district's operations, includes detailed action plans, identifies the resources required to accomplish the goals, forecasts the dates for completion, indicates person(s) within the district responsible for achieving the goals within an established timeline, and sets performance measures for each goal and objective. The current draft of the District Improvement Plan would be a good starting point for developing the strategic plan. The plan should serve as a tool used for the operations of the district, allocating resources, and evaluating the superintendent.

The board members and superintendent should also participate in an annual strategic planning retreat to discuss what should constitute the academic and operational objectives of the upcoming school year, as well as discuss district budgets and accountability goals or strategies. The retreat could be scheduled on a Saturday during the summer on district property and include team-building activities. At the conclusion of the retreat, the superintendent would be charged with creating a plan to accomplish the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (REC. 3)

LVISD's executive leadership team and management personnel lack sufficient leadership development and management training.

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

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

SOURCE: Review Team research on best practices.

Leadership development is lacking for the executive leadership team, principals, assistant principals, and key administrative staff. Educational professional development is emphasized at the campus level to ensure staff is kept current on the latest effective teaching techniques and curriculum. LVISD contracts with Region 12 for six one-half day professional development sessions related to school law and continuous improvement for campus administrators through the Administrators’ Institute for School Improvement. However, campus leadership does not receive adequate training on how to manage and run their organizations within the district structure. Principals need proper training to understand how crucial their role as campus administrators is to the overall leadership, organization, and management of the district. Additionally, training records did not indicate that district administrators receive regular training on managing their functional areas.

Board policy DMA (LEGAL) states, “Staff development shall be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee”. This policy reiterates the importance placed on academic staff development but fails to consider relevant leadership development training needed for effective district management.

The board policy states that staff development may include: training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies like classroom management. Additional leadership training or training not directly related to the educational service delivery aspect of their responsibilities should be an important part of all campus administrator development. Specifically, courses in fundamental management skills, time management skills, and leadership preparation training could be integrated with academic-based staff development. A district could also enlist the services of third party providers to conduct Fundamental Management Skills, Time Management for Leaders, or Building an Authentic Leadership Image sessions. These courses can be taken either in a live setting, group online training class, or self-paced online course. The cost associated with these third party courses could be considered an investment in the continuing education of personnel that ultimately will provide a return through improvements in student academic performance.

Interviews conducted with LVISD personnel revealed that they had an interest in leadership development training but believed that such training was restricted in the budget and not available within the district. The district has an annual staff development schedule for instructional leaders and allows other district staff the opportunity to attend regional

training specific to their positions. The training offered excludes leadership or management training.

Professional development is an important component in the retention of qualified personnel. Leadership training is necessary to ensure district employees are properly coached on how to be effective leaders and manage their organizations, since effective leaders are crucial to the success of the district both academically and financially. Blending operational and personal management skills training with instructional enhancement seminars builds a multifaceted leadership team. Integrating leadership development into LVISD's regular principal meetings and professional development schedule will have a positive effect on academic improvement.

The district should provide leadership development and management training for district management employees including principals. LVISD should incorporate non-academic professional leadership development workshops into the staff development schedule at least two times per year. The seminars should be designed to enhance leadership's ability to more effectively manage campus operations. In order to enhance campus leadership, attendance at these training seminars should be mandatory. Professional development should be coordinated for district staff so that all have the opportunity to receive at least the minimum training to perform their specific duties and meet their personnel evaluation goals. Training should be coordinated through the Personnel and Administration Department to provide universal leadership training to all supervisory roles or positions, and as a supplement to curriculum-based training provided to teachers.

In addition to the professional development currently provided through Region 12's Administrator's Institute, the district should research other professional development activities focused on leadership development and management training offered by regional education service centers, education organizations, and the district's vendors. Specific basic management courses such as interviewing techniques, time management, team development, and dealing with personnel issues should be considered. The Personnel and Administration Department should coordinate the development and management training program and conduct a needs assessment to determine the most needed and appropriate areas of training. The district could also conduct a needs assessment of administrative staff to determine priorities for training.

According to the director of Finance, there are usually unspent funds throughout the general fund budget that could be used for leadership training. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING (REC. 4)

LVISD has not effectively implemented site-based decision-making (SBDM) at its campuses with respect to budgeting. SBDM refers to the level of authority, autonomy, and accountability that school districts grant individual campuses. Policy BQB (LEGAL) provides the district guidance on how planning and decision-making should occur at the campus level. Additionally, §11.251(b) of the Texas Education Code (TEC) states the campus-level committee shall be involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The campus-level committee must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs. TEC specifies many requirements for site-based decision-making including:

- District and campus improvement plans must be developed, reviewed, and revised annually;
- Administrative procedures or policies must clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, and district-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization;
- Systematic communications measures must be put in place to obtain broad-based community, parental and staff input and to provide information to those persons on the recommendations of the district-level committee; and
- Decision-making committees must be actively involved in establishing administrative procedures.

The district does have a district improvement plan. Some but not all campuses have campus improvement plans that demonstrate SBDM has been implemented in respect to academic achievement, even including community participation in those plans.

LVISD has not effectively implemented site-based decision-making, especially with regards to budgeting. Each school within LVISD operates as its own organization with little collaboration between schools, outside of the CSCOPE curriculum requirements. The district's budget process involves central administration providing campuses with a

template showing the historical budgeted amount and actual expenditures by line item in addition to the lump sum proposed budgeted amount. The campus determines the allocation of the lump sum amount between the individual line items and returns the template to the director of Finance to input the information into the budget module. The executive leadership team and board then determine final funding allocations based on individual campus needs. There are no coordinated budget workshops or discussions that involve the collaboration, exchange, and dialogue of all campus, department, and central office budget stakeholders. During the school year, campuses can request a budget line item change or make a special funding request based on the needed expenditure but all transactions must be processed in the budget module by central administration. This process is not based on strategic objectives and does not provide principals the flexibility to make administrative and operations decisions for their schools to which they can be held accountable in their performance evaluation. Principals' evaluations focus more on the performance of the school and student test results than their ability to administratively manage their campuses.

Many districts, including LVISD, establish local board policies for SBDM which address planning and decision-making at both the district and campus levels. Subsequent to the review team's on-site visit, LVISD also updated their legal SBDM policies. These policies require the formation of a Campus Improvement Committee and state that their roles are to address goal-setting, curriculum, budget, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization.

Santa Gertrudis ISD expands the state requirement to actively involve district staff, parents, and community members by creating sub-committees to provide further opportunities for interaction and participation in decision-making processes. Marble Falls ISD (enrollment 3,912) uses

their SBDM process to hire personnel, set goals, develop curriculum and instruction, and prepare campus budgets. Each campus SBDM committee include a campus administrator, teachers from various grade levels, special programs, paraprofessional staff, parents, community representatives, and business members. The superintendent will appoint a central administration representative to each committee. To facilitate the effectiveness of these committees, training is provided to principals on school finance and budgeting.

The survey results in **Exhibit 1–8** show most constituents believed that these committees are adequately involved in the process, although staff interviewed made no mention of committee involvement.

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

**EXHIBIT 1–8
LVISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

SURVEY QUESTION: "THE DISTRICT INVOLVES PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRICT AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLANS."

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
District Administration and Support Staff	149	13%	51%	30%	5%	1%
Principals and Assistant Principals	10	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%
Teachers	142	10%	60%	20%	8%	2%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

COMMUNITY/PARENTAL/VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (REC. 5)

LVISD does not have a districtwide community/parental/volunteer involvement and communication plan nor a budget to fund community-related activities.

Community-related activities including public information, media relations, and communications are implemented primarily by the superintendent and the administrative assistant/Public Information Officer and supplemented by other Central Office administrators on an “as needed basis” without a plan or well defined goals and objectives. LVISD also lacks a plan coordinating and monitoring all parental involvement and volunteer recruitment and management activities taking place on the district campuses.

LVISD’s 2009–10 District Improvement Plan (DIP) does not have a districtwide goal addressing parent and community involvement. It relegates this responsibility to the campuses stating: “All parents, community members, and educators at (campus) will be active partners in the education of our students.” Only one of the activities in the DIP relates to informing parents about “positive events at the schools.”

Since LVISD receives Title I, Part A funds, the district is required to have a parent involvement policy. The District Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), comprised of parents, community leaders, teachers, administrators, non-teaching professionals, and school board members, is responsible for development and implementation of the policy. Additionally, Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) address parental involvement, but little attention is given to community involvement. The CIPs list a range of parental involvement activities including communications between school and home; opportunities for parents and community members to be actively involved in programs such as booster clubs, committees, volunteer activities, class sponsors; information sharing with parents, and involvement in the planning process through a number of district committees, such as the PAC, the District Quality Improvement Council, and the School Health Advisory Committee.

In spite of this range of options for parental involvement, the annual performance targets for increasing parental involvement set in the campus improvement plans are either minimal or unspecified. For example, La Vega Primary set an annual performance objective of increasing parental involvement in 2009–10 by at least one percent. La Vega Intermediate set an annual performance goal of increasing parent involvement in 2009–10 by 3 percent, down from its

2008–09 target of 10 percent. La Vega Elementary set a relatively more aggressive annual performance goal of increasing parental involvement by 10 percent. La Vega Junior High and La Vega High School do not have measurable targets. Their objective is to increase parental involvement as “evidenced by an increase in the number of parent/community contacts.” The parental involvement activities incorporated into the improvement plans have not changed over the past three years, independent of the degree of success in achieving them or changing campus needs.

The campuses’ community, parental, and volunteer involvement activities are implemented and managed at the campus level with little or no coordination among campuses or guidance and monitoring from district administration. The success and effectiveness of these activities vary from campus to campus based on the principal’s interest and involvement and on the initiative and dedication of parents. For example, not all campuses have Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs), and the extent of parent participation varies considerably across campuses:

- The primary school established a PTO only in 2008–09 and has been effective in increasing parent participation. In 2009–10, the PTO has 193 family members and 65 employees. The PTO board consists of nine members who meet four times a year. The PTO organizes multiple events each year.
- The PTO at La Vega Elementary has not been very active in the past few years because of lack of interest on the part of parents. It has been re-activated in 2009–10.
- The intermediate school does not have an active PTO but staff and parents work on fundraisers to purchase materials for students. Each grade level also has three programs a year with strong parent turnout.
- Neither the junior high nor high school has a PTO. However, the Campus Intervention Team has recommended that La Vega High School implement a PTO, and the district has begun the planning by identifying parents willing to serve as officers. During spring 2010, parents and administrators have started to plan for 2010–11 and address some current issues at the high school.

Although district board policies indicate that the district shall develop a volunteer program and evaluate its effectiveness, LVISD does not have a district or campus volunteer recruitment, training, and monitoring plan. Also,

there are no common procedures for recruiting, screening, training, and monitoring volunteers. As a result, teachers recruit volunteers to fulfill a specific classroom task. Each campus screens volunteers and uses different strategies to recruit and monitor volunteers. Each of the schools conducts criminal background checks on their volunteers. The district and the schools do not track or share volunteer information. The LVISD website, redesigned and expanded in 2010, does not include any web pages or information for recruiting volunteers. The success rates of LVISD campuses in recruiting volunteers vary:

- La Vega Primary attaches a volunteer form to the student registration forms. Teachers recruit volunteers to help with parties, snacks, and field trips. Parents, according to the principal, are willing to help in many ways.
- La Vega Elementary School’s volunteer program is largely non-existent. It has a few volunteers who help with events like Picture Day but none that works with students. There is no volunteer coordinator to drive a campuswide volunteer effort or a location for volunteers to meet.
- While La Vega Intermediate has strong mentoring programs involving community members, teachers, and staff, it has not been successful in recruiting parent volunteers.
- La Vega Junior High’s counselor coordinates volunteers campuswide and has seen a recent increase in the number of volunteers.
- La Vega High School does not have an organized volunteer program. It is up to individual teachers to recruit volunteers.

LVISD campus administrators, teachers, and district administrators and support staff, have mixed opinions

regarding schools having enough volunteers, as shown in **Exhibit 1–9**.

San Elizario ISD succeeded in developing a strong parent and community volunteer program by developing a Parent Involvement Plan that guides the district’s efforts in establishing parent and community partnerships. The district established a parent advisory committee, created meaningful volunteer opportunities, and used parent liaisons to recruit volunteers. The goal of the parent advisory committee is to ensure that parents are truly involved in their children’s education. The parent involvement plan includes training and workshops for parents to learn skills for assisting their children with academics and social skills. The district also developed a Parent Involvement Program Handbook. The Handbook identifies benefits for volunteer parents, teachers, and students.

LVISD should create a community/parental/volunteer involvement and communication plan to improve the community, volunteer, and parent recruitment and involvement. The plan should set annual goals; identify needed staff and financial resources; specify yearly community, volunteer, and parental targets; and define procedures for coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of the activities. LVISD should standardize and centralize the volunteer function by assigning the responsibility to the Public Information Officer who at present implements many of the community involvement functions. A common volunteer form should be designed, and the volunteer form should be posted on the district website and campus web pages. Campus and central office clerical staff can screen and maintain records on all volunteers. Training should be conducted for district staff involved in screening volunteers. Each campus should appoint a volunteer coordinator. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**EXHIBIT 1–9
LVISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
SURVEY QUESTION: “SCHOOLS HAVE PLENTY OF VOLUNTEERS TO HELP STUDENT AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS.”					
Teachers	5%	18%	23%	45%	9%
District administrators and support staff	10%	27%	42%	18%	3%
Principals and assistant principals	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

DISTRICT AND CAMPUS WEBSITES (REC. 6)

LVISD is not effectively using its website to communicate with parents and community members or to recruit volunteers. The district website and campus web pages are underdeveloped with regards to parent and community involvement information. Although LVISD redesigned its website in 2010, the redesigned website does not have a community or volunteer page and does not have any information for volunteers or community members on any of its campus web pages.

The LVISD campus web pages have little information beyond a list of administrators and staff and a calendar of events. Neither the district's website nor campus' web pages offer any information about parent and community involvement. The district's website's parent page has a supply list for each school, athletic participation forms, Student and Parent Handbooks in English and Spanish, a parent survey, and a Parent Portal that gives parents access to their child's attendance and grades data. It does not have any information on PTO events, how parents can become involved in their child's school, or how to volunteer.

Websites can be useful and cost-effective tools for districts and schools to reach out to parents and the community at-large. Web pages can be easily updated with current information and communications. Web pages can also help create a positive and caring image of the district and the respective schools and encourage parents and community members to become involved.

Clint ISD, a high minority district, has an informative parent and community web page. The web page has a wide range of information for parents and links to important resources. It provides access to issues in the district newsletter, a link to TEA's Parent Involvement and Community Empowerment, a calendar of district activities, the district Parental Involvement Plan in English and Spanish, and the latest issue of Newsletter for Parents in English and Spanish.

LVISD should develop community and parent web pages for the district and campus websites with up-to-date information describing the different initiatives, programs, and activities of interest to parents and community members. Personnel already assigned to maintain the district and campus websites should work together to develop these web pages and have them go live simultaneously. The web pages should have information on PTO activities and accomplishments and district meetings with parents and community members. The information should be available in both English and

Spanish. The web pages should be used to keep the parents and community members informed of activities in the district and at campuses, recruit parents and community members to volunteer, and create a positive image of the district. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BOARD PARTICIPATION (REC. 7)

LVISD's board meetings are not well attended by parents or the community.

LVISD board meetings are held at the district's administration building on the third Tuesday of each month. Occasionally, LVISD board meetings have lasted three hours, starting at 7:00 PM and adjourning by 10:00 PM. While there is a formal interactive board table for members, seating for the general public is extremely limited, which discourages attendance from non-agenda participants. The district recognized the limited capabilities of its current board meeting location and requested voters to approve \$1.3 million in bonds to construct a new administration building in 2008. Unfortunately, the initiative was rejected by the LVISD voters.

Parental and community participation in board meetings is not encouraged when the duration and agenda order are not convenient nor specific to their particular interests. Even when matters of importance are part of the agenda, parents are not inclined to attend if the time involved is extensive or in conflict with their other responsibilities.

In response to a survey question regarding whether the board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings: 65 percent of district administration and support staff agreed, 100 percent of the principals and assistant principals agreed, and 67 percent of the teachers agreed. However, information obtained through discussion during the on-site visit indicates that most of the respondents do not regularly attend board meetings. Although the survey results reflect approval for the amount of time allowed for public comment, if the public does not attend the meeting, the time allotted may be irrelevant. **Exhibit 1–10** summarizes results to the survey question.

Ideally, the La Vega community should be proportionally reflected in board meeting representation, thereby indicating that the community as a whole is actively participating in LVISD. However, if the community in general fails to attend the monthly meeting to receive information critical to district operations and the education of the students, then

**EXHIBIT 1–10
LVISD SURVEY RESPONSES**

SURVEY QUESTION: “THE SCHOOL BOARD ALLOWS SUFFICIENT TIME FOR PUBLIC INPUT AT MEETINGS.”

RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
District Administration and Support Staff	149	17%	48%	34%	1%	0%
Principals and Assistant Principals	10	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers and Teacher Assistants	142	23%	44%	33%	0%	0%

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

any effort made to encourage participation in the board and the district’s decision-making process loses its maximum impact.

Most LVISD board members commented that the community is not more involved because they trust the board’s decisions. The longevity of each of the current board members tends to limit the competition for each seat; in fact most members run unopposed. This lack of board member rotation can be viewed as the community’s appreciation for the work being done by current members, or an overall sense of community apathy to the board and district operations.

Several tools currently exist and are available that might help LVISD with increasing parents’ and the local community’s active participation during meetings, as well as serving on the board:

- *School board development framework.* The National School Board Association offers a framework entitled “Key Work of School Boards”. The purpose of this web-based tool is to help school boards engage their communities and improve student achievement through effective governance.
- *Conduct an annual board effectiveness audit.* The board effectiveness audit is a free tool offered by the Texas Association of School Boards. The audit is designed to be completed by the individual board members and the superintendent before being discussed as a group. The audit asks a series of questions regarding planning and governance, oversight, and management. This tool will assist the district in focusing on areas of continuous improvement.
- *Conduct quick meeting reviews at the conclusion of board meetings.* The purpose of the quick meeting review is to give board members an opportunity to share their ideas on how well the meeting was run with respect to

conduct, participation, and efficiency. Quick meeting reviews work by having each board member state areas whereby they could improve or offer coaching tips to fellow board members with respect to roles, responsibilities, and community participation.

Manor ISD (MISD) increased community involvement by holding scheduled monthly school board meetings at various campus locations throughout its community. MISD realized that the larger geographic size of the district and the smaller size of the District Learning Center, where it held board meetings, might be impeding the community from active involvement in school board meetings. In March 2009, the district held its monthly board meeting at Manor Elementary School instead of at the District Learning Center and had approximately 100 community members and parents in attendance. Community participation in board meetings often improves when board meetings are conveniently situated within the various communities throughout a district. The MISD school board planned to hold its scheduled monthly meetings at various campus locations throughout the community four times yearly.

LVISD should develop ideas for improving parent/community attendance and participation at board meetings. The district could adopt school board development framework tenets to encourage parent and community participation in board meetings. LVISD could prepare a “Welcome to the School Board Meeting” brochure for community members, or hold its board meetings periodically at various campuses or other locations in the district to encourage attendance. These actions will help LVISD address critical areas of board development, such as periodic board seat rotation, and indicate to parents and community members the importance of taking an active role in the board governance process.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 1: DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT							
1. Realign LVISD's organization to reduce the number of the direct reports to the superintendent, enhance the functional alignment of staff responsibilities, and clearly assign accountability and specific lines of authority.	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(60,000)	\$0
2. Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to provide goals and guide the district in decision-making.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Provide leadership development and management training for district management employees including principals.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Implement and enforce site-based decision-making practices to address budgeting.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Create a community/parental/volunteer involvement and communication plan to improve the community, volunteer, and parent recruitment and involvement.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Develop community and parent web pages for the district and campus websites with up-to-date information describing the different initiatives, programs, and activities of interest to parents and community members.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Develop ideas for improving parent/community attendance and participation at board meetings.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 1	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	(\$60,000)	\$0

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 2. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

La Vega Independent School District (LVISD) provides instruction to its 2,778 students at five campuses: La Vega Primary School (LVPS) which houses the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten grade levels; La Vega Elementary School (LVES) which has grades 1, 2, and 3. La Vega Intermediate School H. P. Miles Campus (LVISDHPMC) covers grades 4, 5, and 6. La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC) has grades 7 and 8, and La Vega High School (LVHS) houses grades 9 through 12. The district also operates a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) located in the Learning Center.

LVISD is a predominantly minority district. In 2008–09, the 2,778 LVISD students were 43.7 percent Hispanic, 28.5 percent African American, and 27.0 percent Anglo. Approximately 82 percent were economically disadvantaged, 54.0 percent were at risk, and 14.5 percent were limited English proficient (LEP).

LVISD received an *Academically Unacceptable* rating for 2008–09 from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In 2008–09, La Vega Primary was *Not Rated*, La Vega Elementary was rated *Exemplary*, and La Vega Intermediate was rated *Academically Acceptable*. La Vega Junior High was rated *Academically Unacceptable* due to Science performance, and La Vega High School was rated *Academically Unacceptable* due to Mathematics performance and completion rate. La Vega Junior High was also rated *Academically Unacceptable* in 2007–08 as a result of its Science performance.

Under the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act, all public school campuses, school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). LVISD's final 2009 AYP results indicate that while the district *Met AYP*, it is in Stage 1 of School Improvement due to its graduation rate. La Vega Primary was *Not Rated*, and La Vega Elementary, La Vega Intermediate, and La Vega Junior High all *Met AYP*. La Vega High School *Missed AYP* due to Mathematics performance.

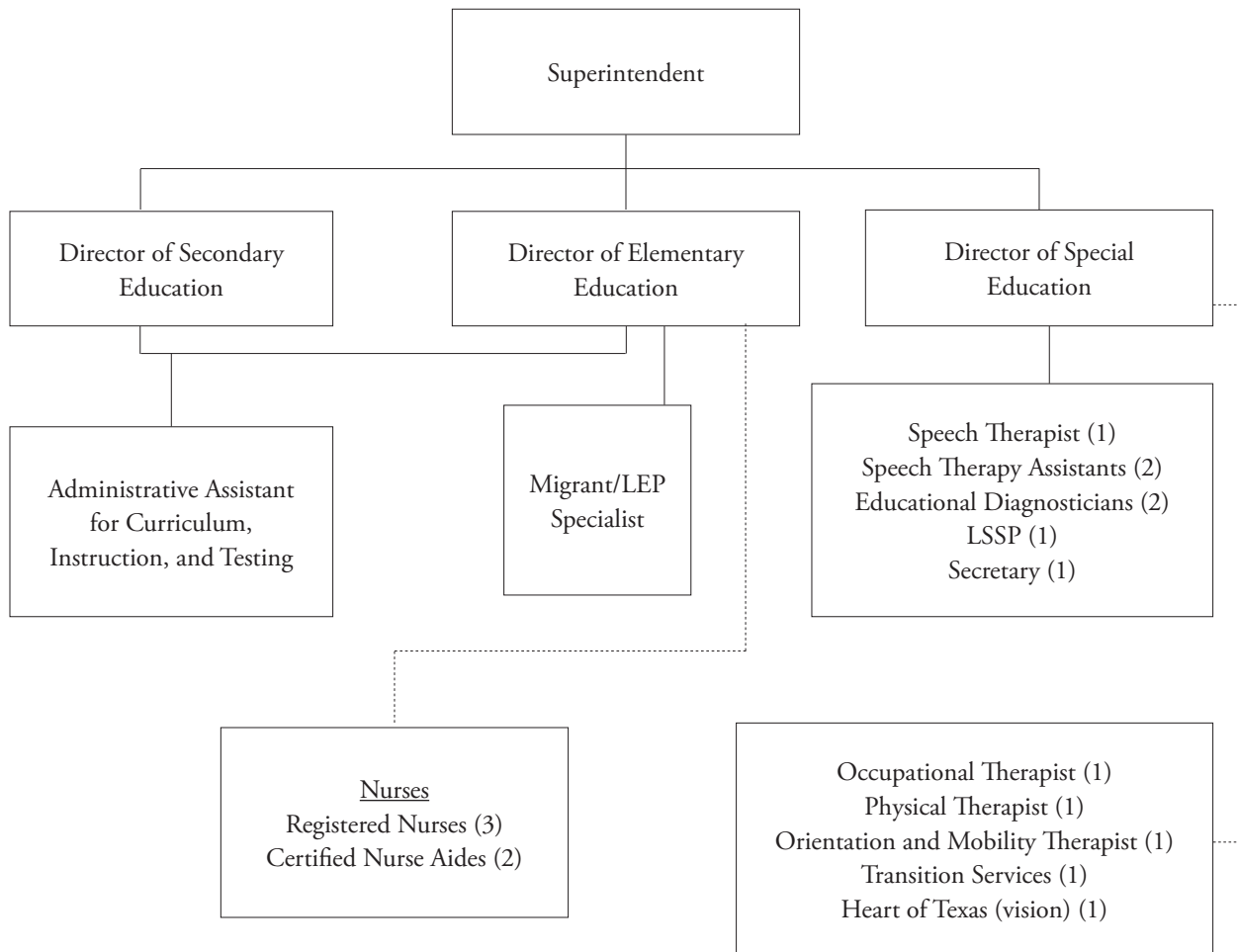
Exhibit 2–1 shows the organizational chart of LVISD's instructional services for 2009–10.

LVISD adopted the CSCOPE curriculum districtwide in 2009–10. Previously, LVISD used the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and textbooks as their

curriculum. Although teachers developed a scope and sequence for each subject area and grade level, it was difficult to ensure consistent implementation and achieve vertical alignment. The Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC) developed CSCOPE, which is research based and fully aligned to the TEKS. It is vertically aligned in the four content areas spanning K–12. Not all math and science courses at the high school level are integrated into CSCOPE. CSCOPE also has not integrated Gifted/Talented (G/T), Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP), AP, and special education. CSCOPE does not address Career and Technology Education (CTE) and electives. In courses not integrated into CSCOPE, LVISD teachers use a scope and sequence and rely on textbooks.

The junior high school was the first to use CSCOPE, implementing it in spring 2009 mainly in science and expanding its use to all four content areas in 2009–10. The elementary school uses CSCOPE in science and social studies and as a supplement in reading and math. The intermediate and high schools use CSCOPE in the four content areas.

**EXHIBIT 2-1
LVISD INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
2009-10**



SOURCE: LVISD Organization Chart, Instructional Services, 2009-10.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LVISD’s secondary schools have created Saturday Academies in an effort to increase students’ interest and involvement in the four core content areas, as well as improve test performance in these subject areas.
- LVISD instituted the 360 Walkthrough model in 2009-10, giving district and campus administrators, program directors, and instructional facilitators a quick snapshot of classroom instruction and student engagement.
- LVISD campuses have implemented intensive benchmark test performance analysis involving teachers and support staff.

- Having difficulty recruiting bilingual teachers, LVISD has addressed the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students by optimizing student access to its small number of bilingual teachers and actively motivating its teachers to become English as a Second Language (ESL) certified.
- LVISD nurses and health aides work as a team to provide unified health care across all schools.

FINDINGS

- LVISD’s high rates of retention, especially in grades 2, 7, and 8, have created a large population of overage students contributing to a high dropout rate.

- LVISD's G/T program appears to lack commitment and priority on the part of school and district administrators, and the number of students identified and served through the G/T program is decreasing.
- Lacking fund tracking and monitoring procedures at the campus and district levels, LVISD under spends its special education funds.
- The weaknesses in LVISD's Response to Intervention (RtI) process leads to a high rate of inappropriate referrals to special education.
- The LVISD Special Education Department is not adequately and appropriately utilized by campuses.
- LVISD's Career and Technology Education (CTE) program does not have an advisory committee and does not evaluate its program annually.
- While LVISD has begun to raise student and parent awareness of the importance of college, its college preparation academic program is limited and its student participation in advanced courses, performance on college admission tests, and college readiness has been low.
- Academic failure, high retention rates, and lack of student engagement in school have led to a high dropout rate and low high school completion in LVISD.
- LVISD's disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), the La Vega Learning Center DAEP, does not maintain comprehensive data on the students in the program and does not monitor the program and evaluate its effectiveness.
- LVISD's libraries are not staffed in accordance with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) recommended standards, limiting the time students and teachers are able to utilize the services of the library and librarian.
- LVISD's library collections do not meet the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) recommended standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 8:** Review the retention procedures that each school follows and analyze their academic and social/behavior impact on retained students and on the relationship between retention and high school completion.
- **Recommendation 9:** Ensure the Gifted/Talented (G/T) program is a priority districtwide and on all campuses, and monitor and evaluate its implementation from recruitment and identification to service provision.
- **Recommendation 10:** Develop documentation and a tracking system to ensure the required expenditure of special education funds.
- **Recommendation 11:** Review the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, identifying areas where implementation is lacking or incomplete, and develop procedures to be implemented districtwide that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation.
- **Recommendation 12:** Ensure that the Special Education Department works closely with the campuses in all matters relating to the education of students with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 13:** Establish a Career and Technology Education (CTE) advisory committee with representatives from local business and industry and involve the advisory committee members in an annual evaluation of its program.
- **Recommendation 14:** Prepare students for participation and success in rigorous, college preparation courses by building up the Advanced Placement (AP) program and developing strategies for improving student performance on college admission tests.
- **Recommendation 15:** Develop and implement a comprehensive dropout prevention and high school completion plan involving all grade levels.
- **Recommendation 16:** Develop an automated data collection system on students placed in the La Vega Learning Center Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP), analyze the data, and evaluate the effectiveness of the DAEP program.

- **Recommendation 17: Ensure that all campus libraries maintain consistency with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) *Acceptable* staffing levels and are being effectively utilized by students and teachers.**
- **Recommendation 18: Evaluate library collection sizes and ages and develop strategies to ensure all libraries meet the TSLAC *Acceptable* standard for collection size and age.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LA VEGA SECONDARY SCHOOLS' SATURDAY ACADEMIES

LVISD's secondary schools have created Saturday Academies in an effort to increase students' interest and involvement in the four core content areas, as well as improve test performance in these subject areas.

To address its students' low passing rates on the science Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), in spring 2010 the junior high school implemented a series of Super Saturday Science Extravaganza Academies for eighth graders that meets 12 times during the spring semester. In 2010–11 the academies will take place throughout the year. The topics of focus at the academy were determined based on the analysis of campuswide benchmark test data. The academies provide a "real-world science experience" to students and offer

creative labs—field trips and hands-on experiments, as shown in **Exhibit 2–2**. The academies offer high interest, hands-on lessons that reinforce what students learn during the week in their regular science classes. The academies meet on Saturday from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM; the district provides transportation, breakfast, and lunch to participating students. To attract students to participate, attendance at the weekly academies provides students an opportunity to earn movie tickets, skating passes, gift cards, iPods, and digital cameras. Each Saturday academy utilizes between 10 and 12 teachers. Teachers are junior high school staff from different departments including Science, English, Language Arts, Math, and electives, and Science teachers and administrators from other campuses also assist in instruction. Students are divided into two teams, each comprised of five teachers. Within each team, students are divided into groups of 12 or smaller. Each team of students rotates among five labs that are focused on a specific topic that week. In the first four academies of the spring 2010 semester, a total of 193 students out of a class of 198 8th graders participated. Participation ranged from 80 to 89 students per academy, or an average of 82 students per academy. Fifty-seven students attended the first four academies of the spring semester. No additional information was provided by the district regarding the number of students in attendance at the remainder of academies from February through April.

**EXHIBIT 2–2
DATES, OBJECTIVES, AND TOPICS
LA VEGA JUNIOR HIGH SCIENCE ACADEMY
JANUARY THROUGH APRIL 2010**

DATE	TAKS OBJECTIVE	TOPICS
January 9	Objective 3	Chemical and physical properties; chemical and physical change
January 23	Objective 5	Water characteristics, water cycle, ground and surface water, people impacting the water cycle
January 30	Objective 2	Environment; food webs and food chains; consumers and producers, impacts of humans on environment
February 6	Objective 2	Cells, living systems, genetics, feedback/homeostasis
February 13	Objective 4	Energy transfer, simple machines, forces of nature, convection currents, photosynthesis
February 20	Objective 5	Earth changes, rock cycles, natural disasters, plate tectonics
February 27	Objective 4	Newton's Law
March 20	Objective 3	Atoms, periodic table, balancing chemical equations
March 27	Objective 5	Space and Astronomy
April 10	Objective 5	Weather and seasons
April 17	Objective 5	Environment, go green, field trip to wetlands
April 24		Bonus date (massive review); science celebration

SOURCE: La Vega Junior High School, February 2010.

While the impact of the academies on student performance on the Science TAKS test is not yet known, the six-week assessments show an increase in student scores. Teachers report that students who have participated in the academies ask more thoughtful questions and connect and transfer knowledge they have learned in the academies and in the classroom.

Following the success of the La Vega Junior High Science Academy, La Vega High School initiated academies in all four content areas for its students. The academies are targeted to students in grades 9 through 12 who want extra help in preparing for the TAKS tests in these subject areas. Academies meet on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The school publicized the academies through information to teachers, classroom announcements, notice displays on the school's electronic message board, and calls home to parents.

The Science Academy involves eight teachers and a graduate student from Baylor University that is located near the district. Labs are set up in stations, allowing students to rotate from station to station to help them with practical applications of lab skills. The Math Academy has four teachers. The first Math Academy, promoted as a "Math TAKS Blitz" that was targeted to students in grades 9 through 12, was set up in several classrooms, each addressing a different topic or area. The initial academies implemented at the high school in spring 2010 had 21 students participating in the Science Academy and 31 in the Math Academy. La Vega High School is planning to hold a Math Academy for re-testers and some mini-academies (TAKS blitzes) to fill in gaps in between the actual academies. Additional information is provided in **Exhibit 2–3** related to the number of participants in the high school Saturday Academies through April 2010.

360 WALKTHROUGHS

LVISD instituted the 360 Walkthrough model in 2009–10, giving district and campus administrators, program directors, and instructional facilitators a quick snapshot of classroom instruction and student engagement. The 360 Walkthroughs also provide understanding that can be used to assess the effectiveness of classroom instruction and identify campus and teacher instructional needs.

The 360 Walkthrough model, adapted from industry, is considered an effective and efficient system to collect data on instructional practices and provide direct and specific feedback to teachers. The classroom 360 Walkthrough model consists of a series of frequent classroom visits where observers

EXHIBIT 2–3

LA VEGA HIGH SCHOOL SATURDAY ACADEMIES SUBJECT AREA AND NUMBER OF ATTENDEES FEBRUARY THROUGH APRIL 2010

DATE	SUBJECT AREA	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
February 27	English/Language Arts	10
March 20	Math	9
March 27	Science	11
April 10	Math	65
April 10	Social Studies	15
April 17	Science	77
April 17	Social Studies	30
April 24	Math	73

SOURCE: LVISD Director of Secondary Education, May 2010.

look for predetermined evidence of specific practices. The observations may range from two to 45 minutes and are intended to support teachers in the delivery of instruction and curriculum. The 360 Walkthrough helps district and campus leaders assess the effectiveness of classroom instruction and define campus instructional needs. It is based on the Framework of Continuous Improvement and best practices. The process uses observation forms that are aligned to the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). Personnel involved in the walkthroughs learn how to use the observation process to identify areas of focus and initiate discussions with colleagues and co-workers on how to improve instruction along with student performance. The process promotes reflection on research-proven practices and their use in the classroom, checks on alignment of materials used, and pinpoints areas for teacher growth.

All LVISD district and campus administrators, instructional facilitators, and program directors were trained in the 360 Walkthrough process by the Region 12 Education Service Center in September 2009. Each trained staffer is required to complete 25, 5 to 10 minute walkthroughs a week and provide feedback to the teachers observed. The campus administrators observe classrooms on their own campus. Although there are no specific criteria on how to determine what teachers and classrooms to observe, the focus is on new teachers and on struggling teachers. The 360 Walkthroughs are implemented in a variety of ways, as follows:

- At the primary school, the principal, assistant principal, and instructional facilitator observe every teacher every week. They decide at the beginning of the week what subject area to observe. The observers

look whether teachers are asking the questions on different levels, whether they differentiate instruction, and whether they reteach struggling students.

- At the elementary school, all administrators conduct the 25 weekly walkthroughs. The data is shared with teachers via the 360 system, and individual conferences are held if there are specific concerns.
- The intermediate principal ensures that she conducts a walkthrough of each teacher's classroom twice a month or more often if she is concerned about a teacher's performance.
- The junior high school administrative team rotates teachers to be observed. It puts a priority on struggling and core subject teachers. The administrative team looks at classroom management procedures and student engagement and learning. Specifically, the team looks at how many students are on task, activities that students perform, and questions students ask. The team also looks for higher-order questioning strategies including teacher question stems and high yield strategies such as cooperative grouping strategies and graphic organizers.
- At the high school, some teachers are observed daily. To help with the observations, LVHS administrators ask the teachers to post their lesson objectives daily, so when the observing administrator enters the classroom, the observer can determine, based on the posted objectives, whether and how the activities the teacher and students are performing are associated with the objectives. For example, if the observer goes into the classroom at the beginning of the period, the observer checks if the class is doing bell ringers, or warm up activities. The observer also checks to see if the students are engaged in the lesson and understand it. The observer may question students to check for understanding. The observer also checks for bell-to-bell teaching. The observer reviews lesson plans to see whether the teacher is implementing the lesson plan.

Following the 360 Walkthrough, each observer completes an online form. The completed forms are viewable by the respective teachers. The reports generated through the walkthroughs can be aggregated by teacher and by campus. The 360 Walkthrough form addresses four domains: the learning process, learner-centered instruction, learner progress, and learner management. For each domain, observers can identify what domain components the teacher

has used in the classroom, how many times, and what high yield strategies or best practices the teacher has implemented. Observers meet to share information, and the data generated through the walkthroughs is used for several purposes. The data is used to ensure that teachers are implementing the CSCOPE curriculum and that they are effectively teaching what they are expected to teach based on the lesson plan. It also helps identify whether and what types of interventions are needed for specific teachers. Several teachers have been put on a growth plan as a result of the walkthroughs. The data generated also helps identify trends and professional development needs. For example, following the observation of low student engagement at the high school, the secondary education director provided professional development to all high school teachers on strategies for increasing student engagement.

The 360 Walkthroughs increase the visibility of the principal and the administrators in the school; allow principals and other administrators to observe what is happening in the classroom; provide a framework for analyzing student performance in the classroom; and help teachers understand what is expected and hold them accountable.

TEST PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

LVISD campuses have implemented intensive benchmark test performance analysis involving teachers and support staff. The test performance analysis helps teachers identify specific students needing assistance, develop plans of action to assist them, and track their progress.

Six years ago, La Vega Elementary initiated the "War Room" concept. Each grade level holds a war room meeting during their conference time once per six weeks. The war room meeting involves the administrative team, reading coach, English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, special education teacher, interventionists, dyslexia teacher, and classroom teachers. The meeting focuses on data gathered from the six-week benchmark tests and practice TAKS tests in each of the four core subject areas: reading, math, science, and social studies. Each teacher posts his/her individual student data on a grid. The classroom percentage of students passing is posted on the dry erase board in the conference room prior to the War Room meeting. The team uses several different data grids organized by grade level. These data grids include a student item analysis by teacher showing the percent of students who answered each item correctly, a classroom item analysis grid that compares performance among teachers at the same grade level, and a benchmark

summary sheet. The benchmark summary sheet, as shown in **Exhibit 2–4**, is a matrix developed for each teacher that shows each student’s overall score and performance on each test item. It also identifies whether the student is dyslexic, in ESL or special education, and the student’s ethnic affiliation. The matrix shows by item the number of wrong answers, the number of problems missed by a certain number of students, and the percent who passed by sub-population.

The detailed data provided in the different grids helps pinpoint the test items associated with the most wrong answers. Knowing the number of students who failed to answer specific items correctly, the team has a clear idea of the “magnitude” of the problem. The data also helps identify the students who did not perform well and points to the specific areas of their weakness. Similarly, by comparing results across teachers, the team can determine whether certain classes of students did better than others and thereby identify the teachers whose students excelled or did not perform well. These comparisons, in turn, allow teachers whose students did well to share information about their strategies with teachers whose students did not perform as well. As a result of the team’s discussion of strengths and weaknesses by grade level, the team can develop plans of action that are tailored to a specific teacher, a specific

classroom, and a specific student, thereby holding teachers accountable.

The “War Room” concept was implemented districtwide in 2009–10. La Vega Intermediate named the war room meetings the Essential Piece Meetings. La Vega Junior High and La Vega High School refer to these meetings as Data Meetings. For example, La Vega Intermediate School initiated Essential Piece Meetings in September 2009. The meetings are convened once every six weeks to examine benchmark data and determine student progress. Meeting participants include all core subject area teachers, reading and math interventionists, special education teachers, dyslexia teachers, the instructional facilitator, and the principal. The meetings focus on analysis of student scores, test items, student performance by ethnicity, and student performance by gender. The analyses of student performance help identify struggling students and TEKS objectives that need to be re-taught because of poor student performance. Participants discuss specific instructional steps and strategies they will take to address areas of weakness and to help struggling students. Struggling students identified through the analyses typically are referred to morning and after school tutorials or participate in small group interventions. Teachers whose students did not master specific TEKS objectives are

**EXHIBIT 2–4
LVES SIX WEEKS READING BENCHMARK SUMMARY SHEET**

STUDENT	SCORE	DYSLEXIC	ESL	SPED	ETHNICITY	ITEM 1	ITEM 2	ITEM 3	ITEM 4	ITEM 5	ITEM 6
Total Missed											

#’s of problems that less than 5 students missed: _____

#’s of problems that 6–10 students missed: _____

#’s of problems that over 10 students missed: _____

SUBGROUPS	% PASSING
5-White	
4-Hispanic	
3-African American	
2-Asian	
1-American Indian	

SOURCE: La Vega Elementary School, March 2010.

required to reteach these objectives until student mastery is achieved. Administrators who do the 360 Walkthroughs go into classrooms of these teachers to monitor the reteaching of these TEKS objectives.

In 2009–10, LVISD acquired a user-friendly analysis tool that makes performing detailed analyses of test scores easier. The web-based tool disaggregates state assessment data, including that from the TAKS, the State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II), and the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and allows users to create district, campus, grade level, teacher, and student reports. The level of disaggregation helps administrators and teachers make instructional decisions.

BILINGUAL/ESL TEACHERS

Having difficulty recruiting bilingual teachers, LVISD has addressed the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students by optimizing student access to its small number of bilingual teachers and actively motivating its teachers to become English as a Second Language (ESL) certified.

All school districts with 20 or more limited English proficient students in the same grade level are required to offer bilingual/

ESL or an alternative language program. Schools must provide bilingual education in Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) through grade 5. Districts must provide bilingual education, ESL instruction, or other transitional language instruction approved by TEA in the post-elementary grades through grade 8. For students in grades 9 through 12, schools are required only to provide instruction in ESL.

In 2009–10, LVISD has more than 20 LEP students in each grade level from Pre-K to fifth grade. However, LVISD has only one bilingual teacher at the primary level, two bilingual teachers at the elementary level and one bilingual teacher at the intermediate level (**Exhibit 2–5**). Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12), where LVISD is located, does not have any colleges or universities which offer bilingual teaching degrees. Due to difficulties in recruiting bilingual teachers, LVISD requested and received an Exception to the Bilingual Education Program from TEA so that the district could offer an alternative program to their LEP students. Additionally, the district provides training in sheltered instruction through the Region 12 Education Service Center and encourages teachers who are trained to use sheltered instruction strategies. Sheltered instruction is

**EXHIBIT 2–5
NUMBER OF LEP STUDENTS AND BILINGUAL/ESL TEACHERS BY GRADE LEVEL
2009–10**

SCHOOL	GRADES	NUMBER OF LEP STUDENTS	NUMBER OF BILINGUAL TEACHERS	NUMBER OF ESL TEACHERS
La Vega Primary School (LVPS)	Pre-K	54	0	6
	Kindergarten	74	1	4
	Total	128	1	10
La Vega Elementary School (LVES)	1st	72	0	9
	2nd	57	1	9
	3rd	63	1	10
	Total	192	2	28
La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus (LVISHPMC)	4th	38	1	3
	5th	33	0	4
	6th	19	0	1
	Total	90	1	8
La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHGDC)	7th	22	0	2
	8th	18	0	2
	Total	40	0	4
La Vega High School (LVHS)	9th–12th	52	0	8
Total	Total	502	4	58

SOURCE: LVISD Director of Elementary Education, May 2010.

an approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to LEP students. Students in these classes are “sheltered” in that they do not compete academically with native English speakers since the class includes only LEP students. This method is used in mainstream secondary classes where the students have a foundation in English.

LVISD serves LEP students up to grade 6 through a combination of bilingual and ESL certified teachers. To optimize the number of students having access to these teachers, each day LVISD pulls out the students most in need of English instruction for one class period of reading with the bilingual and ESL teachers. For example:

- La Vega Primary has 128 LEP students, one bilingual teacher, and 10 ESL certified teachers. The bilingual teacher and one ESL certified teacher who also speaks Spanish pull out students.
- La Vega Elementary has 192 LEP students, two bilingual teachers, and 28 ESL certified teachers. The bilingual teachers pull out students daily for 90-minute sessions, a one-period block.
- La Vega Intermediate has 90 LEP students, one bilingual teacher who serves fourth grade students, eight ESL certified teachers, and one ESL aide. Both the bilingual and ESL teachers pull out students. The school also offers sheltered instruction.
- La Vega Junior High has 40 LEP students and four ESL certified teachers. Two of its teachers have sheltered instruction training. The ESL teachers do pullout for 50-minute periods. The LEP students are grouped by their English speaking ability and by grade level.
- La Vega High School has 52 LEP students, eight ESL certified teachers, and seven sheltered instruction trained teachers. The ESL teachers do pullouts daily for 45-minute classes. The high school utilized sheltered instruction in 2007–08 and discontinued it after a year.

The district tries to recruit bilingual certified teachers through college job fairs, and pays a \$3,600 stipend to bilingual certified teachers. To motivate teachers across all grade levels to become ESL certified, LVISD offers a 4-day free ESL academy each summer. As an additional incentive, the district reimburses the test fees for each teacher who passes the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) ESL certification exam. In recent years, LVISD offered a stipend

to teachers who became ESL certified, but discontinued it in 2009–10 because of its limited financial resources. La Vega Junior High also offers additional incentives to its science and social studies teachers to become ESL certified. The district also encourages special education teachers to get ESL certifications. Two of its ESL certified teachers are special education teachers: one is at the primary school and one teaches at the high school. As seen in **Exhibit 2–6**, the number of ESL certified teachers quadrupled from 13 to 58 in the years from 2006–07 to 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 2–6
LVISD ESL CERTIFIED TEACHERS
2006–07 THROUGH 2009–10

YEAR	NUMBER OF ESL CERTIFIED TEACHERS	PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN NUMBER OF ESL CERTIFIED TEACHERS
2006–07	13	–
2007–08	20	53.8%
2008–09	41	105.0%
2009–10	58	41.5%

SOURCE: LVISD Migrant/LEP Specialist, March 2010.

As a result of the increase in the number of ESL certified teachers, more students have ESL trained teachers all day instead of for only one pullout period a day. The secondary campuses have both ESL certified and sheltered instruction trained teachers, so ESL instructional techniques are used in more classrooms.

At the beginning of each school year, the lead ESL teacher on each campus works with the counselors to place LEP students with as many ESL certified teachers as possible. Also, the schools have added new classes targeting LEP students such as reading, journalism, communications applications, and practical writing.

NURSES

LVISD nurses and health aides work as a team to provide unified health care across all schools.

Each of the schools in LVISD either has a Registered Nurse (RN) or a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)/health aide. The primary, elementary, and intermediate schools each employ a RN. The junior high and high schools each employ a Certified Nurse Aide. The three RNs and two health aides work as a team. They have developed and use uniform documentation on all campuses, including all health forms, letters to parents, and doctor order forms. They meet as a

team about four times a year with their supervisor, the director of Elementary Education, and get updates and discuss policy and procedures, health related issues, and concerns. The RNs and health aides also communicate frequently by e-mail and telephone, asking for information and advice from each other as needed.

The three RNs work closely in a supervisory role with the two health aides (CNAs). The health aides' responsibilities include entering immunization data into the computer, performing vision and hearing screenings, administering medication, providing diabetic care, and giving CPR/first aid. During the annual vision and hearing screenings, the intermediate school RN and the junior high health aide team up to perform the screenings at the schools. The health aides, with the approval of the principal, also identify and train school staff such as the receptionist and substitutes in medication administration. The RNs and the health aides obtain the necessary parent permissions and doctor orders for the respective medications. The primary and elementary school RNs jointly supervise the La Vega High School health aide. One of the RNs supervises grade 9, and the other RN supervises grades 10–12. They each go to the high school one day a week, on different days, for about one to two hours and as needed.

To ensure quality of care, each of the RNs reviews all tasks that the health aide performed and validates the information the health aide recorded. For example, the RN reviews the original immunization records the health aide prepared against a computer printout to make sure that all information is correct. The RN also validates by signature if all students are compliant with the immunization laws, which has greatly reduced the number of students out of compliance with immunization laws over the past six years. The RN also screens students who failed the vision and hearing screenings the health aide performed and makes referrals if needed. The RN reviews with the health aide any medications and treatments ordered by physicians. If an emergency situation occurs, the health aide will call an RN to come to the campus and, if needed, dial 911 for the ambulance. After each emergency situation, a report is completed and filed in the student's health folder. By working together, the nurses and health aides ensure that the same quality of service and care is delivered to students on all LVISD campuses.

DETAILED FINDINGS

RETENTION (REC. 8)

LVISD's high rates of retention, especially in grades 2, 7, and 8, have created a large population of overage students contributing to a high dropout rate.

Since 2005–06, when La Vega Elementary achieved an Exemplary accountability rating, it has had high retention rates of students in grade 2. LVISD's grade 2 retention rates have been two and three-fold the state rates. For example, in 2005–06, LVISD retained 10.2 percent of its grade 2 students compared to 3.5 percent statewide. Similarly, in 2008–09, 10.3 percent of LVISD's grade 2 students were retained compared to 3.2 percent statewide. While the state retention rates for grade 2 students remained relatively unchanged between 2004–05 and 2007–08 and actually declined in 2008–09, LVISD's retention rates increased nearly three-fold from 2004–05 to 2005–06, remained high in 2006–07 and 2007–08 and increased 3.5 percent points in 2008–09. LVISD has also had high retention rates of students in grades 7 and 8, but these decreased in 2007–08 and 2008–09, although they still were two or more times higher than the state rates in 2007–08. In 2005–06 and 2006–07, LVISD had the highest retention rates of its grade 7 students. In 2005–06 it retained 8.0 percent of its grade 7 students compared to a 2.3 percent state rate; in 2006–07, it retained 7.1 percent of its grade 7 students compared to a 2.2 percent state rate. In 2006–07, LVISD had the highest rate of retention of grade 8 students: 8.8 percent compared to 1.6 percent statewide (**Exhibit 2–7**).

High retention rates eventually lead to a high concentration of overage students in grade 9. According to one administrator, it does not appear that there was a clear recognition and awareness on the part of principals and teachers in the lower grade levels on how the level of instructional rigor and decisions to retain students have a negative impact in higher grades. In 2009–10, 74 students out of the 262 students in grade 9 (28.2 percent) are 16–17 years old; two to three years over age. Overage students tend to have a high propensity to dropping out. A high percentage of LVISD students do not progress beyond grade 9, and only slightly over one-half of those in grade 9 graduate. Only 138 out of 206 or 67.0 percent of the students in grade 9 in 2004–05 progressed to grade 10 in 2005–06; only 112 out of 206 or 54.4 percent of those students progressed to grade 12 in 2007–08; and only 68.7 percent of those in grade 12 graduated. Similarly, only 161 out of 239 or 67.4 percent of the 9th graders in 2005–06 progressed to grade 10 in 2006–07, and only 128

**EXHIBIT 2-7
LVISD AND STATE RETENTION RATES BY GRADE
2004-05 THROUGH 2008-09**

GRADES	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE
Kindergarten	1.8%	2.9%	0.6%	2.9%	1.7%	2.9%	2.4%	2.8%	1.5%	2.6%
Grade 1	2.6%	6.0%	1.8%	5.9%	6.4%	6.0%	5.1%	5.9%	4.6%	5.5%
Grade 2	3.7%	3.6%	10.2%	3.5%	8.9%	3.6%	6.8%	3.5%	10.3%	3.2%
Grade 3	4.1%	2.7%	5.1%	3.3%	1.6%	3.0%	0.6%	2.8%	0.5%	2.5%
Grade 4	1.2%	1.7%	1.6%	1.8%	0.7%	1.8%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	1.3%
Grade 5	0.7%	0.9%	4.5%	3.8%	0.0%	2.9%	0.6%	2.3%	1.0%	1.9%
Grade 6	1.1%	1.5%	0.7%	1.5%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.9%
Grade 7	5.9%	2.3%	8.0%	2.3%	7.1%	2.2%	3.5%	1.7%	2.5%	1.4%
Grade 8	5.7%	1.7%	5.5%	1.7%	8.8%	1.6%	3.9%	1.3%	0.0%	1.7%

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

out of the 239 or 53.6 percent of these students progressed to grade 12 in 2008-09 (**Exhibit 2-8**). A study conducted in 2008-09 by the La Vega High School Leadership Team found that 74 percent of students who failed to complete high school were retained one or more years.

Grade retention has been commonly used as an intervention strategy since the 1970s. Research conducted in the 1990s

has shown that between 30 to 50 percent of 9th graders have been retained at least once. Studies on retention and academic performance overwhelmingly failed to demonstrate the effectiveness of grade retention for improving either academic achievement or socioemotional adjustment. In fact, most studies showed negative achievement effects when retained students moved to the next grade level. Where studies have

**EXHIBIT 2-8
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF LVISD STUDENTS BY GRADE
2004-05 THROUGH 2008-09**

GRADES	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early Childhood	6	0.2%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	3	0.1%	5	0.2%
Pre-K	138	5.3%	146	5.7%	151	5.6%	155	5.6%	154	5.5%
Kindergarten	199	7.7%	198	7.7%	233	8.6%	215	7.8%	201	7.2%
Grade 1	198	7.6%	215	8.4%	236	8.8%	239	8.7%	231	8.3%
Grade 2	223	8.6%	212	8.2%	227	8.4%	229	8.3%	256	9.2%
Grade 3	179	6.9%	201	7.8%	205	7.6%	218	7.9%	201	7.2%
Grade 4	221	8.5%	181	7.0%	218	8.1%	200	7.3%	197	7.1%
Grade 5	185	7.1%	222	8.6%	180	6.7%	218	7.9%	185	6.7%
Grade 6	176	6.8%	173	6.7%	241	8.9%	187	6.8%	227	8.2%
Grade 7	221	8.5%	192	7.5%	196	7.3%	243	8.8%	181	6.5%
Grade 8	204	7.9%	199	7.7%	186	6.9%	194	7.1%	226	8.1%
Grade 9	206	8.0%	239	9.3%	227	8.4%	237	8.6%	247	8.9%
Grade 10	158	6.1%	138	5.4%	161	6.0%	163	5.9%	187	6.7%
Grade 11	165	6.4%	134	5.2%	125	4.6%	138	5.0%	152	5.5%
Grade 12	110	4.2%	119	4.6%	108	4.0%	112	4.1%	128	4.6%

N = Number.

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

shown positive effects, those effects were short-term and the benefits diminished over time.

Retention also has negative socio-emotional effects on students. Retained students, on average, display poorer social adjustment, less positive attitudes toward school, lower attendance, and more behavior problems. Longer term, when students who were retained were compared to low achieving but promoted students, the retained students had lower levels of academic adjustment at the end of 11th grade, were more likely to drop out of school by age 19, less likely to receive a diploma by age 20, and less likely to enroll in post-secondary education. These students were also more prone to do less well when employed and typically received lower pay.

Retention has been shown to be the most powerful predictor of a school dropout. Retention is a more powerful predictor of dropout than all other significant predictors such as math achievement, grades, and family variables. Students who have been retained are between two and 11 times more likely to drop out than non-retained students. Furthermore, students who have been retained in early grades are 30 to 50 percent at a greater risk of dropping out of high school. Research clearly shows that neither retention nor social promotion by themselves help improve learning. Research points to empirically proven remedial strategies such as parental involvement, early reading intervention, direct instruction, cognitive behavioral modification, and systematic formative evaluation of teaching programs.

Several Texas school districts have developed effective retention reduction programs based on empirically proven strategies that LVISD could consider implementing. For example:

- Elgin ISD offers an early reading intervention program in which teams of teachers and instructional aides visit first and second grade classrooms four times a week and assist teachers in bringing all students to grade level in reading. Students' reading levels are evaluated quarterly and students are grouped based on their progress.
- Galveston ISD has implemented several retention reduction programs targeted at elementary school students in grades K–6. The programs stress reading mastery and individualized instruction in language arts and math. The district also offers a summer camp program for elementary students in need of help in reading and math.

- Elgin ISD implemented a Skills Building program in the middle school, helping students with poor academic performance during the first semester. Following the first six-week period, students who scored less than 75 in core subject areas are pulled for three weeks from elective courses in which they participate and put in study hall for intensive tutoring. This has helped Elgin reduce its potential retention rate by more than 60 percent in one year.
- Kingsville ISD retention reduction program targets students in grade 8 who are likely to be retained in grade 9 and students in grade 9 who do not have enough credits to be promoted to grade 10. The program offers tutoring, accelerated instruction, counseling, a Monday night program, a summer program, a calculator enrichment camp, and a 9th grade lab to students experiencing difficulties in school. It also has a strong parental involvement component. Of the students enrolled in the program in 9th grade in 1999–2000, about 85 percent earned sufficient credits to be promoted to grade 10.

LVISD should review the retention procedures that each school follows and analyze their academic and social/behavior impact on retained students and on the relationship between retention and high school completion. Based on these analyses and on promising and effective strategies identified in the literature, LVISD should develop intervention programs to deal with students who are at risk of academic failure at all grade levels.

GIFTED AND TALENTED (REC. 9)

LVISD's G/T program appears to lack commitment and priority on the part of school and district administrators, and the number of students identified and served through the G/T program is decreasing.

LVISD's G/T program has been decreasing in size from 4.4 percent of total enrollment in 2005–06 to 3.6 percent in 2008–09. The percentage of LVISD students participating in G/T has been below both the Region 12 and the statewide rates since 2004–05, as shown in **Exhibit 2–9**. In 2008–09, the percentage of LVISD students participating in G/T was less than half the state rate and only 57 percent of the regional rate. While G/T programs also decreased in participation at the regional and state levels between 2004–05 and 2008–09, the rate of decrease in LVISD surpasses the rate of decrease at the regional and state levels. Student participation in G/T in

**EXHIBIT 2-9
LVISD G/T STUDENT PARTICIPATION
2004-05 THROUGH 2008-09**

DISTRICT	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2004-05 TO 2008-09
La Vega	4.1%	4.4%	4.3%	4.1%	3.6%	-12.2%
Region 12	6.8%	6.6%	6.4%	6.2%	6.3%	-7.3%
State	7.7%	7.6%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	-2.6%

NOTE: Percentage change is defined as 2008-09 values minus 2004-05 values divided by 2004-05 values.

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

LVISD declined 12.2 percent since 2004-05, compared with 7.3 percent at Region 12 and 2.6 percent statewide.

Participation in G/T decreased 26.7 percent from 2008-09 to 2009-10. Participation in G/T decreased further in 2009-10 to 2.6 percent overall for all LVISD schools (**Exhibit 2-10**). The greatest decrease is seen at the elementary school. In 2008-09 and 2009-10, La Vega Primary provided G/T services to fewer than five students each year. In 2005-06, La Vega Elementary had 18 students in the G/T program; in 2008-09 and 2009-10, the school has fewer than five students. Participation at La Vega High School (grades 9-12) decreased from 41 students in 2005-06 to 24 students in 2009-10; a 41.4 percent decrease. La Vega Intermediary School (grades 4-6) and La Vega Junior High (grades 7-8) experienced smaller decreases from the 2005-06 level.

**EXHIBIT 2-10
LVISD NUMBER AND PERCENT OF G/T STUDENTS BY SCHOOL
2009-10**

	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
LVPS	414	*	*
LVES	685	*	*
LVISHPMC	607	24	3.9%
LVJHSGDC	435	22	5.1%
LVHS	746	24	3.2%
Total	2,887	74	2.6%

*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: LVISD, Advanced Programs Coordinator and Director of Finance, February 2010 – based on February 17, 2010 enrollment.

With the exception of grades 6 and 7, participation in G/T decreased from 2005-06 to 2009-10 in all other grade levels (**Exhibit 2-11**). The LVISD G/T program experienced the greatest decrease in grades 3, 10, and 8.

LVISD's G/T program includes students in grades K-12 as noted in the LVISD Gifted and Talented Program brochure. LVISD seeks out nominations districtwide. Nominations are accepted from school personnel, community members, parents, peers, or students who self-nominate. The information gathered on each student who is nominated may include at least four of the following sources: a teacher's check list, a measure of intellect, a gifted screening instrument, a parent survey, and student products from a structured experience, a student interview, or a non-verbal measure. LVISD uses several measurements. The teacher completes a Renzulli/Hartman checklist on the student's learning, motivation, creativity and leadership. The district uses the Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students (SAGES-2) test for students in K-3. The district uses the Structures of Intellect (SOI) as a test for the higher grades. In 2004-05 the district began using the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI-3) for students who have limited English proficiency.

While nominations are accepted throughout the year, testing is conducted in February, and the committee that reviews the nominations meets at the end of February. LVISD has Campus G/T Screening Committees and a District G/T Selection Committee. The Campus Screening Committee members include G/T teachers, a campus counselor, a campus administrator, a G/T campus coordinator, and other personnel, as appropriate. The campus Screening Committee forwards its recommendations to the District G/T Selection Committee using a blind selection process. While the identity of students is not provided during this process, students' ethnicity and economic status are shown.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-12**, LVISD's G/T selection process yields an ethnically diverse group of students. Although diverse, the G/T group is not representative of the student population. It still historically over-represents White students and under-represents Hispanic students. In 2008-09, LVISD's student population consisted of 27.0 percent

**EXHIBIT 2-11
NUMBER OF LVISD G/T STUDENTS BY GRADE
2005-06 THROUGH 2009-10**

GRADES	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Kindergarten	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	*
Grade 1	*	*	*	*	*
Grade 2	6	*	*	*	*
Grade 3	11	9	7	*	*
Grade 4	13	16	10	11	6
Grade 5	9	14	15	10	8
Grade 6	8	11	14	15	10
Grade 7	6	8	12	12	12
Grade 8	19	8	8	10	10
Grade 9	9	19	8	7	7
Grade 10	12	9	15	9	*
Grade 11	9	10	9	15	5
Grade 12	11	8	10	8	9
TOTAL	*	116	112	101	74

*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.

NOTE: N/A indicates information was not available for this year.

SOURCE: LVISD Gifted and Talented Students by Grade, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Fall Collection, 2005-06 through 2009-10.

