La Marque Independent School District

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
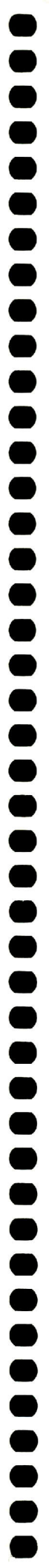
June 8, 2006

Dr. Adrain Johnson
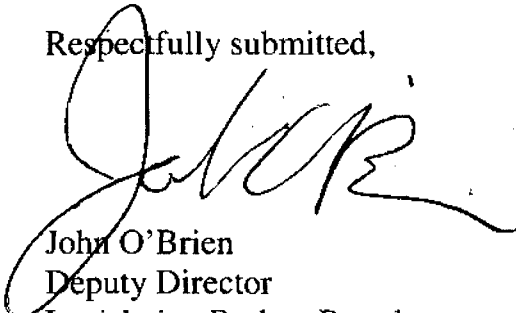Superintendent, La Marque Independent School District

Dear Dr. Johnson:

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

The report's recommendations will help LMISD 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 LMISD.

The staff of the Legislative Budget Board appreciates the cooperation and assistance that your staff and SDSM, Inc. provided during the preparation of this report.

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

Respectfully submitted,

John O'Brien
Deputy Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Travis Smith   Frank Proctor
        Shirley Fanuiel   Joseph Cantu
        Cynthia Bell-Malveaux   Merritt Lockwood
        Bill Spillar
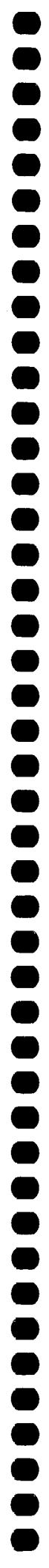
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

La Marque Independent School District's (LMISD's) school review report noted 13 commendable practices and made 65 recommendations for improvement. The following is an Executive Summary of the significant accomplishments, findings, and recommendations that resulted from the review. A copy of the full report is available at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LMISD's education foundation provides an effective way to reach out to the community and raise additional funds to supplement instructional efforts. In the first year of operation the foundation raised $120,000, primarily through its gala in July 2005 honoring a Texas senator who was a La Marque High School graduate, and from contributions from community organizations and community members. The foundation awarded its first grant of $16,750 to the La Marque Middle School for an innovative science program requested by the school and the district's science instructional specialist.

- The district has begun a unique community partnership with the Historical Preservation Association to research and document the origins of The Settlement, a community established by five African American cowboys after the Civil War. Students will have hands-on experience working with curators and historians from the University of Houston to collect and classify items from the one remaining original structure as well as other historical items from the district.

- To help ensure athletic eligibility, the director of Athletics, who also serves as the head football coach, and the football coaching staff developed and implemented a tutorial program for players to increase their academic performance. The tutorial program helps student athletes succeed academically by monitoring athletes' academic performance and by offering and requiring attendance at tutoring sessions before school three days a week.

- The district instituted free breakfast programs for all students to increase student breakfast participation. By increasing the student breakfast participation rate, the district improved student nutritional status and enhanced student classroom performance.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- The district's current planning process does not support district efforts to set and achieve clear goals and limits the ability of LMISD to improve student academic performance.

- Campus staffing is not based on approved staffing guidelines and exceeds industry staffing standards in some cases, primarily for high school and middle school assistant principals and middle school clerical staff.

- Despite recent developments of curriculum guides for core subject areas, LMISD does not have a curriculum management system for developing, reviewing, and updating the guides.

- LMISD does not have a special education teacher allocation methodology and adequate number of special education teachers at the elementary school level.

- The district lacks a process to ensure an appropriate number of teachers receive and maintain an English as Second Language (ESL) endorsement and that it equitably distributes teachers with ESL endorsements across the schools.

- LMISD does not have a clear process for identifying grant opportunities, preparing grant applications, and securing and managing grants, which limits resources for improving student performance.

- The bond construction program oversight process did not include key steps and active hands-on district oversight to ensure design requirements were included and construction was adequately performed.