**EXHIBIT 2-12
CHARACTERISTICS OF LVISD G/T STUDENTS
2005-06 THROUGH 2009-10**

	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GENDER										
Male	52	45.6%	53	45.7%	53	47.3%	51	50.5%	29	39.2%
Female	62	54.4%	63	54.3%	59	52.7%	50	50.5%	45	60.8%
ETHNICITY										
African American	27	23.7%	37	31.9%	35	31.2%	34	33.7%	19	25.7%
Hispanic	26	22.8%	26	22.4%	29	25.9%	26	25.7%	29	39.2%
White	62	54.4%	52	44.8%	47	42.0%	41	40.6%	24	32.4%
Other	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
OTHER CHARACTERISTICS										
LEP	**	**	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Special Education	**	**	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
At Risk	**	**	21	18.1%	13	11.6%	10	9.9%	9	12.2%
Total	114		116		112		101		74	

N = Number.

*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.

**No data available for these groups.

SOURCE: LVISD Gifted and Talented Students by Grade, PEIMS Fall Collection, 2005-06 through 2009-10.

Whites and 43.7 percent Hispanics. The G/T program included 40.6 percent White students and 25.7 percent Hispanics. While the percentage of White students in the G/T program decreased from 54.4 percent in 2005–06 to 40.6 percent in 2008–09; the percentage of Hispanic students in the program increased slightly from 22.8 in 2005–06 to 25.7 percent in 2008–09 far below the 43.7 percent Hispanic population. In 2009–10, the percentage of Hispanic students in the G/T program did increase by over 13 percent.

The district has not been successful in identifying G/T candidates among its limited English proficiency (LEP) students. LVISD has had only eight LEP students in its G/T program in the past four years (2006–07 through 2009–10). At the same time, the number of its LEP students ranged from 328 in 2006–07 to 402 in 2008–09, constituting more than 11 percent of its student population. LVISD's main effort to get G/T nominations from LEP students or their parents is limited to sending home letters in English and Spanish.

There is no districtwide coordinated effort or plan with regards to LVISD's G/T program. Program implementation has been completely dependent on the commitment of campus administrators and the priority with which they regard the G/T program. As LVISD does not have a set G/T curriculum and G/T is not integrated into the district's CSCOPE curriculum, implementation, and quality of G/T services depend on individual teachers. Monitoring the program and evaluating its quality and effectiveness are difficult under these circumstances. Teachers working with G/T students are G/T certified. Each teacher who works with G/T students decides what to offer to the G/T students.

LVISD serves G/T students in either a pullout program or in the regular classroom through differentiation. The elementary and high schools both use classroom differentiation. The intermediate school has G/T clusters, and the junior high school has one class period with an English teacher. Elementary teachers with G/T students give these students reading and research assignments, science projects, add lesson extensions, and have the G/T students work on Success Maker at the highest level that meets their needs.

La Vega Intermediate clusters G/T students together in a homeroom. Fifth graders have after school tutorials several times a year and play reading games. Students subscribe to a local newspaper and discuss current affairs, do several author studies, do research, write biographies during Black History

month, and create and give presentations. In math and science, G/T students do enrichment activities and write science articles. At La Vega Junior High, G/T students are served in honors classes with teacher differentiation.

At La Vega High School, G/T students are encouraged to enroll in Pre-AP and dual credit classes. Teachers with G/T students are expected to differentiate instruction. However, information obtained during on-site work indicates that lesson plans submitted by high school teachers with G/T students do not have documentation showing that differentiation is implemented at the high school level.

Research has shown that G/T programs typically under-represent minority and LEP students. Under-representation is a result of several factors including receiving nominations mainly from teachers due to lack of effective outreach to other nomination sources such as parents, community members, and self-nominations; and basing the giftedness assessment on instruments that are not culturally or linguistically sensitive. Researchers recommend using multiple nomination sources; using multiple criteria for identification; collecting data on G/T candidates through verbal and non-verbal means such as interviews, observations, performances, written documents; and using culturally and linguistically sensitive tests.

Crystal City ISD expanded and improved its G/T program by holding a week long Gifted and Talented Institute. Both teachers and parents participated in the institute. The program consisted of a review of identification processes and rules and regulations as well as day-long sessions on the nature and needs of gifted students; differentiated curriculum; creative thinking; problem solving, depth and complexity, creative thinking for teachers, and parents of gifted and talented students; and how to be scholarly.

Clear Creek ISD coordinates its G/T program with the bilingual/ESL, dyslexia, and special education programs. It trains teachers to observe gifted behaviors of students from minority groups and encourages these teachers to refer students to the G/T program.

Fort Worth ISD increased opportunities for ethnic and language minority students to demonstrate their skills and abilities in order to be considered for participation in the G/T program by expanding the range of identification criteria, selecting a language-free and culturally fair identification instrument, and training all teachers in how to identify gifted and talented students.

LVISD should ensure the G/T program is a priority districtwide and on all campuses, and monitor and evaluate its implementation from recruitment and identification to service provision. It should reach out effectively to parents, especially parents of ethnic and language minorities, informing them in multiple ways about the program and its benefits and how to identify gifted behavior. In addition to a letter, outreach may include presentations about G/T during parent nights and other school events, information on the district and school web pages, and personal contact by teachers. LVISD should review the portfolio of G/T measurements to determine whether and how it should be expanded or modified. LVISD should also integrate G/T instructional strategies into the CSCOPE curriculum to provide guidance to teachers with G/T students in their classes and ensure implementation and program consistency.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDS (REC. 10)

Lacking fund tracking and monitoring procedures at the campus and district levels, LVISD under spends its special education funds.

In 2009–10, LVISD’s Special Education Department is headed by a director and consists of one speech therapist, two speech therapy assistants, two educational diagnosticians, one Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP), and a secretary. The district contracts for Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), bilingual assessment/speech, Orientation and Mobility (ONM), and transition services. The district works with the Heart of Texas cooperative for vision services. LVISD has two special education teachers each in the primary, elementary and intermediate schools;

three teachers in junior high and four teachers in high school. The district mainstreams 53 or 20.0 percent of its special education students into general education classrooms with supplementary aids or services.

LVISD has the second highest percentage of special education students among its peers and the second lowest percentage of special education expenditures (**Exhibit 2–13**). The percentage of LVISD special education students is higher than the state average. In 2008–09, LVISD spent 11.5 percent of its funds on special education compared with a 16.3 percent regional average and a 15.9 percent state average.

The funds LVISD spends on special education have been below the state average from 2004–05 through 2008–09, as shown in **Exhibit 2–14**. LVISD spent less on special education than the state regardless of whether its percentage of special education students was similar to the state rate, slightly lower, or higher. In 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2008–09, LVISD had between 0.9 and 1.5 percentage points more special education students than the state, but its special education expenditures were 2.6 to 4.4 percentage points lower than the state’s expenditures. In 2006–07 and 2007–08, LVISD had 0.2 and 0.5 percentage points fewer special education students, respectively, than the state and 1.3 and 2.6 percentage points lower expenditures, respectively, than the state.

Lower special education expenditures are commonly associated with fewer special education teachers. In 2008–09, LVISD had the highest special education teacher-student ratio among its peers, and exceeded both the regional and

**EXHIBIT 2–13
SPECIAL EDUCATION BUDGETED INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
2008–09**

DISTRICT	TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	BUDGETED SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURES*	PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES
Cleveland	3,649	326	8.9%	\$3,261,414	15.6%
Taylor	3,155	306	9.7%	\$5,181,042	24.8%
La Vega	2,778	286	10.3%	\$1,731,369	11.5%
Sweetwater	2,312	301	13.0%	\$3,093,255	18.4%
Madisonville	2,227	200	9.0%	\$1,346,253	10.9%
Region 12	149,288	16,640	11.1%	\$151,544,677	16.3%
State	4,728,204	444,026	9.4%	\$4,625,650,805	15.9%

*Special Education expenditures from “All Funds.”
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 2-14
LVISD AND STATE PERCENTAGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND EXPENDITURES
2004-05 THROUGH 2008-09

	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE	LVISD	STATE
Special education students	13.1%	11.6%	12.6%	11.1%	10.4%	10.6%	9.5%	10.0%	10.3%	9.4%
Special education expenditures	13.7%	16.3%	12.6%	16.3%	15.0%	16.3%	13.5%	16.1%	11.5%	15.9%

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

state ratios (**Exhibit 2-15**). LVISD's special education teacher-student ratio was double or more than double the regional and state ratios. The Director of Special Education expressed the need for more special education teachers to achieve a "more realistic teacher-student ratio."

EXHIBIT 2-15
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIO
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
2008-09

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIO
Taylor	21.8	306	1:14
Cleveland	20.9	326	1:16
Madisonville	10.6	200	1:19
Sweetwater	14.4	301	1:21
La Vega	13.0	286	1:22
Region 12	998.6	16,640	1:17
State	31,805.5	444,026	1:14

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2008-09.

LVISD has not been spending its special education funds as required. According to a December 11, 2009 report issued by the district's accountants, LVISD spent only 67.6 percent of the special education funds it received from TEA; it is required to spend at least 85 percent of such funds the year in which they are received. LVISD also did not spend \$65,674 in funds that it had carried over from the previous year. According to LVISD's director of Finance, these funds were not spent because they were not carried over to the next year's budget. Continued under expenditure of funds may result in a reduction of special education allotment from TEA to the district.

LVISD's under spending of special education funds stems from lack of tracking of special education funds at the campuses and lack of district monitoring as to whether

campuses spend these funds as planned. The principals are responsible for monitoring their campus budgets and expenditures. The campuses do not have any forms to track expenditures by program, and the central office does not monitor whether the campuses have expended the funds.

Waxahachie ISD (WISD) maintains an automated spreadsheet on all special revenue funds from state, federal, and grant sources and tracks all special revenues. The spreadsheet includes information for each WISD revenue source making it readily available for compliance review with the terms of the special revenue fund. The district accountant reviews and updates the spreadsheet monthly to track the financial results of the special revenue funds. The spreadsheet allows the Finance Department to determine the status of all special revenue funds easily. The spreadsheet is designed to ensure that appropriate accounting entries are made monthly, expenditure reports are filed with the appropriate funding agency, payments are received, indirect costs are budgeted and that the total budgeted revenue includes the initial allocation, and finally, that amounts have been rolled forward from prior year expenditures during the grant period. The grant accountant also maintains a book on each special revenue fund that contains a compilation of information to help ensure compliance with the terms of that particular special revenue fund.

Brownsville ISD (BISD) ensures the timely expenditure of funds by developing an annual spending calendar and monitoring expenditures through monthly reports. BISD ensures the timely use of funds by schools through projected spending targets, timelines, and monthly expenditure reports for each school showing the percentage of funds spent and percentage remaining. Principals are notified monthly about their spending status. BISD uses this method to ensure the appropriate expenditure of funds such as State Compensatory Education (SCE) and other federal funds are spent timely. BISD developed the system after TEA cited it for spending less than the required 85 percent of its SCE funds to

supplement its regular education programs for three years. To ensure that the spending requirement for programs and services is met, BISD assigned a compliance officer to oversee and monitor the funds. The compliance officer established a deadline for spending or encumbering the SCE funds and developed a yearly projected spending targets calendar with targeted spending percentages for SCE funds. On a month-by-month basis, the calendar indicates the percent of SCE funds to be spent or encumbered and the specific date for updating school expenditures. SCE spending is monitored through monthly reports showing the percent balance of each school's allotment, and the reports are provided to each administrator. The calendar has contributed to ensuring the timely expenditure of funds. In 1999–2000, BISD spent 91.8 percent of its SCE funds; in 2000–01, it spent 93.9 percent.

LVISD should develop documentation and a tracking system to ensure the required expenditure of special education funds. The system and associated documentation should be developed for each school and districtwide. The system should include a yearly calendar of expenditures, monthly reports, and monitoring procedures. The director of Finance should specify the annual planned expenditures accounting for a minimum of 85 percent or more of the funds received in the present year and any funds unspent in the previous year and inform each campus principal about the amount available. Campus administrators should be trained in the system. The director of Finance should prepare monthly reports based on expenditure reports the campuses provide and compare actual to planned expenditures. The director of Finance should alert campuses in the event of under spending and adjust the spending plan as needed.

REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (REC. 11)

The weaknesses in LVISD's Response to Intervention (RtI) process leads to a high rate of inappropriate referrals to special education.

As established by the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, RtI is a TEA multi-tiered service delivery model addressing the academic and behavioral needs of all students through a continuum of services which provide: (1) high-quality instruction and scientific, researched-based, tiered intervention strategies aligned with individual student need; (2) frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic or behavioral decisions; (3) data-based school improvement; and (4) the application of student response data to important

educational decisions (such as those regarding placement, intervention, curriculum, and instructional goals and methodologies). These activities typically occur in the general education setting as schools assist struggling students prior to and, often, in lieu of a referral to special education. To implement RtI, local education agency (LEA) general and special education staff must coordinate and collaborate to develop a process for implementing this framework. The instructional approaches used within the general education setting should result in academic and/or behavioral progress for the majority of the students. Struggling students are identified using data-based student progress monitoring and provided intensive instruction.

Districts can fund RtI through a range of resources including Special Education IDEA-B Early Intervening Services (EIS); Title I, Part A; Compensatory Education; Accelerated Reading Instruction/ Accelerated Math Instruction; High School Allotment; and Reading First. Research has shown that the most common cause of a failed intervention is lack of fidelity of implementation: whether teachers received ongoing sufficient professional development and whether they agree to implement all aspects of the model as designed and tested. It is therefore critical that school districts develop and monitor appropriate and adequate implementation procedures.

LVISD has a Student Intervention Team (SIT) on each campus. The team considers speech, academic, and emotional/behavior concerns about students that teachers or parents refer to them. The teacher or parent submits a form to the SIT with student information including results of vision and hearing screenings, a Fluency Checklist, an Articulation Checklist, and other teacher and parent information. The SIT reviews the information submitted on each student and either develops pre-referral recommendations and interventions for the teacher and parent or refers the student for special education evaluation. The SIT convenes after a specified time to review whether the interventions have been effective and allowed the student to make progress in the general education classroom, or whether the student should be referred for a Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE). With a signed permission from the parent, a diagnostician/ Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) conducts an evaluation in suspected areas of disability to determine the presence of a disorder, the associated educational need, and the need for a specialized service provider. The diagnostician/ LSSP prepares a report summarizing the results of the evaluation and making recommendations for intervention,

and schedules an admission, review and dismissal (ARD) meeting to determine special education eligibility.

According to the director of Special Education, each campus has developed its own Response to Intervention (RtI) procedures. The campuses generally have a SIT or 504 meeting prior to initiating a referral. Campus procedures include:

- Students at La Vega Primary are generally referred for speech services only following the SIT process. The Special Education Department helped put an RtI process in place and a referral is usually not initiated until an RtI is completed.
- The referral process at La Vega Elementary generally begins with the SIT process where teachers discuss student's classroom progress and behaviors. Student work samples, grades, test scores, and any other anecdotal information from the classroom teachers, as well as any other special area teachers working with the student, are provided. If the student is failing, a referral generally follows.
- Administrators at La Vega Intermediate generally initiate a referral following a SIT where the status of the student is discussed with teachers and administrators. As part of the process, student test scores are generally discussed and work samples provided.
- At La Vega Junior High, referrals generally come from the counselor who has spoken with the teacher(s). If the student is failing, a referral is generally the next step.
- At La Vega High School, the referral process consists of a parent or teacher referring a student due to failing a class or after failing or struggling for a year in the previous grade. A SIT or 504 meeting is held with teachers who share verbal and written information about the student. Generally, the administrators have already decided that they want the student to be referred for testing.

The RtI/pre-referral procedures in place at the LVISD campuses are neither consistent nor sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous districtwide. Only La Vega Elementary implements a comprehensive RtI process with the components of universal screening, multiple tiers of intervention, progress monitoring, problem-solving or standard protocol approach, integrated data collection/assessment system, and scientifically research-based

interventions. The other campuses, according to the director of Special Education, follow a similar RtI process but with fewer interventions.

While the RtI process at the campuses includes some progress monitoring, when a referral is evident this step is not conducted with consistency or fidelity districtwide.

LVISD has a high rate of inappropriate referrals to special education. From 2006–07 through March 2010, 149 students were referred to special education (**Exhibit 2–16**). Over this four-year period, 31.5 percent of the referrals, 47 out of 149 referrals, did not qualify (DNQ). The percentage of DNQs was highest in 2006–07, 44.6 percent; it decreased in 2007–08, but then increased annually to 42.9 percent in 2009–10. As expected, La Vega Primary had the highest number of referrals to special education followed by La Vega Elementary. The percentage of DNQs was high across all schools.

The RtI procedures in use by LVISD schools have been developed without input from the Special Education Department. The Special Education Department mainly provides information to teachers and campus administration and trains teachers only if campus administrators request training.

Crystal City ISD (CCISD) implemented a Student Assistance Team (SAT) referral process that both reduced the number of referrals to special education and the number of DNQs. The pre-referral intervention process was a coordinated process that encouraged parental involvement and implemented effective interventions. The system promoted collaboration among parents, students, and school and district level instructional, support, and administrative staff members before a student was referred for a special education assessment. The SAT referral system included three processes:

- In Process I, the referring teacher recognized the student's academic/behavior problem, reviewed the student's permanent record and work samples, completed an observation checklist and contacted a parent. The teacher implemented interventions based on the review of records and parent input. If interventions were successful, the process ended. If unsuccessful, the teacher proceeded to Process II.
- In Process II, the referring teacher met with the Student Assistance Team to review Process I information. Each school had a School Assistance Team, composed of two teachers, a counselor and one administrator. The team recommended additional intervention

**EXHIBIT 2-16
LVISD SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS AND DNQS BY YEAR AND SCHOOL
2006-07 THROUGH MARCH 2010**

SCHOOL	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	TOTAL
LVPS					
Referrals	33	17	27	13	90
DNQs	10	*	6	6	25
Percent DNQs	30.3%	*	22.2%	46.2%	27.8%
LVES					
Referrals	17	12	8	2	39
DNQs	11	*	*	*	13
Percent DNQs	64.7%	*	*	*	33.3%
LVISHPMC					
Referrals	5	*	*	*	9
DNQs	*	*	*	*	*
Percent DNQs	*	*	*	*	*
LVJHSGDC					
Referrals	*	*	*	*	5
DNQs	*	*	*	*	*
Percent DNQs	*	*	*	*	*
LVHS					
Referrals	*	*	*	5	6
DNQs	*	*	*	*	*
Percent DNQs	*	*	*	*	*
DISTRICTWIDE TOTALS					
Referrals	56	31	41	21	149
DNQs	25	5	8	9	47
Percent DNQs	44.6%	16.1%	19.5%	42.9%	31.5%

*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.

NOTE: The high number of referrals at LVPS can be attributed to referrals from outside the district as well as internal referrals at the primary school. Many 3- to 5-year olds are referred from early childhood agencies, parents, physicians, and HeadStart.

SOURCE: LVISD Department of Special Education, March 2010.

strategies. If the strategies were successful, the process stopped. If not, the teacher proceeded to Process III.

- In Process III, the team reviewed all information on the student’s progress and interventions and recommended additional interventions or contact with a parent. The team reviewed special programs’ eligibility guidelines and made a referral to appropriate special programs.

The CCISD Student Assistance Team considered four options before deciding to intervene. These options included implementing school modifications for a pre-determined amount of time; initiating a 504 referral process; referring

the student to the dyslexia committee; or initiating the special education referral process. During the first year of implementation, 1999–2000, the number of referrals to special education decreased by 55 percent and, of the 30 students referred, 28 students qualified for special education services.

LVISD’s campus Student Intervention Teams (SITs) and the director of Special Education should review the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, identifying areas where implementation is lacking or incomplete, and develop procedures to be implemented districtwide that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation. The resources

needed for that level of implementation should be identified, as well as the type of monitoring necessary to ensure effective implementation. The director of special education should train the SIT members on all campuses, provide assistance with RtI implementation, and monitor its effectiveness as measured by the number of qualified referrals to special education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ROLE IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (REC. 12)

The LVISD Special Education Department is not adequately and appropriately utilized by campuses. By not making the Special Education Department an equal partner in providing services to identified special education students, district campuses under utilize the resources and expertise that the department can provide to enhance the educational program and benefit students with disabilities.

The need for full collaboration between LVISD campuses and the Special Education Department is evident in light of the improvement areas in the special education program the Texas Education Agency (TEA) identified as part of its monitoring system. According to TEA’s 2009 Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) Special Education Indicators, LVISD lags behind the state in the percentage of its special education students who passed in 2008–09 TAKS science and social studies, in the percentage of special education students across all ages who are placed in the least restrictive environment, and in the percentage of special education students who drop out.

Exhibit 2–17 shows the different areas in which the district’s special education program is below state standards, according to PBMAS. PBMAS has 3 levels of ratings: 1, 2, and 3. A level 1 rating means that the district is 0.1 to 10.0 percentage points below the subject area standard. A level 2 rating means that the district is 10.1 to 20.0 percentage points below the standard; and a level 3 rating means that the district is 20.1 or more percentage points below the standard. A level 1 rating is not as serious as a level 3 rating but it still represents being below the state standard.

**EXHIBIT 2–17
LVISD PERFORMANCE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION INDICATORS
PERFORMANCE-BASED MONITORING ANALYSIS SYSTEM
2009**

INDICATORS	STATE RATE	DISTRICT RATE	INDICATOR PERFORMANCE LEVEL
Special Education TAKS Passing Rate:			
Science	50.0%	23.7%	3
Social Studies	70.0%	50.8%	2
Special Education TAKS/TAKS (Accommodated) participation rate	50.0%	28.1%	2
Least restrictive environment (ages 3–5)	15.0%	7.7%	2
Least restrictive environment (ages 6–11)	40.0%	28.2%	2
Least restrictive environment (ages 12–21)	60.0%	41.1%	2
Annual dropout rate (grades 7–12)	2.0%	4.3%	1

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System, 2009.

Examples of underutilization of the LVISD Special Education Department by the campuses include:

- The department did not take part in the development of the RtI/pre-referral procedures that the campuses use.
- The Special Education Department does not have input into the assessment of training needs or in the development or delivery of training to general education teachers on special education issues unless specifically asked by campus administration. Campus administrators determine staff development. LVISD campus administrators did not seek any input from the director of Special Education with regard to professional development for general and special education teachers they specified in the Special Education Continuous Improvement Plans. At present, the Special Education Department’s role is limited to providing information to campuses on training available through the Region 12 Education Service Center.
- Although there is a need for greater collaboration between general education and special education

teachers, it is the campus administration's decision whether and how to initiate and enhance such collaboration and whether to make the Special Education Department play a role in this effort.

- The Special Education Department advises campuses on placing students in the least restrictive environment; an issue that the PBMAS reports have identified as an area needing improvement. Implementation, however, lags behind the academic priority of TAKS preparation.
- As a result of the PBMAS report that identified areas in need of improvement, all LVISD campuses developed Special Education Continuous Improvement Plans. The director of Special Education was not invited and did not participate in the development of these campus plans. The director of Special Education took part in the initial meetings that addressed the process for plan development and defined the elements comprising the process but was not part of the meetings campuses held where they actually developed their plans. In fact, the director of Special Education is not listed at all in the 2008–09 plans, not even as a member of a committee to develop additional strategies. The director of Special Education is listed in the 2009–10 plans only once in regards to increasing TAKS participation rates for special education students. Campus administrators did not seek any input from the director of Special Education in this process.

Campus administrators do not keep the director of Special Education informed about special education issues on their respective campuses. It is up to the director to seek information from the campuses. For example, except for the hiring of additional special education teachers, the director of Special Education does not have information indicating to what extent each campus has implemented the different improvement strategies they specified in their special education continuous improvement plans.

LVISD district administrators should ensure that the Special Education Department works closely with the campuses in all matters relating to the education of students with disabilities. Campus administrators should utilize the skills, expertise, and assistance that the Special Education Department can provide to campuses. Campus administrators should actively involve district special education staff in working with their staff on effectively implementing RtI

strategies; providing professional development to all their teachers on how to work effectively with students with disabilities; and increasing collaboration between general education and special education teachers. The Special Education Department should be a key partner in all campus-based planning and implementation involving special education students.

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (REC. 13)

LVISD's Career and Technology Education (CTE) program does not have an advisory committee and does not evaluate its program annually.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.181 states that “Each public school student shall master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner; and gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student's education at the post-secondary level.” The Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, Subchapter A requires school districts to offer “Programs of study for broad career concentrations in areas of agricultural science and technology, arts and communication, business education, family and consumer science, health occupations technology, trade and industry, and technology education that will prepare students for continued learning and postsecondary education in employment settings.”

LVISD's Career and Technology Education (CTE) program at La Vega High School has seven teachers, of which two were added in 2009–10. One of the teachers also serves as the CTE Department chair. Three of the teachers are in the process of becoming certified. Three of the teachers teach Business Computer Information Systems (BCIS) I and II, Business Support Systems, and Accounting; one teaches Marketing, one teaches Consumer Science, one teaches Industrial Technology and one teaches Information Technology. In 2008–09, 532 or 19.2 percent of LVISD students were enrolled in CTE programs compared with more than 21 percent at the region and state levels (**Exhibit 2–18**). When compared to its peers, LVISD had the second lowest percentage of students enrolled in CTE.

The LVISD CTE program starts in grade 8 with a course in Careers/Computer Application. LVISD has curriculum guides for all CTE courses. In 2009–10, La Vega High School added a computer maintenance course which leads to an A+ Certification for enrolled students. Previously, the

**EXHIBIT 2–18
CTE STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND BUDGETED EXPENDITURES
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
2008–09**

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN CTE	PERCENT ENROLLED IN CTE	BUDGETED CTE EXPENDITURES*	PERCENT BUDGETED CTE EXPENDITURES	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURES
Taylor	640	20.3%	\$636,859	3.1%	\$995
Sweetwater	588	25.4%	\$384,646	2.3%	\$654
Madisonville	579	26.0%	\$790,050	6.4%	\$1,365
Cleveland	561	15.4%	\$931,006	4.5%	\$1,660
La Vega	532	19.2%	\$467,591	3.1%	\$879
Region 12	32,099	21.5%	\$32,789,011	3.5%	\$1,021
State	1,011,507	21.4%	\$959,193,633	3.3%	\$948

*Includes all funds.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2008–09.

CTE program has not been successful in getting students A+ certified.

Exhibit 2–19 lists the CTE classes LVISD offers in 2009–10 along with student enrollment numbers per course. The CTE courses with the highest enrollment include BCIS I and II, Personal and Family Development, Technology Systems, and Business Support Systems. Only two of the offered courses have an enrollment of fewer than 10 students. La Vega High School CTE students do not participate in any CTE student organizations.

In its 2008–09 response to the Title I, Part C Carl D Perkins Program Effectiveness Report, LVISD reported that it does not promote business and industry partnerships to offer financial supports to CTE students such as scholarships or development of leadership activities through CTE student organizations. LVISD also reported that it does not evaluate its program annually.

An advisory committee is an integral part of a CTE program. Typically, a CTE advisory committee consists of CTE staff, school and district administrators and staff, and members of the business community and industry. CTE advisory committees can also include a parent and a student. The purpose of business and industry participation is to help the district assess local industry and business needs, assist in establishing proficiency standards for students, evaluate the adequacy of CTE facilities and programs, promote school-to-career connecting activities, and provide encouragement to students seeking jobs and training.

One of the key roles of the CTE Advisory Committee is to participate in the annual evaluation of the CTE program.

**EXHIBIT 2–19
LA VEGA HIGH SCHOOL CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION COURSES, BY ENROLLMENT
2009–10**

CTE COURSE	ENROLLMENT
Accounting	31
A+ Certification	31
Business Computer Information Systems (BCIS) I	466
Business Computer Information Systems (BCIS) II	129
Building Trades 1	33
Building Trades 2	*
Business Support Systems	96
Computer Applications	51
Engineering Graphics	29
Food Science Technology	23
Marketing Education 1	39
Marketing Education 2	7
Multimedia	97
Nutrition Food Science/Food Science Technology (NFS/FST)	24
Personal and Family Development (PFD)	214
Teach 1	47
Technology Systems	186
Video Technology	44
Web Mastering	71

*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: LVISD Career and Technology Education Department, March 2010.

The evaluation, based on TEA’s recommendations represented in the Self-Evaluation Form, is comprehensive. It addresses areas such as the composition and utilization of an advisory committee; student recruitment, selection, and enrollment procedures; TEKS, occupational competencies, profiles and instructional objectives; facilities and equipment; instructional materials and resources; testing performance standards; curriculum development, including leadership, occupational orientation and personal development; opportunities for employment; and student follow-up and evaluation. The results of the evaluation lead to program improvement recommendations.

The concerns that La Vega High School seniors expressed with regard to the CTE program further reinforce the importance of CTE student organizations and an evaluation of the CTE program. As shown in **Exhibit 2–20**, only 21.3 percent of the students considered the CTE program effective. Fewer than 30 percent of the students believed that the school offers an effective career counseling program or that the CTE program meets the needs of the work-bound students. While high school teachers who responded to the survey had a more positive view of the CTE program than the students, about 26 percent of teachers did not think that LVISD’s CTE program or the career counseling program were effective.

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

business and industry partnerships, and supporting the students through internships and scholarships.

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

Manor ISD (MISD) has an active CTE Advisory Committee. In 2008–09, the Advisory Committee had 12 members including the CTE program director, a secondary principal, the coordinator of Advanced Academic programs, a CTE teacher, a bilingual/ESL teacher, a general education teacher, a paraprofessional, a parent of a CTE student, a CTE student, two guidance counselors, and a community member. The committee meets twice a year to discuss program related issues and develop recommendations. The CTE Committee also served as the program analysis team. For example, when TEA’s 2008 Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) report gave the MISD’s CTE program ratings of 2 and 3 in regard to the reading and math TAKS scores of special education and LEP students in CTE, the MISD’s CTE Advisory Committee discussed the PBMAS findings. The committee developed recommendations to increase performance of LEP and special education students enrolled in CTE classes through CTE teacher training and the use of common planning times of CTE teachers and ESL and special education teachers to coordinate weekly instructional

**EXHIBIT 2–20
LVISD STUDENT AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY: CTE PROGRAM**

RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Effectiveness of the Career and Technology Education Program					
Students	4.1%	17.2%	43.4%	15.6%	19.7%
Teachers	18.5%	55.6%	0.0%	25.9%	0.0%
Effectiveness of the career counseling program					
Students	5.6%	21.0%	32.3%	22.6%	18.5%
Teachers	11.1%	33.3%	29.6%	18.5%	7.4%
The needs of the work-bound student are being met					
Students	4.1%	25.6%	38.0%	20.7%	11.6%
Teachers	22.2%	33.3%	25.9%	14.8%	3.7%

NOTE: 124 students and 27 high school teachers responded to the survey.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

services for LEP and special education students taking CTE classes. Based on the committee's recommendations, the MISD CTE program developed a Continuous Improvement Plan focusing on special education and LEP students enrolled in CTE classes.

The La Vega High School CTE Department should establish a CTE advisory committee with representatives from local business and industry and involve the advisory committee members in an annual evaluation of its program. In addition to business and industry representatives, the CTE Department should consider including representatives from local community colleges and universities. The annual evaluation of the CTE program should be conducted using the TEA Self-Evaluation or a similar evaluation format. The CTE Department should meet with its advisory committee at least once a semester. The CTE Department should train the advisory committee members in the use of the Self-Evaluation form, and use the evaluation data from each member to prepare a program evaluation report. The CTE Department should use the evaluation report for program improvement. Additionally, the LVISD CTE Department should promote the development of leadership activities of its CTE students through the creation of CTE student organizations.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (REC. 14)

While LVISD has begun to raise student and parent awareness of the importance of college, its college preparation academic program is limited and its student participation in advanced courses, performance on college admission tests, and college readiness has been low.

LVISD had the lowest percentage among its peers of students completing Advanced Placement (AP)/dual enrollment

courses in 2005–06, 2006–07, and 2007–08 (**Exhibit 2–21**). The percentage of LVISD students completing advanced placement/dual credit classes in most cases has been about one-half or less of the regional and state averages since 2003–04.

No LVISD students took AP or dual enrollment tests from 2003–04 to 2006–07 (**Exhibit 2–22**). In 2007–08 only 0.4 percent of LVISD students took AP tests. Among its peers, LVISD rated the lowest from 2003–04 to 2006–07 in the percentage of students taking AP tests and the second lowest in 2007–08. The percentage of students taking AP tests increased for Region 12 from 15.6 percent in 2003–04 to 17.5 percent in 2007–08. The state rates of students taking AP tests increased from 17.4 in 2003–04 to 20.9 in 2007–08.

Although the La Vega High School course catalog lists several Advanced Placement (AP) courses, no LVISD student is taking any AP classes. LVISD discontinued its AP program in 1999–2000 because of low student interest and participation. The district offers Pre-AP classes only at the high school. In 2009–10, LVISD offers Pre-AP classes in English I and II, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. In 2000–01, LVISD began offering dual credit courses. It offers these courses through its two local community colleges, Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and McLennan Community College (MCC), including:

- English 1301 and 1302: Freshman Composition I & II
- English 2322 and 2323: British Masterpieces I & II
- College Algebra (1314)
- College Trigonometry (1316)
- Economics, Government, Psychology, and Sociology

EXHIBIT 2–21

PERCENT OF STUDENTS COMPLETING ADVANCED PLACEMENT/ DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Sweetwater	23.7%	22.5%	20.1%	22.0%	20.3%
Taylor	16.4%	16.2%	16.0%	18.6%	26.2%
Madisonville	11.1%	9.7%	10.4%	15.1%	10.3%
Cleveland	10.0%	12.2%	15.4%	15.4%	15.8%
La Vega	10.7%	13.2%	10.4%	8.3%	10.1%
Region 12	15.8%	16.8%	16.5%	17.0%	19.1%
State Average	19.9%	20.5%	21.0%	22.1%	23.1%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04 through 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 2-22
PERCENT OF STUDENTS TAKING ADVANCED PLACEMENT TESTS
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
2003-04 THROUGH 2007-08**

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Taylor	18.7%	14.7%	17.2%	19.6%	14.8%
Cleveland	15.4%	14.8%	20.4%	24.2%	23.5%
Sweetwater	8.3%	6.0%	8.3%	8.3%	3.8%
Madisonville	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
La Vega	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Region 12	15.6%	15.9%	16.2%	17.5%	17.5%
State Average	17.4%	18.4%	18.9%	20.0%	20.9%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04 through 2007-08.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-23**, LVISD increased its dual credit offering in 2007-08 and again in 2008-09. The number of LVISD students taking dual credit courses also increased annually from 2006-07 to 2008-09 but has dropped in 2009-10 to its lowest level since implementation of the dual credit program. The number of students taking dual-credit courses in the spring semester of each of these years has been smaller than the number taking courses in the fall semester with the decline increasing each year, peaking in 2009-10, where 37.5 percent fewer students are taking dual credit courses in the spring semester compared to the fall semester.

In 2008-09, LVISD established an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program that requires students to enroll in rigorous classes. AVID is a college-preparatory program designed to help economically disadvantaged and academically average first-generation college going students to prepare for college. AVID provides tutorials, teaches students study and writing skills, and Cornell note taking, and provides team building activities. Participating students research careers and colleges, visit colleges, and participate in public service projects. The project in 2009-10 was on recycling.

**EXHIBIT 2-23
NUMBER OF LVISD STUDENTS TAKING DUAL CREDIT COURSES
2006-07 THROUGH 2009-10**

DUAL CREDIT COURSES	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	FALL 2006	SPRING 2007	FALL 2007	SPRING 2008	FALL 2008	SPRING 2009	FALL 2009	SPRING 2010
English 1301	29		40		32		8	
English 2322	19		16		22		11	
English 1302		28		27		24		5
English 2323		15		17		16		*
Math 1314			20		16		14	
Math 1316				17		10		12
Economics					15		7	
Government						13		5
Psychology					22			
Sociology						22		
Total	48	43	76	61	107	85	40	*

*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: LVISD Director of Secondary Education, March 2010.

In 2008–09, 38 students participated in AVID. Participation increased in 2009–10 to 87 students. LVISD has had mixed success with AVID students: in 2009–10 five students moved and six students either dropped out or were exited from the program. Among students who joined AVID in 2008–09 and are sophomores in 2009–10, several are struggling academically. Among freshmen in AVID in 2009–10, 12 students are struggling academically.

The La Vega High School Campus Improvement Plan for 2009–10 devotes little attention to advanced courses, college preparation, and staff development for teachers in those areas. The Campus Improvement Plan lists the PSAT and SAT as part of its portfolio of assessments but does not identify any strategies for improving students' performance on college admission tests. The Campus Improvement Plan also does not mention Advanced Placement as part of its academic emphasis and does not specify any strategies for increasing the percentage of students taking dual credit or college credit courses.

LVISD has not consistently improved its SAT/ACT participation and performance from 2003–04 to 2007–08, as shown in **Exhibit 2–24**. Its participation rates increased since 2003–04 and exceeded regional and state levels in

2007–08. The percentage of LVISD students exceeding criterion increased from 2003–04 to 2005–06 and then decreased considerably from 26.1 percent in 2005–06 to 11.8 percent in 2006–07, and 3.2 percent in 2007–08. Similarly, LVISD mean SAT scores peaked in 2004–05 and decreased each year since then. The district's ACT scores also decreased after 2005–06. Its performance on college admission tests was the lowest in 2007–08.

In 2007–08, while LVISD was second among its peers in the percentage of Class of 2008 students who took the ACT/SAT, it was the lowest among its peers in the percentage of students meeting SAT/ACT criteria (**Exhibit 2–25**). Only 3.2 percent of LVISD students met ACT/SAT criteria compared with 24.3 percent in the region and 27.2 percent statewide. LVISD's mean ACT score was the lowest among its peers, and below regional and state rates. LVISD also had the lowest SAT score among its peers. Its mean SAT score was 140 lower than the regional mean score and 152 points lower than the state average.

Only 22.5 percent of LVISD seniors who responded to the February 2010 survey agreed that the district effectively prepares students for post-secondary education. Seniors were critical of LVISD's college preparation efforts: only 26.6

EXHIBIT 2–24
LVISD, REGION 12 AND STATE PERFORMANCE ON SAT AND ACT EXAMINATIONS
CLASSES OF 2004 THROUGH 2008

	CLASS OF 2004	CLASS OF 2005	CLASS OF 2006	CLASS OF 2007	CLASS OF 2008
Percent Taking SAT Exams					
LVISD	31.0%	37.3%	46.9%	41.0%	69.2%
Region 12	58.3%	61.6%	61.4%	60.9%	60.3%
State	61.9%	65.5%	65.8%	68.2%	65.0%
Percent of All SAT Scores Exceeding Criterion					
LVISD	11.1%	19.5%	26.1%	11.8%	3.2%
Region 12	21.5%	24.2%	23.9%	22.7%	24.3%
State	27.0%	27.4%	27.1%	27.0%	27.2%
Mean SAT Score					
LVISD	852	948	926	868	835
Region 12	968	983	981	976	975
State	987	992	991	992	987
Mean ACT Score					
LVISD	18.1	18.2	19.7	17.6	17.8
Region 12	19.7	19.8	20.0	20.1	20.3
State	20.1	20.0	20.1	20.2	20.5

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 2–25
PERCENT OF STUDENTS TAKING ACT/SAT EXAMS, MEETING CRITERIA
CLASS OF 2008**

DISTRICT	STUDENTS TAKING SAT/ACT EXAMS	STUDENTS MEETING SAT/ACT CRITERIA	MEAN ACT SCORE	MEAN SAT SCORE
Cleveland	86.7%	8.8%	17.8	862
La Vega	69.2%	3.2%	17.8	835
Madisonville	62.4%	20.6%	20.3	926
Sweetwater	58.6%	29.2%	20.9	1025
Taylor	53.9%	22.9%	20.1	976
Region 12	60.3%	24.3%	20.3	975
State	65.0%	27.2%	20.5	987

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2007–08.

percent regarded the college counseling program effective, 38.6 percent agreed that the district meets the needs of the college bound students, and 42.8 percent considered the district’s advanced placement program effective (**Exhibit 2–26**). While high school teachers were more positive than the seniors, only 40.7 percent agreed that the district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education, 22.2 percent had no opinion, and 37.0 percent disagreed. Similarly, 44.4 percent agreed that LVISD has an effective AP program and an effective college counseling program, and 55.5 percent thought that the district is meeting the needs of college bound students. The rest of the teachers either disagreed or had no opinion.

LVISD’s success in preparing its students for college in English Language Arts and math was mixed. LVISD increased the percentage of its college ready students in English Language Arts by 30 points from 2006–07 to 2007–08 (**Exhibit 2–27**). Although it was still below regional and state rates, it has closed the gaps considerably from 2006–07 to 2007–08. However, the percentage of students who were college ready in math declined by three percentage points from 2006–07 to 2007–08 and was more than 20 percentage points lower than the regional and state rates. LVISD’s Class of 2008 was in the middle of its peers in the percentage of college ready students in English Language Arts but the second lowest in mathematics and in both subjects.

**EXHIBIT 2–26
LVISD STUDENT AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY**

RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The needs of the college-bound student are being met					
Students	6.6%	32.0%	28.7%	18.0%	14.8%
Teachers	18.5%	37.0%	11.1%	29.6%	3.7%
The district has an effective college counseling program					
Students	5.6%	21.0%	32.3%	22.6%	18.5%
Teachers	14.8%	29.6%	29.6%	18.5%	7.4%
The district has an effective advanced placement program					
Students	6.5%	36.3%	34.7%	8.9%	13.7%
Teachers	14.8%	29.6%	25.9%	25.9%	3.7%
The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education					
Students	4.0%	18.5%	25.0%	24.2%	28.2%
Teachers	11.1%	29.6%	22.2%	29.6%	7.4%

NOTE: 124 students and 27 high school teachers responded to the survey.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 2–27
PERCENT OF COLLEGE READY GRADUATES
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
CLASSES OF 2007 AND 2008

DISTRICT	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS		MATHEMATICS		BOTH SUBJECTS	
	CLASS OF 2007	CLASS OF 2008	CLASS OF 2007	CLASS OF 2008	CLASS OF 2007	CLASS OF 2008
Sweetwater	64%	55%	45%	53%	29%	40%
Taylor	40%	66%	52%	60%	31%	50%
Madisonville	36%	48%	57%	58%	36%	30%
La Vega	22%	52%	36%	33%	11%	28%
Cleveland	22%	39%	41%	44%	17%	24%
Region 12	46%	53%	50%	55%	32%	39%
State	49%	59%	56%	58%	37%	44%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2007–08 and 2008–09.

Districts with high participation in AP courses and exams and high performance on AP and college admission exams integrate their AP program into their curriculum by preparing students academically to take rigorous and advanced courses before they reach high school. These districts set participation goals, offer multiple pre-AP courses starting in middle school, and offer training to AP and regular education teachers in test-taking strategies. These districts also offer tutorials on test-taking strategies and provide access to computer labs supplied with applicable software. For example, W.T. White High School in Dallas ISD, a school with 2,559 students in 2009–10 had the highest TAKS scores of any comprehensive high school in Dallas ISD. W.T. White High School has an 81 percent minority student population and 42 percent are economically disadvantaged. It enrolls 67 percent of its students in pre-AP and AP programs. The school offers a wide range of advanced placement classes and academic extra-curricular programs such as debate, Academic Decathlon, Whiz Kid, art, chess, and drama activities. It also offers dual credit courses and technology partnerships with Brookhaven and Richland Community Colleges. W.T. White High School was one of three schools in the U.S. to win the 2003 College Board AP Inspiration Award for exemplary work in improving the academic environment and helping economically disadvantaged students go to college. More than 80 percent of its graduates attend four-year colleges and 11 percent attend two-year colleges. The school receives millions in scholarship awards annually, and students get accepted to a large number of colleges. The school has an experienced and highly qualified cadre of teachers with low turnover: 75 percent of the teachers have master's degrees, and teachers have on average 15 years experience.

LVISD should prepare students for participation and success in rigorous, college preparation courses by building up the AP program and developing strategies for improving student performance on college admission tests. The district should begin offering Pre-AP classes in junior high and offer AP classes in high school. LVISD should continue its efforts to develop a college going culture in the district by stressing the importance of college preparation through all grade levels and informing both parents and students of what it takes to be college ready. It should encourage participation in programs like AVID and dual credits and provide the needed resources to facilitate student success in these programs. The district should select teachers qualified to teach Pre-AP and AP classes and provide them with the needed training. The district should also encourage student participation in UIL academic extra-curricular activities such as debate, chess, art, drama, and that enhance academic skills. LVISD should develop strategies to improve student success on college admission exams including offering resources for test preparation and tutorials. The district should monitor and evaluate its college preparation programs and initiatives to ensure their effectiveness.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND DROPOUT (REC. 15)

Academic failure, high retention rates, and lack of student engagement in school have led to a high dropout rate and low high school completion in LVISD.

LVISD has a very high dropout rate from high school. Its high school dropout rate has exceeded both the Region 12 and state percentages over the past five years (Class of 2004 through Class of 2008). Over this period, LVISD high school dropout rates were about twice or more the regional and state

rates. LVISD’s high school dropout rate ranged from 10.1 to 28.8 percent compared to the regional rate of 3.3 to 10.9 percent and the state rate of 3.9 to 11.4 percent (**Exhibit 2–28**). LVISD’s high school dropout rate was 28.8 percent for the Class of 2007; it decreased to 19.0 percent for the Class of 2008. Consequently, LVISD’s high school completion/graduation rates have been low.

LVISD also has the highest dropout rates among its peers since 2005–06 (**Exhibit 2–29**). In 2005–06 (Class of 2006), LVISD’s dropout rate was 3.6 to 10.4 percentage points higher than the peers’ dropout rates, and 10 percentage points higher than the regional and state dropout rates. In 2006–07 (Class of 2007), LVISD’s dropout rate was 15.2 to 27.1 percentage points higher than the dropout rates of its peers, 17.4 and 17.9 percentage points higher, respectively, than the state and regional dropout rates. In 2007–08 (Class of 2008), LVISD’s high school dropout rate was 5.4 to 17.5 percentage points higher than its peers and 8.5 to 8.8 percentage points higher, respectively, than the state and regional rates. LVISD had the lowest high school completion/graduation rates among its peers for the Class of 2007 and the Class of 2008. LVISD’s graduation rates for the Class of 2007 were 10.7 to 30.3 percentage points lower than its peers. Its graduation rates for the Class of 2008 were 10.3 to 22.0 percentage points lower. It had the second lowest high school completion/graduation rate for the Class of 2006, only 0.3 percentage points higher than Cleveland ISD and 14.6 to 22.9 lower than three of its peers.

LVISD’s high school dropout rates for the Class of 2008 were particularly high among limited English proficiency (LEP) students, standing at 40.0 percent and among African American students standing at 26.1 percent (**Exhibit 2–30**). LVISD had the highest dropout rate among its peers’ subpopulations with two exceptions. Cleveland ISD had a higher percentage of LEP and Anglo student dropouts than LVISD.

LVISD also had the highest annual dropout rates in grades 7 to 12 among its peers each year from 2003–04 to 2007–08 (**Exhibit 2–31**). Its annual dropout rates exceeded the Region 12 and state rates.

Recent research has demonstrated that a complex web of overlapping personal, school, and family/community factors tends to push students out of school. No two students may drop out for exactly the same reasons. Dropout factors include:

**EXHIBIT 2–28
PERCENT OF STUDENTS GRADUATING, RECEIVING A GED,
CONTINUING HIGH SCHOOL, OR DROPPING OUT
LVISD, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
CLASS OF 2004 THROUGH CLASS OF 2008**

GRADUATING CLASS	STATE	REGION 12	LVISD
Class of 2008			
Graduated	79.1%	82.0%	68.7%
Received GED	4.8%	2.0%	4.8%
Continued HS	7.5%	5.8%	7.5%
Dropped Out (4-year)	10.5%	10.2%	19.0%
Class of 2007			
Graduated	78.0%	81.4%	62.1%
Received GED	2.0%	2.2%	3.8%
Continued HS	8.7%	5.4%	5.3%
Dropped Out (4-year)	11.4%	10.9%	28.8%
Class of 2006			
Graduated	80.4%	82.9%	67.3%
Received GED	2.3%	2.8%	6.4%
Continued HS	8.6%	5.6%	10.5%
Dropped Out (4-year)	8.8%	8.8%	15.8%
Class of 2005			
Graduated	84.0%	86.8%	80.5%
Received GED	3.8%	4.4%	5.0%
Continued HS	7.9%	5.5%	4.4%
Dropped Out (4-year)	4.3%	3.4%	10.1%
Class of 2004			
Graduated	84.6%	88.1%	77.8%
Received GED	4.2%	4.2%	5.6%
Continued HS	7.3%	4.5%	5.6%
Dropped Out (4-year)	3.9%	3.3%	11.1%

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

- Personal risk factor such as substance abuse, pregnancy, legal problems, and working more than 14-20 hours per week.
- School risk factors such as truancy, absenteeism, tardiness, suspension, and disciplinary infractions.
- Family factors such as an unstable home life, socioeconomic status, siblings’ completion of high school, single-parent households, parental educational background, and primary language spoken in the home.

EXHIBIT 2–29
PERCENT OF STUDENTS GRADUATING AND DROPPING OUT
CLASS OF 2006, 2007, AND 2008
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE

DISTRICT	CLASS OF 2008		CLASS OF 2007		CLASS OF 2006	
	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)
Sweetwater	91.6%	1.5%	89.0%	2.5%	89.3%	5.4%
Madisonville	89.7%	4.8%	92.4%	1.7%	84.6%	9.1%
Taylor	83.3%	8.1%	75.9%	12.7%	77.9%	8.3%
La Vega	68.7%	19.0%	62.1%	28.8%	67.3%	15.8%
Cleveland	68.4%	13.6%	72.8%	13.6%	77.6%	12.2%
Region 12	82.0%	10.2%	81.4%	10.9%	82.9%	8.8%
State	79.1%	10.5%	78.0%	11.4%	80.4%	8.8%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07 through 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 2–30
PERCENT GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS BY STUDENT GROUP
LVISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
CLASS OF 2008

DISTRICT	STATUS	ALL STUDENTS	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ANGLO	ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT
Sweetwater	Graduates	91.6%	75.0%	91.8%	93.2%	92.7%	*
	Dropouts	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	3.6%	*
Madisonville	Graduates	89.7%	85.7%	81.8%	95.2%	86.2%	88.9%
	Dropouts	4.8%	10.7%	9.1%	1.2%	6.2%	11.1%
Taylor	Graduates	83.3%	69.0%	79.8%	93.8%	75.6%	70.0%
	Dropouts	8.1%	13.8%	11.7%	2.5%	15.4%	20.0%
La Vega	Graduates	68.7%	65.2%	69.2%	71.4%	69.9%	40.0%
	Dropouts	19.0%	26.1%	19.2%	12.2%	19.4%	40.0%
Cleveland	Graduates	68.4%	55.6%	66.7%	72.7%	67.0%	14.3%
	Dropouts	13.6%	18.5%	6.7%	14.1%	17.0%	42.9%

*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: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2008–09.

EXHIBIT 2–31
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATES (GRADES 7–12)
LVISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 12, AND THE STATE
2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

DISTRICT	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
La Vega	1.6%	1.7%	3.3%	4.5%	3.9%
Cleveland	0.8%	0.8%	3.2%	2.3%	3.0%
Madisonville	0.3%	0.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.9%
Sweetwater	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Taylor	0.7%	1.2%	2.2%	2.6%	2.6%
Region 12	0.8%	0.8%	2.4%	2.4%	1.9%
State	0.9%	0.9%	2.6%	2.7%	2.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04 through 2007–08.

According to a key 2006 study, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Drop-Outs*, the top five reasons out-of-school youth gave for dropping out were:

- Classes were not interesting (47 percent).
- Missed too many days and could not catch up (43 percent).
- Spent time with people who were not interested in school (42 percent).
- Had too much freedom and not enough rules (38 percent).
- Was failing in school (35 percent).

An analysis that LVISD conducted on dropouts in 2008–09 largely confirms the research findings. According to the LVISD analysis, students who dropped out were enrolled in LVISD from one to 10 years: 38 percent were enrolled three or fewer years, 34 percent were enrolled for four to nine years, and 26 percent were enrolled for 10 or more years. Of the students who dropped out: 74 percent were retained one or more years, 80 percent had excessive absences, 24 percent had discipline problems; 26 percent failed TAKS, and 8 percent were teen parents. According to La Vega High School students surveyed in 2008 regarding their perceptions of why most students drop out of La Vega High School, the main reasons for dropping out included lack of interest in school and failing to pass one or more portions of TAKS. In a focus group the high school principal conducted with students, TAKS failure emerged as the primary cause for dropping out.

The poor academic performance of LVISD’s LEP students has led to low graduation rates and high dropout rates for that student population in particular, as shown in **Exhibit 2–32**. The graduation rates for LVISD LEP students have remained low and the 4-year dropout rates remained high for the Classes of 2006 through 2008. Although graduation rates of LEP students increased from 25.0 percent for the Class of 2006 to 40.0 percent for the Class of 2008, they

remained 22 to 28 percentage points below the district’s overall graduation rates. The dropout rates for the Classes of 2006, 2007, and 2008 also remained high. Two-thirds of the LEP students in the Class of 2007 dropped out as did 37.5 percent in the Class of 2006 and 40.0 percent in the Class of 2008. LEP dropout rates were twice or more as high as the district’s overall dropout rates.

In 2009, the LEP annual dropout rate in grades 7 to 12 was 5.9 percent compared with a state standard of 2.0 percent. In 2008, LVISD had a 9.0 percent LEP annual dropout rate in grades 7 to 12 compared to the 2.0 percent state standard. In response to the TAKS performance, high school graduation and dropout issues related to LEP students, LVISD conducted surveys and focus groups with students and performed a detailed analysis of LEP students who failed TAKS by grade level and content area. The student survey and focus group data pointed to lack of interest and TAKS failure as the prime reasons for dropping out. The analysis identified the need to increase the number of ESL certified teachers overall as well as the number of math, science, and social studies teachers with ESL certifications; foster closer collaboration between the core teacher and the bilingual/ESL pullout teachers to discuss concerns and progress; purchase computers and software for LEP students and materials for ESL teachers and for classroom teachers with LEP students; and increase the involvement of parents of LEP students and their attendance of school events and Language Proficiency Assessment Committees (LPAC) meetings.

LVISD has started to take action to reduce dropout and improve high school completion. In the La Vega High School Campus Improvement Plans from 2007–08, 2008–09, and 2009–10 a range of strategies to address dropout are included. The strategies target high school students and include academic supports, mentoring, development of personal graduation plans, and a credit recovery program. The 2009–10 Campus Improvement Plan also recognizes the need to improve attendance and reduce retention by working

**EXHIBIT 2–32
LVISD LEP STUDENT GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES
CLASSES OF 2006 THROUGH 2008**

CLASS	PERCENTAGE LEP GRADUATED	PERCENTAGE LVISD GRADUATED	PERCENTAGE LEP DROPPED OUT (9–12)	PERCENTAGE LVISD DROPPED OUT (9–12)
Class of 2006	25.0%	67.3%	37.5%	15.8%
Class of 2007	33.3%	62.1%	66.7%	28.8%
Class of 2008	40.0%	68.7%	40.0%	19.0%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2005–06 through 2008–09.

with the AVID program and Communities in Schools. In 2009–10, La Vega High School implemented a Freshmen Wing, putting all 9th grade students in a separate wing of the high school to make these students feel part of a community and creating a class for some of the overage students.

A 2008 TEA funded study, *Best Practices in Dropout Prevention*, found that the most effective dropout prevention strategies involve:

- School-community collaboration by recognizing the value of community entities such as libraries, places of worship, museums, and community agencies and businesses.
- Safe learning environments through the implementation of a comprehensive violence prevention plan including conflict resolution through problem recognition and evaluation, goal setting, planning, expecting challenges, controlling anger, and expressing emotion.
- Family engagement to affect student's academic achievement, attendance, attitudes, and behavior in school.
- Mentoring/tutoring/pairing a caring adult to each student to engage in one-on-one activities focusing on academics.
- Alternative schooling that gives students the opportunity to succeed based on their own personal goals and achievements.
- Active learning implementing teaching and learning strategies that engage students in the learning process through cooperative learning, multiple intelligence theory, and project-based learning.
- Career and technology education integrating academic and career-based skills and providing all students with a solid academic foundation regardless of their post high school plans.

While LVISD is moving in the right direction, its high school dropout rate is still very high, and its high school completion rate is low. To be effective, the strategies to reduce dropout and improve high school completion cannot reside in high school alone. Strategies should include all grade levels, starting in first grade or even earlier. The district should develop and implement a comprehensive dropout prevention and high school completion plan involving all grade levels. Each school and its staff should clearly understand their role

in contributing to and affecting high school completion, be accountable, and take proactive measures. The district should strengthen its vertical alignment not only with its curriculum but also in regards to students' engagement, attendance, and behavior. LVISD should estimate the probability of high school completion for students at each grade level based on their academic performance, engagement, and behavior. Consequently, each school should implement appropriate strategies to facilitate high school completion and not just completion of grades at that respective school.

Additionally, the district should pay particular attention to the needs related to the high dropout rate and low high school completion rate for its LEP students. The district should use survey results to guide its decision-making in this area, including considering: increasing the number of ESL certified teachers overall as well as the number of math, science, and social studies teachers with ESL certifications; fostering closer collaboration between the core teacher and the bilingual/ESL pullout teachers to discuss concerns and progress; purchasing computers and software for LEP students and materials for ESL teachers and for classroom teachers with LEP students; and increasing the involvement of parents of LEP students and their attendance of school events and Language Proficiency Assessment Committees (LPAC) meetings.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (REC. 16)

LVISD's disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), the La Vega Learning Center DAEP, does not maintain comprehensive data on the students in the program and does not monitor the program and evaluate its effectiveness.

The La Vega Learning Center (the Center) DAEP was established in 2006. Previously, each school had its own DAEP. The lead teacher who oversees the Center was a teacher and a coach before becoming the Learning Center's lead teacher, and was selected for the position because he had a combination of teaching and coaching experience. The position reports to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, although the job description says that the position reports to the superintendent. The lead teacher acts as the instructional and administrative manager/principal for the Center. Among the job responsibilities for this position, according to the job description, are: "Develop, maintain and use appropriate information systems and records necessary for attainment of campus performance objectives for each of the Academic Excellence Indicators."

and “Develop and implement system for reporting regularly the fiscal and instructional conditions of La Vega Learning Center and the performance of its students to participating schools.”

The Center, located in a separate building that was previously a school, houses the students in three rooms: a room for elementary school students, a room for junior high students, and a room for high school students. The DAEP does not serve students from the primary school. Each room has a capacity for 15 students. The Center also has an overflow room for junior high and high school students. The elementary school room has one teacher and an aide. The teacher is also special education certified. The rooms for junior high students and high school students each have a teacher and share an aide. The teachers, according to the lead teacher “are handpicked.” A counselor comes once a week to check on students. Classes meet between 7:30 and 2:30 daily and address the core subjects. Each of the rooms has 10 to 15 computers using the self-paced Plato program. The Center does not provide transportation to general education students. Special education students assigned to the Center receive transportation. Students can be assigned to the Center for 30, 45, 90, or 120 days. The Center does not provide any services to students besides core academics. The Center does not offer any behavior management/modification/social skill classes, Physical Education (PE) or group counseling. The Center has a gymnasium and students are allowed to use the gymnasium on their own with no organized PE activities.

The La Vega Learning Center DAEP does not maintain adequate data on its students. At the time of on-site work, the lead teacher who oversees the Center did not provide any records showing the number of students who were placed

there by school and, in total, their ethnic distribution, the number of special education students, and the rate of recidivism. In May 2010, the district reported that the lead teacher does keep the total number of students per grade level and school, as well as their projected release dates, on a dry erase board in his office. Ethnicity of the assigned students can also be obtained as needed. It was also reported that the Special Education teacher assigned to the campus maintains the records of the special education students assigned to the campus, including any modifications needed for these students. The district did not report that any records are maintained related to recidivism rates of the DAEP’s current students. While the district reported that it maintains records on its DAEP students, the records are not comprehensive and are not maintained in an automated database for reporting and evaluation purposes.

LVISD also does not have comprehensive DAEP data for the district as a whole. Each school is expected to maintain data on students assigned to the DAEP. While the schools prepare Student Disciplinary Action Summaries for PEIMS submissions, they do not create reports specific to DAEP and have not used data to determine the characteristics of the students from their campus assigned to DAEP or how effective the program is for their students.

An analysis of data specific to student placement in the DAEP extracted from the district’s Student Disciplinary Action Summaries, as part of this review, shows that in 2008–09, LVISD had 99 students in the DAEP (**Exhibit 2–33**). The analysis revealed that more than a third of the students (34.8 percent) assigned to the DAEP came from grades 1–6. A significant percent of the students in the DAEP were special education students; much more than the 10.3 percent of special education students in the district. The

EXHIBIT 2–33
NUMBER OF LVISD STUDENTS IN DAEP BY SCHOOL
2008–09

SCHOOL	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS
LVES	21	21.2%	8	34.8%
LVISHPMC	17	17.2%	5	21.7%
LVJHSGDC	26	26.3%	7	30.4%
LVHS	35	35.3%	*	*
Total	99	100.0%	*	*

*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.

NOTE: The number of students in DAEP include: Code 07: Placement in on or off campus DAEP and Code 10: Continued district DAEP placement from prior year.

SOURCE: LVISD, PEIMS Report, Student Disciplinary Action Summary, 2008–09.

percentages of elementary and intermediate special education students placed in the DAEP were especially high.

In 2007–08, 79 students were placed in the DAEP (**Exhibit 2–34**). About 57 percent of the students came from grades 1–6. About 27 percent of the students placed in the DAEP were special education students; nearly three-fold as many as the 9.5 percent of special education students in the district. The Student Disciplinary Action Summaries have overall ethnicity/race data on students with disciplinary actions but do not contain ethnic/race information specific to DAEP students.

Both in 2007–08 and 2008–09, students were assigned to the DAEP primarily for violation of the Code of Conduct: 96.2 percent in 2007–08 and 81.6 percent in 2008–09. In 2008–09, 11.2 percent were assigned to the DAEP for fighting/mutual combat (code 41); between one and two percent each were assigned because of possession of a controlled substance (code 04), possession of an alcoholic beverage (code 05), assault against an employee (code 27) or

against another person (code 28), or criminal mischief (code 22).

Students can be assigned to the DAEP for up to 120 days. Junior high and high school students assigned to the DAEP are placed there for the rest of the semester. In 2008–09, elementary school students were assigned to the DAEP for up to 29 days but primarily to a period of 10 or fewer days (**Exhibit 2–35**). Intermediate school students were assigned primarily to 45 days. Junior high and high school students were placed in the DAEP from 10 to 120 days. Junior High students were in the DAEP most commonly 45 or more days. High school students were most commonly in the DAEP 30 days and 90 days.

DAEP programs typically record and maintain comprehensive data on the students placed in their program. At a minimum, the data they record and maintain includes the number of students by grade level and school, student ethnic/racial characteristics, whether the student is in special education, whether a student has limited English proficiency, the

**EXHIBIT 2–34
NUMBER OF LVISD STUDENTS IN DAEP BY SCHOOL
2007–08**

SCHOOL	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS
LVES	15	19.0%	5	33.3%
LVISHPMC	29	36.7%	7	24.1%
LVJHSGDC	21	26.6%	*	*
LVHS	14	17.7%	5	35.7%
Total	79	100.0%	*	*

*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.

NOTE: Number of students in DAEP include: Code 07: Placement in on or off campus DAEP and Code 10: Continued district DAEP placement from prior year.

SOURCE: LVISD, PEIMS Report, Student Disciplinary Action Summary, 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 2–35
NUMBER OF LVISD STUDENTS IN DAEP BY SCHOOL AND ACTUAL LENGTH OF STAY
2008–09**

LENGTH OF STAY	LVES (21)	LVISHPMC (17)	LVJHSGDC (25)	LVHS (35)	TOTAL
10 or fewer days	15		*	*	*
11 to 29 days	6	*	*	6	18
30 days			*	12	*
31 to 45 days		13	7	6	26
50 to 89 days		*	11	*	15
90 to 120 days			*	7	*

*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: LVISD, PEIMS Report, Student Disciplinary Action Summary, 2008–09.

reason(s) the student was placed in the DAEP, length of placement, DAEP attendance rate, and number of times the student was placed in the DAEP within a year. Programs also collect data on how students do academically and behaviorally after they return to their home campuses. This data allows the DAEP to evaluate the program, determine its effectiveness, and help identify areas in need of improvement.

Clint ISD's disciplinary alternative education program, the Student Reassignment Center was restructured following an evaluation that demonstrated that the program was not effective. The assigned staff, instructional program, and materials were not adequate and the students placed in the program lost academic ground during their time in the DAEP which put them further behind when they returned to their home school and increasing their risk of failure. The restructured program also added an "after release" component, tracking students' academic performance, and behavior after they return to their home schools.

LVISD should develop an automated data collection system on students placed in the La Vega Learning Center DAEP, analyze the data, and evaluate the effectiveness of the DAEP program. The lead teacher at the center should work with the assistant superintendent of Personnel and Administration to define the data elements the Center needs to collect on the students placed in its program; identify the data source(s) for each data element; specify the data collection procedures it will use; develop a database structure for recording, maintaining, and analyzing the data; identify the staff member who will enter the data into the database; and outline the type of reports it wants to generate both to document its student population and program and evaluate the program's effectiveness. The reports generated should provide information on the program as a whole, by students' home campus, and by student subpopulation. These reports will also provide useful information to campus administrators.

LIBRARY STAFFING (REC. 17)

LVISD's libraries are not staffed in accordance with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) recommended standards, limiting the time students and teachers are able to utilize the services of the library and librarian.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), in its School Library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards classifies libraries into four categories: *Exemplary*, *Recognized*, *Acceptable*, and *Below Standard*. The TSLAC public school library staffing standards are based on schools'

average daily attendance (ADA). **Exhibit 2–36** shows TSLAC standards for professional and non-professional staff.

According to the minimal standards (*Acceptable*), schools with 1,000 or fewer students require one certified librarian to meet the Acceptable standard. Each of the five LVISD schools has a certified librarian. The standards also recommend that schools with up to 500 students have at minimum a 0.5 library aide and that schools with 500 to 1,000 students have at minimum a full-time library aide. According to these standards, LVISD schools should have 4.0 aides. In 2009–10, LVISD has only 2.0 aides.

Exhibit 2–37 shows the 2009–10 student enrollment for each LVISD school and the number of professional and paraprofessional library staff, and compares these statistics to the TSLAC Acceptable standards. Only two of the five schools have aides: La Vega Elementary and La Vega High School. Based on the student population, La Vega Primary and La Vega Junior High should each have 0.5 aides and La Vega Intermediate should have a full-time aide.

To compensate for the lack of aides, La Vega Junior High has six student assistants and La Vega Intermediate has two students coming in daily in the last period to help shelve books. The lack of aides requires that librarians spend a considerable portion of their time engaging in clerical tasks, thereby limiting the time they can spend on instructional and research tasks. Three of the five librarians estimated that they spend about 56 to 99 percent of their time on clerical duties. In the past three years, the La Vega Junior High library has been open to students only during the first semester, when the librarian spends about 10 percent of her time on clerical tasks during the school day. During the second semester, the library is closed to students during the school day and is used as a classroom with the librarian teaching core subjects using a mobile computer lab. The La Vega Junior High librarian does all library-related work after school. All but the high school librarian reported having other non-library duties such as going into classrooms and reading to students, hall duty, assisting with student pick-up, and monitoring the students in the after school program. Librarians estimated spending from 1 or 2 percent of their time on non-library related duties to spending more than one-third of the time on non-library duties.

The lack of library aides has a significant impact on the services that librarians can provide. The 2001 study *Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services and Student Performance* showed that lower than recommended staffing

EXHIBIT 2–36
TSLAC LIBRARY STAFFING STANDARDS
2010

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

SOURCE: Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2010.

EXHIBIT 2–37
LVISD ENROLLMENT, NUMBER OF LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY AIDES, AND
COMPARISON TO TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS BY CAMPUS
2009–10

CAMPUS	ENROLLMENT	ADA*	LIBRARIANS	TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	LIBRARY AIDES	TSLAC ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS	OVER/ (UNDER)
LVPS	414	393	1 Certified Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	0	At least 0.5 aide	(0.5 aide)
LVES	685	651	1 Certified Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	1	At least 1.0 aide	-
LVISHPMC	607	577	1 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	0	At least 1.0 aide	(1.0 aide)
LVJHSGDC	435	413	1 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	0	At least 0.5 aide	(0.5 aide)
LVHS	746	709	1 Librarian	At least 1 Certified Librarian	1	At least 1.0 aide	-
Total	2,887	2,743	5.0	Meets Acceptable Standard	2.0	4.0	(2.0)

*Average Daily Attendance (ADA) was calculated by multiplying school enrollment by 95 percent.

SOURCE: LVISD Enrollment for School Year 2009–10, February 17, 2010 Enrollment. Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas, 2010.

levels and especially the absence of library aides significantly curtail the range and type of services that librarians can provide. The presence of library aides and the number of hours they work are critical to librarians' ability to perform the range of high priority activities. Library aides "free" the

librarian from having to perform basic library activities and allow the librarian to allocate time to activities that are more directly related to teaching and training staff and students, such as collaboratively planning and teaching with teachers, providing staff development to teachers, facilitating

information skills instruction, managing technology, communicating with school administrators, and providing reading incentive activities. In addition, the extent to which library aides are available increases library usage by individuals and classes.

LVISD should ensure that all campus libraries maintain consistency with the TSLAC *Acceptable* staffing levels and are being effectively utilized by students and teachers.

In order for all campuses to meet the TSLAC *Acceptable* standard, LVISD should create two additional library paraprofessional positions to appropriately staff all five campuses. Additionally, the district should review campus staffing, schedules, and needs to ensure that all librarians are able to provide library services to campus students and teachers and that the libraries remain open throughout the school year. Clerical duties should be delegated to paraprofessional aides, and non-library/core subject teaching duties should be assigned to other campus personnel.

The fiscal impact for this recommendation is based on the 2009–10 average salary of a library aide of \$11.08 an hour multiplied by 37.5 hours per week multiplied by 38 weeks a year plus 20 percent fringe benefits or \$15,789 + \$3,158 (\$15,789 x 20%) totaling \$18,947. The annual cost to the district of creating two additional library paraprofessional positions is \$37,894 (\$18,947 x 2) beginning in 2009–10, with a five-year cost of 189,470 (\$37,894 x 5).

LIBRARY COLLECTION SIZE AND AGE (REC. 18)

LVISD’s library collections do not meet the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) recommended standards. Although four of the five LVISD libraries meet the Texas State Library & Archives Commission standards for collection size, the collections are outdated.

The *School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas* defines an *Acceptable* collection as a balanced collection of 9,000 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 16 items per student at the elementary level, at least 14 items per student at the middle school level, and at least 12 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater. A *Recognized* collection is defined as a balanced collection of at least 10,800 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 18 items per student at the elementary level, at least 16 items per student at the middle school level, and at least 14 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater. An *Exemplary* collection is a balanced collection with at least 12,000 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 20 items per student at the elementary level, at least 18 items per student at the middle school level, and at least 16 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater.

La Vega Elementary School’s library collection size meets the *Exemplary* standard. La Vega Primary, La Vega Junior High, and La Vega High School library collection sizes meet the *Acceptable* standard. The collection size of La Vega Intermediate is *Below Standard* by 790 books (**Exhibit 2–38**).

TSLAC’s standard regarding average collection age, has four categories. Libraries falling under the *Exemplary* category maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 11 years. Libraries falling under the *Recognized* category maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 13 years. Libraries falling under the *Acceptable* category maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 15 years. Libraries that are *Below Standard* maintain an overall average age of collection of 15 or more years. LVISD school libraries have collections with an average age of 16 to 20 years; all are *Below Standard*. La Vega Elementary’s average collection age

**EXHIBIT 2–38
LVISD ENROLLMENT, LIBRARY HOLDINGS, BOOKS PER STUDENT, AND COMPARISON TO TSLAC STANDARDS
2009–10**

SCHOOL	AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	NUMBER OF BOOKS	NUMBER OF BOOKS PER STUDENT	TSLAC LIBRARY STATUS
LVPS	393	9,888	25	Acceptable
LVES	651	14,648	22	Exemplary
LVISHPMC	577	8,442	15	Below Standard
LVJHSGDC	413	8,013	19	Acceptable
LVHS	709	8,507	12	Acceptable

SOURCE: LVISD Library Report 2009–2010; LVISD Enrollment for School Year 2009–10, Enrollment as of February 17, 2010. Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas*, 2010.

is 20. La Vega Primary, La Vega Junior High, and La Vega High School collections' average collection age is 18. La Vega Intermediate's average collection age is 16. On average, 64.2 percent of LVISD's library materials are more than 15 years old. The percentage of items that are more than 15 years old ranges from 47 percent at La Vega High School to 90 percent at La Vega Intermediate (**Exhibit 2–39**).

Overall, LVISD has a collection of 49,498 books, more than the 40,226 books it needs to meet the *Acceptable* standard for collection size. Using the 40,226 minimum collection size and comparing it to the 31,780 books which are 15 or more years old, LVISD would need to replace 22,508 library books to meet TSLAC's required standards for age of collection (**Exhibit 2–40**).

LVISD should evaluate library collection sizes and ages and develop strategies to ensure all libraries meet the TSLAC *Acceptable* standard for collection size and age. LVISD may reduce the number of books it needs to replace (23,298) by accessing online databases and may consider book acquisitions through book fairs and business sponsorships.

Should LVISD choose to investigate the cost for purchasing additional materials in order to bring the district's library collections to the *Acceptable* standard for collection size and age, consideration should be given to the average cost of a child or young adult book, which is \$21.36.

EXHIBIT 2–39
LVISD SCHOOL LIBRARIES COLLECTION AND COLLECTIONS AGE
2009–10

SCHOOL	COLLECTION SIZE	PERCENTAGE OF COLLECTION 15 OR MORE YEARS OLD	NUMBER OF ITEMS 15 OR MORE YEARS OLD
LVPS	9,888	72%	7,107
LVES	14,648	59%	8,702
LVISHPMC	8,442	90%	7,619
LVJHSGDC	8,013	54%	4,308
LVHS	8,507	47%	4,044
Total/Average	49,498	64%	31,780

SOURCE: LVISD Library Report, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 2–40
LVISD SCHOOL LIBRARIES COLLECTION SIZE AND
NUMBER OF ITEMS NEEDING REPLACEMENT
2009–10

SCHOOL	COLLECTION SIZE	COLLECTION SIZE TO MEET ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	NUMBER OF BOOKS LESS THAN 15 YEARS OLD	NUMBER OF BOOKS IN NEED OF REPLACEMENT*
LVPS	9,888	6,288	2,781	3,507
LVES	14,648	10,416	5,946	4,470
LVISHPMC	8,442	9,232	823	8,409
LVJHSGDC	8,013	5,782	3,705	2,077
LVHS	8,507	8,508	4,463	4,045
Total	49,498	40,226	17,718	22,508

*Number of books in need of replacement = number of books meeting *Acceptable* standard – number of books less than 15 years old.

SOURCE: LVISD Library Reports, February 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
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY							
8. Review the retention procedures that each school follows and analyze their academic and social/behavior impact on retained students and on the relationship between retention and high school completion.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
9. Ensure the G/T program is a priority districtwide and on all campuses, and monitor and evaluate its implementation from recruitment and identification to service provision.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10. Develop documentation and a tracking system to ensure the required expenditure of special education funds.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
11. Review the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, identifying areas where implementation is lacking or incomplete, and develop procedures to be implemented districtwide that will reinforce appropriate and effective implementation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12. Ensure that the Special Education Department works closely with the campuses in all matters relating to the education of students with disabilities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13. Establish a CTE advisory committee with representatives from local business and industry and involve the advisory committee members in an annual evaluation of its program.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14. Prepare students for participation and success in rigorous, college preparation courses by building up the AP program and developing strategies for improving student performance on college admission tests.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15. Develop and implement a comprehensive dropout prevention and high school completion plan involving all grade levels.	\$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
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY							
16. Develop an automated data collection system on students placed in the La Vega Learning Center DAEP, analyze the data, and evaluate the effectiveness of the DAEP program.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
17. Ensure that all campus libraries maintain consistency with the TSLAC <i>Acceptable</i> staffing levels and are being effectively utilized by students and teachers.	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$189,470)	\$0
18. Evaluate library collection sizes and ages and develop strategies to ensure all libraries meet the TSLAC <i>Acceptable</i> standard for collection size and age.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 2	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$37,894)	(\$189,470)	\$0

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The largest operating expenses incurred by school districts are personnel costs. On average, a school district's payroll cost is 75 to 85 percent of its annual operating budget. For the last four years, La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD) payroll costs have consistently remained between 73 to 76 percent of the district's overall expenditures.

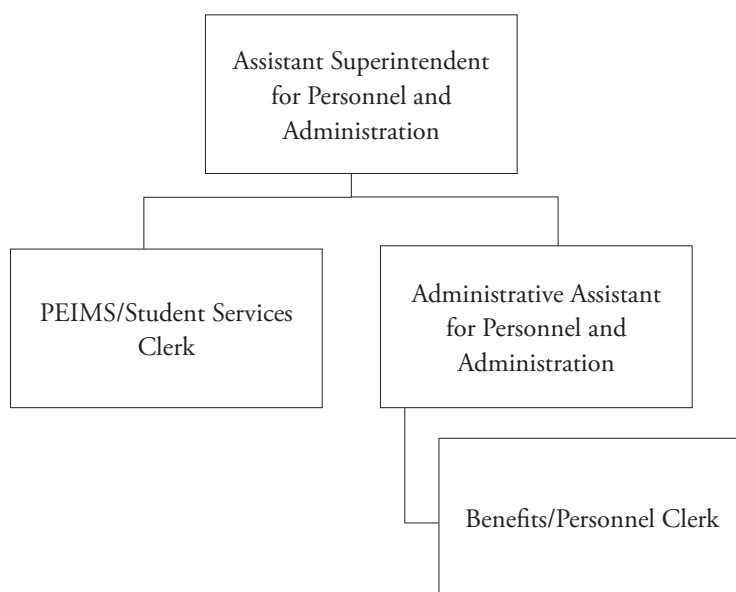
LVISD employs approximately 415 individuals in 2009–10, for a total budgeted salary of \$15 million including benefits. In the 2008–09 school year, payroll costs represented 75 percent of LVISD's general fund budget. The average payroll cost for districts in Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) is about 78 percent of total expenses.

Oversight for all of the district's personnel matters is the responsibility of the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration. **Exhibit 3–1** shows the reporting responsibilities under the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration for 2009–10.

The LVISD Personnel and Administration Department (Personnel) has four budgeted positions, including the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) specialist and has a budget of \$181,430 for Fiscal Year 2010.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration (assistant superintendent) is responsible for the direction and management of district personnel to ensure legally sound and effective personnel management practices and leadership for districtwide planning, administration, policy/governance, and student accounting. This position also serves as a resource to all campus personnel and supports the overall functioning of the district. Personnel support staff includes the administrative assistant for Personnel and Administration (administrative assistant), employee benefits/personnel clerk, and the district PEIMS/student services clerk. The administrative assistant facilitates the efficient operation of the department including supervising the employee benefits/personnel clerk, who maintains the district's insurance benefit program and performs clerical and human resources data entry functions. The PEIMS position works closely with the Finance Department but reports directly to the assistant superintendent and is responsible for collecting, compiling, monitoring, and reporting campus and district attendance/PEIMS data. Personnel processes all district employees throughout the employee life cycle including hiring, retention, promotions, transfer, and termination. Currently, most personnel processes are paper driven but LVISD uses

EXHIBIT 3–1
LVISD PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
2009–10



SOURCE: LVISD Personnel and Administration Department, February 2010.

the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) Human Resources application, which is supported by Region 12 and interfaces with key aspects of district operations including employee data and payroll.

FINDINGS

- The title “Personnel and Administration Department” is outdated and does not reflect the complexities of the functions managed by department staff.
- LVISD’s Personnel and Administration Department lacks specialized human resources training for management and staff, as well as cross-training opportunities for administrative support staff.
- LVISD does not have a comprehensive human resources procedures manual.
- LVISD’s recruiting and retention program is inadequate to attract and maintain the level of quality staff the district needs.
- LVISD has not adopted a comprehensive personnel evaluation instrument to effectively manage the performance appraisal process for non-teaching staff.
- LVISD’s job descriptions are not consistently reflective of responsibilities and tasks actually performed, have incomplete or inconsistent qualifications listed, and may not consistently indicate educational requirements or reflect proper organizational reporting structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 19: Rename the Personnel and Administration Department to Human Resources to accurately reflect the various tasks and responsibilities handled by the department staff.**
- **Recommendation 20: Pursue specialized human resources training and implement cross-training to effectively manage the department and ensure compliance with complex regulations.**
- **Recommendation 21: Develop a comprehensive Human Resources procedures manual to include all processes and procedures conducted within the department.**
- **Recommendation 22: Develop innovative and creative strategies to recruit and retain quality teachers and staff.**

- **Recommendation 23: Develop a comprehensive performance management tool for non-teaching staff that identifies expectations and improvement opportunities.**
- **Recommendation 24: Regularly review and update all district job descriptions to properly reflect educational requirements, reporting structure, and accurate functions or job responsibilities.**

DETAILED FINDINGS

DEPARTMENT NAME (REC. 19)

The title “Personnel and Administration Department” is outdated and does not reflect the complexities of the functions managed by department staff. Most organizations, including school districts, have converted from the title “Personnel Department” to “Human Resources (HR) Department.” While HR and Personnel are basically the same, the term “Personnel Department” is an antiquated term previously associated with a department that processes employee paper transactions. As federal requirements and reporting responsibilities associated with the management and administration of personnel became broader, HR became a more descriptive term for a variety of disciplines such as strategic management, workforce planning, employment, organizational development and training, compensation and benefits, employee and labor relations, and safety and security.

LVISD should rename the Personnel and Administration Department to Human Resources to accurately reflect the various tasks and responsibilities handled by the department staff. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

DEPARTMENT MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF TRAINING (REC. 20)

LVISD’s Personnel and Administration Department lacks specialized human resources training for management and staff, as well as cross-training opportunities for administrative support staff. The Personnel and Administration Department is responsible for handling all of the human resource matters for the district’s 400+ employees. In today’s environment, human resources is increasingly more complex and requires a background or specific training in human resources to plan how instructional and operational staff should be used to full capacity and ensure the district is in compliance with all guidelines and regulations to protect the district from potential litigation. Proper training is needed to ensure

appropriate compliance and to make sure all issues are adequately handled by staff administering Personnel functions.

The current assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration (assistant superintendent) is a tenured educator that retired and was rehired by the district to serve in this capacity. The assistant superintendent is responsible for the direction and management of district personnel to ensure legally sound and effective personnel management practices, including staff hiring, performance evaluations, along with the provision of leadership for districtwide planning, administration, policy/governance, and student accounting. This position also serves as a resource to all campus personnel and supports the overall functioning of the district. The majority of day-to-day Personnel responsibilities are split between two administrative staff positions – one position handles employee benefit matters such as health insurance and retirement plan enrollment and administration, and the other position handles employee communications, personnel records management, salary administration and position control, and regulatory compliance reporting. The PEIMS/student services clerk is also a part of the department, although the responsibilities for this position are more closely aligned with the Finance Department. While the current administrative staff have been in the department for more than 10 years, it is still important that these positions also receive specialized human resources training to ensure their respective functions are properly performed and all compliance matters are adequately addressed.

Personnel and Administration Department staff does receive periodic training through Region 12, and one of the administrative staff positions has been certified as a Texas School Business Specialist through the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO). The district supports providing continuing professional training for both staff, whenever possible.

To effectively manage the human resources function, many organizations require prospective human resources specialists to take courses in compensation, recruitment, training and development, and performance appraisal, as well as courses in principles of management, organizational structure, and industrial psychology. Other courses often required include business administration, public administration, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and statistics. Core Personnel responsibilities in any organization include:

- Complying with federal and state employment regulations;
- Conducting salary and benefit surveys and developing competitive salary schedules and benefits packages;
- Administering the approved salary and benefits system;
- Maintaining the district's position control data;
- Developing and assisting with updating job descriptions;
- Updating the employee handbook;
- Developing and maintaining staffing formulas;
- Administering the employee grievance process;
- Processing Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Office for Civil Rights (OCR) complaints;
- Facilitating the employee performance appraisal process;
- Recruiting qualified employment candidates;
- Establishing and maintaining employee records;
- Administering and monitoring the teacher certification and permit process;
- Issuing contracts, letters of assurance, and non-renewals;
- Hiring, training, and placing new employees and substitute teachers; and
- Preparing required state reports.

Two sources for individuals who do not have a human resources background to obtain skills include attainment of human resource certification by either the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) or the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO). SHRM offers certification courses in a variety of core human resources topics. These courses include human resources development orientation, global HR, total rewards compensation, benefits, workforce planning/employment, personal/professional growth/development, risk management, and developing a generalist perspective. The certification courses are available at seminars around the country, during regional conferences, or by requesting a local on-site training session. Attendance at the regional conference(s) could provide a cost effective

source of various training sessions for school districts because of the multiple seminar choices available. The non-member conference fee is approximately \$885 per person and the 2010 conference is to be in Ft. Worth, Texas. Alternatively, SHRM offers online training in various HR disciplines for \$64.95 per course that districts could participate in. Costs for annual SHRM training would be \$1,820 ((\$885 per annual conference + \$805 travel costs) and continuing online training of \$130 (\$64.95 x 2 courses)).

Because school district administrative staff perform functions at a higher level than basic clerical type administration, they also need to receive specialized human resources training. TASBO offers a Certified Texas School Business Specialist designation that could be earned by Personnel staff. Certification status is effective for three years as long as the annual continuing education requirement is met. The certification cost for one staff person, as a TASBO member, would be \$1,020 (application fee of \$40 plus the seven required certification courses at \$140 each (\$980)). Additional seminars and workshops for both staff annually would be \$960 (two webinars/two times per year at \$60 for each and two workshops/two times per year at \$180 for each for both staff members two times per year).

Cross-training opportunities provide an additional way to ensure department staff are adequately prepared to effectively handle the human resource responsibilities for a district and that all functions are adequately covered if an administrative staff member cannot perform their responsibilities on a temporary basis or for an extended period of time. San Elizario ISD's HR Department increases sustainability and improves its overall effectiveness and efficiency by cross-training its staff. They rotate reporting responsibilities in an effort to expand the department's effectiveness as well as strengthen each employee's understanding of the process and most importantly, to give each employee professional growth opportunities. Cross-training created a positive department climate and improved the director's confidence in their competence.

LVISD Personnel and Administration Department staff should actively pursue specialized human resources training and implement cross-training to effectively manage the department and ensure compliance with complex regulations. It is important for LVISD to regularly provide necessary training for all staff levels and update job titles and descriptions to accurately reflect current responsibilities and experience requirements for all district positions. While HR certification is not required to perform all the functions

necessary to effectively manage the department, it is suggested that at least one person in the department have a background or training in human resources and stays current on all the changing global regulations and procedures. Educational and training requirements should be properly aligned with key position responsibilities. A review of staff training records noted that department staff regularly attends Region 12 or Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) training in the areas of RSCCC functionality or basic clerical functions, like employee service records, maintaining personnel records, and tools for secretaries.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is an annual training cost for department staff of \$3,800 for the first two years ((\$1,820 conference attendance + \$1,020 certification cost for one staff member) + \$960 additional annual training for both staff) while administrative staff is earning the TASBO certification, and \$2,780 per year thereafter (\$1,820 conference attendance for one staff member + \$960 additional annual training for both staff). In addition to certification, this would provide workshops and webinars for each staff person each year. By allowing only one staff member to become certified each year the initial cost impact of this recommendation is minimized.

The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration should also develop a plan for cross-training staff. While the current LVISD Personnel structure splits functions between only two people, rotating responsibilities semi-annually would challenge each staff person, including the assistant superintendent, and would open lines of communication and ensure the department has a sufficient back up plan in case a staff member had to be out for a significant time period.

HUMAN RESOURCES PROCEDURES MANUAL (REC. 21)

LVISD does not have a comprehensive human resources procedures manual. Loss of an organization's institutional knowledge is protected by ensuring that procedures are well-written and accurately documented. A comprehensive HR procedure manual is an invaluable tool to ensure all key processes are routinely performed and institutional or historical department knowledge is not lost if there are any future staff changes.

The district uses Region 12's manual as a reference for using the RSCCC HR modules, which includes system screen prints and narratives. However, the Region 12 manual does not contain complete or detailed descriptions of who is responsible or how to perform daily tasks. As a result, new

employees have no guide to perform daily human resource functions effectively if current staff are not available to train them.

Personnel employees perform their daily functions based on over ten years of experience in their current positions, not as a result of instructions from a departmental procedures manual. Because of the staff longevity, they are familiar with the daily tasks necessary to perform the basic requirements of their jobs. However, without a comprehensive or detailed procedures manual, departmental operational effectiveness could be severely impacted if one or both of the current staff were not available to train their successors.

LVISD has an effective employee handbook, but it is no substitute for a comprehensive human resources procedures manual that would capture all HR processes and procedures as well as ensure retention of institutional knowledge.

An effective procedures manual should serve as a guide for implementing district policies, including the personnel evaluation process. The human resource manual should contain human resource and district policies and administrative procedures, along with examples of required human resource department forms. Procedure manuals are a source of knowledge transfer and assist in training employees. A detailed administrative procedure manual helps new employees learn the processes and serves as a reference for all current and future department employees. Adherence to these processes can also serve as part of the performance evaluation tool in that employees can be partially evaluated based upon their adherence to procedures.

An effective procedures manual should also include revision dates and the name and signature of the person who reviewed or revised the specific section. This information allows users to determine the timeliness and accuracy of the administrative information.

The district should develop a comprehensive Human Resources procedures manual to include all processes and procedures conducted within the department. The manual should describe in detail all the services performed by the department, including but not limited to a timeline for processing personnel transactions, procedures for hiring, requirements for completing and maintaining personnel files, certification requirements, details on district benefits and leave policies, substitute hiring and monitoring, staffing guidelines, and salaries schedules. Copies of all HR hiring, leave, and termination forms should be included in the

manual, with a copy of the manual distributed to all department staff as a desk reference.

Initiation of the manual should begin with the assistant superintendent of Personnel and Administration developing an outline of all HR processes and procedures that should be included in the manual. Then each staff member should be assigned to document in detail their respective processes and step-by-step daily procedures. Each employee should start keeping a log of daily activities to identify potential additional processes that should be included in the manual. Once all HR processes and procedures are thoroughly documented, the manual should be reviewed and approved by the assistant superintendent before it is printed and distributed to department personnel. The manual should be completed within the next twelve months. Then subsequently, the manual should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as needed. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

STAFF RECRUITING AND RETENTION (REC. 22)

LVISD's recruiting and retention program is inadequate to attract and maintain the level of quality staff the district needs. As a result, ineffective approaches to staff recruiting and retention impacts academic effectiveness, which contributes to lower student performance and academic achievement.

Interviews with LVISD staff and board members reveal that the district has a problem recruiting and retaining teachers, which negatively impacts the district's ability to fulfill its mission. For example, LVISD is operating under a waiver from the Texas Education Agency for the staffing requirements for its Bilingual Education Program because it has been unsuccessful in recruiting a sufficient number of bilingual teachers. Fortunately, the district has been able to address this issue by providing incentives for its teachers to become English as a Second Language (ESL) certified.

Another example of recruiting and retention program difficulties is diversity. Currently, the student population in the district is predominately minority (about 73 percent), and the teachers are predominately White (about 79 percent). LVISD's recruiting program has been unable to find sufficient minority individuals for employment in the district to better align the staff ethnicity to that of the students. Diversity in recruiting is important to provide students with the opportunity to learn from teachers who represent their diverse cultural backgrounds.

Several factors contribute to LVISD’s recruiting and retention difficulties. First, smaller districts, like LVISD, are challenged with recruiting, as they must compete against larger districts or districts with lower economically disadvantaged or at-risk populations.

Second, the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration indicated that a key factor affecting recruiting and retention is salaries. **Exhibit 3–2** compares teacher salaries in LVISD with surrounding districts, based on the assistant superintendent’s salary schedule for area school districts. LVISD is compared to five neighboring districts: Waco ISD, China Spring ISD, Connally ISD, Midway ISD, and Robinson ISD. LVISD’s teacher salary figures are for 2010–11 and were approved by the board in May 2010. LVISD has raised teacher salaries in order to compete with area school districts, and the district’s teacher salaries fall near the middle when compared to these neighboring districts.

LVISD’s challenges with recruiting and retention are heightened by high teacher turnover rates, which were over 20 percent in 2006–07 and 2007–08 compared to a state average of 16 and 15 percent, respectively. **Exhibit 3–3** presents LVISD teacher turnover rates compared to state averages from 2005–06 through 2008–09.

LVISD’s recruiting and retention program relies on the traditional tools for recruiting teachers, such as college job fairs. The district has not hosted its own job fair because it feels that it would be attended by the same applicants who attend the Region 12 job fair each year. LVISD has attended job fairs in Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio in years past and gotten no responses. Moreover, the district struggles to find innovative methods to recruit staff at all levels with the necessary qualifications and experience, but in some areas—such as science, math, and bilingual—there is a shortage across the state. **Exhibit 3–4** lists the job fairs the district has participated in over the last three years.

Effective recruitment and retention programs develop innovative strategies to recruit and retain qualified staff. Culberson County-Allamore ISD also promotes the “grow your own” program as a best practice to filling the need for

**EXHIBIT 3–2
TEACHER SALARIES BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
LVISD AND NEIGHBORING DISTRICTS**

	LVISD	NEIGHBORING DISTRICTS					REGION 12	STATE
		CHINA SPRING	CONNALLY	MIDWAY	WACO	ROBINSON		
Beginning teachers	\$37,000	\$32,210	\$36,000	\$40,000	\$39,250	\$35,000	\$36,476	\$40,372
1–5 yrs experience	\$38,800	\$34,362	\$37,800	\$41,500	\$40,500	\$36,450	\$38,149	\$42,463
6–10 yrs experience	\$41,800	\$39,870	\$40,800	\$44,000	\$43,000	\$38,750	\$41,234	\$45,035
11–20 yrs experience	\$46,300	\$46,243	\$45,300	\$47,750	\$46,870	\$44,200	\$46,033	\$49,083

NOTE: Figures may represent latest salary amounts or proposed salary amounts for neighboring districts, according to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Administration.

SOURCE: LVISD Personnel and Administration Department, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Administration’s salary schedule for area school districts, May 2010.

**EXHIBIT 3–3
LVISD AND STATE TEACHER TURNOVER RATE
2005–06 THROUGH 2008–09**

	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
LVISD teachers	14.8%	28.4%	23.0%	17.6%
Texas teachers	14.6%	15.6%	15.2%	14.7%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2005–06 through 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 3–4
LVISD ATTENDED JOB FAIRS
2007 THROUGH 2009**

	2007	2008	2009
Baylor University	X	X	X
University of Mary–Hardin Baylor		X	X
Tarleton State University	X	X	X
University of Texas at San Antonio		X	
Stephen F. Austin University		X	X
Region 12	X	X	X

SOURCE: LVISD Personnel Department, February 2010.

staff in small and rural districts. The premise of this program is that local people are rooted in the community so they are more likely to remain in the community, so if districts can recruit local individuals they are more likely to retain them. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board offers tuition exemptions for paraprofessionals to transition into teaching after taking appropriate college courses through the Certified Educational Aide Exemption Program. The district reported that it does participate in this type of “grow your own” program and has hired at least two teacher aides who have become full-time certified teachers.

Spring ISD has an elaborate recruiting program including involving principals in the recruiting process, screening of all applicants by the Personnel Services staff, and a student teacher program that involves contracts with nine universities and special arrangements with several others. District principals even attend an annual workshop to prepare them to participate in the recruitment process.

Clear Creek ISD attends local, statewide, and out-of-state job fairs. The district considers the location, number of potential teacher applicants graduating from the university program and cost of the job fair to determine participation. Staffing directors measure the effectiveness and success of attending various job fairs by evaluating the number of teachers hired by location each year.

LVISD should develop innovative and creative strategies to recruit and retain quality teachers and staff. A variety of approaches are available. For example, to improve staff diversity, LVISD should participate in both local and regional efforts to recruit qualified minority staff, including continuing efforts to develop qualified staff from within the district. LVISD is in close proximity to Baylor University, Tarleton State University, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, the University of Texas at Austin, and Texas A&M University. Each of these institutions may have established programs that will assist the district in promoting their future educator program. Recruiting at colleges and universities in the state that have predominantly minority populations is another possibility that the district can continue to pursue.

Other innovative strategies the district should explore to strengthen its recruiting and retention program include:

- Develop an internal pipeline for promoting staff into vacant teacher and administrative staff positions.
- Sponsor a local job fair, co-sponsored by the chamber or prominent local businesses, to provide LVISD the

opportunity to showcase the positive advantages of accepting employment with the district.

- Build strong relationships with departments of education at selected colleges and universities known for the quality of their teacher preparation programs.
- Nurture current relationships with regional education service centers as teacher and staff referral sources.
- Develop attractive and informative flyers or brochures to distribute at selected universities, colleges, and regional education service centers.
- Track recruiting efforts by identifying the source of new teachers and staff.
- Conduct analyses of recruiting functions and job fairs by tracking the number of employment applications received.
- Maintain information about successful hires such as how and from where they were recruited, how long they stayed with the district, and why they left.
- Form a Human Resources advisory committee consisting of campus administrators, teachers, auxiliary staff and community members to assist with developing a comprehensive retention plan for the district.
- Conduct face-to-face exit surveys as part of the exit process and analyze the feedback.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PERSONNEL EVALUATION INSTRUMENT (REC. 23)

LVISD has not adopted a comprehensive personnel evaluation instrument to effectively manage the performance appraisal process for non-teaching staff. An effective performance evaluation instrument enables the district to provide constructive feedback and measure professional growth. Without an effective tool, LVISD forgoes the benefits of having a document to serve as a feedback mechanism for employees to elicit behavior change and relay employee expectations.

Currently, each LVISD employee receives a performance appraisal on an annual basis. LVISD uses different performance evaluation instruments for teachers and non-teachers. Teachers are evaluated using two electronic tools: Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS),

which assesses their contribution to the improvement of academic performance of all students on campus, and 360 walkthroughs, which are conducted by campus and district administrative staff who regularly observe and evaluate the classroom teachers.

The manual evaluation instrument used for non-teachers includes a self-evaluation along with the independent supervisor evaluation. Non-teachers include all district staff that do not have classroom responsibilities, such as central administration staff, directors, and child nutrition staff. The self evaluation is divided into five sections: General Effectiveness, Position Specific Effectiveness, Areas of Strength, Areas of Concern, and Goal Setting. The supervisor's independent evaluation asks the same General Effectiveness and Position Specific Effectiveness questions, and it provides spaces for the employee to make optional comments, has Appraiser Comments (which addresses employee areas of strengths and concerns), and then provides an Overall Rating of the Employee's Performance. The rating scale for the General Effectiveness, Position Specific Effectiveness, and Overall Rating is as follows:

- Clearly outstanding (CO);
- Exceeds expectations (EE);
- Meets expectations (ME);
- Below expectations (BE);
- Unsatisfactory (U); and
- Not applicable (NA)—this is not an available option for the Overall Rating.

On the self-evaluation form, the employee is required to list three greatest areas of strengths, three greatest areas of concerns, and set goals for the upcoming appraisal period. Neither the self-evaluation nor the supervisor evaluation specifically address whether the goals from the prior year were met as part of the evaluation rating process. As this process is completed manually on two independent two-page documents, it is challenging to track, measure, or document follow-up discussions or any resolution of corrective actions which are ultimately tied to an individual's performance expectations.

Many districts use performance standards to identify specific criteria for measuring job performance and provide employees with a clear understanding of acceptable performance and expectations. Performance standards also allow for objective evaluations that can mitigate potential

litigation. Effective performance standards describe performance expectations in terms of timeliness, cost, and quality; specify the acceptable margin for error; and state conditions under which the performance is to be accomplished or assessed. Good performance standards are realistic, specific, measurable, and consistent with district goals.

Evaluating employee performance is a time consuming process that should benefit both the employee and the employer. Many districts automate the performance appraisal process to reduce the time involved and enhance the value of appraisal.

LVISD should develop a comprehensive performance management tool for non-teaching staff that identifies expectations and improvement opportunities. The performance appraisal systems should be designed to accomplish the following:

- maintain or improve employee job satisfaction and morale by letting employees know that their supervisor is interested in their job progress and personal development;
- serve as a guide for planning of further training;
- assure thoughtful opinion of an employee's performance throughout the period in relation to specific goals and assigned tasks;
- provide assistance in determining and recording special skills and capabilities;
- assist in planning personnel moves that will best utilize each employee's capabilities;
- provide an opportunity for each employee to discuss job problems and interests with their supervisor; and
- provide substantiating information to support wage adjustments, promotions, disciplinary action, or termination.

The performance expectations documented during the annual review should be in measurable terms that are collaboratively set by the supervisor and employee, identify developmental activities to achieve, and provide comments from the supervisor and employee. Performance measures should be related not only to the department but also to the achievement of district goals and objectives. Supervisors should be trained in-house on how to establish measurable expectations and how to help employees identify personal development goals.

If the district wanted to automate the process, Personnel staff, with the assistance of the Information Technology (IT) Department, could automate the employee performance evaluation instrument to include position specific criteria to effectively measure professional growth. To automate the evaluation process, LVISD could either upload their current instrument to a secure intranet site or purchase a web-based, customizable software package. Personnel evaluation software from outside vendors usually charge subscribers either a monthly or annual fee to implement their web-based performance evaluation package. IT's involvement in this process would ensure that the district's technology platform could support either option and assist with any necessary product or software installation.

An effective performance instrument would reduce the stress of completing the annual reviews thus providing enhanced feedback, would allow staff to track progress towards goals, and even allow management to periodically update a note section for review later.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 24)

LVISD's job descriptions are not consistently reflective of responsibilities and tasks actually performed, have incomplete or inconsistent qualifications listed, and may not consistently indicate educational requirements or reflect proper organizational reporting structure. Effective job descriptions can be a key component of the personnel evaluation process and can serve as a metric for promotion. Personnel has responsibility for developing and maintaining district job descriptions. However, the district has no systematic review or process for updating job descriptions, so they may not accurately reflect the functions being performed. Some descriptions have not been reviewed or updated in more than ten years.

Job descriptions are the basis for informing individuals of job requirements and should be used to ensure that individuals hired meet minimum requirements. Job descriptions help current employees understand the tasks expected of their position and provide a basis for performance evaluations and salary structure. As such, all job descriptions should be developed to include any educational requirements appropriate for the position.

The review of LVISD job descriptions revealed inconsistencies in the required educational qualifications section. Some job descriptions did not have the required qualifications listed, and some subordinate positions had a minimum education requirement even though the supervisory position had no

education listed. For example, district positions without educational requirements indicated on the job description are as follows:

- Head Custodian;
- General Maintenance I and II (approved by the board in 2002);
- Cafeteria Manager; and
- Lead Teacher Early Childhood Center.

Other inconsistencies observed include more than one copy of the same job description for the same position and incorrect titles for direct reporting relationships. For example, the district provided two job descriptions for the administrative assistant for Personnel and Administration. One was approved by the Board in May 1998, and the other was approved in August 1999. There were slight changes to the major responsibilities and duties, so the previous version should have been replaced. Additionally, both job descriptions still listed supervision of the administrative secretary I as a responsibility, although that position does not exist within the department. The job descriptions also indicated that the position reports to the director of Personnel and Administration or executive director of Personnel and Administration, when in fact the position reports to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration.

The Personnel Department should regularly review and update all job descriptions to properly reflect educational requirements, reporting structure, and accurate functions or job responsibilities. Additionally, if staff resources are not available to consistently maintain the district's job descriptions, LVISD could utilize TASB membership services to assist with maintaining the job descriptions or even employee handbook updates. This effort would provide objectivity and ensure that job descriptions reflect current industry standards for required education, skills, and qualifications.

Accurate job descriptions should be available for supervisors and employees to regularly review to assess or acquire additional unique skills and to provide for an independent evaluation of the responsibilities and elimination of any duplicative tasks. This recommendation will also help ensure that the district is hiring individuals best qualified to perform the tasks traditionally associated with the position. Upon review, if there is an educational or experience discrepancy, current employees could be grandfathered into meeting the necessary requirements for the position currently held or be

provided the opportunity to obtain the education or expertise without job dismissal.

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
CHAPTER 3: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT								
19.	Rename the Personnel and Administration Department to Human Resources to accurately reflect the various tasks and responsibilities handled by the department staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
20.	Pursue specialized human resources training and implement cross-training to effectively manage the department and ensure compliance with complex regulations.	(\$3,800)	(\$3,800)	(\$2,780)	(\$2,780)	(\$2,780)	(\$15,940)	\$0
21.	Develop a comprehensive Human Resources procedures manual to include all processes and procedures conducted within the department.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
22.	Develop innovative and creative strategies to recruit and retain quality teachers and staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
23.	Develop a comprehensive performance management tool for non-teaching staff that identifies expectations and improvement opportunities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
24.	Regularly review and update all job descriptions to properly reflect educational requirements, reporting structure, and accurate functions or job responsibilities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 3		(\$3,800)	(\$3,800)	(\$2,780)	(\$2,780)	(\$2,780)	(\$15,940)	\$0

CHAPTER 4

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE, AND MANAGEMENT

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 4. FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE, AND MANAGEMENT

Facilities construction, use, and management operations must function efficiently and effectively to properly support a school district in accomplishing its mission of educating children. Strategic planning activities must be performed under clearly defined policies, procedures, and practices that can be adapted to accommodate changes. School facilities must be adequately planned and funded to create an environment that supports educational programs. Preventive maintenance and timely repairs should be performed to ensure that facilities are in optimum working order and provide an atmosphere conducive for learning. Custodial operations should provide for the general cleanliness and daily upkeep of facilities. Grounds operations should ensure that the schoolyards are properly groomed and maintained. In addition, an energy management program focused on monitoring energy costs and usage along with establishing energy conservation practices should be implemented. Typical facility organizations actively manage construction and renovation projects, as well.

La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD) facilities include five schools with 16 portables, an administration building, a transportation center, a learning center consisting of five buildings, a family resource center, and four maintenance buildings. These facilities encompass 531,441 square feet of space and house approximately 2,800 students and 415 employees. La Vega High School (LVHS) was built in 1984. La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC) was constructed in 2000, and La Vega Primary School (LVPS) and La Vega Elementary School (LVES) were constructed in 2006. La Vega Intermediate School H. G. Miles Campus (LVISHGMC) was built in the 1960's and is scheduled for replacement in 2011.

Exhibit 4–1 presents the district's building inventory.

Of the district's approximately 415 employees, 46 staff comprise the Maintenance Department (Maintenance) which oversees facilities maintenance and custodial operations. The Maintenance Department reports to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration. **Exhibit 4–2** displays LVISD's organization for the Maintenance Department for 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 4–1 LVISD BUILDING INVENTORY 2009–10

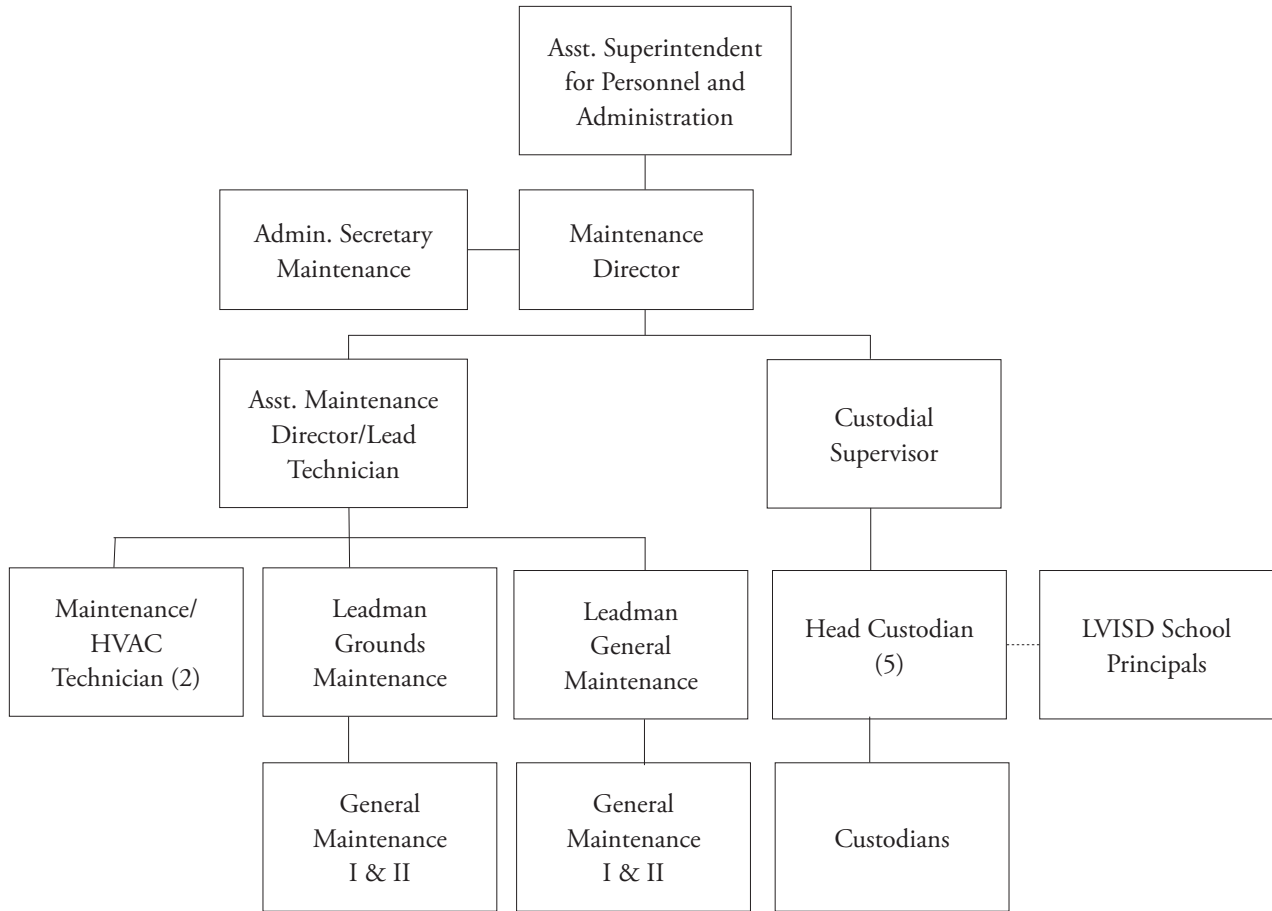
FACILITY	YEAR BUILT	GROSS SQUARE FEET (GSF)
La Vega Primary School (LVPS)	2006	66,013
La Vega Elementary School (LVES)	2006	84,387
La Vega Intermediate School H.G. Miles Campus (LVISHGMC) including 11 Portables and 1 Storage Building	1965	85,460
La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC)	2000	88,735
La Vega High School (LVHS) including 3 Portables (109,668)	1984	109,668
LVHS Athletics/Outbuildings	1984	18,887
Administration Building	1962	4,250
La Vega Transportation Center including 2 Portables		3,786
La Vega Learning Center Buildings A, B, C, D, and F	1950s	39,259
La Vega Family Resource Center	1993	13,320
La Vega Maintenance Buildings A, C, D, and E		17,676
Total Square Footage		531,441

SOURCE: LVISD, February 2010.

Exhibit 4–3 provides an overview of the district's enrollment trend. LVISD's enrollment has slightly increased annually since 2006–07.

Exhibit 4–4 provides a summary of LVISD's maintenance and operations expenses, which average about 11 percent of the district's total operating expenditures.

**EXHIBIT 4-2
LVISD MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
2009-10**



SOURCE: LVISD Maintenance Department, February 2010.

**EXHIBIT 4-3
LVISD ENROLLMENT TREND BY SCHOOL
2004-05 THROUGH 2008-09**

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVELS	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
LVPS	Pre-K-K	343	345	385	373	360
LVES	1-3	600	628	668	686	688
LVISHGMC	4-6	582	576	639	605	609
LVJHSGDC	7-8	425	391	382	437	407
LVHS	9-12	639	630	621	650	714
TOTAL		2,589	2,570	2,695	2,751	2,778
Change			(0.73%)	4.86%	2.08%	0.98%

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

**EXHIBIT 4-4
LVISD SUMMARY OF MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES
2004-05 THROUGH 2008-09**

FISCAL YEAR	PLANT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES	PERCENT OF TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES
2008-09	\$2,413,388	11.4%
2007-08	\$2,441,588	11.3%
2006-07	\$2,279,624	10.6%
2005-06	\$2,381,940	10.4%
2004-05	\$2,050,361	9.5%

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LVISD’s three new campus buildings are uniquely designed with a catwalk above the ceiling to house air conditioning units and other equipment, allowing Maintenance to make repairs without disruptions to classroom sessions or needing access to hallways.
- LVISD’s Maintenance Department has achieved high satisfaction levels for maintenance operations with district stakeholders.

FINDINGS

- LVISD’s Maintenance director does not have a direct reporting relationship to one individual on the district’s executive leadership team.
- The Maintenance director does not have a defined role regarding the construction and renovation of new facilities.
- LVISD’s Maintenance Department does not utilize a staffing allocation model to ensure that staffing levels are appropriate.
- LVISD lacks a comprehensive long-range facility master plan or documented planning process to provide for future needs.
- LVISD has not developed a space utilization plan to optimize existing classroom and building space.
- LVISD lacks policies and procedures for the maintenance, custodial, and grounds functions.
- LVISD lacks a facilities condition assessment (FCA) program or deferred maintenance plan to effectively assess facility conditions, identify deferred

maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the existing facilities.

- LVISD has not documented or implemented a preventive maintenance program for its facilities and vehicles.
- The Maintenance Department does not have an automated work order system to help prioritize and track its work orders electronically.
- LVISD has not developed material standards for regular maintenance items such as plumbing parts, carpet, wall coverings, and light fixtures that are used in standard building renovations.
- LVISD lacks individual staff training plans for all Maintenance Department employees.
- LVISD lacks a process to regularly conduct cost comparisons and evaluate outsourcing opportunities.
- LVISD has not established and documented an energy management program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 25: Realign the organizational structure and clearly define the reporting responsibility for the Maintenance director.**
- **Recommendation 26: Assign the Maintenance director responsibility for oversight of construction and renovation projects.**
- **Recommendation 27: Develop and implement a staffing allocation model for both maintenance and custodial staff and staff district facilities accordingly.**
- **Recommendation 28: Develop a long-range facility master plan.**
- **Recommendation 29: Develop a space utilization plan to optimize existing classroom and building space.**
- **Recommendation 30: Develop a department policies and procedures manual which addresses the maintenance, custodial, and grounds functions.**
- **Recommendation 31: Implement a formal facility condition assessment (FCA) program to effectively assess facility conditions, identify deferred**

maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the existing facilities.

- **Recommendation 32: Develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district’s facilities and vehicles.**
- **Recommendation 33: Implement an automated work order system to process, prioritize, and analyze work order requests.**
- **Recommendation 34: Develop material standards for items such as plumbing parts, carpet, wall coverings, and light fixtures that are used in building construction and renovation.**
- **Recommendation 35: Develop individual staff training plans for all Maintenance Department employees.**
- **Recommendation 36: Implement a process to perform regularly scheduled cost/benefit analysis of in-house operations versus contracted services.**
- **Recommendation 37: Develop a formal energy management program.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

UNIQUE CATWALK DESIGN FOR EQUIPMENT

LVISD’s three new campus buildings are uniquely designed with a catwalk above the ceiling to house air conditioning units and other equipment, allowing Maintenance to make repairs without disruptions to classroom sessions or needing access to hallways. The Maintenance Department staff visited a campus at Bruceville ISD (BISD) constructed with this design and it was recommended to LVISD’s construction contractor. This system was designed and installed in the following school buildings: LVES (2006), LVPS (2006), and LVJHSGDC (2000). The review team accessed the area by entering the stairwell in the custodian’s office and observed

the efficient layout with access to air conditioning units, water heaters, electrical panels, and fresh air handlers.

HIGH SATISFACTION LEVELS FOR MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

LVISD’s Maintenance Department has achieved high satisfaction levels for maintenance operations with district stakeholders. LVISD’s stakeholder survey results show that the district’s school management (principals and assistant principals), district administration, and teachers felt that the maintenance function performs high quality work with good response times for day-to-day maintenance needs.

Exhibit 4–5 indicates that 90 percent of principals and assistant principals, 91 percent of teachers, and 82 percent of administrative and support staff responding to the survey felt that LVISD’s school facilities are clean.

Exhibit 4–6 shows that 80 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 79 percent of teachers, administrative, and support staff responding to the survey felt that LVISD school buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.

Exhibit 4–7 shows that 80 percent of principals and assistant principals, 75 percent of teachers, and 79 percent of administrative and support staff responding to the survey felt that repairs are made to LVISD school buildings in a timely manner.

Exhibit 4–8 shows that 100 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 85 percent of teachers, administrative, and support staff responding to the survey felt that emergency maintenance situations are handled promptly.

Exhibit 4–9 shows that 100 percent of principals and assistant principals responding to the survey felt that procedures for submitting work orders are clearly defined.

Providing timely, quality facility maintenance and cleaning services for LVISD schools, supports the goal for cost-effective maintenance operations and prolonging the functionality of its buildings.

**EXHIBIT 4–5
LVISD SURVEY QUESTION: SCHOOLS ARE CLEAN**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Principals/Assistant Principals	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
Teachers	28%	63%	5%	3%	1%
Administrative & Support Staff	32%	50%	13%	5%	0%

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 4–6**LVISD SURVEY QUESTION:****BUILDINGS ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED IN A TIMELY MANNER**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Principals/Assistant Principals	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%
Teachers	26%	53%	11%	9%	1%
Administrative & Support Staff	29%	50%	13%	7%	1%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 4–7**LVISD SURVEY QUESTION: REPAIRS ARE MADE IN A TIMELY MANNER**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Principals/Assistant Principals	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%
Teachers	21%	54%	14%	10%	1%
Administrative & Support Staff	28%	51%	13%	8%	0%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 4–8**LVISD SURVEY QUESTION: EMERGENCY MAINTENANCE IS HANDLED PROMPTLY**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Principals/Assistant Principals	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
Teachers	30%	55%	11%	3%	1%
Administrative & Support Staff	30%	55%	13%	2%	0%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 4–9**LVISD SURVEY QUESTION:****PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING WORK ORDERS ARE CLEARLY DEFINED**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Principals/Assistant Principals	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

DETAILED FINDINGS**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTING STRUCTURE (REC. 25)**

LVISD's Maintenance director (director) does not have a direct reporting relationship to one individual on the district's executive leadership team. Based on the district's organization chart (**Exhibit 4–2**) the position reports directly and operationally to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration (assistant superintendent). Although the director reports to the assistant superintendent, the director of Finance conducts the director's performance evaluation. Depending on the nature of the issue, the director may communicate and make requests to the assistant superintendent or the director of Finance. Due to unclear reporting responsibilities, an inefficient reporting structure

has been created; distinct lines of authority are necessary to enhance communication.

Under the current organizational structure, no monthly reports of maintenance activities and goals, including performance measures are required. Performance measures are beneficial to determine if Maintenance is on target with administration's expectations. Setting goals and documenting results and accomplishments in monthly or periodic reports will enhance the administration's awareness of maintenance operations and the department's effectiveness. For example, if 10 work orders were submitted in a month and only one was completed, a reporting mechanism would trigger immediate recognition of a potential problem.

LVISD should realign the organizational structure and clearly define the reporting responsibility for the Maintenance Director. With the proposed organization structure recommended in Chapter 1, District Management and Community Involvement (Recommendation 1), the Maintenance director should report directly to the assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations who will be responsible for all of the operational areas of the district. This restructuring will provide a single source reporting relationship to allow Maintenance to perform more effectively. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT (REC. 26)

The Maintenance director does not have a defined role regarding the construction and renovation of new facilities. The district's Executive Leadership Team administers facility construction and renovation projects while Maintenance's expertise and knowledge is not used for capital projects; the director is only responsible for the maintenance function as related to the operation of current district facilities. LVISD's Executive Leadership Team (E-Team)—consisting of the superintendent, assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, and the director of Finance—administers school construction bond programs and renovation projects, oversees the district's architect in the development of specifications for facilities administration of construction contracts, and monitors the construction process.

The E-Team does not formally include the Maintenance director in district capital improvement and construction efforts. Consequently, the district's facilities projects lack the ongoing input of Maintenance management which could help reduce the cost to operate and maintain facilities. Although the E-Team may meet regularly with the architect and contract construction team, the Maintenance director is not an official and ongoing member of the capital improvement planning and construction committee. As a result, the Maintenance staff is not involved in critical construction planning or pre-occupancy and post-occupancy building evaluations. Moreover, they are not involved with change orders or punch-lists, which identify and correct existing and potential malfunctions in equipment, component parts, equipment installations, construction flaws, and other consequences of poor contractor performance that affect maintenance operations. Early detection of defective equipment, poor craftsmanship, and faulty installation is critical to avoid costly equipment, installation, and repair costs before or immediately after occupancy.

Essentially, Maintenance staff becomes directly involved with newly constructed or renovated schools after the fact when equipment malfunctions or facilities need repairs. Past experiences with faulty construction and craftsmanship underscore the need to include maintenance and staff in construction and capital improvement planning and oversight activities. For example, LVJHSGDC was constructed in 2000, and according to district management there were defects in the foundation that have expanded to severe cracks in the foundation and flooring at present. Also, district management indicated that the contractor improperly painted a section of the roof which eventually partially voided the district's roof warranty. Including the Maintenance Department in the oversight role of capital improvement and construction efforts could minimize the risk of such costly occurrences in the future.

In November 2009, a bond election passed for \$24.4 million for the purpose of building a new intermediate school for \$19 million, four science labs at La Vega High School (LVHS), and the expansion of the LVHS library, kitchen, and commons area. Although malfunctions sometimes occur during building construction, effective quality controls require the involvement of Maintenance staff to prevent added costs. With the recent passing of the new bonds, the timely involvement of Maintenance staff to directly observe the construction, equipment, and installation might preclude issues before the district takes occupancy of the future new buildings or immediately upon taking occupancy. A summary of the district's bond history from 1999 through 2008 is displayed in **Exhibit 4-10**.

A summary of the November 2009 bond election approved by LVISD voters is displayed in **Exhibit 4-11**.

Maintenance and energy management can provide critical support services for construction planning, pre-construction, construction, post-construction, pre-occupancy, and post-occupancy phases of capital improvement activities. Change orders submitted to the contractor during critical phases of the construction effort can be enhanced by the knowledge and direct experience found within the Maintenance Department. The timely and accurate submission of change orders that identify and correct flaws before initiating the next phase of construction can help prevent delays in the construction process and flaws that may surface after equipment and construction warranties expire.

LVISD should assign the Maintenance director responsibility for oversight of construction and renovation projects. The

**EXHIBIT 4–10
LVISD BOND HISTORY
1999 THROUGH 2008**

PROPOSITION DESCRIPTION	STATUS	AMOUNT
1999 Bond Election	Passed	\$8,750,000
New junior high school		
Classroom Wing at elementary school		
2004 Bond Election	Passed	\$16,000,000
New elementary school		
New primary school		
New Physical Education gym, 4 classrooms and restrooms at La Vega High School (LVHS)		
2008 Bond Election	Failed	\$25,000,000
New intermediate school		\$18,644,000
LVHS Additions & Renovations		\$3,375,000
New front entrance, office reception area, and parking		
Library/commons expansion		
Renovation/replacement of band hall		
New cafetorium		
Athletic facilities		
New Administration Building		\$1,334,000
Football Field and Track Renovation		\$975,000
Contingency		\$672,000

SOURCE: LVISD Website and Bond Information, February 2010.

**EXHIBIT 4–11
LVISD CURRENT BOND APPROVED NOVEMBER 3, 2009**

PROPOSITION DESCRIPTION	STATUS	AMOUNT
2009 Bond Election	Passed	\$24,420,000
New intermediate school on land owned by district (retain existing gym)		\$19,352,922
LVHS Additions & Renovations		
Four new science labs to comply with TEA* size regulations		\$2,400,149
Renovation of four existing science labs into general classrooms		\$269,775
Library expansion to meet student and TEA* size requirements and Cafetorium/kitchen expansion to accommodate student body		\$2,397,154

*Texas Education Agency.

SOURCE: LVISD Website and Bond Information, February 2010.

district should include the Maintenance director and designated Maintenance and energy management staff on the planning committee for construction and capital improvements to minimize additional costs to operate and maintain its facilities. This ongoing involvement will strengthen decision making surrounding construction projects as well as day-to-day maintenance. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

STAFFING ALLOCATION (REC. 27)

LVISD's Maintenance Department does not utilize a staffing allocation model to ensure that staffing levels are appropriate. Staffing is a significant percentage of a department's and/or district's costs. LVISD has a staff of 15 maintenance and craftsmen that the district deploys to perform maintenance projects districtwide.

Exhibit 4–12 shows LVISD maintenance function staffing comparison to its selected peer districts; this comparison revealed that LVISD’s maintenance staffing levels appear appropriate. Peer districts are school districts similar to La Vega ISD that are used for comparison purposes.

LVISD has 28 custodial positions and one custodial supervisor. In 2002, the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) published findings to establish custodial staffing guidelines for educational facilities. Based on the guidelines published by APPA, custodians should clean approximately 21,000 square feet per day to establish a school at “Level 2”, the APPA standard for “Ordinary Tidiness.” A building cleaned at “Level 2” is considered acceptable for classroom and school space. When compared to industry standards, all of the five LVISD campuses exceed the standard, indicating that the district has more staff with regard to custodians than the guidelines allow.