- LMISD does not have an effective contract management process that ensures the district is receiving the best value for the price paid.

- LMISD adopted deficit budgets each year since 1999–2000 and does not have an effective budget process that ensures budgeted funds are aligned with district priorities.

- LMISD does not have a comprehensive, documented computer acquisition and replacement program with strategies to target multiple funding sources to ensure that it has sufficient computers with appropriate capability to support instruction.

- LMISD does not have a well-defined, written compensation program for all employees in the district.

- The district does not adequately plan or budget for safety initiatives, resulting in a lack of basic security infrastructure and an increase in the district's vulnerability to crime.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation: Develop and implement a research-based planning approach that includes adequate analysis of alternatives, informed decision-making, rigorous monitoring of strategy implementation, and comprehensive evaluation of results.** The district's current planning process does not support district efforts to set and achieve clear goals and limits the ability of LMISD to improve student academic performance. The district uses the District Improvement Plan and the related Campus Improvement Plans as its primary planning tools but treats the process as a separate function that is not related to the budget process and which has little board involvement. The process does not include a rigorous analysis of current performance or a consideration of alternative courses of action. The availability of resources or identification of additional resources is not a structured part of the planning process. Community, parent, and business representation is not adequately included in the process. The current planning process fails to meet the needs of the district because plans are not based on analysis, do not link to financial plans, and do not include the means to measure results for accountability. The district should hire an outside facilitator to assist it with the development and implementation of the planning approach. The facilitator would be involved in documenting the steps in the approach as well as facilitating the development of quantitative performance measures and identification of the data that will need to be captured to assess and evaluate performance.

- **Recommendation: Develop formal staffing guidelines based on actual student enrollments using industry standards that are modified to reflect district expectations.** Campus staffing assignments are not made on the basis of staffing formulas but rather by each school based upon past staffing patterns. The district does not prepare enrollment projections as part of its financial planning. Districts that do not use staffing standards based on student enrollment often rely on staffing allocations that reflect past conditions and not the current situation, which can lead to overstaffing. When compared to Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards, La Marque High School has two more assistant principals than required, and the middle school has one more assistant principal and two more clerical positions than required for a middle school of its size. The district should develop formal staffing guidelines that are reviewed annually to reflect changes in available funding or anticipated enrollments. If the district were to adopt staffing standards similar to those recommended by SACS, the district could reallocate additional funds to new initiatives or other programs during the next five years.

- **Recommendation: Develop and implement a curriculum management system for regularly reviewing and updating the curriculum guides.** Despite recent developments of curriculum guides for core subject areas, LMISD does not have a curriculum management system for developing, reviewing, and updating the guides. As of 2005–06, the district has vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum guides across all grade levels and within core subject areas. However, the guides had little teacher input and buy-in for development and implementation. Teacher use of curriculum guides is not uniform districtwide. Not all teachers are following the calendar included in the guides or using the high yield instructional strategies. Although the district adopted a six-step classroom walk-through model in 2005–06 for principals to monitor curriculum implementation, not all principals use it. In addition, the district does not rigorously monitor curriculum implementation through lesson plans and does not link curriculum implementation to annual teacher performance evaluations. The district should implement a curriculum management system that incorporates input from all teachers and ensures curriculum implementation by teams consisting of teachers and administrators to ensure buy-in. The district should train teachers in guide development and emphasize the benefits of teacher participation in the process. The district should then update the guides over the next five summers. By implementing a curriculum management system, the district will ensure curriculum alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives, encourage teacher participation, and improve

student instruction and performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

• **Recommendation: Develop a special education resource allocation and evaluation plan and hire additional special education teachers to improve the ratio of special education students to teachers.** LMISD does not have a special education teacher allocation methodology and adequate number of special education teachers at the elementary school level. In 2004–05, the district had the highest percentage of special education students among its peer districts and above state and Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4) averages. However, LMISD was third lowest among peers and below the state and Region 4 average for percentage of budget for special education. The district has a higher student-to-teacher ratio than its peers, Region 4, and the state. LMISD special education students had lower attendance and graduation rates than campus-wide students, and special education students that took the TAKS/State Developed Academic Assessment (SDAA) performed poorly. In 2003–04, La Marque High School was assigned a Missed Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) rating for math participation because of low special education student participation. Until 2005–06 the district did not increase inclusion of special education students in the least restrictive environment although cited for this for six years by TEA. The district did not adequately prepare general education and special education teachers for increased inclusion of special education students in the general education setting. LMISD should develop a special education resource allocation plan that sets students-to-teacher ratios and specifies benchmarks that will trigger staffing adjustments. LMISD should train its general education and special education teachers on how to provide instructional services in an inclusive setting to an increased number of special education students. It should train principals in monitoring inclusion to determine how effectively teachers are delivering instruction and using special education resources. The district should follow special education students with low attendance and provide tutorial and other support services to improve academic performance, decrease dropouts, and increase the graduation rate of special education students. The special education director should evaluate annually the delivery of special education instructional services, staffing and other resource allocation, and student attendance,

performance and graduation. By allocating adequate instructional resources to special education students, the district will improve its ability to meet student educational needs in the least restrictive environment.

• **Recommendation: Establish a process to monitor the number of ESL-endorsed teachers based on the number of ESL students, and develop strategies such as training and financial incentives to achieve ESL staffing goals.** The district lacks a process to ensure an appropriate number of teachers receive and maintain an ESL endorsement and that it equitably distributes teachers with ESL endorsements across the schools. The number of teachers with ESL endorsements varies across the schools and is not proportional to the number of English language learner students in each school or to their grade distribution. Access to services is further restricted because none of the teachers with ESL endorsement speak Spanish, whereas most of the ESL students are Spanish-speaking. Although LMISD encourages teachers to get ESL endorsements, it does not pay for the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) or the ESL certificate. The district should increase the number of teachers with ESL endorsements at all educational levels, and especially at the secondary level based on projected increases in the number of bilingual students. LMISD should recruit teachers who speak Spanish and encourage them to get ESL endorsements. The district should provide financial incentives by paying for ESL education courses, test preparation, and test and certificate fees. By improving its ESL program, the district will improve ESL students' ability to gain English proficiency, participate effectively in regular classes, and meet academic performance standards and graduation requirements.

• **Recommendation: Establish a grants development office to coordinate grant identification, preparation, and management and a grants coordinator position in the Business and Operations Department.** LMISD does not have a clear process for identifying grant opportunities, preparing grant applications, and securing and managing grants, which limits resources for improving student performance. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the instructional coordinators research grant opportunities and prepare grant applications as time permits, rather than

systematically. District staff finds it difficult to allocate the time for grant preparation with little administrative support. The current process makes it especially difficult to monitor expenditures at the school level because principals do not have access to salary information and are not always aware whose salaries the grant covers. Consequently, they may under spend grant funds when teachers whose salary was covered by the grant leave. The district should establish a grants development office and coordinator position and hire a coordinator to oversee grants district-wide. The coordinator should be responsible for grant identification, review, preparation, management, and financial reporting. The coordinator should develop and maintain a comprehensive list of federal, state, regional, and foundation grant sources. The coordinator should train staff on preparation of grant applications and grant management. The coordinator and the Technology Department should create a grant website with information on the grant preparation process, grant opportunities, and grant proposal tips. A well-organized grant process and additional grants will help the district increase its financial resources and offer students additional programs and services.

• **Recommendation: Implement comprehensive internal construction program management techniques for remaining and future bond projects.** The bond construction program oversight process did not include key steps and active hands-on district oversight to ensure design requirements were included and construction was adequately performed. LMISD passed a $24 million bond in 2002 for renovations and upgrades to district facilities, with more than half of the funds allocated to high school renovation. During the bond program, many necessary activities such as reviewing design documents before construction began, daily monitoring and inspection of construction progress, and compliance with design specifications with identification and resolution of issues were not performed in an organized or consistent manner resulting in many items being either omitted, unfinished, or of poor workmanship. Additionally, the district's overall management was informal with many of the progress reports delivered to the board verbally and not written, and budget information was only reported periodically and not monthly. For the remaining and any future bond funded projects, LMISD should designate a position to serve as a construction manager