APPA also provides an adjusted guideline for cleaning that assumes that special attention is paid to some custodial tasks and provides an adjusted guideline for more demanding cleaning activities. The adjusted guideline requires each custodian to clean about 16,705 square feet of floor space. When compared to the adjusted guideline industry standards,

three out of the five LVISD campuses exceed the standard. **Exhibit 4–13** displays the district’s custodial allocation for its daily cleanable square feet.

Based on this analysis and compared to the Level 2 and adjusted guideline for custodial staffing set by the APPA, the district employs an excess of three to nine custodians overall.

LVISD should develop and implement a staffing allocation model for both maintenance and custodial staff and staff district facilities accordingly. The director of Finance and the Maintenance director should review staffing standards and industry reports in the development of standards appropriate for LVISD. The district should use staffing formulas to develop budget projections each year, especially in years where no new facilities are opening. The district should monitor staffing allocations on an annual basis to ensure that district maintenance and custodial expectations are being met.

The district should determine the level of cleanliness that is appropriate and establish custodial standards to meet this level. Custodial staff should be assigned based on the staffing allocation formulas developed so that each facility has the appropriate number of staff.

**EXHIBIT 4–12
MAINTENANCE STAFFING COMPARISONS FOR LVISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2008–09**

VARIABLE	LA VEGA ISD	SWEETWATER ISD*	MADISONVILLE ISD	TAYLOR ISD**
2008–09 Enrollment	2,779	2,312	2,247	3,100
Total Number of Schools	5	6	5	5
Management (# Director/Asst. Director)	2	0	2	2
Administrative and Clerical	1	5	1	1
General Maintenance/Craftsmen	5	3	1	2
Painters	0	1	0	1
Carpenters and Helpers	0	0	1	1
Plumbers	1	0	0	1
HVAC Technicians	2	2	2	1
Electricians	0	0	0	1
Grounds	4	2	3	3
Mechanics	0	2	0	2
Energy Management	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	1
Total Facilities-Related Positions	15	15	10	17

*Most Sweetwater ISD facilities are 40 years plus old.

**Taylor ISD shares mechanics with Transportation and the Custodial Director is responsible for Energy Management.

SOURCE: LVISD Maintenance Director and Peer Survey Completed by Maintenance director or designee, February 2010.

**EXHIBIT 4–13
LVISD ACTUAL CUSTODIAL STAFF ALLOCATION
COMPARED TO INDUSTRY STANDARD**

FACILITY	GROSS SQUARE FEET (GSF)	GSF/ 21,000	GSF/ 16,705	CUSTODIAL POSITIONS INCLUDING HEAD CUSTODIAN	OVER (UNDER) DISTRICT FORMULA FOR 21,000 GSF	OVER (UNDER) DISTRICT FORMULA FOR 16,705 GSF
LVPS	66,013	3	4	6	3	2
LVES	84,387	4	5	6	2	1
LVISHGMC including 11 Portables and 1 Storage Building	85,460	4	5	5	1	0
LVJHSGDC	88,735	4	5	6	2	1
LVHS including 3 Portables	109,668	5	7	6	1	(1)
Total	434,263	20	26	29	9	3

SOURCE: LVISD staffing data, February 2010.

Based on the information presented in **Exhibit 4–13** and using the APPA adjusted guideline, LVISD should eliminate three custodial positions across the district. The average salary for a custodian in the district is \$15,000 + 20 percent benefits, for a total of \$18,000 (\$15,000 + \$3,000). The fiscal impact for eliminating three custodial positions is a savings to LVISD of \$54,000 annually (\$18,000 x 3) or \$270,000 over five years (\$54,000 x 5).

Although the district is planning to open a new intermediate school to replace the current facility in fall 2011, its square footage is estimated to be 90,000 square feet, which is less than 5,000 square feet larger than the current 85,460 square foot facility. This means the staffing allocation of custodians presented in **Exhibit 4–13** will change by very little even with the opening of a new facility. However, the completion of significant construction is an opportune time to review staffing allocations and ensure all facilities are staffed according to district developed and adopted standards.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING (REC. 28)

LVISD lacks a comprehensive long-range facility master plan or documented planning process to provide for future needs. Facility planning constitutes a formal planning process and a long-range facility master plan that serve as a roadmap for future construction and renovation programs.

LVISD's facility planning process yields short-term reactive solutions. The board of trustees appointed a Facilities Review and Planning Committee (FRPC) in 1999, 2003, and 2008 to assess the condition of the district's facilities and make recommendations. These assessments resulted in bond elections to generate potential financing for critical construction and renovation needs. The review team

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

- A board approved construction and facility master plan that documents the history and projections of facility needs, available revenue sources, student enrollment, standardized building components and equipment, and other critical factors in long-term planning;
- Long-term enrollment projections; and
- The building design capacity for each facility.

Effective long-range facilities plans incorporate the following activities:

- Develop and institute a policy and framework for long-range facility planning;
- Create a methodology that is based on assumptions drawn from empirical evidence to provide enrollment projections that are reasonably accurate and are used to estimate future needs for sites and facilities;
- Provide the framework and timeline for effective site selection, timely acquisition, and construction start dates;
- Document student capacity and the adequacy of existing facilities for educational purposes;
- Consider the feasibility of alternatives to new construction;
- Document program specifications and requirements to ensure facilities meet building and construction regulations while supporting and enhancing student education;

- Identify sources for architectural services to assist in planning, constructing, and renovating district facilities; and
- Prepare a capital-planning budget that balances facilities needs with expenditures, and identifies funding sources.

Exhibit 4–14 shows required program elements used by many districts to develop a well-documented and comprehensive master planning approach to facilities.

Facility planning is important for school districts. **Exhibit 4–15** presents a diagram of Manor Independent School District’s (MISD) facilities planning process. MISD’s comprehensive, long-range facilities plan ensures proper coordination of the district’s facilities and educational programs; community expansion plans; building costs and capital requirements; and design guidelines.

LVISD should develop a long-range facility master plan. This plan should include the development of school capacity ratings, condition analysis, and functional adequacy studies for each campus. This study should include interviews with the board, staff, principals, and community groups to document the district’s current and future educational, administrative, and support services needs. To develop the master plan, the district should determine the actual student capacity of each school based on its current use and the capacity of each school based on future programs, prepare a demographic analysis, prepare a student forecasting model to project student enrollment by school and grade over the next

five years, present the plan to the board for approval and implementation, and regularly update and revise the plan as circumstances require.

In developing a long-range facilities master plan, the district could collaborate with facilities professionals to assist with critical planning activities. One example would be Manor Independent School District (MISD), which contracts with an educational facility planning and construction program management firm to assist with the district’s long-range facilities planning and capital improvement programs. The Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) offers facility-planning services to Texas school districts that include a detailed study of current facilities and projected building needs as well as demographic analysis and enrollment forecasts. An additional resource could be TASA, whose comprehensive school facility study includes:

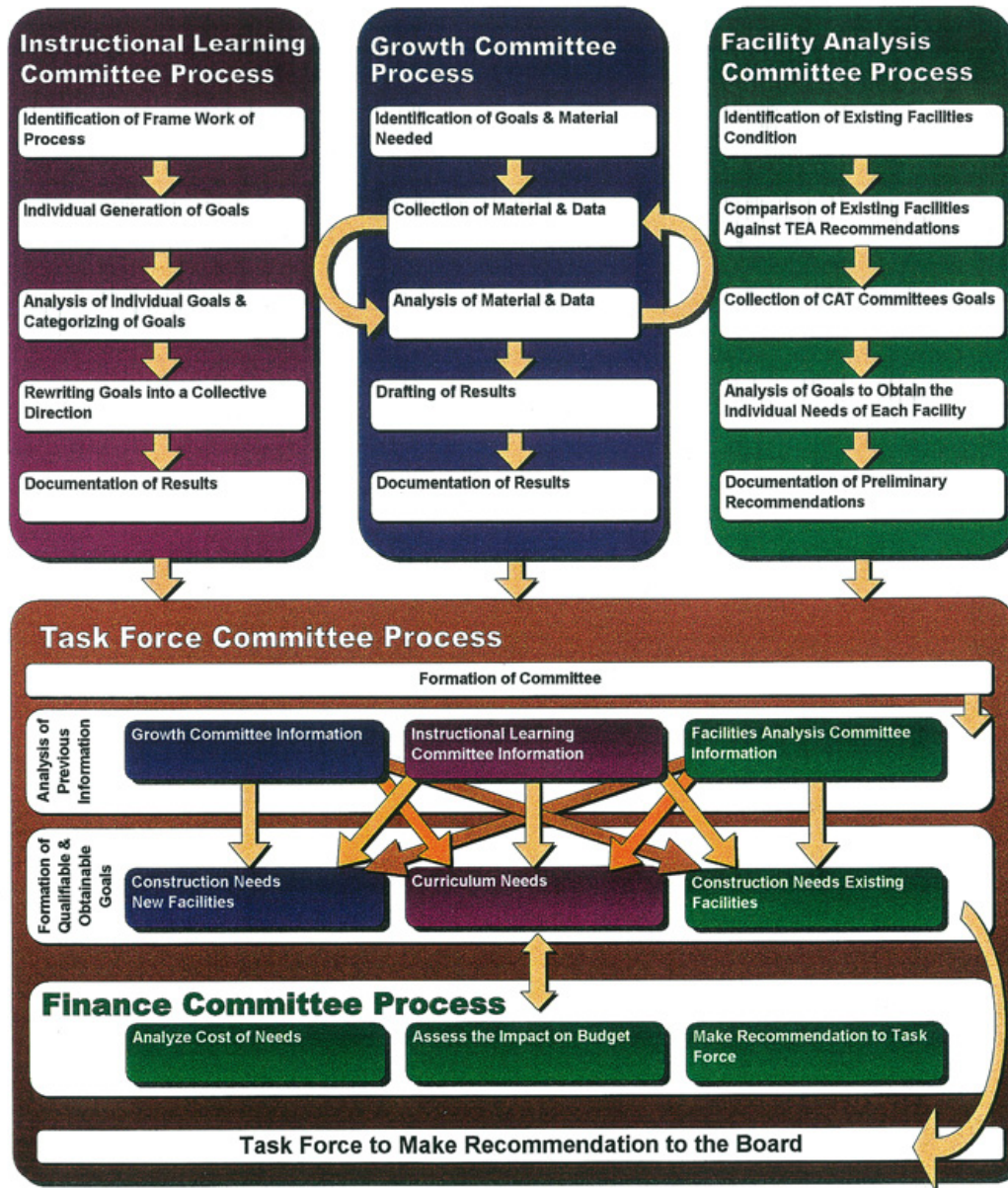
- An extensive evaluation of the condition and educational functionality of existing buildings and sites;
- A capacity analysis of all district education facilities, reflecting the district’s instructional program;
- An evaluation of each campus and facility to determine its best use, in light of local programs and state staffing and space requirements;
- A determination of technology capabilities within existing facilities;

**EXHIBIT 4–14
SAMPLE LONG-RANGE FACILITY MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS**

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

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

**EXHIBIT 4-15
EXAMPLE LONG-RANGE FACILITIES PLANNING PROCESS DIAGRAM
MANOR ISD**



SOURCE: Manor ISD Strategic (Facilities) Study, August 1999.

- Information relative to school facilities conformance to state and federal mandates;
- A series of recommendations and options available to the district to meet current and projected facility needs; and
- A 10-year enrollment forecast by grade, by campus, for the entire district.

The development of a comprehensive long-range facility master plan can be prepared by the district with existing staff who demonstrate the proper skills and experience to engage in long-range planning functions. However, the district should consider services offered by the TASA, who can perform the condition assessment, demographics, and other services, with the exception of preparing the plan, to help prepare a long-range facility plan. The estimated cost for a

vendor, such as TASA, to perform the educational long-range facility planning is \$16,500.

FACILITY SPACE UTILIZATION (REC. 29)

LVISD has not developed a space utilization plan to optimize existing classroom and building space. Data indicating the district's campus design capacity and enrollment projections were unavailable for calculating the campus use rate and the potential for future overcrowding or underutilization of schools. The City of Bellmead's population in July 2008 was 9,579 compared to 9,214 as of the 2000 census, indicating only a four percent increase during this period and which might suggest a slow enrollment growth rate for LVISD.

The review team observed that various buildings were underutilized or over-utilized as follows:

- **Learning Center Buildings A, B, C, D, and F**

- The Learning Center consists of buildings constructed in the 1950's which are mainly used for storage, except for Building F occupied by the Information Technology department, the Custodial Supervisor, and Food Services staff, and Building D used for the disciplinary alternative education program.
- Buildings B and C are only used for storage including computers and surplus furniture. There were no inventory tags observed on the furniture. The district's hard copy student and other records dated since at least 2004 were stored in boxes in a secure room in Building C.
- Building A consists of the cafeteria used by the disciplinary alternative education program where meals are delivered and served to the students.
- The district's disciplinary alternative education program classes are held in Building D which is partially used. This building also includes a school gym used for the disciplinary alternative education program and an after-school program. The gym only has a heating system; there is no air conditioning.

- **Family Resource Center**

- The Family Resource Center, formerly called the Early Childhood Center, was constructed in the 1990s and only about 25 percent of the building is used by Special Education staff. The heating

and cooling system for the Special Education area is operated independently from the remainder of the building to control operating costs.

- **Administration Building**

- The district's superintendent, assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, director of Finance, and other key personnel occupy the Administration Building, which was constructed in 1962. This building is utilized to capacity. The district holds board meetings in the lobby area as a result of the lack of space.

LVISD should develop a space utilization plan to optimize existing classroom and building space. The plan will assist LVISD to develop a strategic plan for underutilized buildings. The district should consider the feasibility of leasing space or selling underutilized buildings. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 30)

LVISD lacks policies and procedures for the maintenance, custodial, and grounds functions. Policies and procedures establish department standards and provide clearly defined operational methods for each craft and the types of projects which should be completed by the maintenance staff. Some of the conditions existing at LVISD as a result of a lack of established standards include the following:

- There is no requirement to maintain inspection reports.
- Work orders are closed without supervisory inspection for quality assurance and timeliness.
- The district has not executed written agreements with all maintenance and operations service providers.

The district has a verbal one year contract with Airfree Filter Service, Inc. for high-grade pleated filters which are changed from two to eight times per year. The filters at most district facilities are changed four times per year at an annual cost of about \$16,900. The district also has a verbal one year contract with Central Texas Security & Fire Equipment, Inc. to monitor the fire alarm systems at a cost of about \$275 per month. Central Texas also performs the annual fire extinguisher inspections, semi-annual kitchen system inspections, and annual fire alarm inspections.

In the absence of a policies and procedures manual, current maintenance, custodial, and grounds personnel must rely on

institutional knowledge when making decisions about how to perform their job functions on a daily basis.

According to the Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, sponsored by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), a maintenance and operations procedures manual should, at a minimum, contain a mission statement, personnel policies, purchasing regulations, accountability measures, asbestos procedures, repair standards, vehicle use guidelines, security standards, and work order procedures. Without a procedures manual, the department does not provide a guide to its employees to ensure consistency of applied procedures to a given problem and ensure that its staff also has a training guide for new employees.

Maintenance policies and procedures should include:

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

Custodial policies and procedures should include:

- cleaning procedures, including supplies, basic office cleaning, restroom cleaning and sanitation, hard surface floor maintenance (dusting, mopping, stripping, finishing, burnishing, and the like);
- custodial relations with others;
- custodial rights and responsibilities;
- integrated pest management;
- energy management guidelines;
- safety procedures;
- playground inspections;
- facility assessment guidelines;
- head custodian duties and responsibilities;
- recycling and refuse;
- custodial certification; and

- cleaning standards (classrooms, restrooms, gyms, locker rooms, showers, offices, libraries, and other areas).

Grounds management policies and procedures should include information related to maintenance of the following:

- courtyards;
- school grounds;
- athletic fields;
- paved surfaces (sidewalks, parking lots, and roads);
- vacant property;
- pest management;
- fertilizers and herbicides;
- sprinkler systems; and
- flower beds.

The Maintenance Department should develop a department policies and procedures manual which addresses the maintenance, custodial, and grounds functions. The Maintenance director should contact a facility planning association and several area school districts to identify and obtain models for procedures manuals. Using these models developed by other districts of similar size, the director should customize a manual for LVISD, meet with department employees to discuss the contents of the manual and which areas are applicable to each group, and conduct training necessary to implement the procedures. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FACILITIES CONDITION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (REC. 31)

LVISD lacks a facilities condition assessment (FCA) program or deferred maintenance plan to effectively assess facility conditions, identify deferred maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the existing facilities. There is no planning process for projecting and funding short- and long-range capital replacement items, such as mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems and roofing systems in the schools. A typical facilities assessment program evaluates exterior, interior, mechanical systems, safety and building code compliance. An effective deferred maintenance plan accounts for all possible major maintenance requirements for the next several years, rather than reacting to problems as they arise.

LVISD has not established a deferred maintenance plan for major renovation or repairs needed at district facilities, including:

- La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus: LVJHSGDC was constructed in 2000 yet has severe cracks in the foundation, floors, and walls throughout the building.
- La Vega High School: LVHS was constructed in 1984 and there are multiple cracks in the halls of the Terrazzo floor, and in the cafeteria area. The building needs a new roof as the current one has about 38 leaks and 14 to 15 air conditioning units require replacement. The campus has an old gym (main gym) and a new gym (PE gym). Sections of the floor in the old gym need to be replaced as a result of buckling.
- Learning Center Buildings A, B, C, D, and F: Access to the back section of Building D is prohibited as it contains asbestos. This building also includes a school gym used for the disciplinary alternative education program and an after-school program. The gym only has a heating system; there is no air conditioning.

LVISD's board of trustees periodically appoints a Facilities Review and Planning Committee (FRPC) to review the district's facility needs and make recommendations to address these needs. The most recent activation of the FRPC occurred at the February 18, 2008 board meeting. The board selected 27 individuals to the committee including all LVISD principals, two teachers, the director of Finance, one board member, the Mayor and City Manager of the City of Bellmead, and 16 community members. Four LVISD administrative staff served as resource persons to provide information and guidance consisting of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of Elementary Education, and the director of Secondary Education. Several of the 2008 committee members served on the 1999 and 2003 FRPCs. The 2008 FRPC held four meetings and conducted the following activities:

- Reviewed the status of the district's priorities since 1999 which included:
 - 1999 FRPC Priorities:
 - √ Construction of new junior high school (Completed under 1999 bond election);
 - √ Additional wing at elementary school (Completed under 1999 bond election);

- √ Renovations at intermediate school (New building approved in 2009 bond election); and
- √ Restructuring of the district's grade configuration grouping Early Childhood Education through Kindergarten at the LVPS; Grades 1 through 3 at the LVES; Grades 4 through 6 at the LVISHGMC; Grades 7 and 8 at the LVJHSGDC; and grades 9 through 12 at the LVHS (Implemented and is the current grade configuration).
- 2003 FRPC Priorities:
 - √ Construction of new primary school (Completed under bond election);
 - √ Complete the rebuilding of elementary school (Completed under bond election);
 - √ Complete improvements and additions at LVHS (additional classrooms; expansion of cafeteria, kitchen, library, and administrative area; new physical education gym); and
 - √ Complete improvements and additions at the intermediate school (additional classrooms; drainage improvements; parking area paving; and security fencing).
- Reviewed the current status of campus facilities and district's facilities; toured intermediate school and high school; reached consensus on priorities; and heard information on estimated costs.
 - 2008 FRPC Priorities:
 - √ Schedule repair and upkeep of facilities, roofs, air conditioners, etc. (\$325,000); LVHS Roof and HVAC replacement is scheduled for summer 2010;
 - √ Repair floor at junior high school (\$425,000); Floor is being reviewed as to best plan to replace or fix;
 - √ Repair/replace the Public Address System (PA), clock and bell system at junior high school (\$50,000); PA, clock, and bell system replaced at campus in summer 2009;
 - √ Replace intermediate school (\$18,644,000) (Approved in 2009 bond election);

- √ Improvements to football and track fields (\$975,000) were resolved with a loan to install artificial turf and resurface the track (new field can generate revenue); Football and track fields completed in summer 2009;
- √ Renovate/replace Athletic field house and press box; Renovate/replace field house and press box currently under review for cost and feasibility;
- √ Replace current Administration Building; Currently under review for cost and feasibility;
- √ Renovate LVHS including a new front entrance, offices, library, commons area, cafeteria, band hall, and parking lots and replace marquee (\$3,375,000) (Partially approved in 2009 bond election); LVHS cafeteria and commons area renovation will begin in summer 2010 along with four new science labs. Marquee was replaced in summer 2009. Band hall, offices, front entrance, and parking lot renovations are currently under review for cost and feasibility; and
- √ Upgrade science labs to address TEA specifications (Approved in 2009 bond election).

The FRPC also discussed school funding alternatives to fund the district priorities and determine the potential tax impact. The committee issued a report to the board of trustees on May 20, 2008 including a summary of the estimated costs and timeline for the facilities priorities.

LVISD should implement a formal facility condition assessment (FCA) program to effectively assess facility conditions, identify deferred maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the existing facilities. The most important factor to achieve success in assessing the condition of school facilities is to evaluate needs without bias. There are a multitude of reasons to conduct FCAs. Some of the more common outcomes include:

- developing and justifying long-term or short-term capital budgets;
- identifying backlogs of deferred maintenance;
- identifying and prioritizing specific capital project needs;

- independently validating capital improvement project requirements; and
- verifying equitable distribution of capital funds among multiple schools.

A consultant could be hired to aid in the comprehensive assessment and program set up; however, the director of Finance along with the Maintenance director and maintenance staff should be a part of the comprehensive facility condition assessment. The estimated cost for an FCA consultant is \$20,000.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE (REC. 32)

LVISD has not documented or implemented a preventive maintenance program for its facilities and vehicles. Maintenance best practices indicate that a widely used strategy to contain maintenance operations costs involves the development of a preventive maintenance program. Preventive maintenance provides a planned approach designed to avoid equipment breakdowns and prevent routine problems from escalating into major repairs or possible premature replacement. A preventive maintenance schedule helps to ensure that vehicles are properly maintained and supports a regular planned replacement schedule.

Preventive maintenance programs contain the following characteristics:

- a list of equipment that requires repair;
- a detailed schedule of the cost of repair;
- a timeline schedule for completion of projects; and
- inspection and maintenance procedures.

Exhibit 4-16 presents a sample facilities preventive maintenance program showing the intervals at which specific items should be inspected, repaired, and replaced.

LVISD performs maintenance on district vehicles as needed based on staff reporting a problem and completing a work order, a process which is reactive versus proactive. Maintenance changes the vehicle oil filters and makes a note on the board in the Maintenance area; however, no scheduled vehicle inspections are performed.

LVISD should develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities and vehicles. The Maintenance director should develop the preventive maintenance program along with a detailed preventive maintenance schedule for all district maintenance

**EXHIBIT 4-16
SAMPLE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR FACILITIES**

AREA	COMPONENT	INSPECTION AND REPAIR (3-6 MONTH INTERVALS)	INSPECTION AND REPAIR ANNUALLY	INSPECTION AND REPAIR (2-5 YEAR INTERVALS)	INSPECTION AND REPLACEMENT (7-10 YEAR INTERVALS)	INSPECTION AND REPLACEMENT (12-15 YEARS)
Exterior	Roof		✓	✓		✓
	Roof Drainage		✓	✓		
	Windows and Glass		✓	✓	✓	
	Masonry		✓	✓		
	Foundations		✓			✓
	Joints and Sealants		✓			✓
Equipment	Belts and Filters	✓				
	Motors and Fans	✓		✓		✓
	Pipes and Fittings	✓			✓	
	Ductwork		✓		✓	
	Electrical Controls		✓		✓	
	Heating Equip.	✓			✓	
	Air Conditioning Equipment	✓			✓	
Interior	Doors and Hardware		✓			✓
	Wall Finishes		✓			✓
	Floor Finishes		✓		✓	
Site	Parking and Walks		✓	✓		
	Drainage		✓	✓		
	Landscaping	✓			✓	
	Play Equipment		✓		✓	

SOURCE: Developed by the Review Team based on a composite of industry best practices.

projects and prioritize these projects by building and vehicle. A timeline and budget for performing preventive maintenance projects should also be established.

Once the preventive maintenance program is implemented, the district should adequately fund its preventive maintenance budget to address the scheduled preventive maintenance activities. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

WORK ORDER SYSTEM (REC. 33)

The Maintenance Department does not have an automated work order system to help prioritize and track its work orders electronically. As a result, work orders have not been used effectively to set accurate targets for completion, measure performance, and establish cost-control strategies. LVISD’s Maintenance director manually prioritizes the work orders, using his discretion to route work orders to maintenance

staff. There is no formal tracking of the quantity or backlog of work orders or supervisory inspection of completed work orders to ensure that work was properly and timely completed.

The lack of an automated work order system forces staff and users to rely on manual processes that are inefficient, time consuming, and error prone. While a manual work order system is common for smaller districts, it is not an effective and efficient process. A work order software program is an effective tool for managing the maintenance operation and the public’s investment in facilities. A software program provides a Maintenance director with tools and reports to manage the flow of work and monitor staff performance. These tools and reports can contribute to a more efficient and effective maintenance program.

Work order software programs can also be programmed to produce preventive maintenance work orders on a pre-set schedule. This feature helps to ensure that preventive maintenance work is completed on a timely basis, therefore minimizing deferred maintenance.

An automated work order system allows building users a convenient way to submit work order requests and track the progress of the requests. Software programs also provide management tools for supervisors and reporting features to help in measuring performance and maintaining accountability.

Automated systems provide the following capabilities:

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

Taylor Independent School District (TISD), one of LVISD's peer districts, utilizes an automated work order system with the following capabilities:

- Generates work orders;
- Schedules preventive maintenance;
- Prioritizes work order maintenance requests;
- Monitors and adjusts materials inventory;
- Tracks labor and material costs;
- Generates on-line reports;
- Generates hard copy reports;
- Performs cost analysis;
- Establishes inventory reorder levels; and
- Accessible via the Internet or Intranet.

LVISD should implement an automated work order system to process, prioritize, and analyze work order requests. LVISD's Technology Department currently uses the Track-It! automated work order system. The estimated cost for Maintenance to implement this system is a one-time cost of \$10,000 in 2010–11, which includes access for 10 licenses, followed by an annual cost of \$1,700 beginning in 2011–12 to renew the licenses, for a total cost of \$6,800 (\$1,700 x 4) over five years. The Maintenance director should coordinate with the director of Technology to perform a cost/benefit analysis for an effective computerized maintenance management system.

MATERIAL STANDARDIZATION (REC. 34)

LVISD has not developed material standards for regular maintenance items such as plumbing parts, carpet, wall coverings, and light fixtures that are used in standard building renovations. Successful use of building material standards across an entire school district helps ensure that construction and renovation costs are as low as possible.

The Maintenance director reported to the review team that materials used in maintenance repairs are dictated by the type of materials installed when the buildings are constructed. When Maintenance looks for replacement parts, they locate the vendor that handles that particular brand regardless of the device they are working on at the time. Thus, there is no standardization of materials and no standard list of vendors from whom to purchase materials and supplies.

The lack of material standardization requires maintenance staff to retain enough materials related to each campus' specific choices to address maintenance issues that require these materials. This makes for tedious inventory management and can increase inventory costs.

Selecting standardized materials districtwide can benefit a district in several ways:

- Improves inventory management by having standard materials thereby reducing the number of different inventoried items;
- Increased volume can reduce purchasing cost providing the district with greater purchasing power when dealing with wholesale suppliers; and
- Increased standardized inventory can help efficiency, by improving the maintenance process. Currently, staff are dispersed to a maintenance issue, the issue is diagnosed, necessary parts are purchased, and staff return to repair the maintenance issue. However,

if materials are standardized and inventoried, the maintenance staff can take materials with them to the work site and complete the repair without having to purchase materials.

The Maintenance Department should develop material standards for items such as plumbing parts, carpet, wall coverings, and light fixtures that are used in building construction and renovation. The district should perform a cost/benefit analysis to determine how material standardization can reduce inventory costs. Maintenance should also perform a comprehensive inventory of its building material and analyze how material standardization can benefit the maintenance process. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

TRAINING (REC. 35)

LVISD lacks individual staff training plans for all Maintenance Department employees. Most maintenance staff do not attend periodic training. A planned program of training enhances functional skills and knowledge, especially when it relates to repairing and maintaining some of the modern equipment in new buildings. Additionally, cross training can promote job fulfillment and backups when employees are absent.

The Maintenance director and two general maintenance II workers attend four hours of Resilient Floor Covering Institute refresher training annually as required for replacing floor tiles installed with asbestos-based glue. Also, the groundskeeper (Leadman-Grounds) attends eight hours of Integrated Pest Management training annually. **Exhibit 4-17** shows the Maintenance Department's certifications and training since January 1998.

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

Training is the opportunity to educate the employees in the most effective way to utilize the available resources and to ensure that people understand the environmental rules and regulations regarding facilities and grounds. Information can be shared not only about the facilities and spaces, but also about the larger district environment and the industry in general.

Generally, there are four basic areas of training focus:

- training new employees in the maintenance and use of the facilities and grounds;
- training current employees who have changed task or function;
- training all employees when new statutes need to be enforced; and
- training all employees when new equipment or tools are purchased.

Training typically refers to learning opportunities specifically designed to help an employee do his or her job better. "Professional Development" has a broader meaning which includes expanding participant's knowledge and awareness to areas outside their specific job duties, yet still related to the overall well-being of the organization. Such topics might include:

- asbestos awareness;
- energy systems;
- building knowledge;
- first aid;
- emergency response;
- biohazard disposal;
- technology use;
- universal precautions;
- right-to-know;
- first responder awareness; and
- first responder operations.

Districts usually build ongoing evaluation of training efforts into their training programs. Good training is timely, informative, effective, and keeps teachers, staff, students, and visitors healthy and safe.

LVISD should develop individual staff training plans for all Maintenance Department employees. The Maintenance director should conduct formalized training specific to all job operations and safety related to their department's functions. Clear documentation of training should be referred to and reviewed periodically to ensure that consistent and updated training is provided and to measure safety improvement practices. Additionally, annual professional development should be encouraged in each employee's evaluation. It is also

EXHIBIT 4-17
LVISD MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAINING
JANUARY 1998 THROUGH DECEMBER 2010

INSTRUCTOR	COURSE/LICENSE DESCRIPTION	EFFECTIVE DATE	TRAINING REQUIRED FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE	NUMBER OF ANNUAL HOURS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE	PARTICIPANT
TASB* Environmental Services	Integrated Pest Management	10/11/2000	Training for Structural Pest Control Certified Applicator and Pesticide Application License	Refresher courses 8 hours	Leadman-Grounds
Central Texas Turf Workshop	General, Termite, Weed, Pest, Laws & Regulations	9/8/2009	Training for Structural Pest Control Certified Applicator and Pesticide Application License	Refresher course 5 hours	Leadman-Grounds
Estes CEU Program**	General, Termite, Weed, Pest, Laws & Regulations	10/21/2009	Training for Structural Pest Control Certified Applicator and Pesticide Application License	Refresher course 8 hours	Leadman-Grounds
Texas Department of Agriculture	Pesticide Applicator License	9/26/2009– 9/26/2010	Training for Structural Pest Control Certified Applicator and Pesticide Application License	Not applicable	Leadman-Grounds
Texas Department of Agriculture	Structural Pest Control Certified Applicator	12/2/1997– 12/2/2010	Training for Structural Pest Control Certified Applicator and Pesticide Application License	Not applicable	Leadman-Grounds
Scientific Investigation & Instruction Institute	Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings Annual Training	6/10/2009– 6/10/2010	Annual Refresher course	Refresher course 4 hours	Maintenance Director, General Maintenance II
TASB* Environmental Services	Asbestos Designated Person Training	7/18/2006	Lifetime certification	Certification course 8 hours	Maintenance Director, Custodial Supervisor
Texas Department of Licensing & Regulations	Certificate of Registration for the Purchase of Refrigerants and Equipment	1/1/1998	Anyone who works with refrigerants must have certificate	Lifetime and no refresher required	Maintenance Director, Assistant Maintenance Director, HVAC Technicians

*TASB = Texas Association of School Boards.

**CEU = Continuing Education Units.

SOURCE: LVISD Maintenance Department Certifications and Training Records, February 2010.

recommended that the Maintenance director maintains documentation of all safety- related training conducted and that these documents be stored at a designated document center for easy access and reference for management and employees alike. It is encouraged that any training provided to the organization be videotaped for future reference and training opportunities.

The Maintenance director should work with the Personnel and Administration Department to schedule and plan training and to reach out to vendors and suppliers who offer

free training. The estimated cost for additional training for Maintenance Department staff is \$2,000 per year.

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF IN-HOUSE SERVICES (REC. 36)

LVISD lacks a process to regularly conduct cost comparisons and evaluate outsourcing opportunities. LVISD does not perform cost/benefit analysis to evaluate the relative value of in-house operations versus contracted services for custodial, maintenance, and grounds operations. Thus the district cannot quantify the benefits of keeping operations in-house and confirm their relative cost-effectiveness. Currently, the district has two full-time heating, ventilating, and air

conditioning (HVAC) technicians to handle the district's needs. The Maintenance director and the assistant Maintenance director possess the credentials as well as the proper certifications to conduct HVAC work. If needed, however, the district at times uses private contractors on an as needed basis to help out with the larger rooftop units.

Contracted services have proven to be effective under the right conditions that include regular performance of cost/benefit analysis, contract language that establishes performance measures, vendors that take a sense of ownership of the buildings, and regularly conducted vendor evaluations. In these instances, school districts save the cost of direct labor, fringe benefits, supply and storage cost, and equipment cost while receiving the same or better service. Potential advantages of outsourcing additional facility services can include:

- Improved Quality of Service
 - Expanded services without additional hiring;
 - Greater access to skilled personnel;
 - Peak demand flexibility;
 - Higher productivity;
 - Access to new technologies; and
 - Strength of competitive market.
- Reduced Costs
 - Anticipated reduction of overhead, salaries and benefits, administrative and accounting costs, etc.;
 - Capital investment (equipment, supplies, etc.); and
 - Transportation costs across large geographic area.

LVISD should implement a process to perform regularly scheduled cost/benefit analysis of in-house operations versus contracted services. The district should perform the analysis of operational areas such as custodial operations for nightly cleaning; periodic grounds operations; and maintenance operations. In order to keep the cost of the district's maintenance operations as low as possible, an annual or bi-annual review of services should be conducted to determine if outsourcing operations is more cost effective. These ongoing evaluations should be documented and available to the school board and the public for review. If the service is contracted or outsourced, periodic written follow-up and

analyses should be made to confirm the effectiveness of the service and to verify that any anticipated cost savings have actually been achieved. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT (REC. 37)

LVISD has not established and documented an energy management program. The district tracks districtwide monthly energy costs through electronic spreadsheets; there is no formal analysis of energy cost by building. LVISD implemented Kreuter Manufacturing Company's (KMC's) WinControl XL Plus energy management system at LVPS and LVES (2006); this system is also fully functional at the LVJHSGDC (2000). With this system at the newer schools, the staff can push a button to turn on the air conditioning or heat in a specific classroom and some parking lot lights. Staff can schedule the time for the system to automatically turn on and remain on for a maximum of 1.5 hours. The system also monitors the freezer and walk-in refrigerator temperatures.

The LVISHGMC utilizes the old KMC system which is designed to turn the air conditioning or heat on and off in all classrooms and the cafeteria simultaneously. A few sections at LVHS were upgraded and the KMC WinControl XL Plus system was implemented in four new classrooms, the auditorium, and new gym; the remainder of the campus is on the old KMC system. The district's Family Resource Center has a standalone energy system which is not as sophisticated as the KMC WinControl XL Plus system.

School districts have been directed to lower their energy consumption by the Texas Legislature. Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 44, §902 states the following: *LONG-RANGE ENERGY PLAN TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRIC ENERGY. The board of trustees of a school district shall establish a goal to reduce the school district's annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district's energy plan.*

Moreover, LVISD's school board has established policies related to energy consumption. Policies CH (LEGAL)-P and CL (LEGAL)-P, state that the board of trustees shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district's annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year. The establishment of this plan has not been completed and the review team was not made aware of any compliance reporting. Current attempts by the district to address state statutory requirements and local board policies to reduce energy consumption include: planning a

lighting retrofit and installing a new HVAC system at the LVHS and building a new, more efficient intermediate school.

Exhibit 4–18 displays LVISD’s cost per square foot in 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 4–18
LVISD DISTRICTWIDE ENERGY COST
2008–09**

TOTAL DISTRICT	TOTAL BUILDING AREA (GSF)	ELECTRICITY COST	ELECTRICITY COST PER SQUARE FT.
2008–09	531,441	\$591,279	\$1.11

SOURCE: Data provided by LVISD Maintenance Department, February 2010.

The Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) provides several programs and resources that LVISD can utilize to develop an energy management program and formal policy to promote energy usage awareness throughout a school district. SECO’s Schools/Local Government Energy Program has helped more than 3,500 schools and other units of local government set up and maintain effective energy-efficiency programs. SECO provides facility preliminary energy assessments, energy management training workshops, technical support in designing new facilities, and on-site training for student energy awareness projects.

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

SECO also provides school districts with an Energy Efficiency Partnership Program, which provides personalized on-site technical assistance to public schools that includes:

- Analysis of utility bills and other building information to determine energy and cost utilization indices of facilities;
- Recommended maintenance procedures and capital energy retrofits;

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

LVISD’s Maintenance Department should develop a formal energy management program. Reputable energy management experts such as SECO recommend that an effective energy management program should have an effective energy policy statement. SECO provides a sample energy policy statement which states: “Recognizing our responsibility as Trustees of the La Vega Independent School district, we believe that every effort should be made to conserve energy and our natural resource. We also believe that this commitment will be beneficial to our students and taxpayers in prudent financial management and the saving of energy. The fulfillment of this policy is the joint responsibility of the trustees, administrators, teachers, students and support personnel. Cooperation shall be experienced on all levels for the success of this policy.” This statement clearly establishes that in order to have an effective energy management program the entire school district must be aware and involved.

SECO also recommends best practices elements for an energy management program that include:

- Mission Statement—Defines broad environmental and management objectives. Also, establishes support by senior administrators.
- Energy Consumption Monitoring and Communications—Organizes on-going monitoring and distribution of facility-specific energy bills.
- Energy Savings or Consumption Targets—Documents reasonable achievable savings targets for annual energy consumption/costs.
- Staff Responsibilities and Training—Documents energy related tasks for custodial, maintenance, and administrative staff.

- Staff or School Incentives/Recognition—Formal or informal staff recognition for shared energy savings.
- Energy Program Communications—Create internal and external progress reports to provide visibility.
- Building Energy Assessments/Audits—Identifies poorly performing schools and likely opportunities.
- Building Operating Guidelines—Provides guidance for vacation shutdown, temperature control, etc.
- Purchasing and Procurement Guidelines—Establishes efficiency standards for replacement equipment.

- Schedule for Program Planning/Revision—Documents the need for on-going program oversight.

The Maintenance Department can educate the district on energy saving techniques and establish an energy conscious environment and promote the energy management program.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 4: FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT							
25. Realign the organizational structure and clearly define the reporting responsibility for the Maintenance director.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26. Assign the Maintenance director responsibility for oversight of construction and renovation projects.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
27. Develop and implement a staffing allocation model for both maintenance and custodial staff and staff district facilities accordingly.	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$270,000	\$0
28. Develop a long-range facility master plan.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$16,500)
29. Develop a space utilization plan to optimize existing classroom and building space.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
30. Develop a department policies and procedures manual which addresses the maintenance, custodial, and grounds functions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31. Implement a formal facility condition assessment (FCA) program to effectively assess facility conditions, identify deferred maintenance backlogs, and evaluate future capital needs of the existing facilities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$20,000)
32. Develop, document, and implement a preventive maintenance program for the district's facilities and vehicles.	\$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
CHAPTER 4: FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT							
33. Implement an automated work order system to process, prioritize, and analyze work order requests.	\$0	(\$1,700)	(\$1,700)	(\$1,700)	(\$1,700)	(\$6,800)	(\$10,000)
34. Develop material standards for items such as plumbing parts, carpet, wall coverings, and light fixtures that are used in building construction and renovation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
35. Develop individual staff training plans for all Maintenance Department employees.	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$10,000)	\$0
36. Implement a process to perform regularly scheduled cost/benefit analysis of in-house operations versus contracted services.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
37. Develop a formal energy management program.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 4	\$52,000	\$50,300	\$50,300	\$50,300	\$50,300	\$253,200	(\$46,500)

CHAPTER 5

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 5. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

School districts play a pivotal role in keeping America competitive in the global economy of the 21st Century. They must educate the nation's children and do more with less by being responsive, imaginative, and innovative. To accomplish this goal, school districts employ asset and risk management techniques to account for, maximize, and protect scarce public financial resources.

Asset and risk management provides school districts with the means to track, manage, and protect liquid and illiquid assets. An effective asset and risk management program uses efficient banking structures to manage cash and liquidity; employs a variety of cash management techniques; maximizes investment earnings; ensures the health and well being of district employees; reduces the risk of loss from unforeseen catastrophic events; and safeguards fixed assets.

A delicate balance exists between the objectives of asset and risk management and cost control. Effective asset and risk managers understand that while it is important to maximize investment earnings, it is equally important to preserve invested principal. Employee health and well being must be protected, but a balance must be struck between rich benefits and ever rising healthcare costs. While it is important to protect against liability claims and property/casualty losses, cost control demands that districts absorb some risks and costs by paying higher deductibles. Finally, fixed assets must be tracked, monitored, and safeguarded; however, since it is not practical or cost effective to track every single asset, districts must establish dollar-value thresholds for recording, tracking, and inventorying such assets.

La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD) director of Finance (director) is the asset and risk manager for the district. The director supervises four full-time staff and reports to the superintendent. **Exhibit 5-1** presents the organization for the LVISD Finance Department for 2009-10.

Cash is the life blood of all school districts. Therefore, districts must manage cash and investments daily to achieve their instructional goals and objectives. Effective cash and investment management involves establishing and maintaining beneficial banking relationships; making timely cash deposits; accurately forecasting cash requirements to make funds available when needed; and maximizing returns

on assets deposited in appropriate, approved, and safe investment vehicles.

LVISD maintains its operating funds at American Bank while investing idle cash in TexPool, MBIA-Texas, and TexStar investment pools. First Southwest Company is the district's bond advisor, and the district obtains its property casualty insurance through the Texas Association of School Board's Risk Management Fund (TASB). The Deep East Texas Self Insurance Fund (Deep East) processes the district's workers' compensation claims.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LVISD improved its cash management function by reducing the number of bank accounts.
- LVISD makes electronic deposits using automated check scanner machines.

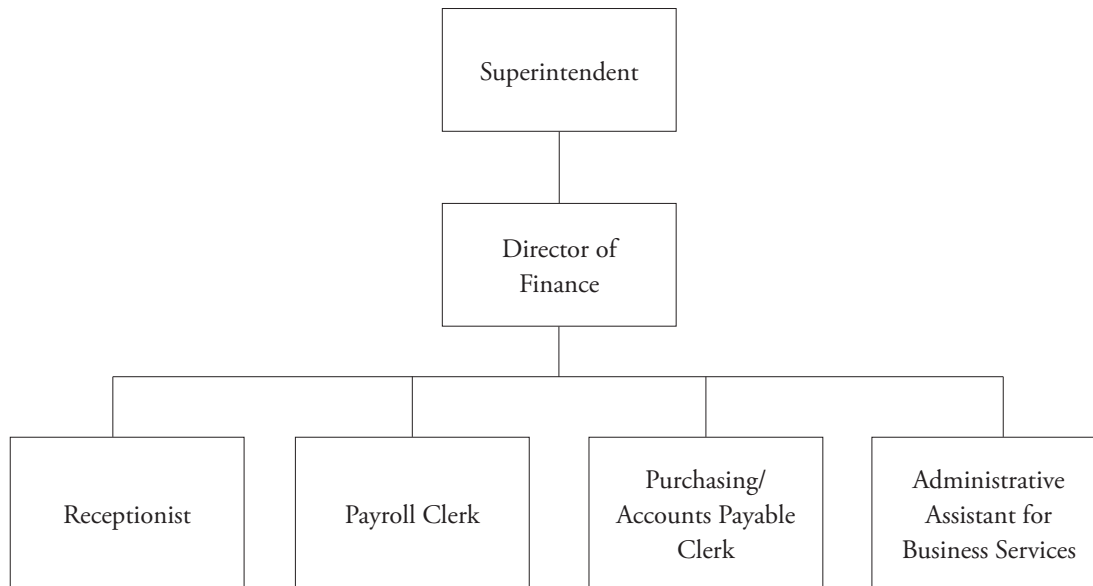
FINDINGS

- LVISD has not maximized the use of cash management techniques such as controlled disbursement, positive pay, and sweep accounts to efficiently manage cash and increase interest investment earnings.
- LVISD maintains a bank account/scholarship fund that has been dormant for decades.
- LVISD does not conduct safety awareness seminars to reduce or avoid workers' compensation claims.
- LVISD does not use available technology to record, track, and inventory fixed assets and controllable equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 38: Expand the use of cash management services to manage cash efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances.**
- **Recommendation 39: Reconstitute the Keezee Scholarship Committee at the high school, establish eligibility requirements for the Keezee Scholarship, and resume making scholarship awards to eligible, deserving students.**

**EXHIBIT 5-1
LVISD FINANCE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
2009-10**



SOURCE: LVISD Finance Department, February 2010.

- **Recommendation 40: Conduct safety seminars for professional, administrative, and auxiliary staff to promote safety awareness and prevent work-related accidents.**
- **Recommendation 41: Utilize fixed asset technology to achieve greater accountability and control over computer equipment and other controllable assets.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BANK ACCOUNT REDUCTION

LVISD improved its cash management function by reducing the number of bank accounts.

In 2007, LVISD reduced its bank accounts from 16 to 3. Most of the accounts were school club accounts, which were closed and consolidated with the district’s operating account. Now, instead of maintaining separate bank accounts, the district maintains separate codes in the general ledger to track cash balances. This process eliminates the need to perform 13 additional reconciliations and streamlines cash management and control activities. **Exhibit 5-2** presents a comparison of the district’s bank accounts in 2007 to its current banking structure.

This change reduced the time and effort to reconcile bank accounts and simplified the district’s banking structure. Bank

accounts provide a convenient means of establishing separate accountability for cash funds. However, an excessive number of bank accounts can be counterproductive because receipts and disbursements must be tracked for each account. Stocks of deposit slips must be kept for each account. Moreover, for checking accounts, check stock must also be purchased and safeguarded. Finally, cash position visibility is lowered when there are many bank accounts because cash balances are decentralized. By centralizing bank accounts, cash can be more easily managed, accounted for, and reconciled. Additionally, cash positioning and transaction processing is streamlined.

CHECK SCANNER TECHNOLOGY

LVISD makes electronic deposits using automated check scanner machines. The district receives checks for campus activity fund transactions, cafeteria receipts, fines, travel reimbursements, gifts, and other miscellaneous receipts. The district office and each of the campuses have a check scanning machine available to deposit checks. The machines are securely linked to the district’s operating account at the bank. As checks are scanned, deposit information is encoded and transmitted to the bank. The original check is then voided and retained for six months. The check amount is credited to the appropriate general ledger account and a copy of the check, along with the supporting documentation, is placed in the bank reconciliation book in the district office.

**EXHIBIT 5-2
LVISD BANK ACCOUNTS
2007 VS. 2010 STATUS**

ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNTS CLOSED IN 2007
Primary Center	√
Challenge Academy	√
East La Vega Parent Teacher Student Organization	√
Maintenance and Transport	√
Bond Account	√
Club Fund	√
Interest and Sinking	OPEN
Lunch Fund	√
General Operating	OPEN
Payroll	√
Elementary Club Fund	√
High School Club Fund	√
East La Vega Club Fund	√
Texas Professional Educators	√
Keezee Scholarship	OPEN
Elementary Parent Teacher Organization	√

SOURCE: LVISD Finance Department, March 2010.

The scanners capture the Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) line information at the bottom of the check. This information includes the American Bankers Association (ABA) routing number, account number, and check serial number. The scanner posts the MICR line check data into an Automated Clearing House (ACH) file and electronically submits it to the district's bank for processing. Check scanning speeds up check processing and cash collections. Check scanners allow the district to deposit campus and district office checks directly into LVISD's bank account. Deposits can be made 24/7, paperwork is reduced, and trips to the bank to deposit checks are eliminated.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CASH MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (REC. 38)

LVISD has not maximized the use of cash management techniques such as controlled disbursement, positive pay, and sweep accounts to efficiently manage cash and increase interest investment earnings.

The district's depository, American Bank, does not currently offer a full suite of cash management services. However, the

bank plans to offer such services before the end of 2010. Meanwhile, LVISD is missing an opportunity to streamline cash management operations and improve investment returns since these services are not currently available. As a result, cash management is not as efficient as it could be.

For example, controlled disbursement is not currently available to the district. Controlled disbursement allows cash managers to transfer just enough cash into the account to cover cash requirements for that day. Each morning, the bank provides the amount of checks clearing the account that day. This service eliminates the guesswork regarding how much cash needs to remain in the accounts to cover clearing checks. As a result, idle cash can remain in investment accounts longer, thereby increasing investment return.

Currently, LVISD manually calculates cash requirements based on the amount of payroll and vendor checks written and ensures that the bank account balance is sufficient to cover the checks. This method exposes the district to the risk of overdrawing an account by mistake. Controlled disbursement is the best insurance against overdrawing accounts.

Positive pay is also not available to LVISD. Positive pay is a popular banking service that provides for pre-payment verification of check number and amount for checks issued by an organization. The customer provides the bank with information regarding the check number and amount that is authorized for payment. As checks are presented for payment, the bank verifies them against the pre-authorized list. This control prevents unauthorized checks from clearing the bank. Currently, LVISD is exposed to this risk because positive pay is not available through its depository. While bank reconciliations mitigate the risk of an unauthorized check, the payment would not be detected until after it was made. Positive pay prevents unauthorized payments from being made. While the district has not had an instance of check fraud to date, the risk exists that such fraud could occur in the future.

Some thieves have been able to circumvent positive pay by altering the payee on the positive pay list. A variation of positive pay, known as positive pay with payee verification, requires verification of the check number, amount, and payee. This security enhancement is becoming more critical as thieves are becoming more sophisticated. The University of California offers positive pay with payee verification. Its lead bank released positive pay with payee verification

providing bank branch personnel with the ability to verify payee name information at the teller window.

Sweep accounts are also not currently available through the district’s depository. Sweep accounts would automatically sweep all district bank balances into overnight investments with higher interest rates. The service would ensure that the district is maximizing its investment earnings.

LVISD’s bank has been reviewing these additional services but does not currently offer them. The bank has been conducting a study of the services and is currently making final decisions about which vendor to use to offer the services. Once the bank makes the decision and contracts with the vendor, it will take approximately five to six months to implement the new cash management services. The bank projects that it will offer the services before the end of 2010. LVISD would then be able to use the services beginning the second quarter of fiscal year 2011.

LVISD should expand the use of cash management services to manage cash efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances. When LVISD’s bank makes these cash management services available, LVISD should begin using them to manage cash more efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances. The director of Finance should identify all of the cash management services that the district is not currently using and contact the bank to request that these services be added to its suite of services. The director of Finance should also ensure that these services are included in the next depository contract or request for proposal (RFP). The director of Finance should negotiate with the bank to ensure that the district receives these value-added services at no additional cost.

LVISD could receive additional investment income of an estimated \$4,303 per year beginning in fiscal year 2012 if investable balances were swept into overnight investments. To derive \$4,303 in additional income, the review team compared the interest LVISD earned on investable balances for the period September 2008 through August 2009 to the interest the district would have earned had excess funds been invested overnight in an investment earning the same rates as Texpool. Since interest rates have been falling steadily, but are expected to began rising again over the next 12 to 18 months, the review team projected additional income using actual fiscal year 2009 rates. **Exhibit 5–3** shows the calculation for the additional annual income.

Additional earnings for fiscal year 2011 would be 75 percent of the total because the district would not be able to begin

**EXHIBIT 5–3
LVISD ESTIMATED SWEEP EARNINGS
SEPTEMBER 2008 THROUGH AUGUST 2009**

MONTH	ACTUAL INTEREST INCOME	ESTIMATED INTEREST FROM SWEEP BALANCES	INCREMENTAL EARNINGS
Sep-08	\$254.02	\$1,149.57	\$895.55
Oct-08	\$203.59	\$810.15	\$606.56
Nov-08	\$109.78	\$746.06	\$636.28
Dec-08	\$174.73	\$976.11	\$801.38
Jan-09	\$179.10	\$705.94	\$526.84
Feb-09	\$203.31	\$544.79	\$341.48
Mar-09	\$138.68	\$311.63	\$172.95
Apr-09	\$88.27	\$168.60	\$80.33
May-09	\$126.70	\$234.59	\$107.89
Jun-09	\$144.47	\$213.71	\$69.24
Jul-09	\$103.38	\$140.24	\$36.86
Aug-09	\$212.01	\$239.64	\$27.63
Total	\$1,938.04	\$6,241.03	\$4,302.99

SOURCE: Calculations made from bank and investment reports based on information provided by LVISD Finance Department, February 2010.

using this service until the second quarter of fiscal year 2011 since it will not be available through the bank until December 2010. During fiscal year 2011, the district would earn 75 percent of the total, or \$3,227 ($\$4,303 \times .75 = \$3,227$).

DORMANT BANK ACCOUNT (REC. 39)

LVISD maintains a bank account/scholarship fund that has been dormant for decades. The bank account, known as the Keezee Scholarship Fund, was established in 1982 and has been used as a conduit for other scholarship monies, but no funds have been disbursed for the Keezee Scholarship in many years. The account has been accruing interest and, as of August 31, 2009, had a balance of \$6,756.71. However, other than interest accruals and unrelated scholarship pass through activity, the account has been dormant. The district is missing an opportunity to award scholarships to deserving students and has created a situation that could lead to misappropriation of funds since the account is not monitored closely.

In 1982, the family of a deceased student established the Keezee Scholarship Fund in the student’s name and turned the fund’s administration over to the district. LVISD deposited community contributions made as a memorial to

the student into the fund and formed a committee of high school administrators to award scholarships to eligible students.

Over the years, public donations ended, the scholarship committee disbanded, and awards to students ceased. Meanwhile, institutional memory about the scholarship fund became impaired. Neither a family member, who currently works for the district, the director of Finance, the administrative assistant for business services, nor the high school principal know why the scholarship committee disbanded or why scholarships are no longer being awarded. Moreover, eligibility and application requirements, the amount of awards, and who received them are unknown. In fact, the only record of bank account activity available shows receipts and disbursements for two non-Keezee scholarships. The administrative assistant for business services told the review team that the district occasionally used the account to receive and disburse monies for scholarships other than the Keezee Scholarship.

As of August 31, 2009, there was a balance of \$637.04 in the Keezee bank account from non-Keezee scholarships that were run through the Keezee account and disbursed to students from 1996 through 2009. **Exhibit 5-4** presents account activity associated with non-Keezee scholarships from 1996 to 2009.

**EXHIBIT 5-4
KEEZEE BANK ACCOUNT ACTIVITY
1996 THROUGH 2009**

YEAR	NON-KEEZEE RECEIPTS	NON-KEEZEE DISBURSEMENTS
1996	\$5,000	\$773.23
1997	\$2,500	\$2,013.01
1998		\$1,195.56
1999		\$441.97
2004		\$578.00
2006		\$991.56
2009		\$869.63
Total	\$7,500	\$6,862.96
Non-Keezee Balance	\$637.04	

SOURCE: LVISD Finance Department, March 2010.

Dormant bank accounts are a poor place for money particularly when it should be awarded as scholarships to deserving students to help pay for college expenses. Most banks classify an account as dormant when it has had no activity, other than transactions initiated by the bank such as interest and charges, for six months. Some banks levy a charge on dormant accounts to offset the cost of maintaining them. Dormant accounts are undesirable also because of the risk of misappropriation of funds if the accounts are not monitored closely.

LVISD should reconstitute the Keezee Scholarship Committee at the high school, establish eligibility requirements for the Keezee Scholarship, and resume making scholarship awards to eligible, deserving students. The superintendent should direct the La Vega High School principal to determine why the Keezee Scholarship Fund became dormant and was allowed to remain so for such a long time. In addition, the board should establish a policy to ensure that bank accounts with no activity after six months be reviewed for further action. Finally, the director of Finance should perform an analysis of the Keezee Scholarship Fund to determine to whom the \$637.04 non-Keezee scholarship funds are owed and immediately disburse the funds. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SAFETY TRAINING (REC. 40)

LVISD does not conduct safety awareness seminars to reduce or avoid workers' compensation claims. The lack of safety awareness creates an environment in which preventable work-related accidents could occur and increase workers' compensation insurance costs.

LVISD's workers' compensation claims experience is low in frequency but high in severity. Two claims comprised 54 percent of estimated costs incurred over the three-year period reviewed. One case involved a teacher's aide who strained her back lifting books; the other involved a teacher whose leg was bruised after being hit by a car.

In comparison to its peer districts, which are school districts similar to LVISD that are used for comparison purposes, LVISD's cost for claims was higher in fiscal years 2007 through 2009. During the period, LVISD had an average of .11 claims per employee at a cost of \$403.20 per claim. Madisonville ISD had .05 claims per employee at a cost of \$64.36 per claim, Taylor ISD had .12 claims per employee at a cost of \$212.91 per claim, and Sweetwater had .13 claims per employee at a cost of \$339.48 per claim. **Exhibit 5-5**

**EXHIBIT 5-5
WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS EXPERIENCE
FISCAL YEARS 2007 THROUGH 2009**

LA VEGA ISD					
YEAR	NUMBER	ESTIMATED COSTS INCURRED	# EMPLOYEES	CLAIMS/EMP.	COSTS/EMP.
2007	16	\$78,861	387	0.041	\$203.77
2008	13	\$12,741	378	0.034	\$33.71
2009	11	\$60,941	370	0.030	\$164.70
Total/Average	40	\$152,543	378	0.106	\$403.20
MADISONVILLE ISD					
YEAR	NUMBER	ESTIMATED COSTS INCURRED	# EMPLOYEES	CLAIMS/EMP.	COSTS/EMP.
2007	7	\$12,343	288	0.024	\$42.86
2008	5	\$3,509	294	0.017	\$11.94
2009	3	\$3,133	303	0.010	\$10.34
Total/Average	15	\$18,985	295	0.051	\$64.36
TAYLOR ISD					
YEAR	NUMBER	ESTIMATED COSTS INCURRED	# EMPLOYEES	CLAIMS/EMP.	COSTS/EMP.
2007	24	\$17,292	510	0.047	\$33.91
2008	26	\$86,231	515	0.050	\$167.44
2009	14	\$6,268	522	0.027	\$12.01
Total/Average	64	\$109,791	516	0.124	\$212.91
SWEETWATER ISD					
YEAR	NUMBER	ESTIMATED COSTS INCURRED	# EMPLOYEES	CLAIMS/EMP.	COSTS/EMP.
2007	25	\$35,390	422	0.059	\$83.86
2008	17	\$36,916	425	0.040	\$86.86
2009	13	\$71,519	424	0.031	\$168.68
Total/Average	55	\$143,825	424	0.130	\$339.48

SOURCE: LVISD and Peer Districts 2007 through 2009 Workers' Compensation Loss Reports and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Reports for Number of Employees.

compares LVISD's workers' compensation claims experience to that of its peers for fiscal years 2007 through 2009.

When LVISD's fiscal years 2007 through 2009 workers' compensation claims are analyzed by worker group, teachers, cafeteria workers, and aides account for 70 percent of accidents and 91 percent of costs incurred. **Exhibit 5-6** presents LVISD workers' compensation claims by worker group.

When claims are analyzed by cause over the three-year period, falls, lifting, and a falling item account for 63 percent of accidents. Falls, lifting, and an automobile accident account for 94 percent of costs incurred during that same

3-year period. **Exhibit 5-7** shows LVISD workers' compensation claims by cause.

When claims are analyzed by type, bruises, strains, sprains, and cuts account for 88 percent of accidents and 97 percent of costs incurred from fiscal year 2007 through 2009. **Exhibit 5-8** presents LVISD workers' compensation claims by type.

LVISD is part of the Deep East Texas Self-Insurance Fund. The district is not self insured but participates in a federation of Texas governmental entities who are members of Deep East. The fund strives to provide quality, competitively priced insurance services to its members and includes governmental entities from across Texas.

**EXHIBIT 5-6
LVISD WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS
BY WORKER GROUP
FISCAL YEARS 2007 THROUGH 2009**

WORKER GROUP	TEACHERS	CAFETERIA	AIDE	TOTAL
Number of Claims	25%	25%	20%	70%
Cost of Claims	40%	15%	36%	91%

SOURCE: LVISD Workers' Compensation Loss Reports, 2007 through 2009.

**EXHIBIT 5-7
LVISD WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS BY CAUSE
FISCAL YEARS 2007 THROUGH 2009**

CAUSE	FALLS	LIFTING	FALLEN ITEM	AUTO	TOTAL
Number of Claims	45%	13%	5%	NA	63%
Cost of Claims	37%	33%	NA	24%	94%

NA = Not Applicable.

SOURCE: LVISD Workers' Compensation Loss Reports, 2007 through 2009.

**EXHIBIT 5-8
LVISD WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS BY TYPE
FISCAL YEARS 2007 THROUGH 2009**

TYPE	BUISE	STRAIN	SPRAINS & CUTS	TOTAL
Number of Claims	38%	20%	30%	88%
Cost of Claims	41%	39%	17%	97%

SOURCE: LVISD Workers' Compensation Loss Reports, 2007 through 2009.

Deep East provides loss reports and statistical data on claims experience to LVISD. However, the district does not use this information to target safety awareness initiatives. Deep East also provides safety awareness workshops and materials such as no slip shoes known as "Grippers for Strippers" and "Shoes for Crews" to its clients. The district purchased 55 pairs of no slip shoes for use by its food service, maintenance, and custodial staff in October 2009. However, Deep East's assistant director told the review team that Deep East offered to provide safety awareness consultation to LVISD as well, but the district decided not to participate. As a result, the district is forfeiting the benefits of having a safety program, which includes increased safety awareness, increased morale among workers, reduced risk of worker injury, improved work quality, increased productivity, and reduced workers' compensation costs.

The Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) implemented a safety awareness and training program to reduce the number and severity of workers' compensation claims. BISD's safety awareness and training program educates and familiarizes employees with safety procedures, rules, and work practices of BISD. New employees receive information on safety during their orientation to the district. The packet of information provided to new employees includes the district's safety policy statement; the employee's safety responsibilities; the basic safety rules; and employee rights and responsibilities under the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.