(CM), working with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations in reviewing design documents and inspecting the worksites to ensure all requirements are addressed. In addition, the district should implement more detailed written reporting to the board on a monthly basis. The reporting should include project status reports that identify the tasks that have been performed and include a schedule with estimated completion dates, as well as financial summaries that outline budgetary information such as original project budget, budget changes, expenditures, and projected balances. Construction program management techniques, such as the use of knowledgeable and dedicated staff to manage the project, coupled with ongoing monitoring and reporting, will assist the district in avoiding problems such as poor workmanship and poor quality and will reduce the cost of re-work.

• **Recommendation: Revise the contract management process to include elements necessary to ensure the district is receiving the best value for the price paid.** LMISD does not have an effective contract management process that ensures the district is receiving the best value for the price paid. The district contracts with three different companies for its maintenance, food service, and transportation functions, and in 2003–04, recorded more than $4.4 million in expenditures for miscellaneous contracted services. The LMISD contracted services are not regularly reviewed for cost/benefits, monitored for performance, or re-bid for competitive procurement. In addition, the district pays for services not delivered to contract expectations and increased contract payments regardless of contract performance. The district should revise the contract management process to include key elements such as regularly assessing the competitiveness of the contractor's fee, determining if the service should continue to be outsourced, providing the contractor and board with a formal evaluation based on performance measures established for each contract, documenting regular communication between the district and contractor, and linking some or all of contractor fee increases to performance. As a result, the district should be able to ensure contracted services are competitively procured, delivered to expectations, and monitored for performance.

• **Recommendation: Modify the budget process to include model practices in each component of the process—development, presentation, adoption,**

and monitoring. LMISD adopted a deficit budget each year since 1999–2000 and does not have an effective budget process that ensures budgeted funds are aligned with district priorities. The LMISD budget process lacks adequate time for key stakeholder input and board review, alignment with program costs and district goals, and non-deficit budget targets. For example, the budget for the gifted and talented (G/T) program is not aligned with the schools that have the program because the $1 million budgeted amount exceeds the true program costs of $60,000 for 2005–06. The district's budget planning mode is to begin the year with a budgeted deficit that is addressed by not expending the budget completely during the year. The superintendent should develop the budget calendar with model process components, and the board should approve it so that all participants understand the budget development process and their role in it. The budget process should include development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring phases. By developing a budget process and calendar based on model practices with key elements of development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring, the district should be able to budget programs in alignment with district priorities and within financial constraints with adequate input and review from key stakeholders and board members.

- **Recommendation: Develop and implement a comprehensive computer acquisition and replacement program that identifies and targets multiple sources to acquire computers to meet target ratios and replacement needs.** LMISD does not have a comprehensive, documented computer acquisition and replacement program with strategies to target multiple funding sources to ensure that it has sufficient computers with appropriate capability to support instruction. In 2005–06, LMISD has 570 computers used by 3,892 students, producing a student-to-workstation access ratio of approximately 7 to 1, which is significantly higher than the 4 to 1 student-to-workstation ratio recommended by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as a short-term goal to be accomplished by 2003–04. Although the district's 2005–08 Technology Plan needs assessment identified that the district was not meeting TEA student access standards, there is no program to reduce the high student-to-workstation ratios over a period of time. In addition to the high ratios, the district does not have a documented replacement program to ensure that aging computers

are replaced. LMISD's technology committee and the technology specialist should work together to develop and implement a comprehensive program that includes a time-phased plan to acquire and replace computers. The plan should focus on two key goals: meeting the TEA-recommended student access ratios and implementing a five-year replacement cycle to maintain technology with sufficient capacity for instructional use. The committee should develop strategies to obtain the needed computers from multiple sources of funding including the technology allotment, reallocating network and telecommunications costs currently funded by the technology allotment to E-Rate funds, grants, and donations, as well as refurbishment programs such as the Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) computer recovery program. The documented acquisition plan will provide the district with a blueprint and coordinated effort for cost effectively obtaining the additional computers.

- **Recommendation: Develop a compensation plan that rewards desired qualities and periodically review the plan for effectiveness and market consistency.** LMISD does not have a well-defined, written compensation program for all employees in the district. The district has two salary scales. One scale defines salaries for teachers, counselors, librarians, and nurses; the other scale describes salary ranges for clerical and paraprofessional support staff. The district does not have an administrator's pay scale. Salaries are determined individually as positions are created or filled. There are no identified salary guidelines, ranges, or schedules to keep administrative salaries consistently within the area market. LMISD's teacher pay scale is based on years of service, increasing pay for each additional year of experience. It provides annual salary increases to all teachers regardless of performance, difficulty of assignment, or workload factors. For paraprofessionals, the district adopted a salary range in 2005–06 which groups positions according to levels; each level has a low, middle, and high salary. However, the new schedule does not have any standards or guidelines for deciding if the combination of skills, education, and experience should place a candidate at the bottom, middle, or top of the range. With no clear direction for placement, starting salaries for new employees may outpace existing salaries for seasoned employees, creating morale problems among staff. Without a comprehensive plan, salary imbalances may occur, performance may go

unrewarded, and unhappy employees may leave the district. Working with the superintendent, the director of Personnel and Operations should develop competitive salary schedules for all district positions. Schedules should align with district compensation goals and reflect strategies that address operational needs. Written compensation guidelines will make review and adjustment processes more efficient, reduce the risk of internal salary inequities, and increase the effectiveness of compensation as a recruitment and retention tool.

- **Recommendation: Develop a planning process for the LMISD Police Department and district-wide safety management that defines goals and implementation strategies, sets goal priorities, and incorporates the plan into the district budget process.** The district does not adequately plan or budget for safety initiatives, resulting in a lack of basic security infrastructure and an increase in the district's vulnerability to crime. LMISD is missing essential communication, detection, and enforcement equipment. Despite numerous burglaries, internal thefts, and drug arrests, the district does not have burglar alarms, controls for its building keys, adequate communication for parents and staff, or patrol vehicles for response and transport. The district uses a number of planning mechanisms that affect safety and security, but none are comprehensive or coordinated with the Police Department. Additionally, the district's planning process does not assign or hold staff accountable for implementing safety initiatives. With full participation from the chief of Police, the safety committee should review calls for service, arrest data, property crime reports, and discipline reports to identify and rank the district's safety and security needs. The committee should research potential equipment or programs that address each need, and the potential costs of various proposed solutions. Each solution should identify a potential source of funding such as a grant, donation, bond program or general fund, and the year funding should become available for implementation, allowing the district to reduce risks while controlling costs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The district is located on the Gulf Coast approximately 35 miles southeast of Houston along Interstate 45.

- LMISD's 2004–05 enrollment of 3,730 students has decreased over the last five years. The district is a majority minority (68.6 percent African American) district with a large population of economically disadvantaged students (62.6 percent).

- The superintendent is Dr. Adrain Johnson, who has served the district in that capacity for five years.

- Out of the total of 413.9 full-time equivalent staff, 245.2 are teachers.

- TEA rated the district Academically Acceptable in 2004–05.

- The district received a superior achievement rating on the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) for 2003–04.

- Overall, LMISD at 48 percent passing is 20 percent behind the state average of 68 percent passing on the all TAKS tests taken for 2003–04.

- Region 4 in Houston services the district.

- The legislators in LMISD's district are Senator Mike Jackson and Representatives Craig Eiland and Larry Taylor.

SCHOOLS
- Early Childhood Learning Center (PreK–K)
- Highlands Elementary (1–5)
- Inter City Elementary (1–5)
- Simms Elementary (1–5)
- Westlawn Elementary (1–5)
- La Marque Middle School (6–8)
- La Marque High School (9–12)
- Lake Road Education Center (Disciplinary Alternative Education Program)

FINANCIAL DATA
- Total actual 2003–04 expenditures: $43.6 million
- Fund balance: 9.6 percent or $4.2 million of 2002–03 total budgeted expenditures
- 2004 Tax Rate: $1.7430 ($1.50 Maintenance and Operations and $0.2430 Interest and Sinking)
- Total property wealth of $322,007 per student, ranking it 260th in the state

- LMISD spends 50.9 percent of its actual operating expenditures on instruction, which is below the state average of 57.9 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.