LVISD should conduct safety seminars for professional, administrative, and auxiliary staff to promote safety awareness and prevent work-related accidents. The director of Finance should direct the benefits coordinator to obtain safety awareness education and training materials from the district's workers' compensation insurance provider. Although the district has not had an unusually high number of claims over the past three years, it has had two costly claims and has the highest claims cost per employee in comparison to its peers. Safety awareness training could reduce accidents and help the district avoid a catastrophic claim that could significantly increase workers' compensation costs. Additionally, it could pay huge dividends if costly accidents are prevented due to district employees being more safety conscious and aware of how to avoid costly injuries. This training can be obtained from Deep East at no cost to the district. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CONTROLLABLE ASSET MANAGEMENT (REC. 41)

LVISD does not use available technology to record, track, and inventory fixed assets and controllable equipment. As a result, the district's fixed asset management system is manual and inefficient. Asset management functions are performed in two departments, and there is no coordination between the two groups. The Finance Department maintains a listing of fixed assets, which are defined as assets costing more than \$5,000 with a useful life greater than one year. The purpose of the listing is to support fixed asset balances in the audited financial statements and to compute and track depreciation on buildings and equipment. The payroll clerk maintains the list on a spreadsheet. The director of Finance monitors fixed asset purchases and informs the payroll clerk when a capital addition needs to be added to the list. The fields on the list include the following:

- Function (Instruction, Food Service, etc.);

- Purchase Year;
- Description;
- Cost;
- Life;
- Beginning Accumulated Depreciation;
- Current Year Depreciation;
- Ending Accumulated Depreciation; and
- Net Book Value.

The list does not have any information to help identify or locate the asset such as asset number or location. Moreover, the listing contains no references to source documents such as purchase orders or invoices. As a result, while the listing supports fixed asset and depreciation amounts in the financial statements, it is not useful as a record of assets to be compared to a listing of assets identified through a physical inventory.

The Technology Department maintains an inventory of computers, laptops, iPods, printers, scanners, and related equipment in various databases. The purpose of the databases is to keep an inventory of the district’s technology assets whether or not they are capital assets. When the district purchases a new technology asset, a Technology Department employee obtains pertinent information about the asset from the packing slip, affixes an identification label onto it, and records the asset into one of several databases depending on the asset type and location. The labels are not bar coded. The director of Technology said that an inventory is performed each year. Although the director showed the review team inventory sheets from the most recent inventory, the information was disorganized, poorly documented, and failed to demonstrate that a thorough, complete, accurate inventory had been performed.

Instead of using a single database with common field names to capture all asset information, the director of Technology uses 31 databases, including 8 databases to record 1,300 desktops, 14 databases for 588 laptops, and 9 databases for 688 other types of equipment such as printers, palm pilots, and scanners. Additionally, the type of data captured is not standardized across each database type. **Exhibit 5–9** provides an example that shows the fields in the desktop and laptop databases. If database fields across all database types were properly conceived and standardized, only 1 database, instead of 31, would be necessary.

**EXHIBIT 5–9
LVISD TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
EQUIPMENT DATABASE FIELDS
2009–10**

DESKTOP DATABASES COMMON FIELDS	LAPTOP DATABASES COMMON FIELDS
Asset Number	La Vega Number
Campus	Last Name
Room Number	First Name
Model Number	Campus
Service Tag Number	Model Number
Monitor Type	Serial Number
Monitor Serial Number	Service Tag
Keyboard Model	Express Service Code
Keyboard Serial Number	Monitor Serial Number
Mouse Model	Keyboard Serial Number
CPU Speed	Comments
RAM Amount	Check Out Date
Operating System Software	Invoice Date
Completed By	PO Number
Inventory Date	Check In Date
Invoice Date	
Vendor	
Customer Number	
PO Number	
Warranty	
Notes	

SOURCE: LVISD Technology Department, Equipment Databases, February 2010.

The district began leasing the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) financial management system supported by Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) in summer 2004 at a cost of \$15,080 per year, which includes installation, training, on-site help, updates, software uploads, and file server support. The RSCCC system includes an asset management module that the district has access to but does not use. If used by the district, the asset management module would enable the Finance and Technology Departments to use a single asset management system that meets the needs of both departments and would allow the Technology Department to consolidate 31 databases into 1. The system provides for the accurate accounting of a district’s land, buildings, furniture, and equipment and establishes responsibility for the custody and use of these items while permitting the district to hold

individuals accountable for items charged to their responsibility based on the asset's location.

The asset management module also provides current information on the quantity, location, age, and life expectancy of assets. Districts can customize the asset management system by indicating what information is to be collected and what catalog and item numbering systems are to be used. As an added control, the system maintains a file of all changes made to inventory records. In this way, administrators can verify the distribution and disposal of fixed asset items. Reports can be printed based on inventory records, which allows for the conducting of a physical inventory of the furniture and equipment items. Inquiries can also be performed of items selected by specified criteria at any time.

Anthony Independent School District (AISD) uses RSCCC's asset management module to record, track, and report on capital assets such as land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment. AISD tags, records, tracks, and reports all fixed asset acquisitions using the asset management module. AISD highlights the following benefits of the module:

- provides a system to value, track, and report items with significant value for accounting purposes;
- enables AISD to meet state and federal cost accounting requirements;
- contributes to the district achieving a good financial rating during annual audits;
- includes a process for annual inventory of assets;
- missing or misplaced assets found during inventory are identified and corrected timely;
- assists in capital budget forecasting for equipment and infrastructure needs;
- provides useful information for risk management/insurance purposes; and
- assists in identifying idle surplus property, thereby preventing unneeded purchases.

AISD has written fixed asset and inventory guidelines. The major features of these guidelines are summarized in **Exhibit 5–10**.

LVISD should utilize fixed asset technology to achieve greater accountability and control over computer equipment and other controllable assets. The director of Finance and the Technology director should spearhead efforts to implement RSCCC's Asset Management Module to improve and streamline the district's asset management processes. Since the Finance and Technology Departments have different

reasons and objectives for tracking assets, they should collaborate on the implementation of the asset management module. These two departments should also jointly establish procedures identifying which types of assets will be tracked and how they will be recorded in the system. LVISD should use AISD's Fixed Assets and Inventory Guidelines as a starting point for establishing its own asset management procedures. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

EXHIBIT 5–10
ANTHONY ISD FIXED ASSET AND INVENTORY GUIDELINES

SECTION	OVERVIEW
Definition	Establishes the definition of a fixed asset as an item, tangible in nature, with a per unit value of \$5,000 or more and having a useful life greater than one year.
Acquisition of Fixed Assets	Describes how fixed assets are acquired through either purchase or donation and discusses how such acquisitions are to be valued and coded.
Inventory Items	Discusses treatment of non-capital assets with a value between \$500–\$4,999. Recognizes that such assets should be tagged because they are susceptible to theft.
Tracking of Fixed Assets and Inventory Items	Establishes organizational unit responsibility for tagging, recording, tracking, and reporting fixed assets in RSCCC.
Delivery/Receipt of Fixed Assets	Establishes delivery destination points within the district for fixed assets based on the type of asset purchased.
Tagging Fixed Assets and Inventory Items	Establishes the responsibility and timing for tagging assets; instructions for tag issuance, numbering, and control; and procedures for items that cannot be tagged, such as software licenses and buildings.
Fixed Asset Inventory Record Card	Identifies the field names for each fixed asset record recorded in the RSCCC Asset Management System. Examples include tag number, acquisition date, description, account code, etc.
Transfer of Fixed Asset or Inventory Item	Establishes procedures for the transfer of fixed assets from one campus/department to another or from one classroom/office to another.
Use of Fixed Assets or Inventory Items	Establishes conditions by which fixed assets may be used by district employees and students.
Surplus Property	Establishes procedures for property that is no longer needed by a campus or department. Also discusses procedures for property disposal and removal of assets from fixed asset records.
Physical Counts	Establishes responsibilities and procedures for annual inventory of fixed assets. Also establishes notification, documentation, and disposal procedures for lost, stolen, or damaged assets.

SOURCE: Anthony Independent School District.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 5: ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT							
38. Expand the use of cash management services to manage cash efficiently and maximize earnings on idle cash balances.	\$3,227	\$4,303	\$4,303	\$4,303	\$4,303	\$20,439	\$0
39. Reconstitute the Keezee Scholarship Committee at the high school, establish eligibility requirements for the Keezee Scholarship, and resume making scholarship awards to eligible, deserving students.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
40. Conduct safety seminars for professional, administrative, and auxiliary staff to promote safety awareness and prevent work-related accidents.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41. Utilize fixed asset technology to achieve greater accountability and control over computer equipment and other controllable assets.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS—CHAPTER 5	\$3,227	\$4,303	\$4,303	\$4,303	\$4,303	\$20,439	\$0

CHAPTER 6

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 6. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In today's global economy, Americans expect publicly-funded institutions to do more with less. School districts are no exception. To thrive in this environment of ever increasing expectations, school districts must find innovative, creative ways to leverage available resources while maximizing learning opportunities for students. Districts must carefully manage scarce financial resources to accomplish their goals. School districts meet these challenges through effective financial management.

Effective financial management ensures that school districts receive and manage all available revenue; make sound financial decisions; operate within carefully crafted budgets; issue timely, accurate, and relevant reports on the financial position; maintain sound internal controls; employ skilled, well-trained staff; and receive favorable audit opinions. Successful financial management involves the following activities:

- design organizational structures and hire qualified employees to ensure that financial transactions are properly captured, categorized, recorded, and reported;
- develop budgets to monitor spending, control costs, and establish accountability;
- employ manual and automated systems and controls to ensure that vendors and employees are paid accurately and timely and to ensure that financial transactions are properly recorded; and
- account for funds in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

A school district's financial operations include payroll, accounts payable, activity funds, budgeting, general accounting, and internal/external auditing. These tasks are critical functions because goods and services must be acquired, paid for, and recorded if the district is to accomplish its core task of educating children. Vendors and employees expect to be paid on time and for the correct amount. Moreover, a variety of legal requirements must be met, such as compliance with the requirements of the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), internal policies and procedures; Generally

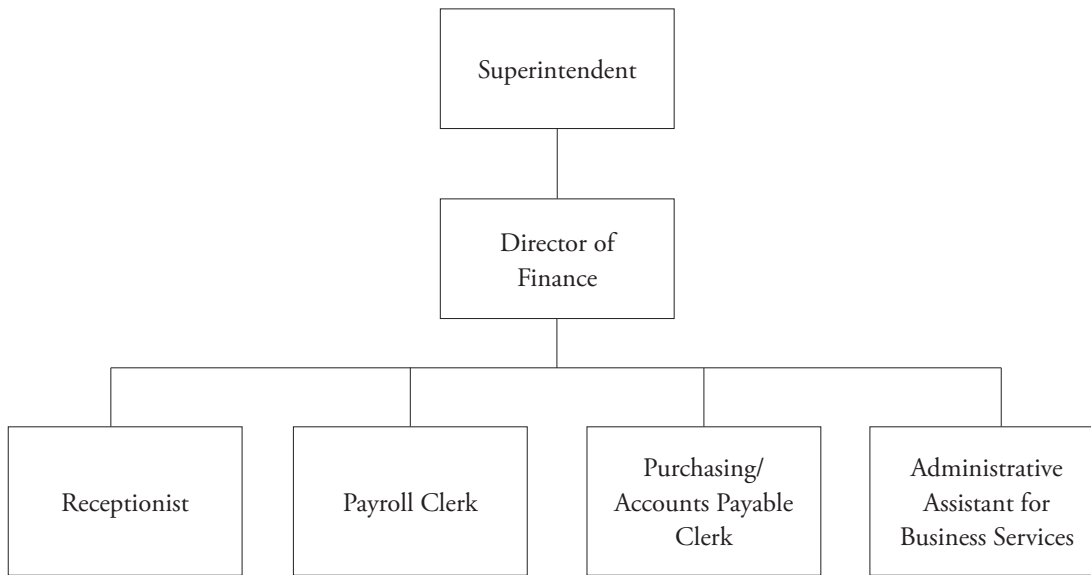
Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP); and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) guidelines.

Finances play a major role in district activities touching every aspect of its operations. Sound financial management enables school districts to use cash, employees, land, buildings, equipment, and supplies efficiently to support the educational process and ensures that adequate resources are available for educating the next generation. Therefore, improving the district's finances will significantly influence the success of educational objectives and priorities.

La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD) adopted General Fund budget for 2009–10 was \$19.9 million of which \$10.3 million, or 52 percent, is allocated for instruction. General Fund revenues consist of \$13.8 million from state revenues (69 percent) and \$6.1 million from local sources, primarily property taxes (31 percent). The district's 2009–10 total tax rate is \$1.239 composed of \$1.04 maintenance and operations and \$0.1989 debt service (interest and sinking).

The director of Finance (director) is responsible for financial management in LVISD. The director coordinates budget activities for the district, estimates and monitors state funding, and oversees the Finance Department. **Exhibit 6–1** presents the organization for the LVISD Finance Department in 2009–10.

**EXHIBIT 6-1
LVISD FINANCE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
2009-10**



SOURCE: LVISD Finance Department, February 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LVISD established procedures and created a standard form for recording and accounting for fundraising activities.
- LVISD implemented measures to improve its financial condition and as a result increased its General Fund balance from a negative \$67,000 at the end of fiscal year 2006 to a positive \$2.7 million at the end of fiscal year 2009.

FINDINGS

- The LVISD Finance Department lacks documented procedures for critical functions, and accounting staff are not adequately cross-trained.
- Although LVISD restored its fund balance from a negative \$67,000 to a positive \$2.7 million between fiscal years 2006 and 2009, the district does not have a fund balance policy.
- LVISD does not have an effective budget development process and does not effectively monitor special program budgets.
- LVISD does not allow budget managers to input their budgets into the budget system and make their own budget transfers.

- LVISD does not promote the benefits of direct deposit among its employees. Seventy-five percent of district employees use direct deposit.
- The LVISD Finance Department lacks sufficient internal controls over the payroll master file.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 42: Develop written procedures for critical Finance Department business processes and ensure that staff are cross-trained to perform such functions.**
- **Recommendation 43: Establish a fund balance policy that contains a target General Fund balance consistent with TEA’s optimum fund balance recommendations.**
- **Recommendation 44: Revise the budget development process to be more collaborative and strategy driven.**
- **Recommendation 45: Provide the access and training that would allow budget managers to enter their own budgets into the budget system and make their own budget transfers.**

- **Recommendation 46: Promote the benefits of direct deposit among employees to increase participation.**
- **Recommendation 47: Implement controls to restrict access to the payroll master file.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FUNDRAISING CONTROLS

LVISD established procedures and created a standard form for recording and accounting for fundraising activities. The new procedures and standard form enable the district to strengthen internal controls over cash receipts by ensuring that the financial aspects of fundraising events are documented, reviewed, and approved before such events occur.

In their 2008 and 2009 audit management letters, LVISD's external auditors cited weaknesses in the district's internal controls over campus-based fundraising activities. The auditors noted in both years that controls over fundraisers were not sufficient to ensure that all monies raised from these events were being accounted for and deposited timely.

In November 2009, the district addressed the issue by updating its *Student Activity Fund Guidelines and Procedures* manual. A new section in the manual entitled, "Fundraising" requires the following procedures:

- Principals must pre-approve all fundraising events.
- Sponsors are responsible for keeping accurate records of items purchased for resale and subsequent sales.
- The Fundraising Approval/Financial Recap form must be used to document pre-approval and accounting requirements.

Also in November 2009, Finance Department staff conducted a seminar to train campus principals on the new fundraising procedures and form. Principals told the review team that students must now submit a proposal for approval before every fundraising event. The proposal allows the principal to establish the type of fundraiser, beginning and ending dates, who will be doing the selling, description of the products to be sold, purpose of the proceeds, a projection of receipts and disbursements, and other pertinent information.

FISCAL DISCIPLINE

LVISD implemented measures to improve its financial condition and as a result increased its General Fund balance

from a negative \$67,000 at the end of fiscal year 2006 to a positive \$2.7 million at the end of fiscal year 2009. This turnaround occurred because in each fiscal year between 2006 and 2007, the district imposed fiscal discipline on the budget process.

During the 2006–07 school year, campus and departmental budgets were reduced by 10 percent. In addition, to ensure that budgeted revenues would not be overstated, the district developed its budget on a reduced average daily attendance (ADA) number. ADA is a factor in calculating state revenues. By underestimating ADA for budget purposes, the district lowered budgeted revenues below what would actually be received from the state. Budgeted expenditures were reduced accordingly. Additionally, the Finance Department, in cooperation with the superintendent's office, carefully reviewed actual purchases and disbursements to ensure that only necessary expenses were being incurred.

For the 2007–08 school year, campuses and departments were asked to establish a 5 percent budget reserve to be used only if necessary. Again, the district developed its budget on a lower ADA number and continued its in-depth review of purchases and disbursements. For the 2008–09 school year, the district continued its practice of underestimating ADA for budget purposes.

These practices, combined with enrollment increases and salary freezes for auxiliary, paraprofessional, and professional employees not on the teacher salary schedule, lifted the district's fund balance to more than \$2.7 million over the three-year period.

DETAILED FINDINGS

PROCEDURES AND CROSS-TRAINING (REC. 42)

The LVISD Finance Department lacks documented procedures for critical functions, and accounting staff are not adequately cross-trained. Knowledge of critical business processes will be lost if it is not documented while experienced employees are still employed with the district. Cross-training is critical to ensuring that accounting and finance operations are not hampered should knowledgeable employees leave the district.

The administrative assistant for Business Services (administrative assistant) has been with the district for 11 years. This individual has more knowledge about the Finance Department's critical business functions than anyone else in the department including the director. However, this

knowledge has not been documented in the form of procedures describing how to perform critical functions. Also, the administrative assistant is the only individual in the department who is cross-trained to perform other duties such as payroll and accounts payable. In fact, Finance Department staff told the review team that if the administrative assistant were unavailable, the district would have to call upon Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) to assist with critical business functions, which include the following:

- processing and recording accounts receivable and cash receipts;
- purchasing and accounts payable;
- processing payroll;
- monitoring daily cash and investment balances;
- journalizing bank reconciling items;
- preparing and entering journal vouchers;
- tracking and maintaining budget amendments and transfers;
- performing general ledger maintenance including reconciliation of asset and liability accounts; and
- preparing Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) financial data submissions.

Written procedures and cross-trained staff are critical components of institutional memory and continuity. Effective written procedures are an important component of internal control because they provide: (1) a permanent record of critical functions and processes; (2) directions for performing critical departmental tasks; (3) a reference for existing employees; (4) a training tool for new employees; and (5) uniformity and continuity of transaction processing when regular employees are unavailable and tasks must be performed by individuals not familiar with the process.

Cross-training is teaching an employee to do a different part of a department's work that is outside of their normal duties. Effective cross-training is good for organizations because it provides more flexibility in managing the workforce and the tasks they perform. Cross-training is good for employees because it allows them to learn new skills, makes them more valuable, and can be effective in reducing worker boredom.

Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) improved efficiency and morale in the Human Resources Department by using well developed

internal quality control processes, standard operating procedures, and cross-training procedures. The department upgraded staff skills, developed clearly written standard operating procedures, and trained staff on the procedures.

FBISD's Human Resources Department maintains a detailed procedures handbook that includes step-by-step descriptions of each process and the procedures used to deliver services, including employment applications, posting of positions, recruitment, adding or reassigning staff, evaluations, transfers, payroll and records retention. Copies of all forms as well as computer screens used in the process are included in the handbook.

The FBISD procedures handbook is updated on a regular schedule. The director of Employee Records reviews the procedures with staff so that improvements are made as part of the overall quality control system within the department. Many of the current employees have served as teachers and principals. Staff are cross-trained to perform other functions and help each other during absences or vacancies. As a result, they serve internal as well as external customers efficiently and effectively.

The LVISD Finance Department should develop written procedures for critical Finance Department business processes and ensure that staff are cross-trained to perform such functions. The administrative assistant for Business Services is already familiar with most of the critical processes in the Finance Department and is already cross-trained to perform them. A common complaint against written procedures and cross-training is lack of time. Such concerns can be addressed through an organized, scheduled approach.

Critical processes should be identified and placed on a schedule showing when procedures for that function will be documented. The director of Finance should instruct each individual responsible for a critical process to document the steps incrementally while they are being performed during the normal work routine. It would not be necessary to complete all of the procedures in one work session. The procedures could be documented in as many sessions as required consistent with the established schedule.

The director of Finance should assign an individual to devise a template to facilitate the documentation of procedures and to ensure a uniform format. Once specific procedures have been documented, a schedule should be developed to cross-train staff using the procedures as a guide. This approach is beneficial because it gives the trainee written instructions to follow while providing a means of testing the procedures for

accuracy, completeness, and usefulness. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FUND BALANCE POLICY (REC. 43)

Although LVISD restored its fund balance from a negative \$67,000 to a positive \$2.7 million between Fiscal Years 2006 and 2009, the district does not have a fund balance policy. Without a policy to avoid unacceptable fund balance levels, the district risks depleting its fund balance again in the future. Fund balance is an important indicator of the financial health of a school district. The General Fund balance is critical because the General Fund is the primary fund through which most school district functions are financed. Moreover, most state aid and local property tax revenue is recorded in the General Fund.

Under current accounting principles school districts classify fund balance into the following categories:

- **Reserved**—not available for appropriation or expenditure, or legally earmarked for a specific future use.
- **Unreserved**—consists of two components:
 - *Unreserved-designated fund balance-earmarked* by the board for bona fide purposes that will be fulfilled within a reasonable timeframe.
 - *Unreserved-undesignated fund balance*-portion of the fund balance that is available for satisfying the regular operating expenditures and commitments of the school district.

In 2009, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued *GASB Statement No. 54, Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions*, which replaces the traditional categories of reserved and unreserved fund balance with five new categories: (1) nonspendable; (2) restricted; (3) committed; (4) assigned; and (5) unassigned. School districts will implement GASB 54 beginning with the 2010–11 school year.

Prudent financial management requires accumulating undesignated unreserved fund balance in the General Fund in an amount sufficient to cover normal operating expenditures. TEA recommends that school districts maintain an optimum unreserved undesignated fund balance equal to the estimated amount to cover cash flow deficits in the General Fund for the fall period in the following fiscal year plus estimated average monthly cash disbursements of the General Fund for the following fiscal year. With the

implementation of GASB 54 in 2010–11, the components of fund balance will change; however, TEA’s recommended optimum level will remain the same but will incorporate new language to accommodate GASB 54 definitions.

Although LVISD’s fund balance has been growing over the past five years, it has remained below TEA’s recommended threshold, thus the need for a fund balance policy. **Exhibit 6–2** presents LVISD’s unreserved undesignated fund balances and the amount by which they fell below TEA’s recommended thresholds for fiscal years 2005 through 2009.

EXHIBIT 6–2
LVISD FUND BALANCE AS COMPARED TO TEA OPTIMUM
FISCAL YEARS 2005 THROUGH 2009

FISCAL YEAR	UNRESERVED UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE	OVER/(UNDER) TEA OPTIMUM
2005	\$1,980,884	\$238,670
2006	(\$67,143)	(\$4,960,186)
2007	\$615,847	(\$4,413,833)
2008	\$2,428,145	(\$2,301,284)
2009	\$2,744,521	(\$1,669,815)

SOURCE: LVISD audited financial statements, 2005 through 2009.

Laredo ISD (LISD) established a General Fund balance goal that exceeded the guidelines established by the TEA and is advancing toward that goal following the instructions established by the board. LISD school board Policy CA (LOCAL) set a goal of attaining an unreserved undesignated fund balance of at least two months’ operating costs within five years. To meet that goal, the policy instructs the superintendent and business manager to implement the following steps:

- develop and submit for board approval a balanced budget with input from site-based decision making (SBDM) committees and instructional programs;
- develop staffing patterns and funding formulas based on a per pupil basis; and
- restrict any surplus funds towards unreserved undesignated fund balance.

LVISD should establish a fund balance policy that contains a target General Fund balance consistent with TEA’s optimum fund balance recommendations. The district has made difficult decisions in the past to rebuild its funding balance; however, it should solidify these commendable actions by

establishing a board policy that prioritizes spending goals and sets fund balance levels. The superintendent should develop a three-year plan with detailed strategies to meet fund balance targets while achieving district goals. The plan should include a three-year forecast of the district’s anticipated enrollment projections, revenue projections, and expenditure projections. The forecast should use the 2009–10 audited financial statements as the baseline. The policy should also require that every agenda item contain a fiscal impact statement showing how the item will impact the fund balance. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT (REC. 44)

LVISD does not have an effective budget development process and does not effectively monitor special program budgets. As a result, there is a lack of collaboration during budget development, strategic objectives are not clearly linked to budget priorities, and special program budgets are under spent.

The district uses an incremental approach to budget development whereby the previous year’s budget and actual expenditures are the starting point for preparing the next year’s budget. While there are advantages to this method such as simplicity, consistency, and stability, the disadvantages are that it lessens the need for campus and district office personnel to collaborate and coordinate on strategic objectives and spending priorities through budget workshops.

LVISD’s budget process begins around April of each year. The Finance Department sends principals and department heads a *Selective Budget Report* and some general instructions for budget preparation. The *Selective Budget Report* is a template of historical budgeted and actual expenditures, by line item, that has a blank column to write in the next year’s budget estimate. The instructions contain general information about LVISD’s decentralized budget process, budgeting for capital equipment, coding, and instructions for submitting the *Selective Budget Report* to the district office.

At the campus level, campus improvement teams meet to discuss the school budget. At the district level, the director of Finance and the superintendent meet with department heads to discuss departmental budgets. In June and July workshops, the director of Finance and the superintendent meet with the board to discuss the budget; however, by that time it is substantially complete. Although these budget reviews and discussions take place, there are no coordinated budget workshops that involve the collaboration, exchange, and

dialogue of all campus, department, and district office budget stakeholders. Budget development is driven by historical experience rather than strategic objectives. Each constituency works in silos around their own individual budget objectives and have no idea how their decisions affect the budget or district as a whole. Therefore, there is little to no incentive for developing new ideas, reducing costs, or justifying budget allocations.

The district’s 2009–10 budget development calendar, shown in **Exhibit 6–3**, demonstrates the lack of collaboration and coordination during budget development. The only budget workshops are between June and August, which is after the budgets have already been compiled.

One consequence of poor budget development is lack of strategic direction during the planning process. Budget development is most effective when the strategic plan and the budget plan are linked. LVISD’s district and campus improvement plans are its strategic planning documents. The plans describe long-range goals as well as strategies and activities for achieving the goals. Each activity identifies the

**EXHIBIT 6–3
LVISD BUDGET DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR
2009–10**

DATE	ACTIVITY
March 27, 2009	Last day to order instructional supplies and materials for 2008–09 school year from General Operating Fund.
April 3, 2009	Last day to order instructional supplies and materials for 2008–09 school year from State Compensatory Education and Federal Funds.
May 1, 2009	Campus/Department General Operating Fund; SCE; and Federal budgets due in Business Office.
May 2009	Compilation and entry of campus/department budgets.
June–August 2009	Budget workshops as scheduled.
June 16, 2009	Preliminary budget discussion with board.
July 21, 2009	Submission and approval of 2009–10 federal budgets. Continue discussion of 2009–10 budget.
August 2009	Public hearing on 2009–10 budget Adoption of 2009–10 budget Presentation of effective and rollback tax rates Adoption of 2009–10 tax rate

SOURCE: LVISD 2009–10 Budget Development Calendar, February 2010.

person responsible, timeline, and resources needed. However, the resources needed column does not effectively link to the budget. It simply lists the amount of money or the type of resource needed without indicating whether the current year's budget includes funding for the activity, where it is included in the budget, and in what amount.

Another consequence of poor budget planning, collaboration, and monitoring is the under spending of special program budgets. LVISD has under spent special program budgets in several instances. First, LVISD has not been spending its special education funds, as required. According to a December 11, 2009 report issued by the district's external auditors, LVISD spent only 67.6 percent of the special education funds it received from TEA; it is required to spend at least 85 percent of such funds the year in which they are received.

LVISD also did not spend \$65,674 in funds that it had carried over from the previous year. According to LVISD's director of Finance, these funds were not spent because they were not carried over to the next year's budget. This oversight could possibly have been avoided had there been greater collaboration among various stakeholders during the budget development process. It could also have been avoided by better tracking at the campus level and greater monitoring at the district level. Principals are responsible for monitoring their campus budgets and expenditures, but the district office has a responsibility to monitor special program budgets to ensure that the funds are being spent in accordance with statutory guidelines.

The lack of budget collaboration and oversight is further demonstrated with the under spending of Career and Technology Education (CTE) funding. Several years ago the district received \$500,000 in CTE grant funding from the state, but the money was not spent because the district did not realize that it had received the funds. The district finally became aware in spring 2009 that it needed to spend the money. Therefore, the district expanded the teaching staff at the high school to include two additional CTE teachers and allocated additional funds to the high school for supplies and materials.

Finally, the TEA Division of No Child Left Behind Program Coordination Initial Compliance Review (ICR) Report for 2009–10 cited the district for not meeting the spending standard for Title I, Part C (migrant students) and Title I, Part D (at-risk students) funds. LVISD was supposed to roll over less than 25 percent for each; instead, they rolled over

49.4 percent of Title I, Part C and 33 percent of Title I, Part D. In both instances, the district was required to spend at least 75 percent of the funds that it received. Instead, they spent only about 50 percent of Title I, Part C funds and only about 67 percent of Title I, Part D funds.

Another consequence of poor budget development is numerous budget transfer requests, which are made to move money to a different line item than was in the adopted budget. Numerous transfer requests are often a sign of poor budget development because budget preparers do not effectively allocate funds among expenditure codes while preparing their budgets. Funds must then be constantly moved to different codes as individual line items are either overspent or under spent. Principals and department heads submitted 878 budget transfer requests between fiscal years 2006 and 2009, an average of 220 per year. Interviews with LVISD's peer districts, which are school districts similar to LVISD that are used for comparison purposes, indicate that they submit far fewer budget transfer requests on an annual basis as compared with LVISD. Madisonville ISD has only had three budget transfers for 2009–10, Taylor ISD had 30 budget transfers total during fiscal year 2009, and Sweetwater ISD reported that they make approximately 45 budget amendments and transfers each year.

One principal told the review team that the reason they issued so many request for budget transfers was because they were unsure how the funds should have been budgeted originally. They said that they could have benefited from more budget workshops where budget coding and expense allocations were discussed. Principals said additional training would have enabled them to properly code their allocation and avoid numerous budget transfers.

Effective budget development provides ample opportunities for collaboration and coordination early in the budget development process. Budget development begins with deliberation over board strategies and initiatives rather than historical expenditures. Workshops are held early to discuss the initiatives, determine how one aspect of the budget affects another, train new budget managers, respond to inquiries about how costs should be classified, and review all funding sources to ensure that all resources have been considered.

For special programs, effective practices include developing a spending plan indicating how a district will use their funds and how much they will use each month or quarter. This plan helps districts avoid under spending funds. For example,

if funds are to be used to buy materials and supplies, program managers will typically purchase the items at the beginning of the school year to ensure the money is spent rather than waiting until later in the year when they may not be able to spend all of the funds.

By developing a sound planning process that ties budget allocations to district and campus improvement plans, Smithville Independent School District (SISD) ensured that funds were effectively directed towards increasing student performance.

SISD's superintendent coordinated the district's improvement initiatives with the budget development process. The business manager sent a budget worksheet to each principal and program director in mid-February. Each principal distributed budget request sheets to the teachers to complete and return to the principal. The principal assembled the request sheets and developed a school budget. The principal submitted the school's budget to the business manager by the end of March.

Next, SISD held budget meetings with all principals and program directors during April. The business manager, campus principals, and the superintendent met to review the budget submitted by each campus and program. Every staff position was reviewed, and any principal who could not properly justify a staff position lost that position.

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

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

By requiring principals to justify their budget requests in terms of campus improvement needs, SISD increased the accountability of campus principals and ensured that

budgeting was made in line with clearly-developed campus plans for increasing student performance.

LVISD should revise its budget development process to be more collaborative and strategy driven. First, the superintendent and the director of Finance should develop a process based on the model shown in **Exhibit 6-4**, which shows how strategic considerations impact budget development.

LVISD should also revise its budget development calendar to begin budget development earlier in the calendar year, around February or March. The superintendent should instruct the director of Finance to schedule workshops with appropriate campus and district office personnel to discuss the district's strategic direction before budget development begins. During the workshops, the superintendent and director of Finance should, in cooperation with all principals, department heads, and other budget managers, ensure that all revenue resources have been identified even if they are not budgeted in the General Fund.

The superintendent and director of Finance should ensure that there is adequate and effective collaboration between the campuses and the district office and that procedures are in place to track and monitor funds from all sources to avoid under spending.

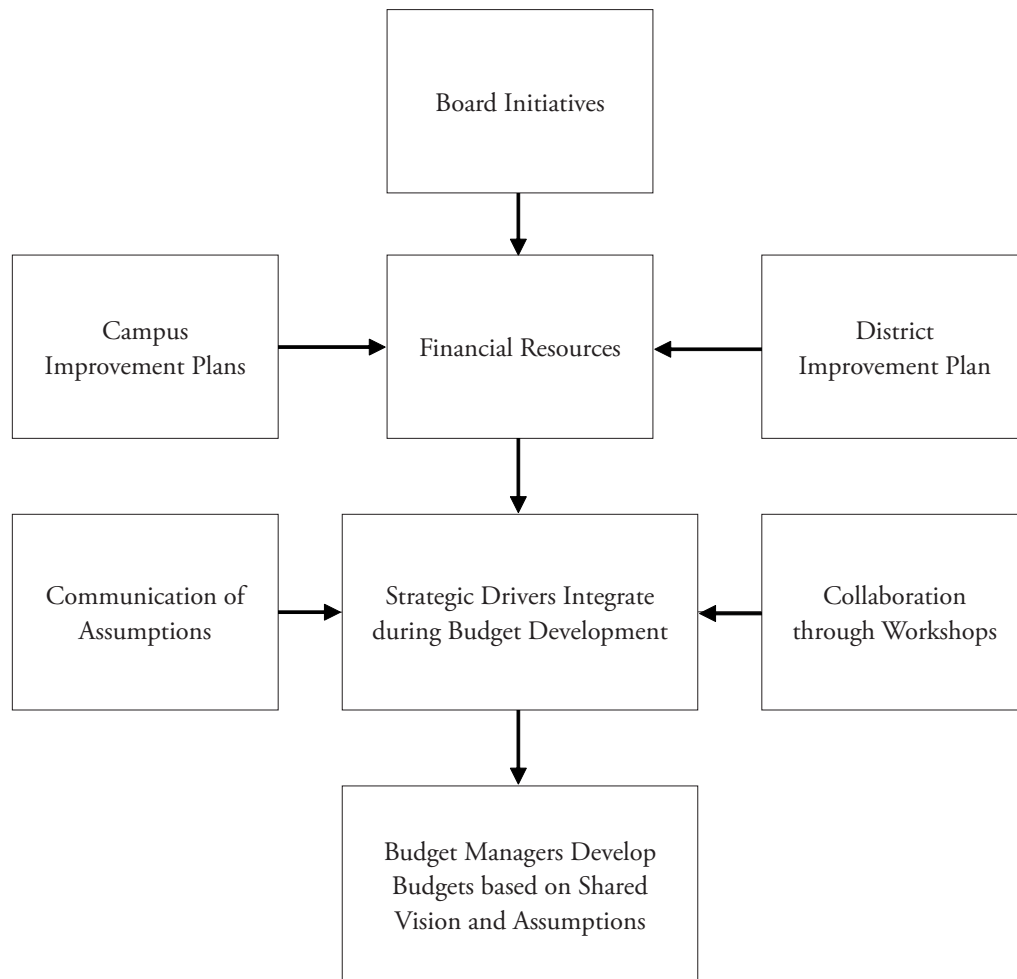
They should also ensure that new budget managers receive adequate training and that sufficient information is provided to help all budget managers allocate their budgets effectively to reduce the number of budget transfer requests made during the year.

Exhibit 6-5 provides a budget calendar adapted from the Clear Creek Independent School District that contains all of the elements of a best practice budget development calendar. LVISD should adapt this calendar to its particular needs and circumstances.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUDGET MAINTENANCE (REC. 45)

LVISD does not allow budget managers to input their budgets into the budget system and make their own budget transfers. This practice is not consistent with the principle of site-based management because budget managers are capable of performing these activities at the campus and department level, but are not provided the access or training to do so.

EXHIBIT 6-4
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT MODEL


SOURCE: Review Team, February 2010.

LVISD budget managers prepare their budgets using a template showing historical budgeted and actual expenditures by line item that has a blank column to write in next year's budget estimate. Once completed, the budget manager forwards the template to the director of Finance who enters the information into the budget module.

When a budget manager wishes to move funds from one line item to another within the same function, they must complete a Budget Transfer Request form and forward it to the Finance Department for review, approval, and entry into the system.

With training, budget managers could input their own budget data and make their own budget transfers. This change would eliminate the need for the director of Finance

to input the data. The director believes it is more efficient for him to enter the data than to train the budget managers to enter it themselves. The director is also concerned that budget managers will make a lot of errors if they input their own budgets. However, the director has many other responsibilities that are critical to the district; data entry is not a value-added activity for such a high-level position. Moreover, effective training reduces the risk of errors, and accuracy, as well as efficiency, will improve over time.

Organizations that allow budget managers to input their own budget information tend to have more efficient processes than those who centralize the activity. Austin Community College (ACC) uses a web-based budget development module. Budget managers enter their budgets online through the college's website, and the budget director compiles the

**EXHIBIT 6-5
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR**

MONTH	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
January	Conduct meetings with the District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC) to gather budget priorities
February	Conduct meetings with superintendent’s cabinet to gather budget priorities Conduct budget workshops to address: Board budget priorities and initiatives Annual salary survey results Initial budget projections
March	Update and revise Budget Preparation Manual Update and revise Budget Worksheets Print budget preparation manual and budget worksheets Distribute budget worksheets and budget preparation manual to budget managers Meet with budget managers to discuss budget procedures and budget coding Conduct budget workshop
April	All centralized districtwide budgets due Input budget data into budget system - centralized districtwide budgets Conduct Budget Review Committee meetings for all centralized budgets Primary campus budgets due Elementary campus budgets due Intermediate campus budgets due Input budget data into budget system - primary, elementary, and intermediate campuses
May	Junior high campus budgets due High school campus budgets due Input budget data into budget system - junior high and high school campuses Review budget data for compliance with budget allotments and budget coding Make revisions to budget input as necessary Prepare budget draft Send budget draft by budget manager, function, and major object to board of trustees Discuss budget for the upcoming school year during regular board meeting as necessary
June	Conduct Budget Workshops as necessary Discuss budget during regular board meeting as necessary
July	Prepare final budget books Adopt budget

SOURCE: Adapted from Clear Creek ISD Budget Calendar, February 2010.

information from a single computer at the central office. ACC’s budget process also allows budget managers to perform their own budget transfers.

The director of Finance should provide the access and training that would allow budget managers to enter their own budgets into the budget system and make their own budget transfers. The director should instruct the administrative assistant for Business Services to develop training materials and a schedule to train budget managers on how to enter their budget worksheets directly into RSCCC’s budget development module and how to make budget transfers. Although time will be required to train the

budget managers, the long-term benefits of distributed processing will outweigh the short-term inconvenience of staff training. Budget managers who are not comfortable with the automated process should receive additional training but should also realize that the benefits of automation can only be appreciated once they overcome the fear of it. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

DIRECT DEPOSIT PARTICIPATION (REC. 46)

LVISD does not promote the benefits of direct deposit among its employees. Seventy-five percent of district employees use direct deposit. This percentage could be

improved with a focused campaign to encourage more participation.

Every employee, when they are hired, is counseled concerning programs available to them through the district, including direct deposit. However, employees’ circumstances could change since their initial hiring, and there is no follow-up mechanism in place to encourage direct deposit participation for those employees who did not sign up when they were hired.

When compared to the peer districts, LVISD has the second highest percentage participation along with Taylor ISD.

Exhibit 6–6 compares LVISD’s direct deposit participation rate to its peers.

**EXHIBIT 6–6
DIRECT DEPOSIT PERCENTAGE
LVISD AND PEER DISTRICTS**

DISTRICT	DIRECT DEPOSIT PERCENTAGE
Madisonville ISD	100%
La Vega ISD	75%
Taylor ISD	75%
Sweetwater ISD	54%

SOURCE: LVISD Finance Department and Peer District Surveys, spring 2010.

Direct deposit is a win-win situation for the district and its employees because it makes payroll processing more efficient for the district and more convenient for the employee. Although many employees may not understand the benefits of direct deposit or trust the process, employees benefit in the following ways by having their paychecks directly deposited:

- saves time;
- eliminates trips to the bank;
- pay is deposited even while employee is out of town or on leave;
- safe and eliminates lost, stolen, or forged paychecks; and
- eliminates potential for paycheck fraud.

Many employers boost direct deposit participation through increased, focused marketing efforts. Some effective methods have included sending employees frequent direct deposit reminders, placing messages on paychecks, training office managers to provide direct deposit information to employees, and partnering with a local teachers credit union to offer

direct deposit when employees open an account. Austin Community College offers direct deposit information on its intranet and websites. Other ACC efforts to increase direct deposit participation have included enrollment fairs on professional development days and appeals during employee orientation when new employees are offered direct deposit and given forms to complete.

While some organizations promote direct deposit through marketing efforts, others, such as Veribest ISD (VISD), require that all employees be paid through direct deposit. At VISD, direct deposit is mandatory. Each employee designates an account at any bank in the county where his or her paycheck is to be deposited each pay period.

Some employees do not participate in direct deposit because they do not have a checking account. Some employers offer a payroll debit card as a direct deposit option for these employees. Instead of a bank account, employees use a payroll debit card at an automatic teller machine to obtain their cash directly, or they use it like a debit card.

LVISD should promote the benefits of direct deposit among employees to increase participation. The superintendent should instruct the director of Finance to expand direct deposit marketing efforts. This can occur through use of the district’s website, district publications, appeals during new employee orientation, and a “direct deposit week” campaign during which the benefits of direct deposit are communicated. Flyers promoting the benefits of the program should be posted at strategic locations throughout the district such as break rooms and teachers’ lounges. In addition, the director should research the feasibility of incorporating payroll debit cards as a payroll payment option. Finally, paycheck stuffers should be used to inform employees about direct deposit options and encourage their participation. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

WEAK INTERNAL CONTROLS (REC. 47)

The LVISD Finance Department lacks sufficient internal controls over the payroll master file. Several employees have access to the payroll master file but do not have any payroll duties. Weak internal controls over the payroll master file could result in unauthorized pay rate changes and disbursements.

LVISD uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) system supported by Region 12 for business administration and student information

management services. LVISD's payroll process is shown in **Exhibit 6-7**.

Five individuals have total access to the payroll master file which is a part of the RSCCC system. They include (1) the administrative assistant for Business Services, (2) the payroll clerk, (3) the benefits clerk, (4) the administrative assistant for Personnel and Administrative Services, and (5) the director of Finance.

The administrative assistant for Business Services is the most knowledgeable employee in the Finance Department. Interviews during on-site work indicated that this individual is cross-trained to process payroll and has done and continues

to do so in the absence of the payroll clerk. The administrative assistant for Business Services is also the system administrator for the department and can assign RSCCC system access rights to others in the department. Although the administrative assistant has had no official payroll duties, the individual maintains access to the payroll master file.

The payroll clerk is responsible for entering hours into the payroll system to process the payroll. However, this individual also has access to change information on the payroll master file, such as account coding, demographic information, and pay rate; it is possible that, due to the lack of sufficient controls, the payroll clerk could make unauthorized changes to the pay rate of any district employee. These changes could

EXHIBIT 6-7
LVISD'S PAYROLL PROCESS
2009-10

1. Employees (non-exempt) punch their timecards each day. Exempt employees are on an exception payroll, meaning they are paid the same amount unless they have extra-duty pay or unless their pay is being docked for some reason.
2. Employees submit their timecards to their supervisor for review and signature.
3. Supervisor forwards timecards to payroll for processing.
4. Payroll reviews the timecards for mathematical accuracy and general correctness.
5. Payroll ensures that any supporting documentation such as Authorization to Pay (ATP) forms accompany timecard for such things as extra duty pay for Saturday school.
6. Payroll clerk corrects obvious errors that do not require clarification.
7. Payroll clerk contacts employee and/or supervisor for issues requiring clarification or to correct errors/discrepancies or to obtain any needed documentation.
8. Obvious errors are corrected by payroll clerk.
9. Payroll clerk enters time into the payroll module of RSCCC.
10. Payroll clerk prints a transaction transmittal that shows the information entered into the system.
11. Payroll clerk compares the information on the transaction transmittal against the timecards.
12. Payroll clerk checks calculations for extra duty pay and overtime.
13. Payroll clerk enters into the system all authorized exempt employee ATPs.
14. Personnel and Administration Department staff enter in changes to the payroll master file.
15. Payroll clerk verifies master file changes.
16. Payroll clerk runs the payroll (there are two pay types: monthly and semi-monthly).
17. Payroll clerk addresses error messages generated by the system, if any.
18. Payroll clerk runs the pre-post routine, which generates the earnings register, deduction register, check register, and pre-post general journal (shows how much money needs to be deposited in bank to cover payroll).
19. Payroll clerk verifies all information on the various reports.
20. Payroll clerk corrects any errors and runs the checks and earnings statements (for direct deposits).
21. Payroll clerk creates an electronic funds transfer (EFT) file with direct deposit information.
22. Payroll clerk transmits EFT file to the bank.
23. Campuses and departments pick up paychecks and earnings statements from district office on payday.
24. Campuses and departments distribute paychecks and earnings statements to employees.

SOURCE: LVISD Finance Department, February 2010.

result in unauthorized payments that would go undetected because no one reviews changes to the payroll master file or verifies the accuracy of payroll checks, which are signed by signature plate.

The benefits clerk and the administrative assistant for Personnel and Administrative Services also have unrestricted access to the payroll master file. While it is appropriate for the Personnel and Administration Department to set up employees in the payroll system, they should not have the same access as the payroll clerk, which would allow them to change a pay rate and also process a check.

In their 2005 audit report, LVISD's auditors cited this condition as a reportable weakness in the district's system of internal control. The auditors noted:

“As we noted in prior year's recommendations dated October 28, 2004, the payroll clerk is responsible for entering salary/wage changes into the payroll master file. We understand that the human resources department submits an approved salary change form to the payroll clerk before changes are made; however, a strong system of internal control restricts the payroll clerk to entering hours worked and other adjustments/deductions to gross pay. Maintenance of the payroll master file should be the responsibility of the human resources department....By redesigning and/or clarifying the functions of the human resources department and the payroll department, the District should strengthen internal controls around payroll costs, which is the largest expense of the District.”

Effective internal controls assist in safeguarding assets from theft or loss from employee dishonesty or error. Segregation of duties is a fundamental component of a strong system of internal control because the basic premise is that no one individual should be able to control a process or transaction from beginning to end. In addition, no one individual should be responsible for the physical custody of assets while also being responsible for maintaining such assets in the accounting records. While segregation of duties is more difficult in small districts, it is not impossible to achieve through ingenuity and greater oversight.

In 1992, the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) issued Internal Control – Integrated Framework (Framework) to help businesses and other entities assess and enhance their internal control systems. In June 2006, COSO issued internal control

guidance for smaller entities. The following are excerpts from the executive summary of their 2006 report:

“Resource constraints may limit the number of employees, sometimes resulting in concerns regarding segregation of duties. There are, however, actions management can take in order to compensate for potential inadequacy. These include managers reviewing system reports of detailed transactions; selecting transactions for review of supporting documents; overseeing periodic counts of physical inventory, equipment or other assets and comparing them with accounting records; and reviewing reconciliations of account balances or performing them independently. In many small companies managers already are performing these and other procedures....By focusing on monitoring activities already in place or that might be added with little additional effort, management can identify significant changes to the financial reporting system..., thereby gaining insight into where to target more detailed testing....”

Webb Consolidated Independent School District (WCISD) provides an example of monitoring as a compensating internal control in small school districts. WCISD was having difficulty maintaining a strong system of internal controls with a limited number of personnel. To address the issue, the district used increased monitoring as a compensating control. Each month, the superintendent provides monthly expenditures to the board of trustees for review and approval. After the board approves the expenditures, the district signs the related checks using a check-signing machine and signature plate controlled by the board. This specific solution may be impractical for LVISD—WCISD's General Fund budget is \$6.7 million compared to LVISD's General Fund budget of \$19.9 million. However, WCISD's approach demonstrates that strong internal controls can be achieved in smaller districts with greater management oversight.

LVISD's RSCCC system generates an audit log that tracks changes made to the payroll master file. As changes are made, the system works in the background, invisible to the user, to record what changes were made, when, by whom, and what the record looked like before and after the change. Users cannot access the file or use it to generate a report. Only Region 12 programmers who support the RSCCC system can access or draw information from the file. However, the director of Information Services at Region 12 said that the report can be generated upon request. Although the report cannot be readily produced by LVISD, it could be requested

periodically and used as a compensating control to monitor changes to the payroll master file.

LVISD should implement controls to restrict access to the payroll master file. First, the director of Finance should ensure that access to the payroll module is only granted to individuals who process payroll. Since the completion of on-site work, the payroll clerk has left the district so the administrative assistant for Business Services is currently doing payroll with assistance from Region 12. This position needs access now, however when a new payroll clerk is hired, and the administrative assistant is no longer doing payroll, this position's access should be suspended.

Second, the director of Finance and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration should

work together to ensure proper segregation of duties between their two departments. The Personnel and Administration Department should maintain the payroll master file while the payroll clerk should only be able to enter hours worked and other adjustments to gross pay. The director of Finance should review and approve these adjustments each pay period.

Finally, the director of Finance should request a copy of the audit log report from Region 12 at least monthly so that the director and the superintendent or her designee (other than the directors of Finance and Personnel) can review and monitor any changes to the payroll master file. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL	ONE TIME
						5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 6: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT							
42. Develop written procedures for critical Finance Department business processes and ensure that staff are cross-trained to perform such functions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
43. Establish a fund balance policy that contains a target General Fund balance consistent with TEA's optimum fund balance recommendations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
44. Revise the budget development process to be more collaborative and strategy driven.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
45. Provide the access and training that would allow budget managers to enter their own budgets into the budget system and make their own budget transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
46. Promote the benefits of direct deposit among employees to increase participation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
47. Implement controls to restrict access to the payroll master file.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 6	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

CHAPTER 7

PURCHASING AND TEXTBOOKS

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 7. PURCHASING AND TEXTBOOKS

The purchasing function is a major component of school district operations and plays a large role in supporting financial accountability in Texas public schools. State, federal, and local purchasing statutes, laws, and regulations establish boundaries in which districts are to conduct purchasing activities for obtaining the best value for the goods and services required for district operations. Although school districts are required to comply with all government purchasing regulations, La Vega ISD's (LVISD) governing board has broad discretion to establish stricter local policies than the government regulations. Therefore, an effective and efficient purchasing structure requires processes and procedures to ensure that the required goods and services are obtained through competitive processes, they meet district needs, and they comply with governmental regulations.

LVISD does not have a formal purchasing department. Instead, the purchasing function is part of the Finance Department and is structured as a centralized operation to coordinate all purchase requirements for the district. The purchasing function is led by the director of Finance (director) who reports to the superintendent. The accounts payable/purchasing clerk is responsible for mailing and monitoring purchase orders and processing vendor update reports to the director. The director is responsible for processing bid requests. LVISD does not have a formal contract management function.

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

The district operates a central warehouse for paper products, custodial supplies, and maintenance supplies. All other merchandise, including textbooks, is ordered through a

purchase order and delivered directly to the respective campus or department.

LVISD's requisition process is automated. Purchase requisitions are entered at each school and department by the designated administrative assistant. Workflow then routes the requisition through the electronic approval process until it reaches the superintendent for final approval. Budget funds are encumbered at the time that it is approved by the campus principal or department head. Automation enables the district to process purchase requisitions in a timely and controlled manner. Encumbering funds at the time of requisition provides for instant budget updates and prevents over spending budgets. LVISD processed 1,843 purchase orders between August 1, 2009 and January 31, 2010 totaling \$1,628,391 and 3,131 purchase orders in 2008–09, totaling \$1,833,530.

The director of Elementary Education oversees textbooks. However, textbook management is decentralized with each school being responsible for textbook receipt, distribution, and inventory. The schools also levy fines for lost and damaged textbooks. Money collected for these fines is deposited into the district's operating bank account and credited to the school's activity fund on the general ledger.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- LVISD's campuses and departments are encouraged to make their purchases through three purchasing cooperatives.

FINDINGS

- LVISD lacks written policies and procedures for the purchasing, textbook management, and contract management functions.
- LVISD does not use evaluation committees to promote neutrality in the bidding process.
- LVISD's accounts payable and purchasing functions lack adequate segregation of duties.
- The central warehouse maintains inventory and employs two full-time staff to manage warehouse orders and deliveries, even though it does not have its own budget.

- LVISD is planning to establish a centralized receiving function without having first conducted a cost/benefit study.
- LVISD does not conduct regular physical inventories of warehouse goods and lacks an accurate inventory valuation.
- Inventory control over textbooks is inadequate in LVISD.
- LVISD lacks a formal contract management process for centralized monitoring of contracts and vendor performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 48: Develop a written, comprehensive policies and procedures manual for the purchasing, textbook management, and contract management functions and provide training to all district staff on the policies, regulations, and procedures.**
- **Recommendation 49: Establish evaluation committees to evaluate proposals and bids before submitting recommendations to the board for approval.**
- **Recommendation 50: Reassign some of the accounts payable/purchasing clerk's responsibilities to other department and district staff to ensure appropriate segregation of duties in the accounts payable and purchasing functions.**
- **Recommendation 51: Identify all costs associated with warehouse operations and develop an annual enterprise fund budget to fund warehouse operations.**
- **Recommendation 52: Conduct a full cost/benefit study to determine the effectiveness of a central receiving function prior to implementation.**
- **Recommendation 53: Conduct a comprehensive inventory of district warehouse goods on a regular basis.**
- **Recommendation 54: Develop and implement procedures to ensure adequate control over textbooks districtwide.**

- **Recommendation 55: Implement a formal contract management process for centralized monitoring of contracts and vendor performance.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

LVISD's campuses and departments are encouraged to make their purchases through three purchasing cooperatives. The district provides information and web addresses regularly to campuses and departments so that they can research products and prices. The three cooperative purchasing programs are: Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12), Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Buy Boards, and Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN). LVISD buys most of their goods and services to support instructional, administrative, athletic, technology, and other operations of the district through these cooperatives.

The purchasing cooperatives do not charge fees to use their services. Benefits of participating in cooperatives include streamlining the purchasing function, providing access to a greater variety of goods and services, and enabling the district to obtain competitive pricing and purchasing terms. Another benefit of participating in purchasing cooperatives is that they process their bids in accordance with state purchasing requirements, allowing the district to spend less time on solicitations for commonly purchased items.

DETAILED FINDINGS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL (REC. 48)

LVISD lacks written policies and procedures for the purchasing, textbook management, and contract management functions. Effective policy and procedure manuals are an important tool for promoting a strong control environment and for training school district personnel in policies and procedures.

The accounts payable/purchasing clerk distributes lists of approved vendors throughout the school year to campus and department requisitioners. However, the lists are no substitute for written policies and procedures. For example, the lists do not include spending thresholds showing at what expenditure level a request for proposal or bid is required. The lists also do not contain instructions for activities such as purchasing fixed assets and technology equipment, using blanket purchase orders, or resolving vendor disputes. Without a detailed and comprehensive policies and procedures manual, LVISD employees could unknowingly violate district and

state requirements. They could also spend more time than necessary completing transactions.

With respect to textbook management, LVISD does not have written policies requiring fines assessed for lost and damaged textbooks to be submitted to the district office. The director of Elementary Education oversees textbooks. Teachers at each campus are responsible for tracking textbook damages and losses then completing damaged/lost textbook notices, which are sent to parents. Teachers are also responsible for reporting this information to the campus textbook coordinator. Each school tracks fines assessed and collected. However, when asked to provide a summary of fines collected, campus personnel could not provide the information. Instead they provided lists with the student's name, the fine assessed, and handwritten lines drawn through the names of those who had either found the book or paid the fine. The lists did not contain total fines assessed and collected.

The district has three service contracts: (1) Sodexo for Child Nutrition Service operations; (2) Durham Transportation for school bus operations; and (3) American Bank for bank depository services. The Sodexo and Durham contracts are for outsourcing of major functions of the district and were budgeted at \$845,973 and \$923,625 respectively for 2009–10. Despite having these contracts, LVISD does not have written policies and procedures to guide how the contracts will be executed and administered. For example, LVISD employees working in Child Nutrition Services and transportation operations do not know to whom they should report suggestions and complaints. Additionally, there are no performance measures in place for either of these contractors.

Section 3.2.1 of the *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG) states that every school district, large or small, should have written policies and procedures for the purchasing function. The manual should be designed to assist campus and department level personnel in purchasing supplies and services. The manual would include vital purchasing rules and guidelines that are consistent with relevant statutes, regulations, and board policies. **Exhibit 7–1** lists the 16 purchasing manual guidelines identified in the FASRG.

Well written policy and procedure manuals serve as guidance to district employees on the district's policies and processes. The manuals should be user friendly and contain enough details so that any authorized employee can understand how to follow district procedures correctly. They should also

EXHIBIT 7–1 FASRG'S PURCHASING MANUAL GUIDELINES

- Purchasing goals and objectives
- Statutes, regulations, and board policies applicable to purchasing
- Purchasing authority
- Requisition and purchase order processing
- Competitive procurement requirements and procedures
- Vendor selection and relations
- Receiving
- Distribution
- Disposal of obsolete and surplus property
- Request for payment vouchers and repair and service of equipment
- Bid or proposal form
- Purchase Order form
- Purchase Requisition form
- Receiving report
- Vendor Performance Evaluation form
- Request for Payment voucher

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*, January 2010.

contain completed examples of all forms used in the processes.

McAllen Independent School District has a well developed purchasing manual that includes board policies and competitive purchasing guidelines. The manual is provided to all campuses and departments and is also available online along with forms and a comprehensive listing, by category, of awarded vendors along with the Request for Quotes (RFQ) or bid number, the bid description, and bid information. The manual also includes approved vendors for campus activity fund purchases. The purchasing manual provides step-by-step instructions with process flows and screen shots for processing purchase orders, bid procedures, payments, return of merchandise, capital outlay requests, vendor relations, donations, and deadlines. The purchasing department also provides comprehensive training each year to all campuses and departments.

LVISD should develop a written, comprehensive policies and procedures manual for the purchasing, textbook management, and contract management functions and provide training to all district staff on the policies, regulations, and procedures. The manual and forms should also be provided online and be updated each year. State laws and local policies should be

used for the foundation of the manual. The director of Finance should obtain copies of other districts' manuals and use the *TEA Purchasing Manual – Model Content Outline* for guidance on the purchasing processes. At a minimum, LVISD's manual should include the following:

- board policies;
- competitive purchasing thresholds;
- request for prices and bids process and forms;
- instructions for purchasing through approved purchasing cooperatives;
- complete and approved purchasing cooperative and vendor listing;
- textbook distribution;
- textbook inventory and reporting process;
- textbook fines – assessing, collection, and submission to district office;
- monitoring performance and compliance with terms and conditions of contracts for outsourced operations;
- complaint and comment procedures for contracted services and outsourced operations;
- management report preparation and deadlines for contracted services and outsourced operations;
- forms and completed samples; and
- details of all processes and when each one applies.

Upon completion of compilation of the manual, it should be approved by the superintendent. Once the manual is completed and approved, the director of Finance should provide a comprehensive training session to district employees. The manual should be updated annually and training should be provided at the beginning of each school year. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

EVALUATION COMMITTEES (REC. 49)

LVISD does not use evaluation committees to promote neutrality in the bidding process. The director of Finance is responsible for preparing requests for bids, receiving bid responses, performing bid evaluations, and making award recommendations to the board. This means that when reviewing and determining the awarding of a contract for an external provider of services, such as in the current food

service and transportation operations, the director is solely responsible for all aspects of the bid, evaluation, and award process.

Attorney General Opinion DM-14 (1991); §11.151(b), Texas Education Code, states that in order to lessen the possibility of an irregularity involving favoritism toward a particular vendor, a district may want to have two employees from separate departments involved in evaluating competitive procurement offers.

Failing to appropriately document bid purchases exposes the district to challenges by vendors who were not awarded the project. TEC §44.031 specifically requires that the district consider the following items when awarding a bid:

- purchase price;
- reputation of the vendor and of the vendor's goods or services;
- quality of the vendor's goods or services;
- extent to which the goods or services meet the district's needs;
- the vendor's past relationship with the district;
- the impact on the ability of the district to comply with laws and rules relating to historically underutilized businesses;
- total long-term cost to the district to acquire the vendor's goods or services; and
- any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposals.

Denison ISD (DISD) uses evaluation committees to evaluate proposals and bids prior to presenting them for approval by the school board. In April 2010, DISD utilized an evaluation committee and specific criteria to determine what vendor would be awarded the contract for their food service operations. **Exhibit 7–2** shows the proposal award criteria and allocation of points the DISD evaluation committee used in their food service proposal evaluation process.

LVISD should establish evaluation committees to evaluate proposals and bids before submitting recommendations to the board for approval. The committees should be led by the director of Finance and comprised of representatives from the requesting department(s). This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**EXHIBIT 7-2
FOOD SERVICE PROPOSAL AWARD CRITERIA
DENISON ISD**

CRITERIA	POINT VALUE
Service Capability	10
Experience, References	20
Doing Business With Like School Systems	20
Financial Condition/Stability	20
Accounting and Reporting Systems	10
Innovation	10
Promotion of the School Food Service Program	10
Possible Total	100

SOURCE: Denison Independent School District, April 2010.

PURCHASING SEGREGATION OF DUTIES (REC. 50)

LVISD's accounts payable and purchasing functions lack adequate segregation of duties. The accounts payable/purchasing clerk mails and monitors purchase requisitions, enters invoices into RSCCC, maintains the vendor master file, and initiates vendor payments. The same individual initiates purchase requisitions for the Finance Department.

Segregation of duties is an important internal control intended to prevent, or decrease the risk of errors or irregularities; identify problems; and ensure that corrective action is taken. Segregation of duties is accomplished by ensuring that no single individual can control a process or transaction from beginning to end.

LVISD generates purchase requisitions electronically through the district's online purchasing system. After requisitions have been approved on paper by appropriate department or campus personnel, requisitions are created online in the information system and progress through the electronic workflow to the appropriate approvers. The director of Finance reviews the requisitions for appropriate account coding and forwards them to the superintendent for final approval.

The Finance Department accounts payable/purchasing clerk mails approved purchase orders to the originator and vendor. Once the goods or services have been received, the campus or department completes a receiving report, which is a copy of the purchase order stamped with the received date and initialed by the approver. The campus or department forwards the receiving report to the Finance Department. The accounts payable/purchasing clerk matches the vendor's

invoice to the purchase order and receiving report then processes the invoice for payment.

Segregation of duties is more difficult to achieve in small school districts because there are fewer people among whom tasks can be divided. However, in a well designed system in which internal controls are in place, each of the major functions now performed by LVISD's accounts payable/purchasing clerk is conducted by a different person. In many small businesses, there may not be enough people in the business function to accomplish adequate segregation of duties. Because a lack of segregation of duties creates the potential for fraud, small school districts must "think outside the box" and assign certain duties to individuals outside the business office.

LVISD should reassign some of the accounts payable/purchasing clerk's responsibilities to other department and district staff to ensure appropriate segregation of duties in the accounts payable and purchasing functions. The superintendent's administrative assistant should print and mail the purchase orders after they are approved by the superintendent; vendor files should be established and maintained by a clerk other than the accounts payable/purchasing clerk, and Finance Department purchase orders should be entered by a clerk that does not have access to the vendor master file or process invoices. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CENTRAL WAREHOUSE BUDGET (REC. 51)

The central warehouse maintains inventory and employs two full-time staff to manage warehouse orders and deliveries, even though it does not have its own budget. Instead, the cost of maintaining the central warehouse is included in various departmental budgets. Preparing a separate warehouse budget would enable the district to better monitor warehouse costs and conduct cost/benefit analyses.

The warehouse is located in an old high school cafeteria/kitchen. The facility, which is climate controlled, stocks paper, chemicals, vacuum cleaner parts, custodial supplies, and maintenance supplies such as lights and ballasts. In addition, leftover supplies of school and office supplies are stored in the warehouse. At one time these supplies were regular stock items, but they have been outsourced through direct order to local office supply outlets. In addition, LVISD's Child Nutrition Services uses the warehouse freezer to store frozen goods. The warehouse has 9,975 square feet of space, including a records area. **Exhibit 7-3** provides the warehouse space allocation. Although the space allocations

**EXHIBIT 7-3
LVISD WAREHOUSE SPACE ALLOCATION**

AREA	SQUARE FEET
Main Warehouse	
Building	5,846
Rack & cage area	935
Sub-Total	6,781
Old Warehouse	
Warehouse	2,360
Records area	594
Sub-Total	2,954
Food Service	240
Total	9,975

SOURCE: LVISD Warehouse Operations, February 2010.

are identified as main warehouse and old warehouse, all locations are included under one roof.

Enterprise funds are used to account for operations where pricing policies of the activity establish fees and charges designed to recover its costs, including capital costs such as depreciation or debt service. Using enterprise funds also allows costs and revenues associated with an activity such as a warehouse to be readily identified and tracked.

LVISD should identify all costs associated with warehouse operations and develop an annual enterprise fund budget to fund warehouse operations. Costs to be considered in development of the budget include salaries, benefits, inventory, utility costs, and maintenance costs. These budgeted costs should be allocated to the users by including them in the pricing of goods provided to campuses and departments. All charges and fees would also be accounted for in the warehouse enterprise fund.

There would be no additional costs or savings to the district to implement this recommendation as the budget funds would be reallocated from the various departments that they are currently included.

CENTRAL RECEIVING (REC. 52)

LVISD is planning to establish a centralized receiving function without having first conducted a cost/benefit study. Currently, schools place supply orders to vendors and then receive the merchandise directly at the schools. School staff are then required to submit a receiving report to the accounts payable/purchasing clerk at central office in order for the invoice to be paid.

Beginning in the summer of 2010, all goods ordered by schools and departments will be shipped to the district warehouse. Once received, the goods will be counted and delivered to the respective school or department by the warehouse delivery person. This procedure is being implemented due to challenges obtaining accurate counts and timely receiving reports from schools and departments. With this change, the district risks incurring unnecessary costs without improving controls. Schools will still need to count supplies delivered from the warehouse to verify the delivery. Additionally, any savings from purchasing supplies in bulk may not cover the cost of running a warehouse.

Operating a central warehouse and receiving function can increase convenience and result in bulk order savings. However, these benefits must be weighed against the costs of maintaining the warehouse. Such costs include building and energy, security, maintenance, warehouse staff, delivery equipment, inventory control, inventory damage, shrinkage, and obsolescence. A simplified warehouse cost model is shown in **Exhibit 7-4**.

Section 3.2.6.4 of the FASRG addresses centralized receiving. It states that distribution procedures should be in place for goods received at central locations. Receiving personnel may contact the ordering campus or department to inform them that goods have been received. Personnel should then distribute goods according to the specifications to the proper location and/or staff members. For control purposes, the requesting campus or department should then compare goods received to its copy of the purchase order to ensure that they agree.

LVISD should conduct a full cost/benefit study to determine the effectiveness of a central receiving function prior to implementation. The Director of Finance and warehouse manager should work together to conduct this analysis, and the analysis should be updated on an annual basis to evaluate the benefit of central receiving operations.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources as the cost/benefit study can be completed by district staff.

WAREHOUSE INVENTORY (REC. 53)

LVISD does not conduct regular physical inventories of warehouse goods and lacks an accurate inventory valuation. The employee who was in charge of counting and receipting inventory, processing internal requisitions for warehouse items, and updating the inventory system retired, and a

**EXHIBIT 7-4
WAREHOUSE COST MODEL**

COST DESCRIPTION	COST
WAREHOUSE OCCUPANCY (OVERHEAD)	
<p>Cost per square foot – cost to build, modify, or lease the warehouse divided by the number of sq. feet. This amount should be allocated to the storage space by type of good inventoried/sold and/or the space allocated to each department.</p> <p>Estimated pest control for the year.</p> <p>Estimated utilities for the year (electricity, gas, garbage, information technology infrastructure fees, telephone, etc).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total cost of warehouse occupancy</p>	
DELIVERY EQUIPMENT	
<p>The normal life cycle of warehouse delivery trucks is 5 years. The formula for determining equipment cost is: Cost to replace each truck \$ _____ / by 5= \$ ____ x the number of trucks ____ = \$ _____.</p> <p>Estimated fuel, oil, grease, and tires.</p> <p>Estimated vehicle repair cost.</p> <p>Estimated vehicle insurance cost.</p> <p>Estimated motor vehicle license fees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total cost of delivery equipment</p> <p>Salary and Benefits</p> <p>Salaries of warehouse staff</p> <p>Benefits of warehouse staff</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total cost of salary and benefits</p>	
INVENTORY INVESTMENT	
<p>Inventory can be a hidden cost as money invested in the inventory could be in the bank earning interest. Furthermore, the risk of inventory loss becomes a cost to the district. Calculate the inventory investment cost by multiplying the average dollar value of the inventory by the interest rate.</p> <p>Average month end inventory \$ _____ x current interest rate ____% = Inventory investment cost.</p> <p>There are three ways to assign the risk of maintaining an inventory. A district should choose one:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replacement cost if the total inventory was lost. (Use the highest inventory value of the year). 2. The cost of inventory losses during the previous year. 3. The insurance cost on the average monthly inventory value. Include the insurance deductible cost also. <p style="text-align: right;">Total cost on inventory investment</p>	
<p>Summary of Warehouse cost</p> <p>Warehouse occupancy cost total</p> <p>Delivery equipment cost total</p> <p>Salaries and benefits total</p> <p>Inventory investment cost total</p> <p>Total warehouse cost</p> <p>SOURCE: Adapted by review team from the National Food Service Management Institute.</p>	

replacement began working in the warehouse in February 2010. The August 31, 2009 inventory value was \$106,034. **Exhibit 7-5** provides a summary of the inventory values.

Conducting physical inventories on a regular basis is a good business practice, increases internal controls, and allows a school district to reconcile its physical inventory with the general ledger in a timely manner. There are three types of

EXHIBIT 7–5
LVISD WAREHOUSE INVENTORY VALUE
AUGUST 31, 2009

DESCRIPTION	VALUE
Custodial & Janitorial Supplies	\$45,397
Maintenance (includes lighting)	\$13,063
Paper and office supplies	\$47,574
Total	\$106,034

SOURCE: LVISD Warehouse Operations, February 2010.

inventory methods that are common industry practices: (1) cycle counts; (2) full inventory at fiscal year end; and (3) full inventory at a time other than fiscal year end. Cycle counts are when a district inventories different portions of their warehouse at various times throughout the fiscal year. The advantages of conducting cycle counts include early detection of problems relating to the school district's inventory and it allows for greater emphasis to be placed on high risk items by conducting more cycle counts in those areas than in lower risk inventory areas.

Rockwall ISD's (RISD) warehouse personnel conduct a physical inventory at the end of each month. Staff members estimate that the inventory takes approximately three hours. Warehouse staff compares the physical count to the count in the automated Warehouse Inventory System, noting differences. The director of Purchasing reviews and approves a variance report sent to the Business Office. The Business Office personnel adjust any variances in the physical count and the system count online.

LVISD should conduct a comprehensive inventory of district warehouse goods on a regular basis. The director of Finance should determine the inventory method to use, then direct warehouse personnel to conduct a complete inventory using this method to obtain updated balances. Additionally, the inventory database should be updated each time items are received or delivered to schools and departments. A reconciliation report should be developed and provided to the Finance Department each month. The report should show the beginning balance, additions, sales, adjustments for damaged goods, and shrinkage, and ending balances. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

TEXTBOOK MANAGEMENT (REC. 54)

Inventory control over textbooks is inadequate in LVISD. The district does not have a comprehensive textbook inventory to identify total textbooks on hand, where they are

located, and the value. Textbook operations are not centralized and textbook orders, distribution, and inventory records are not maintained at the district office. While the district has a position assigned to textbook management, there is no monitoring of textbook operations. Schools do not complete textbook inventories in a consistent manner. Currently, textbook management is assigned to the director of Elementary Education. However, it is one task among many other education-related responsibilities. In addition, each school has identified a textbook coordinator who is usually an assistant principal or clerical assistant.

Each school is responsible for maintaining textbooks and conducting inventory, but they each have different methods of tracking textbooks. The high school, intermediate, and junior high schools have automated textbook systems while the elementary and primary schools track textbooks with manually prepared lists.

Survey respondents indicate that there is a difference of opinion regarding the availability and condition of textbooks. Principals, assistant principals, and teachers agree that textbooks are issued in a timely manner, but only 31 percent of students agree. Only 16 percent of students agree that textbooks are in good condition. **Exhibit 7–6** summarizes the survey results.

Textbooks are the property of the state of Texas as long as they remain in adoption by the state, and districts are responsible to the state for lost textbooks. The TEC, Chapter 31, and 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 66, provide the rules by which the state adopts and distributes textbooks. TAC §66.107 states that each school district shall conduct an annual physical inventory of all currently adopted instructional materials that districts have requisitioned and that the state has delivered to districts. The district shall record the results of the inventory in the district's files.

LVISD should develop and implement procedures to ensure adequate control over textbooks districtwide. The director of Elementary Education should maintain the position of districtwide textbook coordinator. This position should work with campus textbook coordinators to develop a uniform set of procedures to be used across all campuses related to textbook orders, distribution, and inventory. Once these procedures are developed, they should be approved by the superintendent, shared with all district staff, and implemented in a timely fashion. The district should also implement the automated textbook inventory system at all campuses to strengthen the textbook management function. District staff

**EXHIBIT 7-6
LVISD SURVEY RESULTS
TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS**

QUESTION	PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS AGREE	PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS NO OPINION	TEACHERS AGREE	TEACHERS NO OPINION	STUDENTS AGREE	STUDENTS NO OPINION
Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	80%	20%	78%	16%	31%	19%
Textbooks are in good shape.	90%	10%	73%	13%	16%	21%
There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	Not Asked	Not Asked	Not Asked	Not Asked	22%	15%

SOURCE: Review Team Surveys, February 2010.

responsible for the coordination of the textbook function should be evaluated on their performance with regard to this important function in their annual performance evaluations.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is estimated to be a one-time cost of \$2,000 for additional licenses for the automated textbook system to be purchased for use at the elementary and primary schools.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 55)

LVISD lacks a formal contract management process for centralized monitoring of contracts and vendor performance. The director of Finance informally serves in the role of contract manager for dealing with contractors, but there is no formal, identified, central point of contact at the district with whom staff can discuss problems or concerns with the contracting entities. As a result, the district cannot ensure consistency and timeliness of contract monitoring and performance status. If there is no consistent, formal contract review process, the district risks entering into unfavorable contractual arrangements and not enforcing the contract terms and conditions.

LVISD has outsourced its child nutrition services and transportation operations to management companies through formal contracts. District employees report directly to each company’s manager responsible for overseeing the contract. The assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration handles problems related to district employees and the management companies on an informal basis, but there are no formal, written processes in place for

employees to report complaints or concerns about the management companies to LVISD’s district office.

LVISD’s contract process begins with the campus or department notifying the Finance Department of needed goods and services. The director of Finance then reviews the requirements, checks for available funds, and issues a Request for Proposal (RFP). Upon receiving bids, the board of trustees receives the recommendation for approval. Once the board of trustees approves the vendor, a contract is executed.

Contract management includes negotiating contract terms and conditions, ensuring compliance with the contract terms and conditions, and documenting agreed contract changes. A recent study concluded that almost 65 percent of businesses participating in the study reported that contract lifecycle management has reduced their exposure to financial and legal risks.

A properly completed vendor evaluation form is an industry best practice and is part of the contract management function. The form provides evidence that contract terms are being monitored, appropriate records are maintained, vendor performance is being evaluated, contracts are managed for close-out, and contract results are evaluated.

Section 3.2.2.5 of the FASRG states that a system for the evaluation of vendors and their performance is important to support an effective purchasing function.

Factors to consider for inclusion in the evaluation are:

- timeliness of deliveries;
- service availability;

- completeness and accuracy of order; and
- quality of products or services received.

The FASRG goes on to state that whenever a problem occurs with a vendor, it is important to document the problem noting the date with an accurate description of the problem. A school district should also contact the vendor and keep a record of all phone calls, including the dates and what was discussed. This record of information about vendor performance is very important in the evaluation of the vendor.

Effective contract management ensures that a vendor fulfills all legal obligations and delivers acceptable and expected service. Effective contracts include measures that establish adequate performance such as task completion dates, vendor payments and penalties, and specific standards about exactly what constitutes adequate performance. Contract management requires a clearly identified scope of work, terms of the contract, performance criteria and measurements, and any special provisions.

School districts, such as Dallas ISD, Cedar Hill ISD, and other governmental entities have established contract management policies and procedures to ensure that their contracting processes are efficient and effective; avoid legal, ethical, and conflict of interest problems; include measurable performance standards; and evaluate existing procedures and standards.

LVISD should implement a formal contract management process for centralized monitoring of contracts and vendor performance. LVISD's superintendent should assign contract management functions to the director of Finance and include these functions in the position's job description. A formal contract management function will allow the district to better monitor, evaluate, and support vendor performance and contract renewals. Furthermore, identifying an LVISD employee as contract manager to review and approve all transactions related to contracts would enhance the monitoring of compliance with contract terms and provisions. It would also provide employees and district staff with a single point of contract for reporting and resolving complaints about contractor performance.

Responsibilities that should be assigned to contract management include:

- establish and monitor contract performance measures;
- dispute resolution;
- amendment/contract modification facilitation;
- liaison for LVISD employees assigned to outsourced operations;
- contract extension facilitation;
- contract closeout and termination processing and reporting; and
- management reporting of contract performance.

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
CHAPTER 7: PURCHASING AND TEXTBOOKS							
48. Develop a written, comprehensive policies and procedures manual for the purchasing, textbook management, and contract management functions and provide training to all district staff on the policies, regulations, and procedures.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
49. Establish evaluation committees to evaluate proposals and bids before submitting recommendations to the board for approval.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
50. Reassign some of the accounts payable/purchasing clerk's responsibilities to other department and district staff to ensure appropriate segregation of duties in the accounts payable and purchasing functions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
51. Identify all costs associated with warehouse operations and develop an annual enterprise fund budget to fund warehouse operations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
52. Conduct a full cost/benefit study to determine the effectiveness of a central receiving function prior to implementation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
53. Conduct a comprehensive inventory of district warehouse goods on a regular basis.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
54. Develop and implement procedures to ensure adequate control over textbooks districtwide.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,000)
55. Implement a formal contract management process for centralized monitoring of contracts and vendor performance.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 7	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,000)

CHAPTER 8

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 8. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

Effective child nutrition services operations provide students and staff appealing and nutritious meals at a reasonable cost in an environment that is safe, clean, and accessible. These operations must comply with federal and state regulations, and local board policy. The United States Congress created the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in 1946 to “safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritional agricultural products.” The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). These are federally-assisted meal programs operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions.

School districts that participate in the NSLP and SBP must serve students meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional value and offer free or reduced-price meals to eligible students. When school districts participate in the NSLP and SBP, they receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each eligible meal served at schools.

LVISD’s Child Nutrition Services (CNS) mission statement is to ensure that every student is offered a high quality, well balanced, nutritious meal at breakfast and lunch, with friendly service, by a quality staff observing high sanitation and safety standards, using cost-effective management practices, and following the child nutrition program guidelines. LVISD’s CNS operations are contracted to Sodexo, a national food service vendor. Sodexo is responsible for all CNS functions, including meal reimbursement claims, purchasing, and cafeteria operations. Sodexo provides a general manager for operations while CNS staff are employees of the school district. The current contract, based on a fixed meal price, is set to expire on June 30, 2010, and may be renewed for four additional terms of one-year each upon mutual agreement between LVISD and Sodexo.

Exhibit 8–1 provides an overview of the structure of CNS operations in LVISD for 2009–10.

The following terms will be used for the remainder of this chapter:

- CNS director refers to the Sodexo manager responsible for food service operations.

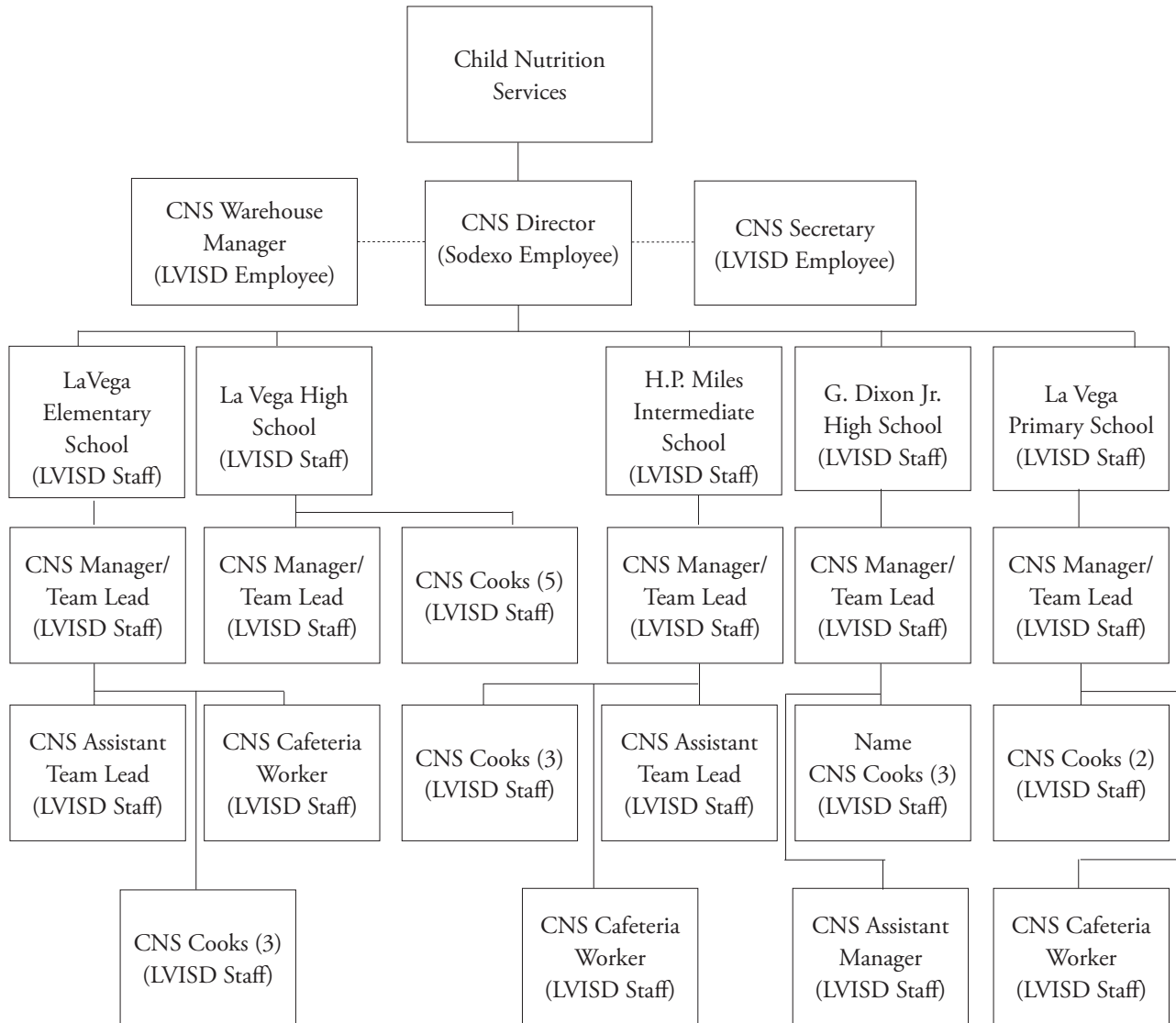
- CNS manager refers to the cafeteria managers at each school. These individuals are LVISD employees.
- CNS workers refer to all CNS staff at schools. These individuals are LVISD employees.

All LVISD schools have fully operational cafeterias. La Vega High School (LVHS) operates as an open campus, meaning that students are allowed off school property for their lunch period. LVISD CNS workers prepare all food that is served for breakfast and lunch. Students enter serving lines and select what items they would like on their tray, including milk or juice from the beverage coolers. Students either enter their student identification number on a keypad or tell the cashier their student identification number. In September 2009, CNS implemented the NutriKids® Point-Of-Sale system at each school to account for all meals served. The automated point-of-sale (POS) system identifies students as eligible for a full-priced, reduced-price, or free meal. Students that are required to pay for meals have the option of paying in advance and having the money placed in their personal meal account or paying for each meal as they go through the serving line. Each school’s cafeteria operations are connected to the school district’s wide area network.

LVISD participates in the NSLP and the SBP. Eighty percent of the district’s current students are economically disadvantaged and qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. CNS served 135,551 breakfasts and 212,838 lunches from August 1, 2009 through January 31, 2010. Meal participation rate is the number of students eating a meal at school compared to the average daily attendance. LVISD’s breakfast participation rates were 50 percent and lunch participation rates were 79 percent from August 1, 2009 through January 31, 2010.

LVISD schools meet the eligibility criteria for severe need as defined by the USDA and receive an additional \$0.02 cents for every lunch served and an additional \$0.28 for every reduced-price or free breakfast served. The 2008–09 LVISD Food Service revenues were \$1,597,249 and expenses were \$1,562,457. Of the total 2008–09 revenues, federal reimbursements were 87 percent, state reimbursements were two percent, and local sales were 11 percent. CNS had a fund balance of \$65,186 as of August 31, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 8-1
LVISD CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES
OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE
2009-10**



SOURCE: Prepared by review team based on interviews, April 2010.

FINDINGS

- LVISD’s child nutrition services contract and operations lack adequate oversight.
- LVISD’s Child Nutrition Services (CNS) does not have a trained pool of substitute workers to help perform the duties of those workers who are absent.

- LVISD does not prepare and distribute CNS financial reports to major stakeholders on a monthly basis.
- LVISD’s current meal pricing structure and contract costs exceed the revenues generated per full-priced meal.

- LVISD Child Nutrition Services workers are not receiving adequate training to perform their job assignments effectively.
- LVISD does not have participative menu planning to increase student satisfaction with meals served and does not use its point of sale (POS) system to determine menu item popularity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 56: Renegotiate the contract, including clarifying vague contractual language outlining the reporting relationships and the division of responsibilities between the contractor and the district to ensure adequate oversight of the child nutrition services contract and operations.**
- **Recommendation 57: Ensure the implementation of a substitute cafeteria worker labor pool program to provide qualified resources in peak periods and when CNS workers are absent.**
- **Recommendation 58: Develop financial reports of CNS operations to enhance financial controls, monitoring of operations, and accountability of CNS managers.**
- **Recommendation 59: Renegotiate the contract, and while giving consideration to the current economic conditions, evaluate meal prices charged and adjust the prices to at least equal the reimbursement rate received for each full-priced student meal served.**
- **Recommendation 60: Use the Food Safety Plan as a training tool and establish an annual training schedule for all CNS employees.**
- **Recommendation 61: Establish a CNS advisory board to develop menus and begin utilizing the point of sale system to its fullest capacity, including recording the entrées being sold on a daily basis.**

DETAILED FINDINGS

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 56)

LVISD's child nutrition services contract and operations lack adequate oversight. The district has informally designated the director of Finance to oversee compliance with the contract terms and conditions, and he serves as the district's authorized representative for communication and compliance

with the CNS vendor regarding the district's contract. In addition, the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration is the school district official that handles all human resources (HR) issues and inquiries involving CNS managers and workers, who are all LVISD employees. Despite the contractual agreement between the district and Sodexo, the lack of adequate oversight of operations, as a result of vague contractual language, has impacted the district in the following ways:

- Section G, Employees, Item 6 on page 19 of the contract states that Sodexo is responsible for supervising employees, with supervision activities specified to include employee and labor relations. The Employee section of the contract does not address substitutes, and neither the district nor Sodexo requires substitute workers to be used or use of substitute workers when CNS workers are absent. Since the completion of on-site work, both the vendor and the director of Finance have verified that the district and Sodexo are attempting to identify a reliable temporary agency in the Waco area that could provide quality temporary workers beginning in the 2010–11 school year to assist in backfilling for absent CNS workers.
- Although Section G, Employees, Item 6 on page 19 of the contract states that Sodexo is responsible for training personnel, the frequency and type of training to be provided are not specified. CNS workers stated that they have not received training from Sodexo on anything except the new POS system. This was confirmed through training documentation provided by the district.
- The food service contract does not contain specific performance goals for the vendor (Sodexo) to meet. Performance goals such as profitability targets, customer satisfaction scores, and meal participation claim accuracy are critical components of determining effective and efficient food service operations. Subsequent to the completion of on-site work, documentation was provided by the vendor which shows monthly invoices on the costs (fixed price) associated with meal participation. However, documentation showing profitability targets and customer satisfaction scores was still lacking, demonstrating the need for specific performance goals to be set by the district for the vendor to meet. This was confirmed by the director of Finance who

stated that any surveys and/or customer satisfaction scores, if conducted, are not being shared with district officials.

- Section K, Books and Records, Item 1 on page 32 states that Sodexo shall submit monthly operating statements...no later than 10 days after the end of the month. Information reported during on-site work indicates that the only financial reports that are prepared for CNS operations are provided by the external auditors on an annual basis. However, subsequent to on-site work, documentation was provided by the vendor which shows monthly invoices on the costs (fixed price) associated with meal participation. The documentation provided showed the monthly invoice having been submitted 26 days after the end of the month (18 working days). The district states they expect no problems in having the monthly invoices submitted within the allowed timeframe. However, as confirmed by the director of Finance, no monthly operating statements are submitted by the vendor to the district.
- Section D. Use of Advisory Group/Menus, Item 1 on page 13 states that the district is to establish and Sodexo is to participate in the formation, establishment, and periodic meetings of an advisory board composed of students, teachers, and parents to assist in menu planning. This board has yet to be established. Since the completion of on-site work, documentation was submitted by the vendor suggesting that the CNS director actively participates in the regularly scheduled Parent Advisory/School Health Advisory/Safe & Drug Free Schools and Communities Committees as well as the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) where line flow, quality of food served, menu planning, menu choices, and other related items are allegedly discussed. However, after careful examination of the documents, including committee(s) meeting minutes, the review team could not confirm membership or active participation by the CNS director in discussing CNS issues in these committees. As a result, menu planning by an advisory board composed of students, teachers, and parents is still nonexistent.
- Reporting relationships and the division of responsibility between Sodexo and LVISD are not clear. The CNS director is a Sodexo employee while all other employees are paid by LVISD, and the reporting

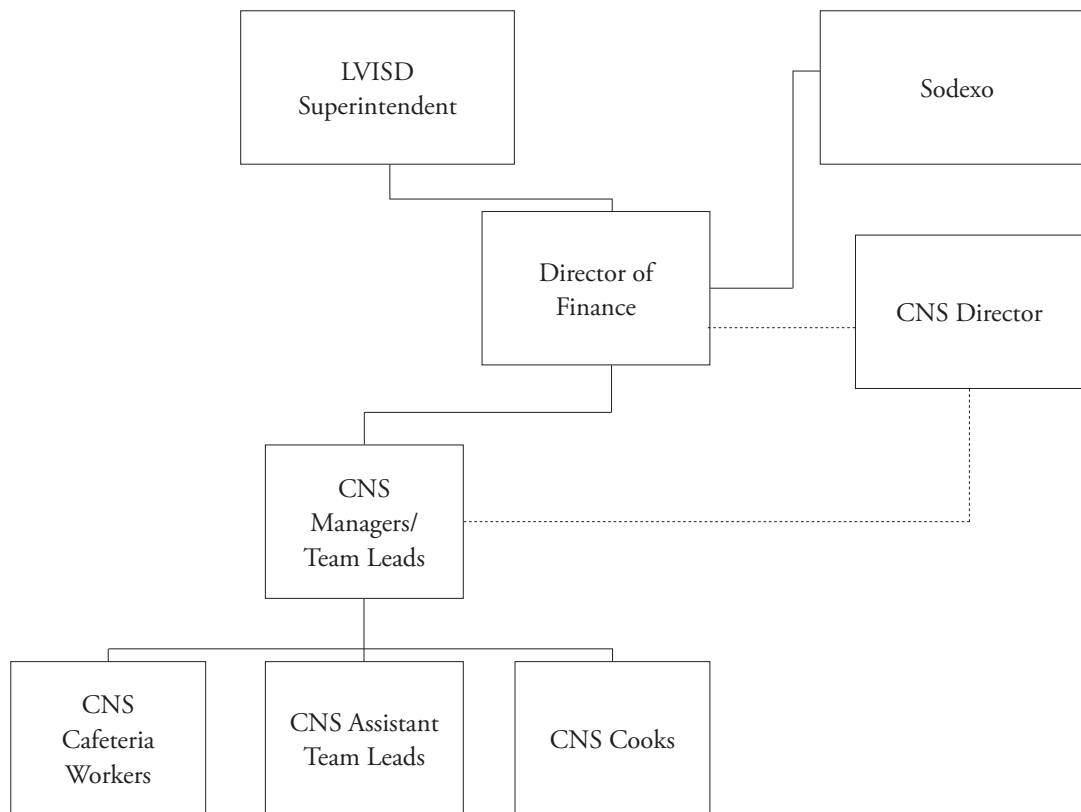
structure is not clearly and adequately defined. The CNS managers stated that they are instructed by LVISD to follow protocol, which is to report to the CNS director. Additionally, CNS managers reported that they request needed cooking utensils and other supplies but seldom receive any items requested as Sodexo selects all of the equipment. Subsequent to the completion of on-site work, the vendor provided a list of equipment along with copies of invoices showing the purchase of equipment for the 2009–10 school year. However, no documentation was provided as to who and how this equipment list was generated, how the purchased equipment was divided amongst the five campuses, or whether or not there is an inventory of CNS equipment and supplies being conducted at each one of the five campuses on a regular basis.

Atlanta Public Schools in Atlanta, Georgia have also outsourced Child Nutrition Service operations to a management company while the CNS staff members are district employees. The district has clear reporting responsibilities whereby a district employee is assigned to oversee the contract and address employee, administration, parent, and student concerns.

LVISD should renegotiate the CNS contract, including clarifying vague contractual language outlining the reporting relationships and the division of responsibilities between the contractor and the district to ensure adequate oversight of the child nutrition services contract and operations. As indicated in **Exhibit 8–2**, the CNS managers should report directly to the director of Finance and have a secondary reporting relationship with the CNS director. The CNS director should have a secondary reporting relationship with the director of Finance. The revised reporting structure should be communicated to CNS workers by the director of Finance through a departmental meeting that includes the CNS director. The following issues should also be addressed and resolved during the contract renegotiation process: substitute usage requirements, specific training requirements and the provision of such training, preparation of monthly financial reports, and performance measurements for financial and operational results. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Exhibit 8–2 shows the recommended operational and organizational structure for CNS operations.

**EXHIBIT 8-2
PROPOSED LVISD CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES
OPERATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



SOURCE: Developed by review team, April 2010.

STAFFING AND PRODUCTIVITY (REC. 57)

LVISD's Child Nutrition Services does not have a trained pool of substitute workers to help perform the duties of those workers who are absent. Most LVISD campuses have a full CNS worker complement, but there are no substitutes available when staff members are absent. Therefore, present workers must perform their own duties as well as the duties of workers who are absent. CNS workers are also expected to prepare food for catering when the district requests catering services, in addition to their regular cafeteria duties.

Productivity in food service operations is measured in meals per labor hour (MPLH), which is monitored by Sodexo at LVISD. The food service industry established the MPLH standards based upon the number of meals and meal equivalents served and the type of food preparation. It is a

critical indicator that many successful food service organizations use to control labor costs. MPLH increases as the number of workers preparing meals decreases. Therefore, when worker absences are not filled with substitutes, there is more work that has to be completed by fewer employees. **Exhibit 8-3** provides an example of how worker absences impact MPLH.

In calculating MPLH, one reimbursable lunch is considered a meal. Breakfast, à la carte sales, and snacks are converted to one reimbursable lunch based upon a formula prior to calculating MPLH. Most school districts use MPLH as a guide to staffing levels as it provides the necessary information to make quick labor adjustments as needed.

Exhibit 8-4 shows industry standards and the district's actual MPLH by campus for September 2009. Compared to

**EXHIBIT 8–3
WORKER ABSENCE IMPACT ON MPLH**

DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	NUMBER
Number of Workers	6	5
Average Hours per Day per Worker	7	7
Total Hours per Day	42*	35*
Number of Meals Served per Day	500	500
Average MPLH	12**	14**

*Calculated by taking the Number of Workers x Average Hours per Day per Worker.

**Calculated by taking the Number of Meals Served per Day/Total Hours per Day.

SOURCE: Review Team calculations, March 2010.

industry standards, the district's average MPLH is five MPLH above the low standard and two MPLH above the high standard. At the campus level, all schools are within the low standard and three are within the high standard. La Vega Primary School (LVPS) reported the best MPLH with 11 MPLH above the low standard and 8 MPLH above the high standard.

As outlined in **Exhibit 8–3**, the practice of not backfilling for absent staff members could be helping to raise the MPLH results since less labor hours are required to prepare the same volume of meals that would be required if the cafeteria was fully staffed. Also, additional stress is placed upon staff when they are required to complete the tasks of others in addition to their own in a high-paced environment.

Since the completion of on-site work, both the vendor and the director of Finance have verified that the district and Sodexo are attempting to identify a reliable temporary agency in the Waco area that could provide quality temporary workers beginning in the 2010–11 school year to assist in backfilling for absent food service workers.

Some districts have implemented practices that provide low-cost options for developing and maintaining qualified labor pools to substitute for CNS workers when they are absent. For example, Clint ISD's Food Service Department implemented a volunteer program that develops qualified labor pools while saving on labor costs. The volunteer program consists of individuals from the local community who commit 180 hours of unpaid time to the Food Service Department. The department requires volunteers to obtain a food handler's permit and complete a criminal background check, a waiver related to job accidents, and eight hours of classroom instruction. In return for their commitment, the district provides the individuals with hands-on training in food service operations.

Dripping Springs ISD's (DSISD) Child Nutrition Department has implemented an innovative solution to finding trained workers by initially hiring new staff as substitute workers. The district trains these substitutes and requires that they work 30 days as substitutes before hiring them for a permanent kitchen position. This solution also ensures that new hires are compatible with the Child

**EXHIBIT 8–4
LVISD CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES
MEALS PER LABOR HOUR BY CAMPUS
SEPTEMBER 2009**

SCHOOL	AVG. MEALS EQUIVALENT*	ACTUAL MPLH	INDUSTRY STANDARD LOW END	INDUSTRY STANDARD HIGH END	VARIANCE - LOW END	VARIANCE - HIGH END
La Vega High School (LVHS)	452	16	14	17	2	-1
La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC)	414	15	14	17	1	-2
La Vega Intermediate School H. P. Miles Campus (LVISHPMC)	614	20	16	18	4	2
La Vega Elementary School (LVES)	753	24	17	19	7	5
La Vega Primary School (LVPS)	407	26	14	17	11	8
TOTALS/AVERAGES	528	20	15	18	5	2

*Calculated by the review team from total student lunches + equivalent à la carte sales + (total student breakfast/3).

SOURCE: LVISD Opportunity Assessment, September 2009 and Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition, by Dorothy Pannell-Martin, Revised July 2000.

Nutrition Department and the kitchen in which they are placed.

For a district the size of La Vega, an additional option would be for the district to consider creating a pool of two substitute workers to cover for those workers who are absent. The fiscal impact for creation of this substitute pool of two workers is \$15,660 per year assuming that they would work each of the 180 school days ($\$7.25$ per hour \times 6 hours per day = $\$43.50$ per day \times 2 workers = $\$87.00$ per day \times 180 days = $\$15,660$). The five-year fiscal impact would be $\$78,300$ ($\$15,660$ per year \times 5 years).

LVISD should ensure the implementation of a substitute cafeteria worker labor pool program to provide qualified resources in peak periods and when CNS workers are absent. Options for consideration include a volunteer program such as that in Clint ISD, a substitute-to-hire program such as that in Dripping Springs ISD, or the creation of a permanent substitute pool to cover for absent workers. The decision on which type of substitute program to implement should be made jointly with the food service vendor, and as outlined in Recommendation 56, the requirement to provide substitute workers when CNS workers are absent should be incorporated into the Sodexo contract.

No fiscal impact is assumed for this recommendation, as the district must first consider its options prior to implementing a substitute cafeteria worker labor pool program.

FINANCIAL REPORTS (REC. 58)

LVISD does not prepare and distribute CNS financial reports to major stakeholders on a monthly basis. Instead, information received during on-site work indicates that the annual financial statements prepared by the external auditors are the only financial reports that are prepared for the CNS operations. However, since the completion of on-site work, the vendor has submitted documentation demonstrating information on revenues and expenditures (unaudited—budget vs. actual). The director of Finance confirmed to the review team that the submission of such monthly reports was once commonplace, but is no longer the case since the district and the vendor agreed to a fixed price (meal participation) contract beginning in the 2009–10 school year.

LVISD is responsible for payroll and miscellaneous costs associated with CNS operations while Sodexo is responsible for food production costs such as food purchases, small equipment and utensil replacement, and the general

manager's salary. As a result of this division of operating cost responsibilities, LVISD does not currently capture all of the information to generate financial reports and at present does not know which cafeteria operations are profitable or losing money.

LVISD monitors monthly invoices to budget and the final contribution to fund balance (profit or loss) at the end of the year while Sodexo's general manager monitors participation and productivity results but not profitability for each campus. Furthermore, CNS managers do not have input into the planning and budgeting process nor have access to profit and loss or production reports. CNS workers are required to keep food preparation costs down, but are not provided with any financial information to analyze profitability. While the district's contract with Sodexo provides for monthly reporting responsibilities on the part of the contractor, the "monthly operating statements" language in the contract is vague and it has been verified by the director of Finance that the vendor is not meeting this contractual requirement.

Best practices in the food service industry recommend that four financial and operating reports be distributed to district management and the board of trustees so that they can monitor and evaluate the cash flow of operations and take corrective action if needed. The reports are: (1) budget, (2) profit-and-loss statement, (3) balance sheet, and (4) cash flow statement.

According to the *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors*, the number one requirement for cost control management is an accounting system and procedures that provide accurate and timely financial information and reports. Profit and loss statements should be compared each month, and to the same month one year prior, to spot sudden changes or possible errors. Additionally, profit and loss statements should be distributed to each campus within ten days of month end. **Exhibit 8–5** provides seven financial reporting tools, the optimal frequency that they should be prepared, and whether LVISD uses and distributes them to its campus managers.

Financial statements are important to successful child nutrition services operations as they highlight areas of strength in addition to improvement needs and information against which to measure performance. They can also be used as comparisons to prior periods to spot trends, improvements, and decline thereby allowing management to take appropriate steps in a timely manner. CNS workers should be able to use these reports to monitor and track key operating and financial

EXHIBIT 8-5
LVISD FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING EVALUATION
2009-10

REPORT/DESCRIPTION	USES	OPTIMAL FREQUENCY	USED BY THE DISTRICT	DISTRIBUTED TO CAFETERIAS
Budget: Illustrates a plan for financial management according to each account.	<p>Allows informed decisions and financial forecasts for the next year through the use of historical, economic, and demographic data, projected enrollment, menu changes, and changes in operational procedures.</p> <p>Allows a forecast of financial performance for the next year.</p> <p>Allows comparisons between actual and forecasted performance.</p>	Annual with monthly monitoring.	Yes, but is not prepared by campus and is not used for monthly monitoring by campus level.	No
Costing food and service.	Allows for informed decision-making about purchases and the continuation of products and services.	Daily	Performed by Sodexo for their internal operating purposes.	No
Revenue received from lunch and breakfast.	Allows identification of major sources of revenue such as free, reduced-price, paid, à la carte, or other.	Daily	Yes	No
Balance Sheet: Illustrates the financial position of the account at a point in time.	Allows a comparison of current balances with balances at the end of the month of the prior year.	Monthly	Limited to the annual financial report prepared by LVISD's external auditor.	No
Profit and Loss Statement: Illustrates what is left after all expenditures are paid.	<p>Allows identification and analysis of increases or decreases in participation or expenses.</p> <p>Allows identification of school making a profit or experiencing a loss.</p> <p>Allows administrators to determine where key issues/problems exist.</p>	Weekly or Monthly	No	No
Statement of Changes: Shows changes in working capital from year to year.	Allows for the monitoring of net increases in working capital requirements.	Annually	Limited to the annual financial report prepared by LVISD's external auditor.	No
Key Operating Percentages: Trends, Expenditures, and Revenues over time.	<p>Allows management and staff to monitor expenditures over time including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food cost percentage Labor cost percentage Other costs percentage Break-even point Inventory turnover Participation rates Average daily labor costs Average hourly labor costs 	Monthly	Limited to meal participation rates.	Limited to meal participation rates.

SOURCE: Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors by Dorothy Pannell, revised July 2000 and interviews with LVISD Child Nutrition Services staff and the director of Finance, February 2010.

measures (for example, net profit or loss, student participation, meals per labor hour, food costs, and wages). The director of Finance can also use the reports to identify and discuss favorable and/or unfavorable trends or variances each month with Sodexo to adjust operations as appropriate.

LVISD should develop financial reports of CNS operations to enhance financial controls, monitoring of operations, and accountability of CNS managers. The director of Finance should develop financial report templates and work with Sodexo to obtain the data, then generate and distribute monthly profit and loss statements, budget reports, and key operating comparison reports no later than ten days after the end of each month. As outlined in Recommendation 56, goals for financial and operational improvement should be set for Sodexo and each CNS manager. These goals should include the accuracy of meal participation recording in the POS system and resulting reports, the profitability of each cafeteria, and the MPLH for each cafeteria. Furthermore, contract and employee evaluations should contain an element for performance against goals. As appropriate, the food services contract should be renegotiated to contain specific information regarding specific financial reporting requirements from Sodexo. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

MEAL PRICING AND CONTRACT COSTS (REC. 59)

LVISD's current meal pricing structure and contract costs exceed the revenues generated per full-priced meal. Each full-priced lunch served results in a financial loss for the district. Additionally, the district receives less revenue per meal from students who pay than it does from reimbursements for students receiving free and reduced-price meals. As a result of the pricing structure, revenues from free and reduced-price student meals are subsidizing full pay student meals.

The amount paid to Sodexo combined with LVISD labor and non-contract costs exceed the revenues generated per full-priced meal. Sodexo receives \$1.3973 per breakfast, lunch, à la carte, and snack served. On average, each full-priced meal served results in a \$0.3868 loss at the primary, elementary, and intermediate schools and a \$0.0868 loss at junior high and high schools. **Exhibit 8-6** provides the revenue and cost per meal (lunch) by type of meal served and campus level.

Exhibit 8-7 summarizes the differences in meal prices versus reimbursements for free and reduced-price meals. The differences range from \$0.23 cents per meal served at the

junior high and high schools to \$0.53 per meal served at the primary, elementary, and intermediate schools. The difference can be accounted for by the \$0.30 difference in price between a full-priced student meal at the junior high and high schools and a full-priced student meal at the primary, elementary, and intermediate schools ($\$2.20 - \$1.90 = \$0.30$).

Peer districts are school districts similar to La Vega ISD that are used for comparison purposes. LVISD's full-priced lunch prices fall in the middle as compared to its peer districts whose prices range from \$1.75 to \$2.00 for elementary lunch and \$2.00 to \$2.25 for secondary lunch. **Exhibit 8-8** provides a comparison of meal prices charged by LVISD compared to the peer districts.

Interviews conducted with LVISD personnel indicate that an increase in meal prices has been considered by the district and the board, but there is hesitance to implement this change given the current economic climate.

The director of Finance should renegotiate the contract, and while giving consideration to the current economic conditions, evaluate meal prices charged and adjust the prices to at least equal the reimbursement rate received for each full-priced student meal served. As per documentation provided by the vendor, such action would affect only 11 percent (325 out of 2,874) of students taking part in the child nutrition program. The renegotiating should include obtaining a separate price per meal served for breakfast, lunch, à la carte, and snacks instead of the current flat rate of \$1.3973 (**Exhibit 8-6**) for every type of meal served. The adjusted prices, if any, should then be presented for board of trustee approval so that the adjusted prices can go into effect in the 2010-11 school year. Once board of trustee approval is obtained, parents should be notified.

Exhibit 8-9 summarizes full-priced student meals served, proposed revenue increase per full-priced student meal, and the overall projected increased revenues. Increasing the full-priced lunch price to \$2.30 for primary, elementary, and intermediate schools, and \$2.45 for junior high and high schools would result in additional annual revenue of \$28,801 (\$15,765 in savings on losses and an additional \$13,036 in increased revenues). In summary, a conservative estimate of additional revenues generated by raising full-priced student meal prices, and by equalizing reimbursement rates received would result in approximately \$28,801 per year or \$144,005 over five years.

EXHIBIT 8–6
LVISD CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES
COMPARISON OF COSTS TO REVENUES
2009–10

MEAL TYPE	STUDENT FREE MEAL	STUDENT REDUCED-PRICE MEAL	STUDENT FULL-PRICED MEAL	TOTAL
Lunch				
LVPS, LVES, and LVISHPMC				
Meal Price	\$0.00	\$0.40	\$1.90	
Federal Reimbursement	\$2.70	\$2.30	\$0.27	
Total Revenues per Meal (A)	\$2.70	\$2.70	\$2.17	
Sodexo Cost per Meal	\$1.3973	\$1.3973	\$1.3973	
LVISD Salaries & Benefits per Meal	\$0.9512	\$0.9512	\$0.9512	
Other Budgeted Costs (Excluding Contract Services) per Meal	\$0.2083	\$0.20833	\$0.2083	
Total Expenses per Meal (B)	\$2.5568	\$2.55688	\$2.5568	
Net Revenue (Loss) per Meal (A - B)	\$0.1432	\$0.14312	(\$0.3868)	
Number of Meals Served (C)	173,762	23,344	23,285	
Sub-Total Revenue (Loss) (A - B) x (C)	\$24,882.72	\$3,340.53	(\$9,006.64)	\$19,216.61
LVJHSGDC and LVHS				
Meal Price	\$0.00	\$0.40	\$2.20	
Federal Reimbursement	\$2.70	\$2.30	\$0.27	
Total Revenues per Meal (D)	\$2.70	\$2.70	\$2.47	
Sodexo Cost per Meal	\$1.3973	\$1.3973	\$1.3973	
LVISD Salaries & Benefits per Meal	\$0.9512	\$0.9512	\$0.9512	
Other Budgeted Costs (Excluding Contract Services) per Meal	\$0.2083	\$0.20833	\$0.2083	
Total Expenses per Meal (E)	\$2.5568	\$2.55688	\$2.5568	
Net Revenue (Loss) per Meal (D - E)	\$0.1432	\$0.1432	(\$0.0868)	
Number of Meals Served (F)	111,093	14,925	14,887	
Sub-Total Revenue (Loss) (D - E) x F	\$15,908.52	\$2,137.26	(\$1,292.19)	\$16,753.59
Total Revenue (Loss)	\$40,791.24	\$5,478.25	(\$10,298.83)	\$35,970.66

NOTE: Calculated by the Review Team Based Upon Percentage of Total Students compared to the Total Number of Lunch Served by Type.

SOURCE: National School Lunch and Breakfast Program Reimbursement Rates 2009–10, and LVISD Food Service Participation Reports 2008–09.

TRAINING (REC. 60)

LVISD Child Nutrition Services workers are not receiving adequate training to perform their job assignments effectively. Although Section G Employees Item 6 on page 19 of the contract requires Sodexo to provide training, it does not state the frequency and type of training to be provided. CNS managers attended a two-day workshop at the Concordia University Campus in July 2009, and received training for the implementation of the NutriKids® point of sale system in September 2009. However, CNS workers do not receive

regular training related to food preparation and serving methods and food service requirements.

LVISD's CNS operations have a comprehensive policy and procedures manual. This manual is called the La Vega ISD Food Safety Plan (FSP). However, training is not provided for in the manual. Furthermore, the CNS director does not provide training, assistance, or support in preparing for external audits, such as those conducted by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) International™. NSF

EXHIBIT 8-7
LVISD CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES
COMPARISON OF REIMBURSEMENT RATES TO MEAL PRICES
2008-09

MEAL TYPE	STUDENT FREE MEAL	STUDENT REDUCED-PRICE MEAL	STUDENT FULL-PRICED MEAL
Lunch			
LVPS, LVES, and LVISHPMC Price	\$0.00	\$0.40	\$1.90
Federal Reimbursement	\$2.70	\$2.30	\$0.27
Total Revenues per Meal (A)	\$2.70	\$2.70	\$2.17
Federal Reimbursement Rates for Free Student Meals (B)	\$2.70	\$2.70	\$2.70
More or (Less) Than Reimbursement (A - B)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.53)
Number of Meals Served (C)	173,762	23,344	23,285
Sub-Total Difference between Reimbursement Rate and Prices (A - B) x (C)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$12,341)
LVJHSGDC and LVHS Price	\$0.00	\$0.40	\$2.20
Federal Reimbursement	\$2.70	\$2.30	\$0.27
Total Revenues per Meal (D)	\$2.70	\$2.70	\$2.47
Federal Reimbursement Rates for Free Student Meals (E)	\$2.70	\$2.70	\$2.70
More or (Less) Than Reimbursement (D - E)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.23)
Number of Meals Served (F)	111,093	14,925	14,887
Sub-Total Difference Between Reimbursement Rate and Prices (D - E) x F	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$3,424)
Total Difference Between Reimbursement Rate and Prices	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$15,765)

NOTE: Calculated by the Review Team Based Upon Percentage of Total Students compared to the Total Number of Lunch Served by Type.

SOURCE: National School Lunch and Breakfast Program Reimbursement Rates 2009-10, and LVISD Food Service Participation Reports 2008-09.

EXHIBIT 8-8
COMPARISON OF FULL-PRICED STUDENT MEAL PRICES
LVISD TO PEER DISTRICTS
2009-10

MEAL TYPE	LVISD	TAYLOR ISD	SWEETWATER ISD	MADISONVILLE ISD
Primary* student breakfast	\$0	\$1.25	\$0	\$0
Secondary** student breakfast	\$0	\$1.25	\$0.50	\$0
Adult breakfast	\$1.75	\$1.60	\$0.75	\$1.50
Primary* student lunch	\$1.90	\$1.75	\$1.90	\$2.00
Secondary** student lunch	\$2.20	\$2.25	\$2.00	\$2.25
Adult lunch	\$2.75	\$2.90	\$3.00	\$2.75
Visitor lunch	\$2.25	\$2.90	\$3.50	\$3.25

*Primary includes LVPS, LVES, and LVISHPMC.

**Secondary includes LVJHSGDC and LVHS.

NOTE: \$0 is due to the district participating in the NSLP Universal Breakfast Program whereby all students eat breakfast for free.

SOURCE: LVISD and Peer District Survey Responses, February 2010.

EXHIBIT 8–9
PROPOSED LVISD INCREASE IN REVENUE ON
FULL-PRICED STUDENT LUNCH SERVED
BASED ON 2008–09 DATA

CAMPUS LEVEL	SUGGESTED LUNCH PRICE	NUMBER SERVED	REVENUE INCREASE PER MEAL	ANNUAL DIFFERENCE IN REVENUES	FIVE YEAR DIFFERENCE IN REVENUES
Raising Meal Cost to Total Reimbursement Rate					
LVPS, LVES, and LVISHPMC Lunch	\$2.30	23,285	\$0.53	\$12,341	\$61,705
LVJHSGDC and LVHS Lunch	\$2.45	14,887	\$0.23	\$3,424	\$17,120
Sub-Total				\$15,765	\$78,825
Impact on Revenue over Costs					
LVPS, LVES, and LVISHPMC Lunch	\$2.30	23,285	\$0.40	\$9,314	\$46,570
LVJHSGDC and LVHS Lunch	\$2.45	14,887	\$0.25	\$3,722	\$18,610
Sub-Total				\$13,036	\$65,180
Total Increased Revenues				\$28,801	\$144,005

NOTE: Calculated by the Review Team Based Upon Percentage of Total Students compared to the Total Number of Lunch Served by Type
 SOURCE: LVISD Food Service Participation Reports, 2008–09.

International™ is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to public health and safety. Sodexo uses this company to conduct health and safety reviews of LVISD cafeteria operations. Instead, CNS managers receive guidance and tips from other CNS managers that have completed the process. Despite the lack of formal training to prepare CNS managers for such audits, the primary and junior high schools both recently received excellent ratings on their food safety and occupational safety and health audits which can be attributed to the knowledge and dedication of the CNS managers and workers.

Weekly staff meetings are another example of lost training opportunities. The meetings are held, but cafeteria managers do not consider them to be informative or productive. Moreover, they are not geared towards providing training and information about upcoming events. Since the completion of on-site work, documentation was provided by the vendor showing a list of weekly 5-minute safety talk topic(s) to be discussed including a sample sign-in sheet; a Kitchen Equipment Training Packet including a sample sign-in sheet; and an agenda for a CNS in-service including a sample sign-in sheet. None of the submitted documentation provided a sign-in sheet with signatures verifying the actual attendance of kitchen staff to any of the mentioned training sessions. In addition, the vendor provided documentation with signatures on sign-in sheets showing only CNS kitchen

managers attending weekly meetings. The documentation also listed weekly topics discussed, but the review team could not, based on the information provided, determine how thorough and how detailed these listed topics were discussed; listed comments showed some topics having been briefly mentioned or covered. Moreover, there was no documentation submitted demonstrating that the information obtained by CNS kitchen managers at the weekly meetings was being passed along to all kitchen staff employees at each one of the five campuses. The district verified that it has no knowledge of a formal training program for CNS managers and workers.

The Port Arthur ISD Child Nutrition Department developed and implemented a manager training program. The program provides trainees an opportunity to become familiar with all district forms and procedures and to practice completing the duties and tasks of a Child Nutrition Program (CNP) kitchen manager before taking on the entire responsibility of kitchen management.

The Rio Grande City Consolidated ISD food services department implemented a weekly training schedule in which cafeteria managers provide training for cafeteria staff. Training is based upon a yearly schedule that was created by staff to address food safety, sanitation, worker safety, and regulatory compliance. Training includes topics such as calibrating thermometers, preventing burns, proper cooling procedures, proper use of equipment, handling ready-to-eat

foods, meals per labor hour, the impact of making false statements, washing fruits and vegetables, presentation, and recordkeeping. Training has resulted in a demonstrated proficiency in many areas as kitchens are clean, and food is prepared and served with maximum visual appeal. The end result has been food tasting better, which in turn has led to higher participation in all schools within the school district.

LVISD should use the Food Safety Plan as a training tool and establish an annual training schedule for all CNS employees. Each CNS manager should work with their staff to draft a list of training topics needed, including those found in the FSP. Once the list has been developed, the CNS managers should work with the CNS director to set priorities, develop the annual training calendar, and provide training materials needed. Furthermore, as outlined in Recommendation 56, the Sodexo contract should be amended to include specific training goals and requirements to be provided by the contractor. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

MENU PLANNING (REC. 61)

LVISD does not have participative menu planning to increase student satisfaction with meals served and does not use its point of sale (POS) system to determine menu item popularity. The NutriKids® POS system was implemented in fall 2009 and although it has the capability, it is not currently set up to identify the specific entrées that are being served each day by type to determine food popularity. This deficiency results in LVISD not being able to track which menu items are sold the most and which result in a profit loss.

Prior to implementation of the NutriKids® system in fall 2009, LVISD utilized a different POS system. They discontinued their contract with this vendor and purchased NutriKids® instead because of its ease of use and reporting capabilities. The vendor provided information which indicates that, in their opinion, use of the NutriKids® system to track participation and popularity of menu items is a slower and less accurate process than using production

reports for the same purposes. The district, however, is concerned that the NutriKids® system is not being utilized to its fullest capabilities.

According to responses received from student surveys administered by the review team, 61 percent of the students did not think that the food served looks or tastes good. Additionally, 41 percent of the students responding to the survey did not think that food is served at the right temperature. **Exhibit 8–10** provides the survey responses to the questions on food taste, appearance, and serving temperature.

As outlined in Recommendation 56, Section D. Use of Advisory Group/Menus, of the Food Service Management Company (FSMC) contract between LVISD and Sodexo, the district is to establish and Sodexo is to participate in the formation, establishment, and periodic meetings of an advisory board composed of students, teachers, and parents to assist in menu planning. The contract does not state a date or timeframe by when the advisory group is to be established. However, the advisory group has not been established and parents complain that meals are not nutritious, and they prefer for their kids to eat home-cooked meals.

Food service menus are based on a 5-week cycle and are generated by Sodexo for LVISD approval. According to CNS workers, a significant amount of food loss occurs because there are certain meals that the children will not eat, yet the CNS managers’ recommendations for meals that are nutritious and enjoyable are ignored. For example, the menu may include pot pie with a biscuit and vegetables as the sides. During onsite work, the review team was advised that anywhere from five to 11 entrées were being prepared at the various schools on a daily basis, which requires more time and staff to prepare. Since the completion of on-site work, the vendor advised that on a daily basis 3 entrées are offered for lunch at the primary school, 5 entrées are offered at the elementary school, and 8 to 15 entrées are served at the intermediate, junior high, and high schools. This concurs

**EXHIBIT 8–10
SURVEY RESPONSES
CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES**

QUESTION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The cafeteria’s food looks and tastes good.	1.6%	12.3%	24.6%	22.1%	39.3%
Food is served at the right temperature.	4.1%	21.3%	33.6%	14.8%	26.2%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: Review Team Survey, February 2010.

with menus and production reports; however, the appropriate, cost-efficient number of entrées provided each lunch period at each of LVISD's campus should be no more than three.

Sodexo is responsible for food inventory and the purchase of meal ingredients as part of the fixed fee per meal served. CNS managers order food based upon menus and on-hand inventory; they stated that there is no uniformity between schools as to the type of food ordered. For example some schools make pizzas and have to buy dough, pepperoni, pizza sauce, etc. while another school may order premade pizzas. CNS workers also stated that they occasionally share their food supplies with other schools when they have excess inventory. However, no notification of this sharing of supplies is made to Sodexo as there is no policy for allocating supplies among the schools.

Many school districts have established wellness or nutrition advisory committees to assist with menu planning and nutrition marketing. Clint ISD (CISD) and Kerrville ISD (KISD) have established a test kitchen where students, teachers, and principals are invited to participate in preparing and tasting different menu items.

LVISD should establish a CNS advisory board to develop menus and begin utilizing the point of sale system to its fullest capacity, including recording the entrées being sold on a daily basis. The advisory board should be comprised of students, teachers, parents, the CNS director, and district personnel, including CNS employees. The board should help develop menu items that are nutritious and appealing. Expansion of the POS system to its fullest capabilities would allow for the recording of meals sold by entrée with the results being monitored by the advisory board to identify popular and low performing selections. This improvement would assist in the identification of student choices and can be used to increase student meal participation. 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
CHAPTER 8: CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES							
56. Renegotiate the contract, including clarifying vague contractual language outlining the reporting relationships and the division of responsibilities between the contractor and the district to ensure adequate oversight of the child nutrition services contract and operations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
57. Ensure the implementation of a substitute cafeteria worker labor pool program to provide qualified resources in peak periods and when CNS workers are absent.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
58. Develop financial reports of CNS operations to enhance financial controls, monitoring of operations, and accountability of CNS managers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
59. Renegotiate the contract, and while giving consideration to the current economic conditions, evaluate meal prices charged and adjust the prices to at least equal the reimbursement rate received for each full-priced student meal served.	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$144,005	\$0
60. Use the Food Safety Plan as a training tool and establish an annual training schedule for all CNS employees.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
61. Establish a CNS advisory board to develop menus and begin utilizing the point of sale system to its fullest capacity, including recording the entrées being sold on a daily basis.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 8	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$28,801	\$144,005	\$0

CHAPTER 9

TRANSPORTATION

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 9. TRANSPORTATION

Chapter 34 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) authorizes, but does not require, Texas school districts to provide transportation for students in the general population to and from home and school, school and career and technology training locations, and extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 requires that a school district provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to special education services. In addition, the federal McKinney-Vento Act of 1987, as amended, requires school districts to provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin even if the student no longer lives within the district.

School districts are free to offer any level of transportation they see as appropriate, subject to the minimum requirements in the federal laws cited above. State funding, however, is only available for “regular” students and students in the special program. Any transportation provided above this level must be entirely funded by the local school districts. Regular students are defined as those who do not need specialized transportation or who live more than two miles from their school or live in an area within two miles but where walking conditions are hazardous. Students in the special program have specialized transportation needs or are special needs students with a disability.

La Vega Independent School District (LVISD) encompasses the City of Bellmead and portions of the City of Waco. According to the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) 2008–09 transportation report, the district transported 172,440 students a total of 193,444 miles over 180 school days at a cost of \$3.02 per mile for the regular program, and \$4.59 for the special program. TEA allocated state funds based upon a linear density (a measure of the number of regular riders carried per mile of regular bus service) of 1.150 to 1.649 at \$1.11 per mile. Operations costs were \$740,502 for the regular program and \$183,123 for the special program. Total transportation costs were \$923,625, with a state allotment of \$213,768 (23.1%). The difference of \$709,857 (76.9%) was funded by the district.

The LVISD fleet consists of 30 buses, five of which are used as spares in case of a breakdown. The district operates 17 daily regular routes, three special program routes, and five

primary routes with a total of 28 drivers and 10 monitors. Primary routes refer to those to and from LVISD’s primary school.