At the end of the chapters, a page number reference identifies where additional general information for that chapter is available. Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter's recommendations and associated savings or costs for 2006–07 through 2010–11.

Following the chapters are the appendices that contain general information, comments from the Community Open House and Focus Groups, and the results from the district surveys conducted by the review team.

The table below summarizes the fiscal implications of all 65 recommendations contained in the report.

FISCAL IMPACT

	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Gross Savings	$105,587	$417,258	$417,957	$420,456	$421,155	$1,782,413	$0
Gross Costs	($234,957)	($249,041)	($253,187)	($323,750)	($323,750)	($1,384,685)	($105,925)
TOTAL	($129,370)	$168,217	$164,770	$96,706	$97,405	$397,728	($105,925)

Chapter 1

Educational Service Delivery

La Marque Independent School District

CHAPTER 1. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) is located in Galveston County in southeast Texas. The district covers 32.8 square miles, including the communities of La Marque, Bayou Vista, Tiki Island, and parts of Texas City. As of November 1, 2005, LMISD serves 3,872 students through an early childhood learning center, four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, an alternative education program (Power School), and a disciplinary alternative education program located in the Lake Road Education Center. The district contracts through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Galveston County for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) services. Student enrollment at LMISD has declined each year since 1993–94, resulting in a total decline of 18 percent from 4,718 in 1993–94.

Part of the decline is due to students transferring from LMISD to attend charter schools. The superintendent prepared a report to the board regarding student transfers in 2003–04 based on a Texas Education Agency (TEA) Transfer Analysis. The Transfer Analysis showed that 297 students transferred out of the district in 2003–04 compared to 19 students that transferred into the district. Of the 297 students that left the district, 230 students transferred to charter schools, including 223 students that transferred to Mainland Preparatory Academy.

During the same 12-year period since 1993–94, student demographics changed with the decline in student population. The percentage of Anglo students decreased from 30.7 percent to 14.7 percent, the percentage of African American students increased from 59.2 percent to 68.6 percent, and the percentage of Hispanic students has increased from 9.4 percent to 16.2 percent. However, the district remains predominantly African American. In addition, more than 62 percent of the students are economically disadvantaged and 58.2 percent are at-risk. During the fall of 2005, the district enrolled approximately 100 students from families that Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita displaced.

Student academic performance has declined under the more rigorous Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) testing program. LMISD was rated *Recognized* from 1999–2000 through 2001–02 when students took the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test. In 2001–02, three LMISD schools were rated *Recognized* and four schools were rated *Exemplary*.

In 2002–03 when Texas moved to the TAKS, a more challenging state test, LMISD's academic performance declined. The district and all its schools received an *Academically Acceptable* rating in 2003–04 and 2004–05. In 2005, the district and Inter-City Elementary received a *Missed Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP) for its reading performance; La Marque High School and La Marque Middle School received a *Missed AYP* for math performance. In 2003 and 2004, La Marque High School was assigned a *Missed AYP* for math participation. If a campus fails to meet AYP for two consecutive years, such as La Marque High School, the campus is subject to school improvement stage 1 requirements, which include developing a two-year campus improvement plan to address the deficit areas and notifying parents of the school's improvement status. The district must offer school choice and provide transportation. The district must also establish a peer review process to assist the campus. Every year that a school does not make AYP, it will move to the next, more corrective school improvement stage. During stage 2 of the improvement process, the campus must also offer supplemental educational services to students.

The district also lags behind the region and state in college readiness indicators such as the number of students taking advanced placement (AP) courses and tests and performance on college admission tests. The district has experienced a high teacher turnover rate of 22.4 percent compared to 14.3 percent for the state. In 2004–05, 50.4 percent of the teachers had five or fewer years of experience compared to 36.4 percent for the state. In 2003–04, LMISD had 312 teachers, resulting in a 15.3 to 1 student teacher ratio, slightly higher than the state average ratio of 14.9 to 1.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- To help ensure athletic eligibility, the director of Athletics, who also serves as the head football coach, and the football coaching staff developed and implemented tutorial program for players to increase their academic performance.