LVISD contracts with Durham School Services to provide student transportation. The contract is on a “turnkey” basis, meaning Durham is responsible for operations, maintenance, all staffing, and provides the buses. All LVISD provides is a storage yard and temporary buildings for Durham staff. No LVISD staff are involved in the transportation operation. Transportation is headed by a Durham general manager, who reports to the school district’s assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration (assistant superintendent). The reporting relationship is weak, reflecting the nature of the “turnkey” contract. The assistant superintendent and general manager only meet if an issue needs to be resolved. For day-to-day reporting, the general manager reports to her supervisor at Durham School Services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LVISD uses staggered bell times to increase the efficiency of the school buses by serving more than one campus during the day.
- The private transportation provider has placed animal caricatures on the La Vega Primary School buses as an aid to La Vega Primary School students who have not yet learned to read the route numbers on the bus.
- LVISD has included clauses in its contract with the private transportation provider that reduce the risks to the district.

FINDINGS

- LVISD has not reviewed its route efficiency despite a continued decline in their linear density, which has resulted in a decrease in the district’s transportation allotment per mile since 2006–07.
- LVISD operates school bus routes to all corners of the district regardless of the number of students residing in a given area.
- LVISD does not require as part of its contract that mechanics be Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)-certified.

- The duration of LVISD’s contract with the private transportation provider is for only one year, with options for extension, which creates a higher risk for the provider that must be factored into the contracting price.
- LVISD’s transportation contract provides the option for the district to purchase the buses from the contractor at the end of the contract, but the price for smaller buses is too high relative to their expected lifetime.
- LVISD lacks performance measures for the transportation function.
- LVISD’s policy of offering transportation to all students who request it requires the district to bear the full cost of transporting students who reside within a two-mile radius of their campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 62: Conduct an independent review of route efficiency.**
- **Recommendation 63: Consider the option of using private transportation in remote areas of the district.**
- **Recommendation 64: Require that the transportation contract include language to ensure that mechanics be ASE-certified.**
- **Recommendation 65: Re-solicit transportation provider bids with a contract term of three years with two, one-year extensions.**
- **Recommendation 66: Include in the next contract for student transportation a provision that allows the district to purchase the school buses at an appropriate value at the time of contract termination.**
- **Recommendation 67: Determine the most important performance measures for the transportation function, ensure that those are aligned with district goals, and then set performance levels for the provider to meet.**
- **Recommendation 68: Reconsider the policy of offering transportation to all students and determine if other viable alternatives exist.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STAGGERED BELL TIMES

LVISD uses staggered bell times to increase the efficiency of the school buses by serving more than one campus during the day. This arrangement allows most buses to serve three to four schools and reduces the number of buses and drivers required. **Exhibit 9–1** shows the bell times and route combinations used for the school buses.

**EXHIBIT 9–1
LVISD SCHOOL BELL TIMES AND ROUTE COMBINATIONS
2009–10**

School	AM Bell	PM Bell	Routing
La Vega Primary School (LVPS)	7:30	2:30	Not shared
La Vega Elementary School (LVES)	7:45	2:40	Combined with LVISHPMC
La Vega Intermediate School H. P. Miles Campus (LVISHPMC)	7:45	2:50	Combined with LVES
La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC)	8:00	4:02	Combined with LVHS
La Vega High School (LVHS)	8:15	3:45	Combined with LVJHSGDC

SOURCE: Interview with Transportation General Manager, April 2010.

Buses typically make three trips in the morning and three in the afternoon. On the first trip, primary students are carried. On the second trip, elementary and intermediate students are carried. On the third trip, junior high and high school students are carried.

USE OF CARICATURES TO IDENTIFY PRIMARY SCHOOL BUS ROUTES

The private transportation provider has placed animal caricatures on the La Vega Primary School (LVPS) buses as an aid to La Vega Primary School (LVPS) students who have not yet learned to read the route numbers on the bus. As shown in **Exhibit 9–2**, Durham School Services, the private provider for the service, has a program that places animal caricatures on the doors of the buses used for LVPS. Some of the animal caricatures used are an octopus, a deer, and others, which help ensure that the young students get on the right bus. Young students have a much easier time remembering

EXHIBIT 9-2
LVISD PRIMARY BUS
EXAMPLE OF AN ANIMAL CARICATURE



SOURCE: Photo taken by Review Team member, April 2010.

that they are on the “octopus” bus rather than Bus Route 23, for example. These “animal buses” have been a popular addition for these youngest students.

CONTRACT CLAUSES CONTROL RISK

LVISD has included clauses in its contract with the private transportation provider that reduce the risks to the district. The district has a “turnkey” contract with Durham School Services whereby Durham is responsible for all aspects of student transportation—all the district supplies are the funding and the operations facility.

“Turnkey” transportation arrangements can minimize the administrative burden of providing transportation but these types of contracts can also expose a school district to risks should the contract not be renewed or is terminated early. The greatest risk that a district could face under a pure “turnkey” contract is the need to replace in short order the drivers, mechanics, buses, and storage facility should the transportation provider pick up and leave.

LVISD has taken several steps to minimize the downside risk of its “turnkey” transportation contract. First, LVISD owns the storage lot for the buses, although the bus maintenance is handled at a Durham facility in a separate location. Second, LVISD has an option in the contract to purchase the buses at the depreciated value should the contract be terminated. Finally, LVISD’s contract includes an escalation clause that ties the reimbursement rate to changes in the Consumer

Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. As a result, the district has been able to reduce the reimbursement rate related in part to the change in the CPI-U. These aspects of the contract protect LVISD from the largest downside risks associated with “turnkey” transportation contracts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

LINEAR DENSITY (REC. 62)

LVISD has not reviewed its route efficiency despite a continued decline in their linear density, which has resulted in a decrease in the district’s transportation allotment per mile since 2006–07. The decline in the district’s linear density, the formula used to determine state funding, has reduced the amount of state funding for transportation. No review has been conducted to determine the cause or methods to reduce this decline.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reimburses school districts at different allotment rates based upon funding levels set by the Texas Legislature. For the regular program, the state reimburses districts qualifying for transportation expenses based on the previous school year’s linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported to and from school daily to the number of route miles traveled daily for those regular routes. TEA uses this ratio to assign each school district to one of seven linear density groups. Each group is eligible to receive a

maximum per mile allotment. The effect of this approach is to reward districts that are able to carry more riders on fewer miles of service by paying a higher allotment per service mile. **Exhibit 9–3** shows the linear density groupings and their per-mile allotment rates.

**EXHIBIT 9–3
LINEAR DENSITY GROUPS**

LINEAR DENSITY GROUP	ALLOTMENT PER MILE
2.400 and above	\$1.43
1.650 to 2.399	\$1.25
1.150 to 1.649	\$1.11
0.900 to 1.149	\$0.97
0.650 to 0.899	\$0.88
0.400 to 0.649	\$0.79
Up to 0.399	\$0.68

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, School Transportation Allotment Handbook, May 2009.

Exhibit 9–4 provides a three-year trend of linear density statistics for LVISD.

The district is only 33 square miles, and the developed area is less than about 20 percent of this area at roughly six square miles, with the remaining area being sparsely populated farmland. Such a small district should have a very high linear density since the distances that most students are transported are short.

The declining allotment is directly related to the decline in linear density. The linear density for the regular program of the district has steadily declined in recent years, from 1.226 in 2006–07, to 1.089 in 2008–09. This fluctuation is

significant because there is a funding breakpoint at 1.150 as specified in the state funding statutes. Since LVISD’s linear density fell below this level in the 2008–09 school year, the district will receive a smaller reimbursement in the 2009–10 school year; the allotment rate for 2009–10, based on linear density, is \$0.97. If the mileage level is unchanged from the approximately 148,000 miles operated in the 2008–09 school year, the district will receive \$21,000 less in state funding ($\$1.11 - \$0.97 = \$0.14$ difference \times 148,000 miles).

Linear density can also be adversely affected by new residential development located away from the existing populated areas. A new HOME (Home Investment Partnerships) development is planned for an area east of the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Waco Airport. HOME is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. This location is remote from all schools in the district and other residential areas. It is not known whether or not the project may still be active given that the information shown on the public notice is inaccurate – the website is incorrect and the phone numbers are not to officials connected with the project. Should this development proceed, it would have a significant impact to the transportation requirements of the district – requiring more miles of travel to serve students at the proposed 132 units.

It is important for LVISD to continue monitoring the HOME development (and any new housing development) for potential impacts to the school transportation service. School districts often do not speak up and thus become an unheard voice too late in the land development process. District personnel must be active in the area’s land use planning decisions.

**EXHIBIT 9–4
LVISD LINEAR DENSITY TREND
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	PERCENTAGE INCREASE/ (DECREASE) FROM 2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09
Mileage	144,023	151,353	147,990	3%
Daily Riders	981	992	895	(9%)
Annual Riders	176,580	178,560	161,100	(9%)
Linear Density	1.226	1.180	1.089	(11%)
Effective Allotment Rate	\$1.25	\$1.11	\$1.11	(11%)

NOTE: Annual riders are daily riders \times 180 school days. Linear Density is the ratio of annual riders to mileage.
SOURCE: Based upon Standard Regular Riders and Miles from the TEA Route Services Reports.

LVISD should conduct an independent review of route efficiency. The district should closely examine the regular program routing to return the district to the \$1.25 reimbursement group, which requires a linear density of at least 1.650, as specified in the state funding statutes. The increase in linear density could be accomplished by reducing the number of miles traveled. Assuming the same number of students is served, if miles were reduced by 50,354 annually, or 280 miles per day for each of the 180 school days, the district would move into the higher grouping. The independent review conducted by a consultant or transportation professional would tell the district how such a reduction could be accomplished. Durham School Services personnel should assist with the review, as it is one of the services they offer under their existing contract. The estimated one-time cost for such an independent review is \$2,500.

PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION (REC. 63)

LVISD operates school bus routes to all corners of the district regardless of the number of students residing in a given area. No review has been conducted to determine if a more cost-efficient way of transporting students, such as parental reimbursement for private transportation costs, is available.

Related to the desire to increase linear density, LVISD could consider reducing the area of the district that receives school bus transportation. One area to be considered is the far northeast corner of the district, an area of rural farmland located north and east of the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Waco Airport. There are few residents in this area, but it encompasses 12 of the 33 square miles of the district; it is also the location of the potential HOME development discussed in Recommendation 62. Buses must travel long distances to serve the area due to the distance from the schools and the limited roadway network. LVISD operates two routes on a daily basis to that area which carry a total of 21–25 students.

TEA provides the reimbursement of costs for the private transportation of students in districts where the parent or other designee transports the student to school. The district receives a maximum reimbursement of \$0.25 per mile (as provided in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §42.155(e) and (g)) up to \$816 per year, not to exceed actual cost, for regular students, and reimbursement for the actual cost regardless of the amount for special needs students. The district reimburses the parents for their costs up to this amount. To be eligible for this reimbursement, two requirements must be met: regular education students must

live in an isolated area two or more miles from the nearest school and bus route; and must be an “extreme hardship case.” The School Transportation Allotment Handbook (Handbook) notes that the need must be determined on a case-by-case basis and “the fact that district-operated route services are not provided or convenient does not constitute an extreme hardship that justifies the need for a private transportation allotment.” The Handbook is silent on what does constitute an “extreme hardship.” These requirements only apply to the use of state funds; there is no prohibition on the use of district funds, and federal funds are not available for this purpose.

LVISD should consider the option of using private transportation in remote areas of the district. In considering this option, LVISD should investigate whether reimbursing parent(s)/guardian(s) instead of providing school bus service is an unreasonable hardship on the parents/guardians. The number of families without access to a vehicle and the time required for the parents to provide the transportation may make this option unfeasible. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

MECHANIC CERTIFICATION (REC. 64)

LVISD does not require as part of its contract that mechanics be Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)-certified. Additionally, the private transportation provider does not offer any incentives for mechanics to obtain ASE certifications. Certified mechanics provide more accurate fault diagnosis of district vehicles, which allows more repairs to be completed correctly the first time.

For mechanics, the appropriate training is offered by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). ASE offers test series for a variety of vehicles and systems, including automobiles, heavy trucks, electronics, and other fields. One field of study is for school buses. Seven certifications are offered: (1) body systems and special equipment; (2) diesel engines; (3) drive train; (4) brakes; (5) suspension and steering; (6) electrical/electronic systems; and (7) air conditioning systems and controls. Certification exams are held twice per year. Retesting is required every five years. To be eligible for the test, a mechanic must have two or more years of experience.

Clear Creek ISD offers an increase in the hourly pay for their mechanics that receive certification. For each certification, up to three, the mechanic receives an increase in pay of \$0.15 per hour, or \$312 per year per certification.

During the process of renegotiating their transportation contract, the district should require that the contract include language to ensure that mechanics be ASE-certified. Durham School Services should encourage and reward mechanics that achieve their certification, and the district should require in their contract that at least one mechanic be certified in all fields of study offered for school buses. Training and certification costs are less than \$500 per course. A recommended bonus for the successful completion is \$300 for each certification.

No fiscal impact is estimated for this recommendation since the operating contract does not include a separate charge for maintenance. Moreover, the cost of ASE tests is modest and should be borne by Durham School Services as part of their contractual responsibility to assign qualified personnel to LVISD's transportation function.

CONTRACT DURATION (REC. 65)

The duration of LVISD's contract with the private transportation provider is for only one year, with options for extension, which creates a higher risk for the provider that must be factored into the contracting price.

The contract between LVISD and Durham School Services is only for a single year, although up to four one-year extensions are permitted. For a private transportation provider, such an interval creates uncertainty over the ultimate contract term, which results in increased costs to cover the unknown risk that the contract will be cancelled before the provider recovers the cost of purchasing the school buses.

Instead of exercising the next one-year renewal, LVISD should re-solicit transportation provider bids with a contract term of three years with two, one-year extensions. The new contract should incorporate the other changes discussed in the subsequent recommendations.

VEHICLE PURCHASE PRICE (REC. 66)

LVISD's transportation contract provides the option for the district to purchase buses from the contractor at the end of the contract, but the price for smaller vehicles is too high relative to their expected lifetime.

The values of school buses are to be based upon a straight-line depreciation over a 12-year lifespan. Such a depreciation schedule is appropriate for larger buses, but an 8-year lifespan is more appropriate for smaller buses. The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services recommends that school districts adopt a lifespan of

12–15 years for large buses and 8–10 years for small buses. Using a longer depreciation schedule has the effect of increasing the value of the buses, which would result in the district paying too much for any smaller buses purchased under this option. For example, under a 12-year depreciation schedule, a typical small bus costing \$60,000 depreciates \$5,000 per year (\$60,000 divided by 12 years equals \$5,000). After the end of the full five years possible under the contract, the small bus would have a residual value of \$35,000 (\$60,000 less five times \$5,000 yearly depreciation or \$25,000 equals \$35,000). Under an eight-year depreciation schedule, the \$60,000 bus would depreciate \$7,500 per year (\$60,000 divided by 8 years equals \$7,500). After five years, the residual value of the small bus, and hence the price to the district, would be \$22,500 (\$60,000 less five times \$7,500 yearly depreciation, or \$37,500 equals \$22,500). Under the eight-year schedule, the district would pay \$12,500 less (\$35,000 less \$22,500 equals \$12,500). Currently the district does not have any of the smaller buses, but this change would protect the district's interest should smaller vehicles be added to the fleet in the future.

LVISD should include in the next contract for student transportation a provision that allows the district to purchase the school buses at an appropriate value at the time of contract termination. The value of the buses should be calculated on a straight-line basis based upon a 12-year life for large buses and an 8-year life for small buses.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES (REC. 67)

LVISD lacks performance measures for the transportation function. The district currently does not have performance measures for the major evaluation categories of the transportation function, such as the condition of the buses, the on-time performance, parent/student/administration satisfaction, and safety. The intent of performance measures is to provide a management tool so that a district can determine if the provider's performance is satisfactory.

Performance measures are essential for determining if the provider's performance is satisfactory and if the provider is correcting any deficiencies. A limited number of performance measures assists both the district and the provider in knowing what is expected of each. The decision of which performance measures to include in evaluation of the transportation function is based upon monitoring any known areas of concern or any areas that are deemed critical by the district management.

For example, regarding the timeliness of transportation arrivals and departures, the review team found that in their teacher survey, 21 percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Transportation gets students to school on time.” Principals and assistant principals had a similar negative view of on-time arrivals and departures, as did the students. Such a negative finding indicates that the private transportation provider needs to devote more attention to ensuring students arrive promptly at school. Before simply including a performance measure, such as 90 percent of the trips should arrive 5–15 minutes prior to the bell time, it is important for the district to examine the reasons behind this poor performance. It may be that the bell times need to be adjusted to provide sufficient time for the buses to make their routes, rather than implying poor performance on the part of the provider.

Another potential issue that should be evaluated in LVISD is the cleanliness of the buses. In the student survey, 35 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Buses are clean.” This issue is entirely within the control of the provider and the district could adopt a standard calling for all buses to be swept after each route, and washed twice per week, for example.

LVISD should determine the most important performance measures for the transportation function, ensure that those are aligned with district goals, and then set performance levels for the provider to meet. These goals should be realistic and achievable, but represent progress in areas that are currently unsatisfactory.

TWO-MILE TRANSPORTATION (REC. 68)

LVISD’s policy of offering transportation to all students who request it requires the district to bear the full cost of transporting students who reside within a two-mile radius of their campus. The district has a policy of offering transportation to any student whose parent(s) or guardian(s) request it, which provides a high level of service. TEA only reimburses school districts based upon the amount of transportation provided for regular students who live more than two miles from their school. This amount can be increased by up to 10 percent for students who live in designated hazardous areas within the two-mile distance from school. A hazardous condition exists where no walkway is provided and children must walk along or cross a freeway or expressway, an underpass, an overpass or a bridge, an uncontrolled major traffic artery, an industrial or commercial area, or another comparable condition. In 2008–09, the

district reported 157,371 miles for 2-mile service and 161,619 miles for 2-mile and hazardous mile service. While the district’s transportation policy provides a high level of service for students, it requires the district to bear a greater transportation cost.

The Durham School Services general manager did not estimate that any current routes could be eliminated if the transportation was limited to two-mile or more students, but this conclusion should be evaluated given the small size of the district. A two-mile radius around each of the district’s schools covers almost all of the populated areas of the district; only a few homes in the rural areas are outside of these limits.

The walking environment in the district, however, is an impediment to having more students walk to school. The district is divided by several major roadways (IH-35, US 84, Texas Loop 340 and others) and two Union Pacific rail lines, including the Bellmead Yards. Furthermore, most streets in the district lack sidewalks. A number of students would continue to be eligible within the two-mile radius of their school due to the number of hazardous locations in the district.

Steps are underway to improve the walking environment in the district. Federal transportation policy requires the development of a Long Range Transportation Plan for urban areas with more than 50,000 persons. In the Waco region, this plan is the Connections 2030 – The Waco Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035 Draft Update. It has prioritized a number of sidewalk projects around La Vega ISD schools into two priority groups. Wheeler Avenue is a Priority 1 project and will benefit LVES and LVHS; Harrison Street is a Priority 1 project that will benefit LVPS; Williams Drive is a Priority 1 project that will benefit LVISHPMC; and Orchard Lane is a Priority 2 project that will benefit LVJHSGDC. Funding may also be available through the federal Safe-Routes to-School program. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) administers this federal program, which provides funding for infrastructure improvements within two miles of a school serving grades Kindergarten–8. The program provides 100 percent of the cost of a project up to \$500,000, on a cost-reimbursement basis. The district would have to pay for any project, but all expenses would be reimbursed. Applications for projects are taken once a year at the end of November. The Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has in its current two-year Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to assist school districts with up to four plans to meet the Safe-Routes-to-School program. The plans are undefined in

the UPWP. Plans could be one school at four districts or four schools at one district.

While the Durham School Services general manager did not estimate that any routes could be eliminated, the LVISD school board should reconsider the policy of offering transportation to all students and determine if other viable alternatives exist. Furthermore, the district should actively pursue funding for sidewalk construction through the Waco MPO.

No fiscal impact is assumed, as the district must first review its policy of offering transportation to all students and determine if it should continue to provide this service.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 9: TRANSPORTATION							
62. Conduct an independent review of route efficiency.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,500)
63. Consider the option of using private transportation in remote areas of the district.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
64. Require that the transportation contract include language to ensure that mechanics be ASE-certified.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
65. Re-solicit transportation provider bids with a contract term of three years with two, one-year extensions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
66. Include in the next contract for student transportation a provision that allows the district to purchase the school buses at an appropriate value at the time of contract termination.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
67. Determine the most important performance measures for the transportation function, ensure that those are aligned with district goals, and then set performance levels for the provider to meet.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
68. Reconsider the policy of offering transportation to all students and determine if other viable alternatives exist.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 9	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,500)

CHAPTER 10

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 10. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

The La Vega Independent School District (LVISD) Information Technology Department (IT) provides a variety of technology services that support instructional learning and administrative functions. The district uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) system supported by Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) for business administration and student information management services.

The IT Department designs and maintains the network infrastructure and supports the computer-based information systems for the district. The department is headed by a director of Technology that reports operationally to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration and the director of Finance. The department is staffed with a systems administrator, two systems engineers and an administrative secretary/help desk support position. There is no dedicated instructional technology position. LVISD has a Public Education Information Management System

(PEIMS) specialist that reports to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration.

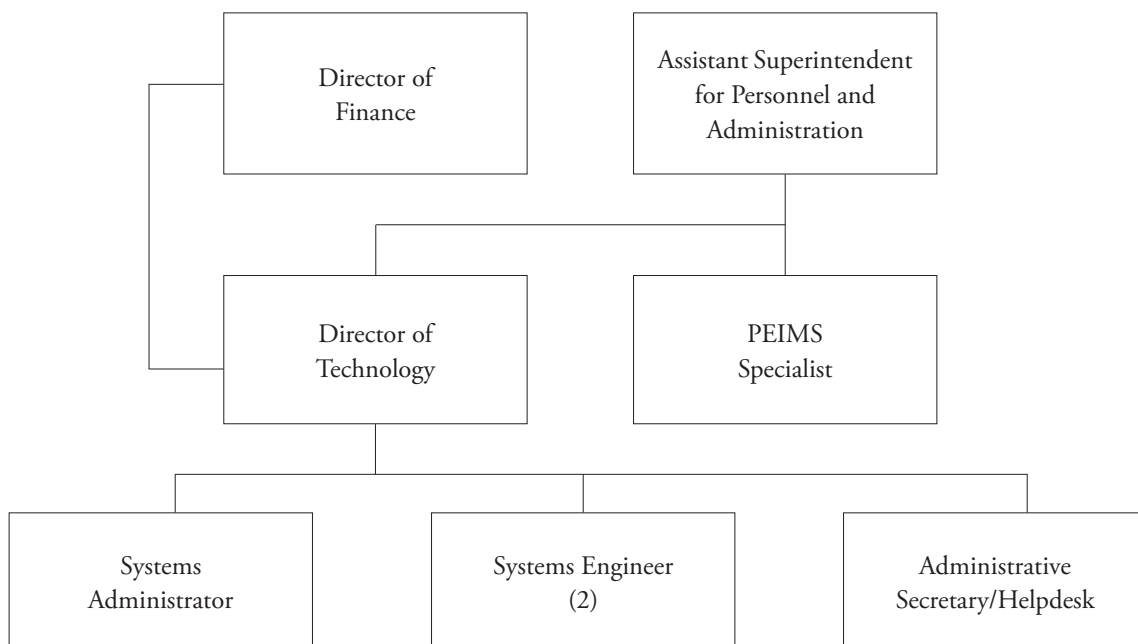
Exhibit 10–1 depicts the LVISD Information Technology and PEIMS organization for 2009–10.

The director of Technology (director) has responsibility for planning and managing technology services districtwide. The director is responsible for the development of short and long-range plans for the integration of technology into all districtwide programs. The director also ensures that timely and efficient computer services are provided to all campuses and administrative departments.

The major responsibilities of the systems administrator include designing, installing, testing, and maintenance of network hardware and software, and administration of operating systems, servers, and Microsoft Active Directory network services.

The two system engineers' primary responsibility is to provide on-site technical support by installing and maintaining

EXHIBIT 10–1
LVISD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PEIMS ORGANIZATION
2009–10



SOURCE: LVISD Organization Chart, February 2010.

computer hardware and software throughout the district. One systems engineer has support responsibility for the primary and elementary campuses; the other systems engineer has responsibility for the intermediate and junior high campuses. Support for the high school campus and the administrative staff is shared by both of the system engineers.

The administrative secretary/helpdesk support staff member is responsible for handling administrative activities such as preparing correspondence, forms, and reports; monitoring and maintaining time card activity for the technology staff; and data entry of IT purchase orders in RSCCC. For helpdesk support, this staff member assists users that call or email with technology issues and monitors and maintains work orders in the Track-It helpdesk system. The administrative secretary/helpdesk support staff member also works with the Activity Directory to add and remove staff, teachers, and students; change passwords; and add or remove staff, teachers, and student’s Group Policies.

The PEIMS specialist is responsible for inputting, monitoring, and reporting student information for student services using RSCCC. The specialist works closely with the campus PEIMS coordinators to ensure that student information is input correctly and submitted in a timely manner.

LVISD’s vision for technology provides a framework for enhancing the education of students and district business functions by careful integration of technologies. In recent years, the district has made great strides in making technology available at every campus and the administrative building. The district goal is to integrate and institutionalize the use of technology in order to promote all aspects of education and administration. There are several key features driving this goal listed in the executive summary of the district’s technology plan:

- Technology will empower students and faculty by providing a more efficient and effective way to facilitate learning.
- Technology will be fully integrated in the classroom by becoming an integral part of the learning/instructional process.
- Technology will be a significant component of a well balanced district program to develop life-long learners.
- Technology will provide access to information to parents, students, and community outside the physical school environment. The high school databases are

accessible to parents and students in their homes if they have Internet. After school sessions for parents are offered so they are able to see what resources are available to them.

- Technology will be incorporated as a natural part of education through a systematically integrated framework to govern acquisition, application, and evaluation of technological resources.
- Technology will provide support that is efficient, timely, and cost effective to ensure technology is available when needed.

LVISD has installed a fiber-optic wide area network (WAN) to provide an infrastructure to fulfill the vision of data and voice connectivity districtwide. This infrastructure also provides wireless connectivity throughout the district. The increased demand for technology within the district has resulted in a large dependency upon technology tools that are used for instructional and administrative purposes. However, budget constraints have made it a challenge to meet professional development and computer proficiency goals.

LVISD’s IT budget for 2009–10 is approximately \$1.22 million or \$440 per student. The budget includes \$406,831 for IT Department expenses and projected expenditures of \$814,500 required to upgrade the networking and security infrastructure districtwide as outlined in the 2009–10 Technology Plan. From 2007–08 through 2009–10, the district’s IT budget has increased from \$1,114,826 to \$1,221,331. **Exhibit 10–2** shows LVISD’s IT budgets for the last three years from 2007–08 through 2009–10.

EXHIBIT 10–2
LVISD IT BUDGETS
2007–08 THROUGH 2009–10

KEY AREA	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
Salaries/ Benefits	\$199,099	\$220,790	\$224,681
Contracted Services	\$48,755	\$51,705	\$72,200
Supplies/Software	\$28,313	\$73,300	\$85,300
Other Operating Expenses	\$24,200	\$24,100	\$24,650
Technology Plan Expenditures	\$814,459	\$814,345	\$814,500
Total	\$1,114,826	\$1,184,240	\$1,221,331
Number of Students	2,695	2,751	2,778
Average per Student	\$414	\$430	\$440

SOURCE: LVISD Information Technology Department, 2007–08 through 2009–10 Budgets and LVISD 2009–10 Technology Plan.

Based on the IT Department's hardware inventories during 2009–10, there are 1,240 desktops and 549 laptops for a total of 1,789 computers in the district. Of those, 197 computers are used for administrative purposes and 1,592 are available for dedicated student access, resulting in a student-to-computer ratio of 1.75:1. This means the district has met the student-to-computer ratio of a 4:1 to be reached by 2004 as recommended in the State Board of Education's (SBOE) 1996–2010 Long-Range Plan for Technology. The district has not yet reached the student-to-computer ratio of 1:1 by 2010 as recommended in the updated 2006–2020 SBOE Long-Range Plan for Technology. The district has met the 1:1 teacher-to-computer ratio as recommended by the 2006–2020 SBOE Long-Range Plan for Technology.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LVISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a robust network infrastructure that will adequately support the district's current and future technology needs.
- LVISD has centralized and optimized its network and server infrastructure using "virtualized" server technology enabling the district to reduce the number of servers needed.

FINDINGS

- LVISD's IT Department has several organizational issues, including: the reporting relationship of the director of Technology does not promote or maximize organizational effectiveness; the lack of a back up plan for key IT positions; and insufficient support for the district website.
- LVISD's IT Department does not have an instructional technology position to coordinate technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum.
- LVISD does not have a comprehensive professional development program to ensure that district staff are proficient in the use of technology.
- LVISD has neither a comprehensive long-range technology plan that is linked to the district improvement plan (DIP) nor a Technology Committee of key stakeholders to develop such a plan.

- LVISD lacks a comprehensive replacement strategy for the district's computing hardware.
- The IT Department lacks documented policies and procedures to drive operational activities and standardization.
- LVISD does not have a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the network server facility is rendered inoperable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 69: Establish a clearly defined reporting relationship for the director of Technology, identify backup roles for technicians and institute a cross-training program, and provide more support for the district's website.**
- **Recommendation 70: Create an instructional technology coordinator position with responsibility for technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum.**
- **Recommendation 71: Develop a comprehensive professional development program to ensure that district staff are proficient in the use of technology.**
- **Recommendation 72: Establish a Technology Committee comprised of stakeholders from the board, administration, teachers, students, and community to develop a three- to five-year long-range technology plan with the necessary components to make it a comprehensive and effective management tool.**
- **Recommendation 73: Review different options and determine an appropriate computer replacement strategy.**
- **Recommendation 74: Develop and publish policies and procedures that establish standards for IT operations.**
- **Recommendation 75: Develop and implement a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the network server facility is rendered inoperable.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

LVISD has effectively used E-Rate funding to implement a robust network infrastructure that will adequately support the district’s current and future technology needs. LVISD actively participates in the E-Rate program governed by the Universal Services Administration Company’s School and Library Division to enhance its network and telecommunications infrastructure. The E-Rate funding cycle runs from July 1 to June 30. The district is currently working on E-Rate 12 (2009–10) funds and has submitted a request for E-Rate 13 (2010–11) funding. E-Rate 11 (2008–09) funds of \$89,552 were used to provide backup batteries at the Intermediate campus and Internet fiber and phone service districtwide. E-Rate 12 (2009–10) funds totaling \$238,912 are being used for installation of switches, wireless access points, servers, and battery backup systems at the junior high campus and Internet fiber, phone service, basic maintenance, and web-hosting districtwide. **Exhibit 10–3** displays E-Rate 8 (2005–06) through E-Rate 12 (2009–10) expenditures by campus. Also, E-Rate funds are being used to contract with a third-party vendor to provide assistance with infrastructure design and implementation and to install new or relay existing cabling.

The main features of the enhanced infrastructure include fiber-optic network connectivity that links all campuses and buildings to one centralized location. A Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telecommunications system has been installed at all of the district’s locations. The district’s network is a 10/10 megabyte fiber-optic Internet connection with one

gigabyte fiber-optic connections between campuses. Wireless connectivity is available throughout the district. LVISD uses a network firewall and Internet content filtering to keep the network secure and free from unwanted access.

CENTRALIZED SERVER FACILITY

LVISD has centralized and optimized its network and server infrastructure using “virtualized” server technology enabling the district to reduce the number of servers needed. LVISD has consolidated its network servers in a central location at the elementary campus. Using virtualized server technology, the district has been able to replace 25 of its servers with two. Virtualized server technology provides the capability to mask server resources to divide one physical server into multiple isolated virtual environments, thus reducing the number of servers required. This reduction benefits the district by reducing hardware costs, space requirements, and energy consumption. It also improves operational efficiency and makes the server environment easier to support and maintain.

Exhibit 10–4 shows the LVISD centralized wide area network (WAN) configuration.

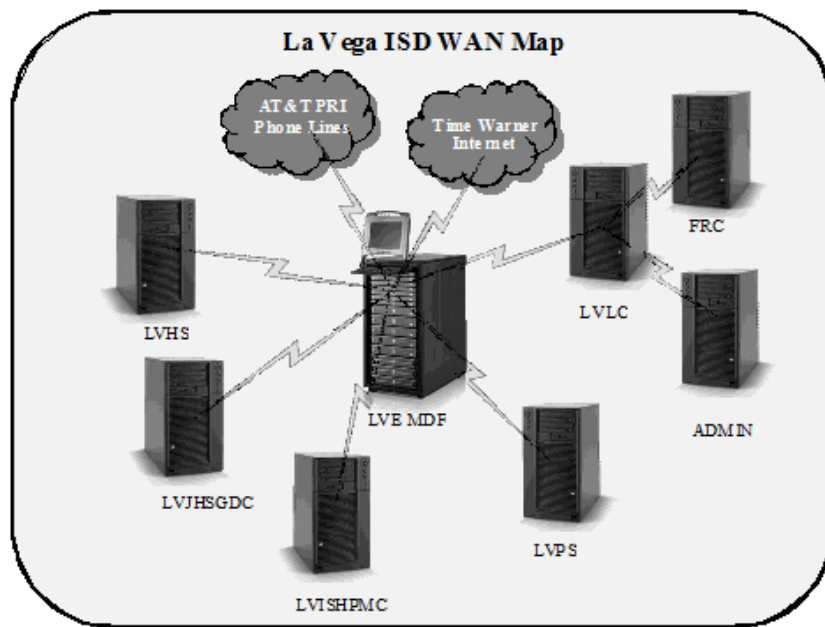
The Internet servers at the centralized location are installed using a star technology concept. There is one main server connected to the Internet that passes Internet traffic to campus servers at the central location that connects to a local area network (LAN) switch at the campus and administration building locations. **Exhibit 10–5** shows the LAN configuration at a campus. E-Rate funds were used for the acquisition of hardware and installation of cabling for these projects.

**EXHIBIT 10–3
LVISD E-RATE EXPENDITURES BY CAMPUS
E-RATE 8 THROUGH E-RATE 12**

CAMPUS	E-RATE 8	E-RATE 9	E-RATE 10	E-RATE 11	E-RATE 12	TOTAL
La Vega Primary School (LVPS)	\$174,326					\$174,326
La Vega Elementary School (LVES)	\$258,805		\$38,879			\$297,684
La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus (LVISHPMC)	\$16,927			\$6,832		\$23,759
La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC)	\$17,585				\$159,554	\$177,139
La Vega High School (LVHS)	\$133,562					\$133,562
Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) at the Learning Center		\$10,853				\$10,853
Districtwide	\$125,659	\$93,058	\$76,368	\$82,720	\$79,358	\$457,163
Total	\$726,864	\$103,911	\$115,247	\$89,552	\$238,912	\$1,274,486

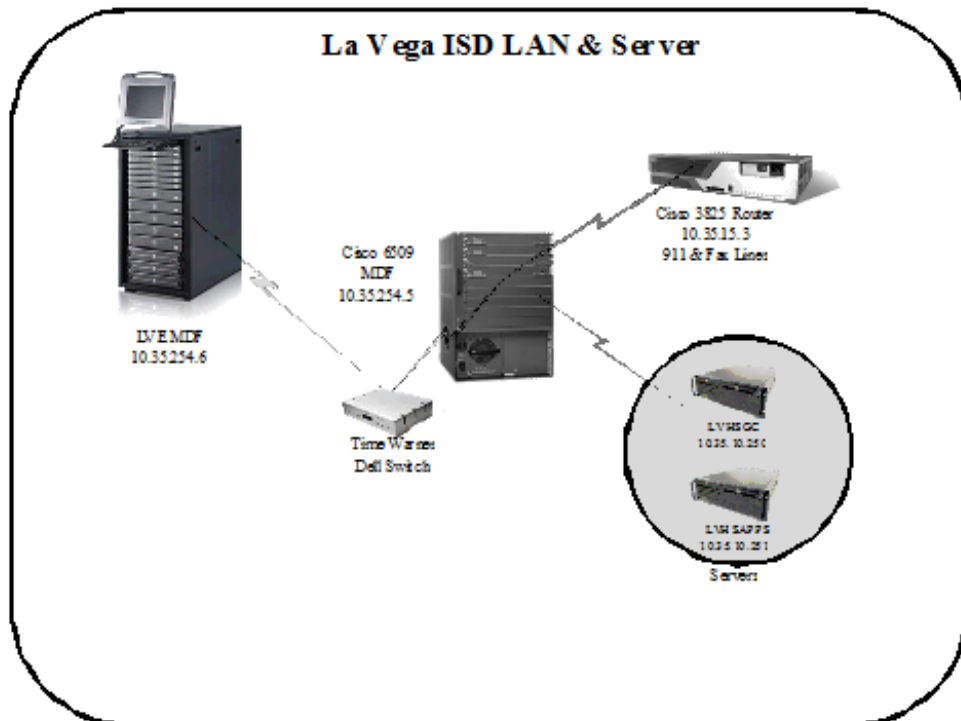
SOURCE: LVISD IT Department, February 2010.

**EXHIBIT 10-4
LVISD CENTRALIZED WAN CONFIGURATION**



SOURCE: LVISD IT Department, February 2010.

**EXHIBIT 10-5
LVISD CAMPUS LAN CONFIGURATION**



NOTE: Connections are single- and multi-mode fiber and ethernet.
SOURCE: LVISD IT Department, February 2010.

Special application servers that house software such as Waterford that is specific to a campus will remain at that location. LVISD has installed 32 network, application, and VoIP servers at various locations throughout the district that LVISD's IT Department supports.

DETAILED FINDINGS

IT DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES (REC. 69)

LVISD's IT Department has several organizational issues, including: the reporting relationship of the director of Technology does not promote or maximize organizational effectiveness; the lack of a backup plan for key IT positions; and insufficient support for the district website.

Previously, the IT Department reported to the deputy superintendent. When the position of deputy superintendent was vacated, issues dealing with IT responsibilities were informally split between the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration and the director of Finance. Interviews with the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, the director of Finance, and the director of Technology reflected unclear lines of communication and reporting relationships. Responsibility for the IT function being split causes confusion and inefficient handling of important IT-related decisions. Furthermore, interviews with IT management indicated that major IT decisions are made by the executive leadership team consisting of the superintendent, assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, and director of Finance without the involvement of the director of Technology, who is the most knowledgeable on such matters.

Gartner Research is a division of Gartner, Inc. and is one of the world's leading information technology research and advisory companies. A Gartner Research Note entitled *K-12 E-Education: Technology Framework* cited the issue of structure for a technology department in a school district. According to this note, a key component of the recommended framework for a school district is a department of information technology that is independent of other functional areas and headed by a chief information officer who reports directly to the superintendent.

A second organizational issue concerns the LVISD IT Department lacking backup for key positions. For example, if the incumbent systems administrator left the department, it would cause difficulty in supporting the network infrastructure that this position alone updates and maintains. Since there are two systems engineer positions, they currently

provide backup for each other. While the director of Technology could potentially engage the services of a third-party vendor to provide interim support, this approach alone would take time for the third-party vendor to become familiar with the district's computing environment in order to be able to provide adequate support.

Another area of concern in the LVISD IT Department is support for the district website. One of the first places the community goes to find information concerning the district is its website. As such, the website should be well designed, user-friendly, and the content logically organized and up-to-date. LVISD has a district website, and each campus has linked web pages. The district website is maintained by the administrative assistant/public information officer and each campus has a designated individual that maintains its web pages. Due to time constraints and lack of coordination, the websites are in varying stages of construction and content is not always up-to-date.

LVISD engages a third-party vendor, School Center, to host its website. The vendor provided the initial website layout and templates for the district to use to structure and update the content of the main website and campus' web pages. The vendor provided training for selected district administrative personnel, teachers, and designated campus web page coordinators.

The district should establish a clearly defined reporting relationship for the director of Technology, identify backup roles for technicians and institute a cross-training program, and provide more support for the district's website.

To address LVISD's IT Department reporting relationship issue, having the department report directly to the superintendent would be ideal but due to the district's size, the proposed LVISD organization structure has the director of Technology reporting to the new position of assistant superintendent of Finance and Operations (See Recommendation 1 in Chapter 1, District Management and Community Involvement). This move will provide a single source reporting relationship and consistency of direction that will allow the IT Department to conduct its function in a more effective and efficient manner. It will enable the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration to devote full attention to his core functions. The director of Technology should participate in or be consulted with prior to any major IT decisions being made by the executive team.

To be able to have backup support coverage for all key positions, the IT Department should implement a cross-

training program. The director of Technology should develop a plan identifying backup personnel and the levels of knowledge and skills proficiency required for each position. A schedule of training should be developed for the backup personnel that could include train-the-trainer, outside classes, and rotational assignments to enable the staff to become proficient in alternate positions.

It would be ideal for the district to employ the services of a trained webmaster that has school district web design experience to be thoroughly trained on the templates and be responsible for design and management of the district’s website. In this case the webmaster could work closely with the campus designated website personnel to ensure design and data consistency and timely updating of information. A less expensive alternative for the district to consider is to designate the administrative assistant/public information officer or another district staff member as the district website coordinator. The district website coordinator would have responsibility for establishing standards, maintaining the website templates, and enforcing timely updates of the district website and campuses web pages. The district website coordinator would also be responsible for coordinating the training of other district staff and campus web page coordinators to be able to update the district website and campus web pages through vendor training classes or the train-the-trainer approach. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY (REC. 70)

LVISD’s IT Department does not have an instructional technology position to coordinate technology training and integration of technology into the curriculum. The use of instructional technology enables students to function in today’s technology-advanced workplaces and technologically advanced society. Regardless of career choice, all students need the problem solving and critical thinking skills for incorporating technology. A curriculum that incorporates technology expands content and guides students toward higher potential. School districts serve as the link between the education systems of today and the technology of tomorrow.

Not having an instructional technology position causes inconsistency and lack of a standard method for how teachers should integrate technology into their curriculum. On an ad-hoc basis, the directors of Secondary and Elementary Education work with the schools on technology curriculum issues. Currently, the district offers technology application

courses at the high school and junior high campuses. The primary and elementary campuses offer reading, math, and science applications to teach the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Many instructional tools and programs are in place at the campuses. Some of the programs include Success Maker and Waterford to reinforce learning; and Accelerated Reader to promote and reward reading.

LVISD has made a significant investment in recent years to implement a technology infrastructure that will adequately support integration of technology into the teaching curriculum districtwide. The district has installed internet access to all campuses, installed computer labs equipped with 25 to 30 computers and mobile labs with 30 computers at campuses, implemented wireless technology throughout the district, and made significant progress in providing adequate software programs and technology tools for teachers’ use at each campus. **Exhibit 10–6** shows the number of computer labs and mobile labs at the district campuses.

**EXHIBIT 10–6
NUMBER OF COMPUTER/MOBILE LABS PER LVISD CAMPUS
2009–10**

CAMPUS	NUMBER OF COMPUTER LABS	NUMBER OF MOBILE LABS
LVES	3	0
LVISHPMC	3	1
LVJHSGDC	3	4
LVHS	3	6
TOTAL	12	11

NOTE: There are no mobile or computer labs at the primary campus.
SOURCE: LVISD IT Department, February 2010.

Exhibit 10–7 shows LVISD technology tools and software programs in use by the district in 2009–10. However, for true integration of technology into the teaching curriculum to occur, teachers must be proficient in the use of available technology tools.

Training is a crucial factor in determining whether technology is used effectively. Instructional staff must be comfortable with the use of instructional technology tools in order to effectively integrate technology into their instruction. It is critical that the training format for LVISD staff includes the use of the instructional technology computer labs as well as individual training sessions as appropriate.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed the School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart for use by campuses

**EXHIBIT 10-7
LVISD TECHNOLOGY TOOLS AND SOFTWARE PROGRAMS
2009-10**

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS		SOFTWARE PROGRAMS	
DEVICE	QUANTITY		
Multimedia Projectors	78	Microsoft Office 2003	Microsoft Office 2007
Document Cameras	59	Photo Shop	Page Maker
Video Cameras	15	Complete View	Waterford
Inter-write Pads	10	MySatori	Success Maker
Mimio Interactive	5	Accelerated Reader	AR/STAR
Mobi Learner	52	Plato	Follett/Destiny
Document Scanner	7	CSCOPE	DMAC
Camcorders	6	Track-It	Light Speed
DVD Player	4	RSCCC	

SOURCE: LVISD IT Department, February 2010.

and districts in conducting self-assessments of their progress of integrating technology into the curriculum in alignment with the goals of the State Board of Education’s (SBOE) Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020. The key areas of the STaR Chart are Teaching and Learning; Educator Preparation and Development; Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support; and Infrastructure for Technology. There are four stages of progress: Early Tech, Developing Tech, Advanced Tech, and Target Tech. **Exhibit 10-8** displays the key areas and scoring within each.

Exhibit 10-9 shows a summary of LVISD’s 2008–09 STaR Chart ratings by campus, with both the rating for level of progress and the actual score provided in each of the four focus areas.

When comparing campus progress in the STaR Chart in the first two areas of Teaching and Learning and Educator Preparation and Development with the other two areas of Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support and Infrastructure for Technology, it is clear that campuses have not progressed beyond the Developing Tech status in the first two categories. This comparison provides an indicator that LVISD staff is not fully proficient in the use of technology or consistently integrating it into instruction.

When comparing the STaR summary report for LVISD to state averages, the district’s overall progress in the four key areas falls within the same range as the majority of Texas school districts in Teaching and Learning, Developing Tech (12); Educator Preparation and Development, Developing Tech (11); Infrastructure for Technology, Advanced Tech (14); and Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support, Advanced Tech (14). While the district’s STaR ratings are within the present state averages, these ratings fall

short of being reaching the goal of target tech in the 2006–2020 SBOE Long-Range Plan for Technology.

The district should create an instructional technology coordinator position with responsibility for technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum. This position should be responsible for developing and maintaining a quality program for computer instruction for all K–12 students; assisting instructional personnel to integrate technology into all educational programs; and leading the development of the district’s long-range plan for instructional technology. The instructional technology position should be filled by a person who is well-trained in operating instructional networks, using technologies for instructional purposes, and integrating new technologies into the curriculum. The instructional technology position would be responsible for:

- Advising schools regarding effective strategies and helpful educational resources;
- Providing expert advice on classroom uses of technology;
- Serving as the primary instructional technology support resource for the Technology Committee;
- Coordinating districtwide teacher training;
- Leading the effort to implement various technology standards in schools;
- Collaborating on network implementation efforts to ensure that LVISD’s WAN and LAN satisfy instructional needs;
- Monitoring the adequacy of district technology support; and
- Facilitating the acquisition of instructional software by schools.

**EXHIBIT 10–8
TEXAS CAMPUS STaR CHART FOCUS AREAS AND SCORING**

KEY AREA	FOCUS AREAS	SCORES DEPICTING LEVELS OF PROGRESS
Teaching and Learning	Patterns of classroom use	Early Tech (6–8 points)
	Frequency/design of instructional setting using digital content	Developing Tech (9–14 points)
	Content area connections	Advanced Tech (15–20 points)
	Technology application TEKS implementation	Target Tech (21–24 points)
	Student mastery of technology applications (TEKS)	
	Online learning	
Educator Preparation and Development	Professional development experiences	Early Tech (6–8 points)
	Models of professional development	Developing Tech (9–14 points)
	Capabilities of educators	Advanced Tech (15–20 points)
	Technology professional development participation	Target Tech (21–24 points)
	Levels of understanding and patterns of use	
	Capabilities of educators with online learning	
Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support	Leadership and vision	Early Tech (5–7 points)
	Planning	Developing Tech (8–12 points)
	Instructional support	Advanced Tech (13–17 points)
	Communication and collaboration	Target Tech (18–20 points)
	Budget	
	Leadership and support for online learning	
Infrastructure for Technology	Students per computers	Early Tech (5–7 points)
	Internet access connectivity/speed	Developing Tech (8–12 points)
	Other classroom technology	Advanced Tech (13–17 points)
	Technical support	Target Tech (18–20 points)
	Local Area Network/Wide Area Network	
	Distance Learning Capability	

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Campus STaR Chart, spring 2009.

**EXHIBIT 10–9
LVISD SUMMARY STaR CHART RATINGS BY CAMPUS
2008–09**

CAMPUS	TEACHING AND LEARNING	EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT	LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION, AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TECHNOLOGY
LVPS	Developing Tech (13)	Developing Tech (11)	Advanced Tech (15)	Advanced Tech (17)
LVES	Developing Tech (10)	Developing Tech (11)	Advanced Tech (14)	Developing Tech (12)
LVISHPMC	Developing Tech (11)	Developing Tech (12)	Advanced Tech (14)	Advanced Tech (13)
LVJHSGDC	Developing Tech (12)	Developing Tech (10)	Advanced Tech (13)	Advanced Tech (14)
LVHS	Developing Tech (13)	Developing Tech (12)	Advanced Tech (16)	Advanced Tech (16)
LVISD Average	Developing Tech	Developing Tech	Advanced Tech	Advanced Tech
State Average	Developing Tech	Developing Tech	Advanced Tech	Advanced Tech

SOURCE: LVISD Campus Summary STaR Chart Report, 2008–09.

If the instructional technology position is filled from outside of the district, the estimated annual cost to the district is \$54,000, based on a salary of \$45,000 plus benefits of 20 percent. For 2010–11, there will be a half-year implementation cost of \$27,000 (total cost including benefits of \$54,000/2) to allow the district time to hire an appropriate candidate for the newly created position.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (REC. 71)

LVISD does not have a comprehensive professional development program to ensure that district staff are proficient in the use of technology. The district encourages professional development for teachers in the use of technology. Many teachers have used state grants to focus on using technology in the classroom. On several occasions, teachers have attended training conducted by the program vendors or through train-the-trainer sessions, but there is no program or consistent method for providing professional development in the understanding and use of technology in the district. The district's STaR chart indicates that the technology skills of the teaching staff are at the developing tech level, indicating there is work to be done to increase their proficiency in the use of technology tools and programs.

As an example, San Elizario ISD developed a foundation for a technology professional development program that includes:

- A four-tier matrix outlining the levels of understanding for technology use;
- A technology determinate survey to identify a teacher's individual level of understanding of technology; and
- An individual technology plan that details the training required to address a teacher's specific technology weakness.

LVISD should develop a comprehensive professional development program to ensure that district staff are proficient in the use of technology. The program should include specific standards, training requirements, policies, proficiency standards and goals, and mandatory teacher proficiency levels and timeframes for becoming proficient to ensure all instructional staff attains the capacity to integrate technology effectively into the teaching curriculum. The instructional technology coordinator (See Recommendation 70) and the directors of Secondary and Elementary Education should work as a team to develop the technology professional development program. This team should develop training plans, schedules, and formats to ensure teachers receive

training within the target timeframe. The team should also develop an evaluation methodology with measures to objectively assess proficiency that includes a certification based on the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Technology Applications Standards. LVISD should also consider models from other districts and educational institution best practices in developing its technology professional development program.

The district could also mandate that teachers use their laptops to facilitate the training process through distance learning and online tutorials. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

LONG-RANGE TECHNOLOGY PLAN (REC. 72)

LVISD has neither a comprehensive long-range technology plan that is linked to the district improvement plan (DIP) nor a Technology Committee of key stakeholders to develop such a plan. All LVISD Technology Plans that have been developed have been for one year and are used solely to meet E-Rate submission requirements.

The director of Secondary Education develops the annual plan in collaboration with the directors of Technology and Finance. The director of Technology provides input on the technical aspects for the goals and objectives of the plan, and the director of Finance provides budget data. Without a comprehensive long-range technology plan linked to the DIP, the district could be making technology decisions that are not in line with the improvement goals and objectives. **Exhibit 10–10** shows LVISD's 2009–10 Technology Plan broken down by goals and objectives.

To implement the 2009–10 technology plan, the district budgeted expenditures of approximately \$814,500. **Exhibit 10–11** summarizes the budgeted technology expenditures by goal and budgeted amount.

The major budget items include staff development, telecommunications and internet access, materials and supplies, equipment, maintenance, and miscellaneous expenses. The planned funding sources are Title II, Part D Formula; TEA Technology Allotment; E-Rate; grants (STAR, Carl Perkins, and Career and Technology Education); and local funds. **Exhibit 10–12** shows the budgeted technology cost by budget item.

Comprehensive technology plans include goals, action plans, timelines, performance and success measures, designated personnel responsible for leading the goal and monitoring progress, and financial allocations. Well written technology

**EXHIBIT 10-10
LVISD TECHNOLOGY PLAN
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
2009-10**

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Goal 1 (Teaching and Learning) – Incorporate technology as a systematic part of the teaching and learning process.	Objective 1.1 – By the end of the 2009–2010 school year, all teachers will integrate technology in the classroom and library. Objective 1.2 – By the end of the 2009–2010 school year, all students will demonstrate literacy in the use of technology as a tool and a resource for continued learning as defined by the Technology Applications Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TA TEKS).
Goal 2 (Educator Preparation and Development) – Ensure educator preparation and development is ongoing and meaningful.	Objective 2.1 – Provide professional development opportunities for all educators in hardware and software use. Objective 2.2 – Staff development will be provided for all curricula software acquired through the district technology framework.
Goal 3 (Leadership, Administration, and Support) –Establish leadership, administration, and instructional support in the area of technology to assure all members of the learning community can accomplish their tasks.	Objective 3.1 – Provide tools that enhance and support the instructional setting.
Goal 4 (Infrastructure for Technology) – Provide the infrastructure that is necessary to support technology in the schools.	Objective 4.1 – Maintain a holistic picture of the district’s technological infrastructure. (Fiber, T-1 lines, routers, switches cabling, etc.) Objective 4.2 – Maintain the state recommended student to computer ratio in the classroom and library.

SOURCE: LVISD Technology Plan, 2009–10.

**EXHIBIT 10-11
LVISD TECHNOLOGY PLAN
BUDGETED EXPENDITURES BY GOAL
2009-10**

GOAL	BUDGET	PERCENT
Educator Preparation and Development	\$357,182	44%
Teaching and Learning	\$280,605	35%
Infrastructure for Technology	\$150,000	18%
Leadership, Administration, and Support	\$26,713	3%
TOTAL	\$814,500	100%

SOURCE: LVISD Technology Plan, 2009–10.

plans lay the foundation for effective planning and decision-making and guide a district towards achieving its stated goals. Comprehensive plans also facilitate budget planning, employee resource allocations, and technology acquisitions.

Exhibit 10-13 provides an overview and comparison of components of a comprehensive technology plan with LVISD’s Technology Plan.

Boerne ISD’s Technology Plan is comprehensive and details their needs assessment along with explicit goals and timelines for incorporating technology into learning and lesson plans,

**EXHIBIT 10-12
LVISD TECHNOLOGY PLAN
BUDGETED COST BY BUDGET ITEM
2009-10**

BUDGET ITEM	COST	FUNDING SOURCES WITH AMOUNT PER SOURCE
Staff Development	\$46,500	75% Local 5% Title II, Part D 20% Grants
Telecommunications & Internet Access	\$45,000	25% Local 75% E-Rate
Materials & Supplies	\$511,000	86% Local 7% E-Rate 7% Technology Allotment
Equipment	\$10,000	5% Grant 85% E-Rate 10% Technology Allotment
Maintenance	\$182,000	90% Local 10 E-Rate
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$20,000	1% Local 99% Technology Allotment
TOTAL	\$814,500	

SOURCE: LVISD Technology Plan, 2009–10.

**EXHIBIT 10-13
TECHNOLOGY PLAN COMPONENTS**

TECHNOLOGY PLAN COMPONENT	INCLUDED IN LVISD'S TECHNOLOGY PLAN
District Profile – includes district statistics such as number of campuses, students, technology budget, and the current technology infrastructure	Yes
Executive Summary and background information – includes committee organization and goal	Yes
Needs assessment – the assessment process and outcome of what is needed in the district	Yes
Technology infrastructure goals and standards	Yes
Instructional technology standards, acquisition, and usage	No
Technology literacy and professional development requirements	Yes
Administrative technology standards, acquisition, and usage	No
Technology replacement cycles	No
Software standards and acquisition	No

SOURCE: Best practices researched by Review Team as compared to LVISD Technology Plan, March 2010.

incorporating student usage of technology tools, professional development, technology competency and literacy requirements, administrative technology, and technology replacement cycles. Galena Park ISD's technology plan includes a comprehensive training program and technology proficiency standards.

LVISD should establish a Technology Committee comprised of stakeholders from the board, administration, teachers, students, and community to develop a three- to five-year long-range technology plan with the necessary components to make it a comprehensive and effective management tool. The district will not have a comprehensive technology plan until it covers all areas of technology needs: instructional, administrative, and operational. To ensure that the plan is comprehensive and addresses districtwide technology issues, a Technology Committee should be organized to develop the plan. The Technology Committee should be comprised of representatives from the technology department, administration, teachers, students, board, and community. The Technology Plan for 2009–10 could be used as a starting point to provide a framework and stimulate thought. The

plan should focus on guiding technology decisions by defining goals, objectives, strategies, activities, and timelines; and the plan should assign responsibilities and costs to accomplish each goal. These goals should also be linked to the DIP.

The process for developing the long-range technology plan should include:

- Establishing a Technology Committee to include representation from the school board, district administration, teachers, students and community. The committee should meet on regular basis during the development of the plan and upon its completion meet twice annually to review progress in accomplishing the goals of the plan and update the plan as needed;
- Performing a formal needs assessment of its administrative and operational systems for upgrade or replacement requirements, including those used by the Business Services, Transportation, and Child Nutrition Services departments;
- Reviewing the DIP to determine how technology can support accomplishment of its defined goals and change strategies;
- Reviewing the IT budgeting process and establish a distinctive budget model and guidelines for districtwide IT spending managed by the director of Technology; and
- Reviewing instructional technology applications used throughout the district for effectiveness.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

REPLACEMENT STRATEGY (REC. 73)

LVISD lacks a comprehensive replacement strategy for the district's computing hardware. According to the IT Department's computer inventory, of the 1,789 personal computers (PCs), approximately 300 (17%) are more than 10 years old and 500 (28%) are between 5–10 years old. This means that almost half of the PCs in the district are more than five years old, which exceeds the industry lifecycle standard. Aging computers present many problems, of which one is the amount of time and effort required to maintain them. More significantly, older computers lack capabilities to run much of the new interactive educational software such as Waterford.

The district recently acquired 430 desktop computers to replace the 5–10 year old computers at the primary, elementary, and intermediate schools. This initial acquisition could be used as the starting point for developing a comprehensive 5-year computer replacement strategy with the primary focus to upgrade one school per year. This strategy would focus on replacing computers and mobile computer labs at each school and other district locations. To level out the costs of replacing the computers for budgetary purposes, the strategy would involve replacing approximately 300-plus computers per year. **Exhibit 10–14** shows a computer replacement strategy using this option to purchase computers. As part of this process, the district would also need to establish hardware standards that are enforced by the IT Department. This action reinforces the rationale for the IT Department to have a distinctive budget to manage these type of projects for consistency and standardization throughout the district. The deployment of 430 recently purchased computers could also serve as a starting point for establishment of the standards.

To minimize the fiscal impact and provide the lowest total cost of ownership (TCO), districts can research various alternatives for funding the replacement strategy. One of the options districts can consider is leasing. A Gartner Research study shows that standout organizations and businesses evaluate several high-level business drivers that affect the decision to lease or purchase PCs and define the associated evaluation criteria. Before making a decision to implement a PC leasing program, best-in-class organizations ask four key questions:

- What is the organization’s real computer equipment replacement life cycle?
- Does the organization have the ability to track the equipment during its life cycle?
- Does the organization plan to lease this equipment as part of a well-considered strategy with strong consensus throughout the organization?
- Are the software applications and processing requirements reasonably stable?

PC leasing programs are just one of many tools for resolving financial, technological, and organizational demands in the context of equipment acquisition. **Exhibit 10–15** lists the five critical factors that organizations face in executing the actual PC lease, according to a Gartner Research study.

Another option for a district to consider is using a service provider to replace and maintain new computers. Fort Worth ISD uses an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to provide repair and replacement services for new computers in order to lower their TCO for computer hardware. Under this agreement, the OEM must repair or replace equipment within 48 hours during the first three years following purchase. Fort Worth’s vendor offered this service to the district without additional cost to its preexisting hardware bid in an effort to keep the district’s business. The agreement calls for a technician to be on-site the following business day if the vendor receives a call before 5:00 p.m. If the technician cannot resolve the problem that day, the technician returns

**EXHIBIT 10–14
COMPUTER REPLACEMENT PURCHASING OPTION
5-YEAR PLAN**

COMPUTER	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
			LVHS	LVJHSGDC	LVPS & SELECTED ADMINISTRATION	LVISHPMC & REMAINING ADMINISTRATION	LVES & MAINTENANCE FOOD SERVICE, IT, OTHERS
Desktops	250	\$1000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Laptops	70	\$1250	\$87,500	87,500	\$87,500	\$87,500	\$87,500
Mobile Labs (30 laptops & cabinet)	6	\$22,000	\$132,000				
Mobile Labs (30 laptops & cabinet)	4	\$22,000		\$88,000			
Mobile Labs (30 laptops & cabinet)	1	\$22,000				\$22,000	
Fiscal Impact			\$469,500	\$425,500	\$337,500	\$359,500	\$337,500

SOURCE: Review team calculations, March 2010.

**EXHIBIT 10-15
CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PC LEASING**

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
1. Understand the Enterprise's Motivations for Leasing	The motivations to lease are driven primarily by technology and financial management decisions, rather than by capital cost pressures. From the perspective of the Technology Department, leasing can help minimize the impact of technology obsolescence, while it facilitates product acquisition and embraces the life cycle management of assets.
2. Select an Appropriate Lease Term	To select the right lease term, an enterprise needs to determine the amount of time the system will be needed. This is the most difficult step, but it is also the key assumption for determining whether to lease or purchase equipment. Leasing works best when you match the term of the lease to the amount of time you expect to use the equipment.
3. Negotiate Contract Terms and Conditions	Inattention to lease terms and conditions is one of the major reasons PC leasing initiatives fail. The advantages of leasing are only gained through careful negotiation, thorough contract review, and meticulous documentation. Best practice contracts use easily understood language and examples that help explain the intent of the lessor and lessee. Throughout the negotiation process, it is essential that enterprises understand the legal, financial, and business aspects of a lease contract and the practical day-to-day implications these contracts pose.
4. Asset Management Is Required	We recommend that enterprises require lessors to provide notification of the expiration date of each equipment schedule, along with their renewal and purchase options and pricing, 90 to 120 days before expiration. The lessee would then be required to notify the lessor of its intention 30 days after receiving such notice. Most lessors will offer some level of asset management tracking data.
5. Put Someone in Charge	Enterprises that are "best-in-class" in PC leasing generally have empowered an individual within the organization to shepherd the lease process from start to finish. Depending on the size of the lease initiative, a part-time or full-time employee reports to IT management or up through the finance organization. It is critical that management fully empowers that person to make tough decisions and provides this individual with the appropriate resources to carry out the lease initiative.

SOURCE: Gartner Research study, July 2001.

the next day. If the vendor can't fix the problem within 48 hours, the vendor installs a replacement computer in the classroom. Fort Worth ISD covers about 2,000 computers in this agreement. PC leasing companies provide a similar level of support to districts that choose to lease computers.

Many school districts employ a cost-effective PC acquisition program that allows them to explore creative leasing and purchasing options. By doing so, these districts obtain a greater number of machines at a lower cost and upgrade technology more frequently to prevent computer obsolescence.

The district should review different options and determine an appropriate computer replacement strategy. LVISD has started this process by replacing computers at some of its campuses. The district should utilize input from key stakeholders through its Technology Committee (See Recommendation 72) and research the various options to determine the best alternative for acquiring computers, their replacement schedule, and how best to budget and pay for the computers. By developing a regular replacement strategy, the district can better manage the significant cost of providing technology to its students.

DOCUMENTED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 74)

The IT Department lacks documented policies and procedures to drive operational activities and standardization. The IT Department has not developed policies and procedures for most information technology functions. Documented policies and procedures provide clear direction to staff and protect the district from loss of information in the event of staff turnover. At the same time, written policies and procedures can facilitate assimilation of new staff into the district in the most effective way. Policies and procedures provide daily guidance for technology activities and ensure the district's technology function can continue to operate in the event of a personnel change. Without documented policies and procedures, functions may be carried out in an inconsistent, ineffective, and inefficient manner. Additionally, the lack of procedures can result in situations in which the district employees cannot access email, network files, student information, or connect to the regional education service centers for services should an absence occur among technology staff.

At LVISD, the Technology Department assists users by developing and circulating a newsletter that outline key technology-related policies, procedures, and new technology standards. The newsletter provides documentation for

faculty, staff, and students on Internet usage policy, information dissemination procedures, use of computer software and copyrighted materials, hardware purchasing standards, and maintenance and upgrades of computer workstations and printers. The policy memos are available on the district's website for use by district employees and students. The information is clear, informative, and user-friendly.

LVISD has also developed Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) for employee and student electronic information resource usage and student email access. These AUP's are posted on the district's website. However, policies to govern the daily functions of the IT Department are non-existent. Not having documented policies and procedures leaves the district unprepared for emergencies and other problems that can often occur to challenge the staff. The impact to the district is slower resolution of problems that require more in-depth technical expertise.

The publication *"Innovative Solutions to Help Address the Issues and Challenges Facing Most Public School Districts"*, as written by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts in April 2003, stresses the importance of well-written procedures. Winchester Public Schools in Virginia provides an example of a well-organized and comprehensive procedures manual and its suggested content (**Exhibit 10-16**).

Having documented procedures such as the ones outlined in **Exhibit 10-16** assist in daily operations and troubleshooting of non-routine problems. It also enhances the efficiency and overall effectiveness of the technical staff that assist district personnel on technology related needs.

LVISD should develop and publish policies and procedures that establish standards for IT operations. The director of Technology, working with the Technology Committee, should identify and map out functions or activities that require a policy or procedure to be compliant or make a process more effective. A plan should be developed to document and publish policies and procedures incorporating standards, as appropriate. These policies and procedures should become a part of a standard operating procedures manual as well as posted on the district and campus websites. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

DISASTER RECOVERY/BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN (REC. 75)

LVISD does not have a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the network server facility is rendered inoperable. Additionally, there is no backup network coming into the main hub which could provide another route for network traffic to the facility should the main route be compromised. Also, the district has hard copy student and other records stored in boxes that are critical and should be considered for retention and recovery in the event of a disaster. Without a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, the district is at risk of losing critical data and operations in the event of an unforeseen disaster.

Selected district data is backed up remotely on a nightly basis. Email and Microsoft Office servers are backed up remotely using a product and service called File Banc. The data is stored in two locations, Dallas and Houston. In the event data is lost on the local servers, it can be restored remotely from either one of these locations.

The primary objective of a disaster recovery/business continuity plan is to protect the district in the event its operations and technology services become unusable. Prior planning and test exercises minimize chaos and ensure a level of organizational stability and orderly recovery after a disaster.

Exhibit 10-17 lists the key elements of a disaster recovery plan.

LVISD should develop and implement a comprehensive disaster recovery/business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the network server facility is rendered inoperable. The plan would identify critical systems and data that must be protected and would help the district restore operations and technology services as soon as possible after a crisis had occurred.

The district should establish a disaster recovery team comprised of representation from the executive team, principals, teachers, district staff, outside vendors, maintenance, security, and technical staff. The district's disaster recovery team should conduct an annual review of the plan to ensure that changes in staff, organization, or systems are incorporated in the plan.

EXHIBIT 10-16
WINCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROCEDURE MANUAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Introduction

- I. Department Structure and Procedures
 - A. Organizational Chart
 - B. Roles of the Department
 - C. Job Descriptions
 1. Director of Technology
 2. Network Technician
 3. Computer Systems Technician
 4. Technology Support Specialist
 5. Technology Resource Teacher (TRT)
 6. Building Technology Coordinator
 7. School News Coordinator
- II. Technology Plan
- III. General Guidelines and Procedures
 - A. Materials to be carried by Computer and Network Technicians
 - B. Work Order Procedure
 - C. Parts Ordering Procedure
 - D. Routine Maintenance to be performed on Macintosh Computers
 - E. School News Coordinator Guidelines
- IV. Server Configuration (build a server from scratch)
- V. Backup Procedures
- VI. CIMMS Procedures
 - A. Contracting
 - B. Scheduling
 - C. Testing Labels
- VII. Technical Notes and Articles

SOURCE: Winchester, Virginia Public Schools, Technology Department, 2005.

Essential elements in the disaster recovery plan should include:

- Develop a complete list of critical activities performed within the district;
- Identify which systems and staff are necessary to perform functions;
- List key personnel for each function, and their responsibilities;
- Create an inventory of all technology assets including hardware, software systems and data, documentation, and supplies that correctly identify the location with sufficient information to document loss for insurance recovery;

- Define actions to be taken when a pending disaster is projected;
- Identify actions taken to restore critical functions;
- Keep the plan simple but effective; and
- Keep the plan components in an accessible location that can be accessed in the event of an emergency.

As part of the development of the disaster recovery/business continuity plan, LVISD should consider exploring alternatives for use as a backup facility for key application processing and network connectivity if the core network center is inoperable for an extended period of time. Many districts use the vendor which provides the software for them to backup their system, or their regional education service

EXHIBIT 10-17
KEY ELEMENTS OF A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

STEP	DETAILS
Build the disaster recovery team.	Identify a disaster recovery team that includes key policy makers, building management, end-users, key outside contractors, and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the system. Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	Develop an inventory of all computer technology assets including data, software, hardware, documentation, and supplies. Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organizations to share each other's equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the system to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. Make plans to procure hardware, software, and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations are resumed as soon as possible. Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. Locate support resources that might be needed, such as equipment repair, trucking, and cleaning companies. Arrange with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders. Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details within the plan.	Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so that everyone knows exactly what needs to be done. Define actions to be taken in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. Define actions to be taken at the onset of an undesirable event to limit damage, loss, and compromised data integrity. Identify actions to be taken to restore critical functions. Define actions to be taken to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	Test the plan frequently and completely. Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Deal with damage appropriately.	If a disaster actually occurs, document all costs and videotape the damage. Be prepared to overcome downtime; insurance settlements can take time to resolve.
Give consideration to other significant issues.	Don't make a plan unnecessarily complicated. Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that others are authorized and prepared to implement if it is needed. Update the plan regularly whenever changes are made to your system.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding your Technology", November 2002.

center, to serve as a backup computing facility or to provide redundant network capability in case of a problem or disaster. For example, in 2004 Clint ISD entered into a reciprocal agreement with Regional Education Service Center XIX for disaster recovery services. The two organizations compared compatibility options to make sure mission critical systems could be aligned with minimum expenses.

The district should also consider implementing a document records management system to scan district records in conjunction with the district's disaster recovery plan. The

cost for this service is dependent on the type of records management system selected by the district. 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
CHAPTER 10: COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY							
69. Establish a clearly defined reporting relationship for the director of Technology, identify backup roles for technicians and institute a cross-training program, and provide more support for the district's website.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
70. Create an instructional technology coordinator position with responsibility for technology training and integration of technology in the curriculum.	(\$27,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$243,000)	\$0
71. Develop a comprehensive professional development program to ensure that district staff are proficient in the use of technology.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
72. Establish a Technology Committee comprised of stakeholders from the board, administration, teachers, students, and community to develop a three- to five-year long-range technology plan with the necessary components to make it a comprehensive and effective management tool.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
73. Review different options and determine an appropriate computer replacement strategy.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
74. Develop and publish policies and procedures that establish standards for IT operations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
75. Develop and implement a comprehensive disaster recovery/ business continuity plan that would allow the district to maintain operations in the event the network server facility is rendered inoperable.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 10	(\$27,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$54,000)	(\$243,000)	\$0

CHAPTER 11

SAFETY AND SECURITY

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 11. SAFETY AND SECURITY

A major concern to school districts and stakeholders is the safety of students and school district personnel and the security of facilities and physical assets. A balanced approach of prevention, intervention, enforcement, and recovery is essential to provide an effective safety and security program.

La Vega Independent School District's (LVISD's) board of trustees approved the hiring of a police chief for the district in June 2009 and filled the position in August 2009. The police chief reports to the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration with his major responsibilities including to conduct campus patrols, respond to calls from campuses, investigate criminal offenses, arrest perpetrators, work cooperatively with other police agencies, and help provide traffic control. The police chief's office is located on the district's high school campus.

The board also approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City of Bellmead Police Department and the LVISD Police Department in October 2009 and MOU negotiations are ongoing with the City of Waco Police Department.

The police chief is the key person responsible for safety and security in the district. Prior to January 2010, the director of Finance was responsible for updating the district Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and for reviewing and responding to the recommendations of the Security Audit Teams resulting from their campus safety and security audits conducted in 2007–08. These responsibilities were assigned to the police chief as of January 2010. The police chief prepares and submits monthly incident reports to the executive leadership team and board of trustees. **Exhibit 11–1** presents a summary of incidents which occurred in the district during the 2009–10 school year through February 11, 2010.

The district also operates a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) located in the Learning Center.

FINDINGS

- LVISD lacks comprehensive, up-to-date safety and security policies and procedures.
- Safety and security practices are not consistently applied to ensure a safe and secure learning environment in LVISD.

EXHIBIT 11–1 LVISD SUMMARY OF INCIDENTS AUGUST 21, 2009 THROUGH FEBRUARY 11, 2010

INCIDENT TYPE	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	PERCENT INCIDENT RATE
Disorderly Conduct - Profanity	67	44.1%
Fighting	25	16.4%
Disruption of Class	24	15.8%
Assault by Contact Class C	11	7.2%
Disruption of Transportation	6	3.9%
Other	19	12.5%
TOTAL	152	99.9%*

*Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LVISD Police Chief's Incident Reports, February 2010.

- LVISD lacks coordination and timely communication between the district and the external agencies with which the district maintains safety and security agreements.
- The LVISD Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) does not adequately separate La Vega Elementary School students from older students, and the building environment is not conducive to learning.
- LVISD lacks a position at La Vega High School that appropriately monitors safety and security on the campus and reports to the district police chief.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 76: Document and implement comprehensive, up-to-date safety and security policies and procedures.**
- **Recommendation 77: Perform a comprehensive safety and security assessment of each campus and determine and implement a correction plan for identified issues.**
- **Recommendation 78: Establish and implement proper coordination with external agencies which provide the district with safety and security services.**

- **Recommendation 79: Consider creating a separate disciplinary alternative education environment for elementary school students to eliminate their exposure to behavioral issues common to more mature middle and high school students being served in the disciplinary environment.**
- **Recommendation 80: Consider expanding the duties and responsibilities of the security/patrol clerk position at La Vega High School and require the position to report to the district police chief.**

DETAILED FINDINGS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 76)

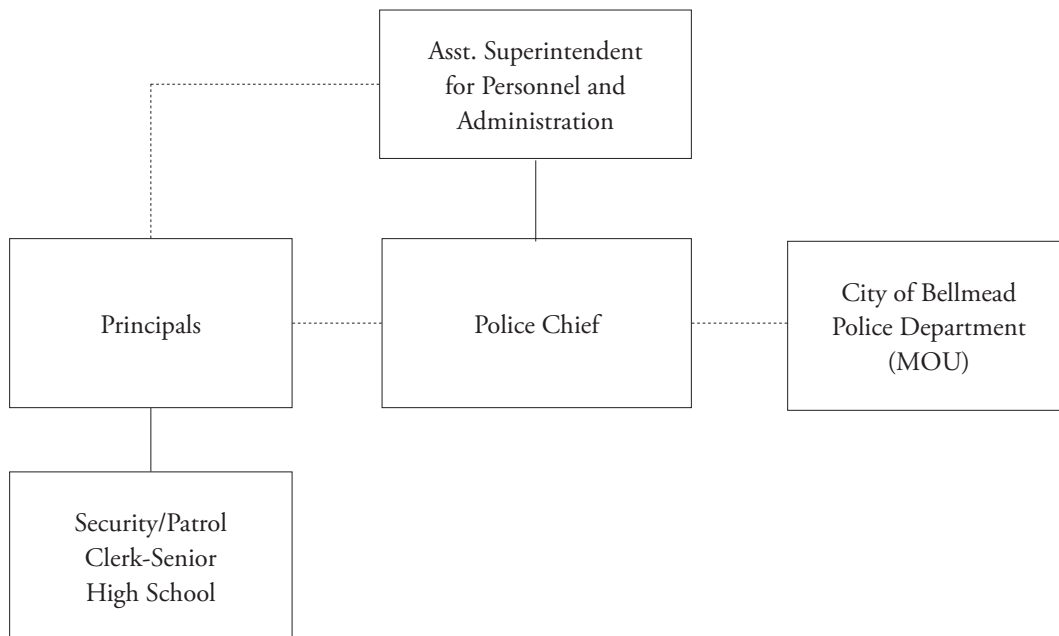
LVISD lacks comprehensive, up-to-date safety and security policies and procedures. Policies provide authorized guiding principles for daily decision-making while procedures define the tasks to perform. Comprehensive, up-to-date policies and procedures may also minimize the district’s liability and risk. The police chief has prepared and submitted a draft Police Department General Orders Manual to the superintendent for review and approval. The draft manual articulates detailed daily operating procedures to perform the responsibilities for this position to make sure they are in line with the school district’s safety and security goals and

objectives. In the interim, the police chief’s job description outlines his key responsibilities in the areas of law enforcement, consultation, safety, and administration.

As outlined in **Exhibit 11-2**, the police chief has been assigned responsibility for the safety and security areas in the district, but relies on principals to handle the fire drills, emergency procedures, crisis plan training, and safety training.

In January 2010, the police chief was assigned additional responsibility for overall safety and security in the district including the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and monitoring the status of recommendations from campus safety and security audits. Chapter 37, §108 of the Texas Education Code states that each school district shall adopt and implement a multihazard EOP for use in district schools. The plan must address mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery as defined by the commissioner of education in conjunction with the governor’s office of homeland security.

**EXHIBIT 11-2
LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
SAFETY AND SECURITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
2009-10**



SOURCE: LVISD District Administration, February 2010.

The plan must provide for:

1. district employee training in responding to an emergency;
2. mandatory school drills to prepare district students and employees for responding to an emergency;
3. measures to ensure coordination with local emergency management agencies, law enforcement, and fire departments in the event of an actual emergency; and
4. the implementation of a security audit as required by TEC §37.108 (b).

LVISD's EOP indicates annual revision dates on the Record of Changes section, but does not specify the nature of the change. The Crisis Response Plan included in the EOP provided to the review team was dated August 31, 2007.

LVISD maintains a Crisis Response Plan flip chart which addresses emergency procedures. The flip chart obtained by the review team during onsite work is dated August 31, 2006; it has not been updated since this date. The purpose of the flip chart is to provide a safer school environment and action plan in the event of an emergency. The flip chart is provided to the administration at each campus and includes the information outlined in Appendix 16, Crisis Response Plan, of the EOP, including:

- Crisis Communication Procedures;
- Accidents Emergency Procedures;
- Bomb Threat/Fire/Explosion Procedures;
- Violence/Hazardous Materials Procedures;
- Tornadoes/Inclement Weather Procedures;
- Crisis Action Plan;
- Emergency Phone Numbers; and
- Crisis Management Team members.

LVISD should document and implement comprehensive, up-to-date safety and security policies and procedures. The police chief should enforce safety coordination among campuses and establish a review process to determine if each principal is effectively performing this responsibility.

One of the first priorities in this process should be review, revision (as necessary), and approval of the draft Police Department General Orders Manual which was prepared by the police chief and submitted to the superintendent for approval earlier in 2009–10. Also, LVISD's EOP should be

updated to identify the police chief's responsibilities and contact information in sections such as Appendix 7, District Emergency Operations Planning Team, and Appendix 16, Crisis Response Plan, which includes emergency contact information and procedures for accidents, bomb threats/fire/explosion, violence/hazardous materials, and other emergency situations. In addition to approval of the Police Department General Orders Manual and update of the EOP, the district's Crisis Response Plan flip chart should be updated annually. The information in this flip chart helps to provide a safer school environment and action plan in the event of an emergency.

As the police chief's role and responsibilities evolve, all relevant policies and procedures, as well as the position's job description, should be updated to reflect the new assignments and related tasks. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES (REC. 77)

Safety and security practices are not consistently applied to ensure a safe and secure learning environment in LVISD. Various safety and security issues exist at the campuses that have not been addressed or corrected by the district.

An effective safety and security program maintains a balanced approach of prevention and intervention enforcement. The following are some of the safety and security issues noted during on-site work in LVISD:

- At the high school, junior high, and intermediate campuses, students can enter through multiple doors and open the door for others. Some of the external doors can only be locked with chains and padlocks.
- There are no security cameras at primary, elementary, or intermediate campuses. Fourteen out of 30 cameras are not working at the junior high school. There is no camera aimed at the front parking lot and faculty parking lot at the high school. The analog surveillance cameras in place at the junior high and high schools are not the best quality, especially for close ups to clearly identify students or others, including perpetrators.
- There is no fence around the junior high and high schools, which allows easy trespassing opportunities.
- The high school has an open campus policy for lunch due to overcrowding. Students walk or drive across a hazardous road (Texas Loop 340) which poses a risk of student involvement in a serious traffic accident.

- La Vega (LVHS) uses its electronic visitor sign-in system, which has the capability to check for sex offenders and generate visitor badges. LVISD implemented an electronic visitor registration system to record, track, and monitor visitors to school campuses throughout the district. As an enhancement to school security, the visitor registration system reads visitor drivers' licenses, comparing information to a sex offender database. If a match is confirmed, the appropriate step(s) to take is to contact and notify campus administrators and law enforcement personnel to ensure the campus remains safe, otherwise a visitor's badge is printed that includes a photo, the visitor's name, time and date. The visitor policy section of the student handbook states that visitors must first proceed to the office, sign-in, and receive a visitor's badge. During the onsite visit at LVHS, the review team was allowed to check-in by inserting our own driver's license and check-out without the administrative staff's oversight or verification of the pictures on our licenses. One review consultant team member was not accepted by the system and the administrative staff was able to place him on the "Good List" without authorization from the principal.
- The electronic visitor system is only fully functional at LVHS. The system was not acquired nor is it supported by the Technology Department.

Exhibit 11-3 summarizes the key school security system capabilities available and the functions implemented by LVHS.

These and additional issues were noted by the district's Safety and Security Audit Teams. The Texas Education Code §37.108, as amended, requires all school districts to conduct security audits by September 1, 2008, and to conduct security audits at least once every three years. LVISD established Safety and Security Audit Teams to conduct safety and security audits at all campuses using the audit protocol recommended by the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) to identify safety and security strengths and weaknesses in the district. TxSSC is a central location for school safety information, and provides schools with research, training, and technical assistance to promote school safety. Safety training offered includes security criteria for instructional facilities, a model safety and security audit procedure, and assistance in developing a multi-hazard

EXHIBIT 11-3

LA VEGA HIGH SCHOOL SECURITY SYSTEM CAPABILITIES 2009-10

SYSTEM CAPABILITY	FUNCTION USED?
Print volunteer identification (ID) badges	Yes
Print visitor ID badges	Yes
Print late/tardy passes	Yes
Print early release pass	Yes
Print early dismissal pass	No
Print substitute ID badges	No
Print reports on activities	No
Track volunteer hours	No
Track visitors	Yes
Track early dismissals	Yes
Track late/tardy students	Yes
Track faculty and staff	No
Track family service hours	No
Track vendors	No
Insert identification card and system searches sex offender database	Yes
Visitor selects yes or no to indicate if they are a sex offender	Yes
System accepts or rejects visitor's identification	Yes
Administrator can manually override and add visitor to the "Good List" and system will print visitor's pass	Yes

SOURCE: La Vega High School Administrative Staff, April 2010.

emergency operations plan. The security audit results must be reported to the school district's board and to TxSSC.

The district's 2007-08 Safety and Security Audit Teams consisted of principals, head custodians, counselors, librarians, teachers, and district administrators. Best practices from the Texas Unified School Safety Standards indicate that trained audit teams should consist of staff representing the following areas: maintenance/facilities, food service, school resource officer (SRO), nurses, administrators, teachers, and counselors. The audit results were also provided to each principal to implement recommendations with little or no fiscal impact. As of the time of the on-site visit in February 2010, the district did not have a status report regarding the action taken as a result of school safety and security audit recommendations.

The following presents a summary of information from the Safety and Security Audit Team's reports for each of the district's campuses.

La Vega Primary School (LVPS)

Pre-Audit Needs Assessment:

- Security cameras are lacking;
- Fencing around the play area is needed;
- Training on consistent emergency procedures not being provided;
- Finances (deemed a barrier to address needs); and
- Consistent district protocol for all LVISD employees when entering/exiting buildings (deemed a barrier to address needs).

Pre-Audit Accomplishments:

- Training is being provided; and
- Practicing for emergency drills.

Audit Recommendations:

- Seek finances to secure the playground area with fencing;
- Post signs to indicate any restricted areas;
- Number exterior doors from the outside;
- Provide written procedures to staff for access to building outside of school day;
- Provide and protect play and recreation areas with fencing;
- Number exterior doors on the inside;
- Post safety symbols; and
- Provide substitute teachers with safety plan training and information.

La Vega Elementary School (LVES)

Pre-Audit Needs Assessment:

- Lack of security cameras;
- The fence is not closed along the back of the school;
- Maintenance personnel to not follow campus check-in procedures, and often prop and leave doors open;
- The need to provide parents access to pick-up their children without leaving the security doors open;

- Finances (deemed a barrier to address needs); and
- District personnel not following security procedures (deemed a barrier to address needs).

Pre-Audit Accomplishments:

- Proactively monitoring individuals who come into the building;
- Making students aware of expectations and procedures; and
- Conducting safety drills.

Audit Recommendations:

- Acquire security cameras;
- Instruct all staff to wear identification badges;
- Supervise all tutorial students during and after dismissal;
- Review compliance of campus safety procedures by all district personnel;
- Incorporate LVISD Crisis Plan flip chart with campus EOP in order to cover all necessary emergency procedures;
- Indicate date on visitor passes;
- Collect badges of LVES staff members who are no longer employed by the campus at the conclusion of the school year; and
- Install a security mirror in the front foyer area to allow for a clear and direct line of site between the receptionist and security doors.

La Vega Intermediate School H. P. Miles Campus (LVISHPMC)

Pre-Audit Needs Assessment:

- Easy access to buildings from more than one point;
- Front entrance area difficult to see from the office;
- The condition and layout (open campus) of the entire school building (deemed a barrier to address needs); and
- Revamp evacuation map due to increased enrollment (deemed a barrier to address needs).

Pre-Audit Accomplishments:

- Automated External Defibrillator (AED) refresher course provided to staff;
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training course provided to staff; and
- Practiced the art of observing suspicious behavior and questioning visitors and guests.

Audit Recommendations:

- Consider using a system to monitor the entrance of visitors and guests into the building;
- Post signs to indicate restricted areas;
- Number exterior doors from the outside;
- Clearly mark parent drop-off and pick-up areas;
- Post drug, smoke, and weapon-free signage;
- Provide written procedures to staff for access to building outside of school day;
- Document school deliveries by having drivers sign a delivery log;
- Make exit signs clearly visible from the portable buildings;
- Inspect the cafeteria hood every three months;
- Advise cafeteria staff on the location of electrical/gas/water shut-offs;
- Make Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) available for each material in the science labs;
- Post safety symbols throughout the campus;
- Provide substitute teachers with safety plan; and
- Develop and implement a process for checking suspicious packages.

La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus (LVJHSGDC)**Pre-Audit Needs Assessment:**

- Small areas and nooks are difficult to supervise;
- Acquire the time to do all that is required (deemed a barrier to address needs); and
- Identify funds for repairs, upgrades, etc. (deemed a barrier to address needs).

Pre-Audit Accomplishments:

- Emergency drills are scheduled and conducted on a regular basis.

Audit Recommendations:

- Address the need of proper supervision by teachers outside their classroom doors in between class periods;
- Update and/or add additional cameras for proper coverage;
- Position adequate personnel to monitor the bus arrival doors during morning arrivals;
- Provide supervision for parent pick-up areas at dismissal time in the afternoon hours; and
- Provide adequate supervision for student lunch periods.

La Vega High School (LVHS)**Pre-Audit Needs Assessment:**

- Secure a School Resource Officer (SRO) who is a law enforcement officer and/or an additional assistant principal for discipline;
- Address the camera system which is not fully functional;
- Provide the means for teachers in the classroom to call the office;
- The building has multiple entrances that cannot be locked during school hours (deemed a barrier to address needs); and
- Provide ongoing training in school safety (deemed a barrier to address needs).

Pre-Audit Accomplishments:

- Student identification is clearly visible;
- Hall passes utilized limiting the number of students in the hallways without authorization;
- Sign-in procedures for visitors are clearly established; and
- Emergency drills are scheduled.

Audit Recommendations:

- Evaluate the campus video camera security system;
- Evaluate and upgrade the exterior doors and gymnasium locker room doors;

- Provide emergency lighting throughout the school building;
- Install a two-way communication system between the classrooms and the office;
- Upgrade the science laboratories to meet Texas Education Agency (TEA) specifications; and
- Examine the front drop-off/pick-up area for expansion and addition of a fire lane and additional faculty parking.

In addition to not implementing the recommendations from the Safety and Security Audits, LVISD did not fully comply with the City of Bellmead Fire Department's safety checklists as completed during inspections in December 2009. The Fire Department identified various fire safety inspection issues at

the district's four Bellmead campuses as summarized in **Exhibit 11-4**.

During on-site work, the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration and the LVISD police chief indicated that they were not aware of any imposed deadlines that the district must meet in order to come into compliance when all of the aforementioned safety and security issues became known, including those in **Exhibit 11-4**.

LVISD should perform a comprehensive safety and security assessment of each campus and determine and implement a correction plan for identified issues. As part of this plan, district administration should work with the police chief to determine the priority and timeline for correction of each identified issue and should maintain a status report of open issues. Subsequent to the assessment, the district should develop procedures to monitor inconsistent application of

EXHIBIT 11-4
SAFETY VIOLATIONS AT LVISD CAMPUSES
REPORTED BY BELLMEAD FIRE DEPARTMENT
DECEMBER 2009

FIRE SAFETY ISSUE	LA VEGA PRIMARY SCHOOL (PRE-K-K)	LA VEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (1-3)	LA VEGA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL H. P. MILES CAMPUS (4-6)	LA VEGA HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)
Housekeeping and Precautions				
Accumulation of waste material to property				X
Storage of combustible materials or rubbish	X	X	X	X
Display of highly combustible goods				X
Storage maintained 2' below ceiling	X	X	X	X
Combustible material storage in equipment rooms	X			
Fire Service Features				
Fire lanes marking	X	X		X
Knox lock required on gate				X
Electrical Equipment-Wiring & Hazards				
Clearance to electrical equipment	X		X	
Extension cord usage		X		X
Unapproved electrical conditions			X	X
Fire Resistance				
Fire extinguisher maintained & tagged	X	X		
Fire extinguisher mounted with hanger and brackets				X
Means of Exit				
Means of exit maintained			X	X

NOTE: La Vega Junior High School George Dixon Campus information is not included as the campus is located within the city limits of the City of Waco.

SOURCE: City of Bellmead Fire Department's Fire Safety Inspection Reports, December 21-29, 2009.

safety and security practices districtwide. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES (REC. 78)

LVISD lacks coordination and timely communication between the district and the external agencies with which the district maintains safety and security agreements. Proper coordination and communication between the district and both the Bellmead Police Department (BPD) and the drug detection contractor are not maintained.

LVISD executed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Bellmead Police Department in October 2009. Section 10.1, Coordination of Effort, of the MOU states that the BPD and LVISD police chiefs will meet formally at least every two months to discuss and coordinate the operations of departments. No information was provided to the review team to indicate that these meetings have been occurring.

The lack of coordination between the two entities was exhibited during an incident which occurred in the district in February 2010. The LVISD Police Chief was not informed regarding the possible arrest of a district employee until two days after Child Protective Services (CPS) contacted the BPD. Additionally, BPD did not provide LVISD's superintendent a list and pictures of sex offenders in the school district area as required by law. Ultimately the LVISD police chief requested and obtained the list of sex offenders from BPD, and proceeded to print out the pictures of the sex offenders from the internet.

Regarding drug detection services, proper coordination between the Interquest Detection Canines, the drug detection contractor, and LVISD is not maintained to ensure proper follow-up and handling of potential drug offenses and other criminal activity. The drug detection contractor currently coordinates their campus visits solely with the school principals, excluding the district police chief from these drug detection efforts. The contract provides for 20 one-half day visits for contraband (all drugs of abuse, alcoholic beverages, firearms, etc.) inspection services. These inspections may be conducted on an unannounced basis of communal areas, lockers, gym areas, automobiles, grounds and other select areas as directed by district officials. However, if drugs or other problems are found, only the school principal is present. The contract does not state that the district police chief should be immediately notified.

In addition to these agreements, in July 2009 the LVISD school board approved a resolution to establish an MOU with the City of Waco Police Department. As of April 2010, no MOU has been executed with the City of Waco and negotiations are ongoing.

LVISD should establish and implement proper coordination with external agencies which provide the district with safety and security services. This includes the Bellmead and Waco Police Departments as well as the drug detection contractor. The district should amend its MOU with BPD to require immediate notification to the LVISD police chief of potential criminal arrests and/or convictions of district employees, and to provide the district with a list of updated sexual offenders information on a timely basis. The LVISD police chief should meet with the BPD chief and officers to confirm their mutual understanding and procedures, and continue the meetings on a formal basis every two months as required by the MOU.

The district should also amend the contract with Interquest Detection Canines to require the contractor to notify the district police chief of scheduled campus visits and any violations found so that the district may take the appropriate legal action on a timely basis.

Finally, the district should continue pursuing execution of an MOU with the City of Waco so that all the interests of all LVISD students are protected by external law enforcement agencies. These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT (REC. 79)

The LVISD Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) does not adequately separate La Vega Elementary School students from older students, and the building environment is not conducive to learning. This situation potentially exposes younger children to mature language and acts of violence that may occur in a disciplinary alternative education setting. Prior to establishing the DAEP at the La Vega Learning Center (Center) in 2006, each school had its own DAEP. Currently, the DAEP for all grade levels in LVISD is housed in older buildings separate from all of the campuses. The buildings have their own gym and cafeteria areas; however, the décor does not promote a motivating learning environment.

The Center houses the students in three rooms: a room for elementary and intermediate students, a room for junior high students, and a room for high school students. The

Center also has an overflow room for junior high and high school students respectively. The total number of rooms is five, each with a 15-student capacity. Each room has a separate restroom according to district administrators. The elementary/intermediate room has one teacher and an aide.

LVISD should consider creating a separate disciplinary alternative education environment for elementary students to eliminate their exposure to behavioral issues common to more mature middle and high school students being served in the disciplinary environment. The district should evaluate moving the disciplinary alternative educational programs to the elementary student's home campuses, rather than sending these students to a separate building for DAEP services. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

SECURITY STAFF (REC. 80)

LVISD lacks a position at La Vega High School that appropriately monitors safety and security on the campus and reports to the district police chief.

The district maintains a security/patrol clerk position at LVHS that reports to the LVHS principal and not the district's police chief. The job description for the security/patrol clerk indicates that the major responsibilities of this position are to patrol assigned routes, walking or driving, on district grounds to prevent vandalism, illegal entries, fires, and theft and notify the principal or other appropriate authority of any situation requiring immediate or prompt attention.

Approximately four to five years ago, the Safety and Environmental Compliance position at LVISD was eliminated with responsibilities of that position being allocated to the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Administration, and maintenance director; some responsibilities were recently assigned to the police chief. In January 2010, the police chief was assigned additional oversight responsibilities for district safety and security including updating the Emergency Operations Plan, monitoring the status of recommendations from campus safety and security audits, and reviewing emergency drill reports.

As seen in **Exhibit 11-5**, the number of incidents at LVHS generally exceeds that of the four other district campuses, which is of concern since LVHS is the only campus which employs a full-time security position.

LVISD should consider expanding the duties and responsibilities of the security/patrol clerk position at La Vega High School and require the position to report to the district police chief. Given the expanding role of the police chief, the high number of incidents at LVHS, and reporting requirements related to disciplinary incidents, it is important that this position is able to monitor and prevent disciplinary incidents at the LVHS campus.

If the district decides to expand the duties and responsibilities of the security position at LVHS, a new job description should be created and the district could consider increasing the pay scale for the position. The fiscal impact of this recommendation would depend on the district's decision regarding the future of this position.

EXHIBIT 11-5
LVISD DISCIPLINE REPORTS BY CAMPUS
2008-09

ATTRIBUTE	LA VEGA PRIMARY SCHOOL (PRE-K-K)	LA VEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (1-3)	LA VEGA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL H. P. MILES CAMPUS (4-6)	LA VEGA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL GEORGE DIXON CAMPUS (7-8)	LA VEGA HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)
How many office discipline referrals were made?	118	846	630	1,116	1,423
How many students [unduplicated count] were referred to the office?	51	207	178	222	255
How many bus discipline referrals were made?	19	202	161	76	24
How many students [unduplicated count] were referred for bus discipline?	12	136	108	45	11
How many Level 1 violations occurred?	*	846	627	1,113	1,420
How many Level 2 violations occurred?	N/A	N/A	*	*	*
How many Level 3 violations occurred?	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	N/A
How many students were administered corporal punishment?	5	315	38	9	N/A
How many incidences of out-of-school suspension occurred?	N/A	10	188	128	155
How many incidences of out-of-school suspension were related to the possession, sale, or use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs?	N/A	N/A	*	*	*
How many students were placed in the local/campus DAEP**?	N/A	21	14	24	40
How many students were placed in any AEP due to possession, sale, or use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs?	N/A	N/A	*	*	*
How many students were expelled?	N/A	N/A	*	*	N/A
How many incidents of the following behavior occurred:					
Possession/Sale/Use of Tobacco?	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	*
Possession/Sale/Use of Alcohol?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*
Possession/Sale/Use of Other Drugs?	N/A	N/A	*	*	5
Inappropriate Sexual Conduct?	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	*
Sexual Harassment?	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	*
Fighting?	*	*	18	26	25
Assaults Against Other Students?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*
Assaults Against Teachers/Staff?	N/A	*	N/A	N/A	5
Acts of vandalism/criminal mischief against school property?	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	*

*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.

**DAEP = Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

N/A = Not Applicable.

SOURCE: LVISD District Administration, April 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
CHAPTER 11: SAFETY AND SECURITY							
76. Document and implement comprehensive, up-to-date safety and security policies and procedures.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
77. Perform a comprehensive safety and security assessment of each campus and determine and implement a correction plan for identified issues.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
78. Establish and implement proper coordination with external agencies which provide the district with safety and security services.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
79. Consider creating a separate disciplinary alternative education environment for elementary students to eliminate their exposure to behavioral issues common to more mature middle and high school students being served in the disciplinary environment.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
80. Consider expanding the duties and responsibilities of the security/patrol clerk position at La Vega High School and require the position to report to the district police chief.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 11	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

APPENDICES

LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

N = 149

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

	MALE	FEMALE				
1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	27%	73%				
	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER	
2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	50%	22%	15%	2%	11%	
	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY LA VEGA ISD?	11%	35%	24%	12%	7%	11%
	A. ADMINISTRATOR		B. CLERICAL STAFFER		C. SUPPORT STAFFER	
4. ARE YOU A(N):	6%		15%		79%	
	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN THIS CAPACITY BY LA VEGA ISD?	11%	39%	24%	12%	7%	7%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	17%	48%	34%	1%	0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	19%	49%	29%	3%	0%
3. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	52%	36%	10%	2%	0%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	50%	32%	14%	4%	0%
5. Central administration is efficient.	26%	51%	17%	5%	1%
6. Central administration supports the educational process.	31%	46%	20%	3%	0%
7. The morale of central administration staff is good.	24%	50%	22%	3%	1%
8. Education is the main priority in our school district.	41%	47%	9%	3%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
9. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	18%	46%	32%	3%	1%
10. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	9%	37%	46%	7%	1%
11. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	10%	38%	45%	6%	1%
12. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	23%	53%	23%	1%	0%
b. Writing	17%	55%	24%	4%	0%
c. Mathematics	20%	52%	24%	4%	0%
d. Science	18%	50%	24%	8%	0%
e. English or Language Arts	19%	54%	23%	3%	0%
f. Computer Instruction	18%	54%	25%	3%	0%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	16%	54%	27%	3%	0%
h. Fine Arts	11%	52%	35%	1%	1%
i. Physical Education	16%	53%	29%	1%	1%
j. Business Education	10%	41%	45%	3%	1%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	11%	40%	45%	3%	1%
l. Foreign Language	11%	35%	48%	6%	0%
13. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	24%	48%	27%	1%	0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	14%	45%	33%	7%	1%
c. Special Education	17%	55%	24%	3%	1%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	11%	35%	50%	3%	1%
e. Dyslexia program	16%	42%	38%	4%	0%
f. Student mentoring program	18%	38%	39%	5%	0%
g. Advanced placement program	12%	34%	49%	5%	0%
h. Literacy program	15%	39%	41%	5%	0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	14%	28%	46%	8%	4%
j. Summer school programs	23%	45%	27%	4%	1%
k. Alternative education programs	12%	43%	39%	5%	1%
l. English as a second language program	19%	43%	37%	1%	0%
m. Career counseling program	10%	39%	44%	5%	2%
n. College counseling program	9%	33%	48%	8%	2%
o. Counseling the parents of students	12%	40%	37%	9%	2%
14. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	14%	39%	39%	6%	2%
15. Teacher turnover is low.	7%	42%	38%	11%	2%
16. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	14%	43%	35%	7%	1%
17. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	16%	43%	34%	6%	1%
18. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	16%	40%	36%	6%	2%
19. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	9%	43%	42%	5%	1%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
20. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	19%	48%	26%	7%	0%
21. The student-teacher ratio is reasonable.	7%	44%	36%	11%	2%
22. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	26%	53%	18%	2%	1%
23. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	23%	37%	34%	3%	3%
24. The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education.	12%	39%	41%	7%	1%
25. Teachers integrate technology into instruction.	13%	43%	40%	4%	0%
26. Students use technology to do their work.	14%	43%	39%	3%	1%
27. New teachers have appropriate professional development and support.	14%	44%	37%	4%	1%
28. The district has a program evaluation process and procedures looking at all the components of a program, not just at student test (TAKS, 6-week assessments) scores.	18%	37%	35%	7%	3%
29. The district does a good job preparing students for college.	11%	36%	41%	11%	1%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
30. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	9%	34%	22%	30%	5%
31. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	13%	56%	23%	6%	2%
32. Substitute workers are rarely used.	4%	25%	35%	31%	5%
33. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	9%	37%	41%	10%	3%
34. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	7%	35%	47%	9%	2%
35. The district operates an effective staff development program.	10%	46%	39%	4%	1%
36. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	23%	62%	15%	0%	0%
37. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	7%	39%	42%	9%	3%
38. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	10%	42%	40%	6%	2%
39. The district has distributed a well written employee handbook which clearly details policies and procedures including a fair and timely grievance process.	25%	60%	12%	3%	0%
40. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	27%	50%	17%	3%	3%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
41. The district regularly communicates with parents.	19%	50%	25%	5%	1%
42. The district regularly communicates with Spanish speaking parents.	17%	49%	28%	5%	1%
43. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	14%	29%	38%	15%	4%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
44. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	10%	27%	42%	18%	3%
45. District facilities are open for community use.	8%	32%	50%	8%	2%
46. The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.	12%	36%	41%	10%	1%
47. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs.	12%	46%	37%	4%	1%
48. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs in Spanish.	13%	39%	44%	3%	1%
49. The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.	13%	51%	30%	5%	1%
50. The district's website has information for parents and community members.	21%	58%	19%	1%	1%
51. The district's website has information for community members who want to be school volunteers.	14%	33%	49%	3%	1%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
52. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	11%	46%	36%	6%	1%
53. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	9%	26%	63%	1%	1%
54. Schools are clean.	32%	50%	13%	5%	0%
55. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	30%	50%	13%	7%	0%
56. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	28%	51%	13%	8%	0%
57. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	30%	55%	13%	2%	0%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
58. Campus administrators are given ample opportunity to participate in the development of the district's budget.	12%	38%	47%	3%	0%
59. Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	9%	29%	58%	2%	2%
60. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	9%	39%	49%	3%	0%
61. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	10%	30%	58%	1%	1%
62. The district has adequate safety programs and training to prevent work-related accidents.	10%	45%	37%	6%	2%
63. My payroll check is always correct.	16%	54%	14%	14%	2%
64. My payroll check is always issued on time.	30%	64%	6%	0%	0%
65. The district's Payroll Department does a good job of processing the district's payroll.	22%	60%	11%	6%	1%
66. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors the correct amount.	16%	34%	49%	1%	0%
67. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors on time.	17%	32%	49%	1%	1%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
68. Purchasing has made it easy to get what I need.	14%	49%	30%	6%	1%
69. Purchasing identifies the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	11%	39%	46%	3%	1%
70. Vendors are selected competitively.	7%	36%	55%	2%	0%
71. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	10%	49%	37%	4%	0%
72. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	13%	41%	45%	1%	0%
73. Teachers are provided the ancillary textbooks that they need.	12%	33%	54%	1%	0%
74. Textbooks are applicable to the subject matter.	14%	36%	49%	1%	0%
75. Textbooks are in good shape.	13%	36%	48%	3%	0%
76. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	22%	46%	31%	1%	0%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
77. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	22%	46%	20%	9%	3%
78. Food is served at the right temperature.	23%	50%	22%	4%	1%
79. Students have enough time to eat.	18%	56%	19%	4%	3%
80. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	17%	61%	19%	2%	1%
81. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	18%	47%	29%	4%	2%
82. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	13%	52%	22%	10%	3%
83. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	27%	53%	16%	3%	1%
84. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	35%	53%	12%	0%	0%
85. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	40%	47%	13%	0%	0%
86. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	15%	36%	43%	5%	1%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
87. Transportation gets students to school on time.	15%	52%	26%	5%	2%
88. Transportation promptly picks up students at the end of the day.	17%	56%	26%	1%	0%
89. The quality of service provided by Transportation on field trips is high.	13%	44%	42%	1%	0%
90. School buses are clean and well maintained.	13%	45%	40%	1%	1%
91. School principals quickly and fairly discipline students that are disruptive on the school bus.	16%	44%	37%	2%	1%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
92. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	8%	35%	36%	17%	4%
93. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	5%	27%	42%	23%	3%
94. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	5%	28%	36%	24%	7%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
95. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	19%	44%	33%	3%	1%
96. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	11%	40%	45%	3%	1%
97. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	17%	54%	25%	3%	1%
98. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	15%	45%	28%	8%	4%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
99. Students have access to and use of computers.	33%	55%	12%	0%	0%
100. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	28%	50%	19%	3%	0%
101. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	28%	42%	29%	1%	0%
102. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	23%	54%	22%	1%	0%
103. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	23%	48%	27%	2%	0%
104. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	19%	42%	35%	4%	0%
105. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	23%	48%	26%	2%	1%
106. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	21%	47%	31%	1%	0%

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY

N = 10

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

	MALE	FEMALE
1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	50%	50%

	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%

	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY LA VEGA ISD?	10%	40%	40%	0%	0%	10%

4. WHAT GRADE(S) ARE TAUGHT IN YOUR SCHOOL?

Pre-Kindergarten 20%	Kindergarten 20%	First 0%	Second 0%	Third 0%
Fourth 20%	Fifth 20%	Sixth 30%	Seventh 30%	Eighth 20%
Ninth 30%	Tenth 30%	Eleventh 30%	Twelfth 30%	

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
3. School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%
6. Central administration is efficient.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
7. Central administration supports the educational process.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
8. The morale of central administration staff is good.	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%
9. Education is the main priority in our school district.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
10. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	20%	70%	10%	0%	0%
11. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%
12. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%
13. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
14. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
15. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
16. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	20%	70%	0%	10%	0%
b. Writing	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%
c. Mathematics	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
d. Science	10%	50%	10%	30%	0%
e. English or Language Arts	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
f. Computer Instruction	20%	40%	30%	10%	0%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
h. Fine Arts	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%
i. Physical Education	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
j. Business Education	10%	30%	50%	10%	0%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%
l. Foreign Language	10%	40%	50%	0%	0%
17. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%
c. Special Education	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	10%	50%	30%	10%	0%
e. Dyslexia program	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%
f. Student mentoring program	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
g. Advanced placement program	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
h. Literacy program	10%	50%	30%	10%	0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
j. Summer school programs	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%
k. Alternative education programs	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
l. English as a second language program	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%
m. Career counseling program	10%	40%	40%	10%	0%
n. College counseling program	10%	40%	40%	10%	0%
o. Counseling the parents of students	10%	50%	40%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
18. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	40%	20%	10%	30%	0%
19. Teacher turnover is low.	10%	40%	30%	20%	0%
20. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	20%	70%	0%	10%	0%
21. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0%	80%	0%	10%	10%
22. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	20%	70%	10%	0%	0%
23. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	20%	60%	0%	10%	10%
24. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
25. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
26. The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education.	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
27. Teachers integrate technology into instruction.	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%
28. Students use technology to do their work.	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%
29. New teachers have appropriate professional development and support.	20%	70%	0%	10%	0%
30. The district has a program evaluation process and procedures looking at all the components of a program, not just at student test (TAKS, 6-week assessments) scores.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
31. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
32. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%
33. Substitute workers are rarely used.	0%	20%	10%	70%	0%
34. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0%	50%	30%	20%	0%
35. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
36. The district operates an effective staff development program.	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%
37. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
38. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
39. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
40. The district has distributed a well written employee handbook which clearly details policies and procedures including a fair and timely grievance process.	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%
41. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	40%	50%	0%	10%	0%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
42. The district regularly communicates with parents.	40%	50%	0%	10%	0%
43. The district regularly communicates with Spanish speaking parents.	20%	70%	10%	0%	0%
44. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
45. District facilities are open for community use.	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
46. The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
47. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
48. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs in Spanish.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
49. The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%
50. The district's website has information for parents and community members.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
51. The district's website has information for community members who want to be school volunteers.	10%	40%	20%	30%	0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
52. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%
53. Schools are clean.	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
54. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%
55. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%
56. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
57. Procedures for submitting work orders are clearly defined.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
58. I am given ample opportunity to participate in the development of my school's budget and to determine how much money my school will have to spend during the year.	0%	50%	30%	10%	10%
59. I fully understand the district's financial management policies and procedures and what is expected of me to monitor and protect the financial resources that have been allocated to my school.	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
60. I have received adequate training on the district's financial accounting and budgeting system.	0%	40%	40%	10%	10%
61. I understand how to use the district's financial accounting and budgeting system for the financial management of my school.	0%	40%	40%	10%	10%
62. I am able to move funds from one spending category to the other without contacting central office as long as it does not change my overall budget total.	0%	20%	40%	30%	10%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
63. The level of oversight that I have over student activity funds is adequate to ensure that funds are not misused or misappropriated.	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
64. The district has adequate safety and training programs to prevent work-related accidents.	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
65. My payroll check is always correct.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
66. My payroll check is always issued on time.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
67. The district's Payroll Department does a good job of processing the district's payroll.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
68. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors the correct amount.	0%	70%	30%	0%	0%
69. The district's Accounts Payable Department does a good job of paying vendors on time.	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
70. Purchasing has made it easy to get what I need.	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%
71. Purchasing identifies high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%
72. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0%	40%	50%	10%	0%
73. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	10%	70%	20%	0%	0%
74. Textbooks are in good shape.	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
75. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	20%	70%	10%	0%	0%
76. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources in Spanish.	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%
77. I have the ancillary sets that I need.	0%	50%	40%	10%	0%
78. Textbooks are applicable to the subject matter.	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
79. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%
80. Food is served at the right temperature.	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%
81. Students have enough time to eat.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
82. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%
83. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
84. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
85. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	30%	40%	0%	30%	0%
86. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
87. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
88. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	10%	30%	30%	30%	0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
89. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	30%	60%	0%	10%	0%
90. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	10%	70%	20%	0%	0%
91. Buses arrive and leave on time.	0%	60%	0%	40%	0%
92. Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%
93. The district locates new schools to minimize travel time for students.	0%	30%	60%	10%	0%
94. The school assignment pattern fairly balances students in all schools.	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%
95. Transportation gets students to school on time.	10%	50%	0%	40%	0%
96. Transportation promptly picks up students at the end of the day.	10%	70%	0%	20%	0%
97. The quality of service provided by Transportation on field trips is high.	10%	70%	20%	0%	0%
98. School buses are clean and well maintained.	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
99. Students feel safe and secure at school.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
100. School disturbances are infrequent.	30%	60%	0%	10%	0%
101. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	20%	40%	20%	20%	0%
102. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	10%	50%	20%	20%	0%
103. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	20%	40%	20%	20%	0%
104. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
105. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	40%	30%	30%	0%	0%
106. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	30%	60%	10%	0%	0%
107. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
108. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
109. Students have access to and use of computers.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
110. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
111. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
112. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
113. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	20%	70%	10%	0%	0%
114. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	10%	20%	60%	10%	0%
115. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	30%	60%	10%	0%	0%
116. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	10%	70%	20%	0%	0%

TEACHER SURVEY

N = 142

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

	MALE	FEMALE
1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	19%	81%

	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	79%	9%	6%	1%	5%

	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–15 YEARS	16–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY LA VEGA ISD?	13%	38%	24%	10%	8%	7%

4. WHAT GRADE(S) DO YOU TEACH THIS YEAR?

Pre-Kindergarten 8%	Kindergarten 10%	First 15%	Second 16%	Third 17%
Fourth 10%	Fifth 10%	Sixth 12%	Seventh 9%	Eighth 13%
Ninth 16%	Tenth 19%	Eleventh 15%	Twelfth 16%	

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	23%	44%	33%	0%	0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	31%	46%	22%	1%	0%
3. School board members work well with the superintendent.	44%	41%	15%	0%	0%
4. The school board has a good image in the community.	40%	45%	14%	1%	0%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	68%	30%	0%	2%	0%
6. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	62%	33%	4%	1%	0%
7. Central administration is efficient.	38%	52%	6%	4%	0%
8. Central administration supports the educational process.	45%	52%	2%	1%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
9. The morale of central administration staff is good.	33%	54%	12%	1%	0%
10. Education is the main priority in our school district.	57%	39%	0%	4%	0%
11. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	20%	55%	11%	11%	3%
12. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	10%	43%	33%	13%	1%
13. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	12%	38%	40%	9%	1%
14. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	32%	59%	5%	3%	1%
15. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	26%	58%	9%	6%	1%
16. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	24%	56%	11%	8%	1%
17. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	28%	63%	4%	5%	0%
b. Writing	13%	53%	15%	18%	1%
c. Mathematics	26%	57%	6%	11%	0%
d. Science	15%	58%	10%	14%	3%
e. English or Language Arts	22%	66%	6%	6%	0%
f. Computer Instruction	17%	52%	19%	11%	1%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	15%	61%	11%	11%	2%
h. Fine Arts	12%	58%	18%	11%	1%
i. Physical Education	20%	66%	11%	3%	0%
j. Business Education	7%	34%	54%	5%	0%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	8%	34%	49%	9%	0%
l. Foreign Language	8%	32%	53%	6%	1%
18. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	29%	57%	11%	3%	0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	14%	42%	25%	13%	6%
c. Special Education	23%	65%	7%	4%	1%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	8%	26%	64%	2%	0%
e. Dyslexia program	20%	51%	24%	4%	1%
f. Student mentoring program	17%	46%	27%	10%	0%
g. Advanced placement program	8%	31%	50%	10%	1%
h. Literacy program	14%	48%	32%	5%	1%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	13%	37%	37%	11%	2%
j. Summer school programs	21%	59%	16%	4%	0%
k. Alternative education programs	15%	45%	30%	6%	4%
l. English as a second language program	29%	60%	7%	3%	1%
m. Career counseling program	4%	33%	56%	5%	2%
n. College counseling program	4%	30%	58%	6%	2%
o. Counseling the parents of students	6%	30%	48%	13%	3%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
19. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	16%	36%	32%	14%	2%
20. Teacher turnover is low.	3%	43%	24%	24%	6%
21. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	15%	62%	9%	13%	1%
22. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	10%	63%	13%	12%	2%
23. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	13%	42%	25%	18%	2%
24. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	13%	55%	22%	9%	1%
25. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	23%	68%	5%	4%	0%
26. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	13%	43%	18%	22%	4%
27. The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	8%	51%	8%	27%	6%
28. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	31%	59%	6%	2%	2%
29. The district does a good job preparing students for post-secondary education.	6%	40%	39%	13%	2%
30. Teachers integrate technology into instruction.	11%	65%	14%	9%	1%
31. Students use technology to do their work.	11%	51%	21%	16%	1%
32. New teachers have appropriate professional development and support.	16%	56%	11%	15%	2%
33. The district has a program evaluation process and procedures looking at all the components of a program, not just at student test (TAKS, 6-week assessments) scores.	18%	54%	13%	13%	2%

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
34. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	6%	41%	7%	35%	11%
35. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	11%	61%	14%	12%	2%
36. Substitute workers are rarely used.	2%	11%	23%	56%	8%
37. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	6%	44%	27%	17%	6%
38. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	6%	33%	40%	18%	3%
39. The district operates an effective staff development program.	11%	55%	15%	16%	3%
40. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	27%	68%	4%	1%	0%
41. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	7%	30%	38%	20%	5%
42. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	7%	50%	33%	9%	1%
43. The district has distributed a well written employee handbook which clearly details policies and procedures including a fair and timely grievance process.	25%	62%	9%	3%	1%
44. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	25%	58%	12%	4%	1%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
45. The district regularly communicates with parents.	26%	63%	5%	6%	0%
46. The district regularly communicates with Spanish speaking parents.	22%	63%	10%	3%	2%
47. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	8%	27%	30%	30%	5%
48. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	5%	18%	23%	45%	9%
49. District facilities are open for community use.	3%	34%	49%	11%	3%
50. The district actively recruits local businesses and industry as partners to help students and school programs.	13%	42%	23%	20%	2%
51. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs.	18%	60%	14%	7%	1%
52. The district informs parents and community members about new initiatives and programs in Spanish.	15%	54%	21%	9%	1%
53. The district involves parents and community members in the development of district and campus improvement plans.	10%	60%	20%	8%	2%
54. The district's website has information for parents and community members.	30%	64%	4%	1%	1%
55. The district's website has information for community members who want to be school volunteers.	13%	33%	39%	14%	1%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
56. The district plans facilities construction far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	9%	46%	17%	23%	5%
57. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	9%	48%	27%	14%	2%
58. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	9%	33%	58%	0%	0%
59. The quality of new construction is excellent.	17%	42%	25%	15%	1%
60. Schools are clean.	28%	63%	5%	3%	1%
61. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	26%	53%	11%	9%	1%
62. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	22%	54%	13%	10%	1%
63. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	30%	55%	11%	3%	1%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
64. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	7%	42%	41%	8%	2%
65. Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	8%	44%	44%	3%	1%
66. Financial reports are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	10%	35%	47%	7%	1%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
67. Purchasing has made it easy to get what I need.	10%	43%	20%	20%	7%
68. Purchasing identifies the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	7%	37%	40%	13%	3%
69. Vendors are selected competitively.	7%	27%	57%	8%	1%
70. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	12%	49%	20%	16%	3%
71. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	15%	61%	15%	8%	1%
72. I have the ancillary textbooks that I need.	16%	57%	17%	7%	3%
73. Textbooks are applicable to the subject matter.	21%	66%	9%	3%	1%
74. Textbooks are in good shape.	15%	58%	13%	12%	2%
75. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	30%	53%	9%	7%	1%

H. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
76. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	14%	53%	18%	12%	3%
77. Food is served at the right temperature.	16%	57%	20%	7%	
78. Students have enough time to eat.	16%	58%	12%	10%	4%
79. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	19%	71%	6%	4%	0%
80. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	21%	61%	7%	8%	3%
81. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	21%	56%	11%	10%	2%
82. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	32%	54%	10%	4%	0%
83. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	36%	57%	6%	1%	0%
84. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	41%	49%	10%	0%	0%
85. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	11%	22%	46%	18%	3%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
86. Transportation gets students to school on time.	21%	54%	4%	17%	4%
87. Transportation promptly picks up students at the end of the day.	17%	62%	9%	9%	3%
88. The quality of service provided by Transportation on field trips is high.	14%	51%	32%	2%	1%
89. School buses are clean and well maintained.	11%	55%	32%	2%	0%
90. School principals quickly and fairly discipline students that are disruptive on the school bus.	17%	58%	22%	1%	2%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
91. School disturbances are infrequent.	11%	53%	8%	26%	2%
92. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	10%	29%	41%	19%	1%
93. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	5%	19%	49%	23%	4%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
94. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	5%	28%	37%	25%	5%
95. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	18%	54%	27%	1%	0%
96. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	14%	44%	39%	3%	0%
97. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	13%	59%	25%	3%	0%
98. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	18%	54%	7%	13%	8%
99. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	12%	50%	18%	16%	4%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
100. Students have access to and use of computers.	40%	53%	1%	5%	1%
101. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	31%	56%	1%	9%	3%
102. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	34%	53%	5%	8%	0%
103. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	25%	52%	6%	16%	1%
104. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	23%	51%	10%	14%	2%
105. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	13%	36%	30%	18%	3%
106. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	34%	53%	5%	5%	3%
107. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	28%	51%	12%	9%	0%

STUDENT SURVEY

N = 124

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

	MALE	FEMALE
1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	53%	47%

	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	21%	33%	35%	2%	9%

	SENIOR
3. WHAT IS YOUR CLASSIFICATION?	100%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	6%	32%	29%	18%	15%
2. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	4%	26%	38%	21%	11%
3. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a. Reading	8%	54%	17%	12%	9%
b. Writing	10%	50%	14%	17%	9%
c. Mathematics	8%	36%	15%	24%	17%
d. Science	6%	42%	18%	20%	14%
e. English or Language Arts	10%	49%	18%	14%	9%
f. Computer Instruction	6%	46%	28%	9%	11%
g. Social Studies (History or Geography)	25%	48%	14%	6%	7%
h. Fine Arts	20%	43%	20%	6%	11%
i. Physical Education	19%	38%	27%	6%	10%
j. Business Education	2%	17%	46%	16%	19%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	4%	17%	43%	16%	20%
l. Foreign Language	17%	39%	24%	8%	12%
4. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Library Service	18%	46%	18%	9%	9%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	10%	37%	30%	11%	12%
c. Special Education	9%	39%	41%	1%	10%
d. Student mentoring program	5%	25%	39%	15%	16%
e. Advanced placement program	6%	36%	35%	9%	14%

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
f. Career counseling program	6%	21%	32%	23%	18%
g. College counseling program	6%	24%	28%	19%	23%
5. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	12%	47%	19%	11%	11%
6. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	6%	28%	31%	21%	15%
7. The district provides a high quality education.	3%	18%	30%	26%	23%
8. The district has a high quality of teachers.	6%	24%	31%	25%	14%
9. The district does a good job preparing students for college.	4%	19%	25%	24%	28%

B. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
10. Schools are clean.	6%	24%	22%	27%	21%
11. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	7%	31%	26%	18%	18%
12. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	6%	28%	26%	19%	21%
13. Emergency maintenance is handled timely.	5%	37%	32%	11%	15%
14. School facilities are readily available for student activities.	4%	31%	30%	17%	18%

C. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
15. There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	5%	19%	15%	33%	28%
16. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	4%	27%	19%	28%	22%
17. Textbooks are in good shape.	3%	12%	21%	32%	32%
18. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	14%	38%	24%	8%	16%

D. CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
19. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	2%	12%	25%	22%	39%
20. Food is served at the right temperature.	4%	21%	34%	15%	26%
21. Students have enough time to eat.	3%	9%	18%	19%	51%
22. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	10%	42%	25%	6%	17%
23. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	3%	12%	20%	17%	48%
24. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	3%	23%	33%	16%	25%
25. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	10%	28%	28%	12%	22%
26. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	9%	34%	34%	5%	18%
27. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	28%	36%	22%	2%	12%
28. Child Nutrition Services undertakes different activities each month to encourage students to eat meals at their schools.	6%	13%	37%	17%	27%

E. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
29. I regularly ride the bus.	6%	9%	19%	18%	48%
30. The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	5%	10%	56%	13%	16%
31. The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	4%	11%	57%	11%	17%
32. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	4%	22%	54%	6%	14%
33. The bus stop near my house is safe.	5%	17%	57%	7%	14%
34. The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	8%	17%	59%	2%	14%
35. Buses arrive and depart on time.	5%	9%	48%	14%	24%
36. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	3%	6%	51%	14%	26%
37. Buses seldom break down.	4%	11%	57%	12%	16%
38. Buses are clean.	6%	10%	49%	12%	23%
39. Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	7%	19%	52%	4%	18%

F. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
40. I feel safe and secure at school.	7%	27%	19%	22%	25%
41. School disturbances are infrequent.	8%	18%	30%	16%	28%
42. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	9%	15%	37%	17%	22%
43. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	8%	12%	27%	17%	36%
44. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	6%	12%	26%	18%	38%
45. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	9%	27%	32%	11%	21%
46. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	5%	17%	34%	17%	27%
47. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	6%	26%	38%	10%	20%
48. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	8%	15%	28%	17%	32%
49. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	4%	17%	41%	16%	22%

G. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
50. Students have access to and use of computers.	14%	47%	20%	7%	12%
51. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	11%	35%	22%	17%	15%
52. Teachers use computers in the classroom for instructional purposes.	13%	43%	23%	9%	12%
53. Computers are updated to be useful for student instruction.	11%	42%	20%	13%	14%
54. The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	8%	33%	27%	16%	16%
55. The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	7%	33%	30%	13%	17%
56. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	11%	32%	22%	16%	19%
57. Computer labs meet instructional needs.	8%	39%	29%	8%	16%