- LMISD expanded the Career Action Planning (CAP) and Personal Growth Plan (PGP) programs to include all students in grades 8 through 11 and provide additional guidance for students, document interventions, and encourage parental involvement.

- The district provides the opportunity for Career and Technology Education (CTE) students in the electronics courses to help maintain high school computer systems and obtain real-world work experience as well as provide cost-free computer support at the high school.

FINDINGS

- In spite of recent developments of curriculum guides for core subject areas, LMISD does not have a curriculum management system for developing, reviewing, and updating the guides.

- LMISD does not evaluate instructional and instructional support programs on a regular basis, thereby limiting the district's ability to effectively accommodate changing student needs.

- The LMISD Gifted and Talented (G/T) identification and screening processes under identify G/T students at all school levels and especially at the elementary level, resulting in low program participation rates.

- LMISD lacks strategies for increasing student participation in advanced placement (AP) courses and improving performance on advanced placement and college admission exams.

- LMISD does not have a special education teacher allocation methodology and adequate number of special education teachers at the elementary school level.

- The district lacks a process to ensure an appropriate number of teachers receive and maintain an English as Second Language (ESL) endorsement and that it equitably distributes teachers with ESL endorsements across the schools.

- LMISD does not have a clear process for identifying grant opportunities, preparing grant applications, and securing and managing grants, which limits resources for improving student performance.

- LMISD does not maintain appropriate library resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a curriculum management system for regularly reviewing and updating the curriculum guides**. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction should develop and implement a curriculum updating process and incorporate input from all teachers. Teams

consisting of teachers and administrators should implement updates to ensure teacher and administrator buy-in. The district should train teachers in guide development and emphasize the benefits of teacher participation in the process. The district should monitor curriculum implementation with principals consistently using the six-step classroom walk-through method and include results in annual teacher performance evaluations. Such a system will ensure that curriculum is current, effective, and addresses student needs.

- **Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a program evaluation system with a calendar to regularly evaluate programs and use evaluation results to improve programs and inform planning and budgeting.** LMISD should develop and implement an evaluation system and a calendar to evaluate all instructional programs, including instructional support programs, on a regular basis. The system should define the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the type of data to collect, methods of data collection and analysis, and outline an evaluation report. The district should present program evaluation and follow-up reports to the board. LMISD should develop a three- to five-year calendar showing which programs it will evaluate each year. By conducting program evaluations, the district will determine program effectiveness, identify areas of weakness, and address these in a timely manner.

- **Recommendation 3: Develop a G/T district plan articulating the strategies for student nominations and referrals, testing, and services and improve the program annually based on evaluation results.** LMISD should develop and implement a G/T district plan with an aggressive teacher, community, and parent campaign to nominate and identify gifted students from diverse backgrounds. It should educate all parents about the gifted child and the nomination and screening process and create multiple opportunities for their involvement in the program. The plan should include a description of an annual program evaluation with methodology, data collection instruments, analysis guidelines, and a timeline. It should use the results of the annual evaluation to guide program improvement and implementation strategies. Implementing a G/T plan will help the district ensure that its nomination, identification, and screening procedures identify an adequate number of students at all educational levels and that the services it provides to G/T students are effective.

- **Recommendation 4: Develop and implement strategies to improve student participation and performance on advanced placement courses and advanced placement and college admission examinations.** LMISD district and campus administrators should stress the importance of college preparation through all grade levels to teachers, students, and parents. The counseling program should help students plan and prepare for college by taking advanced classes and exams. Counselors and teachers should motivate students to enroll in pre-AP and AP courses and take AP and college admission exams. The district should provide training to its teachers on how to teach and prepare students for success in AP and college admission exams. It should prepare students academically to take pre-AP and AP courses and offer resources such as AP and college admission test preparation tutorials. Having a strong advanced academics program at the secondary level, stressing the importance of college at all grade levels, and preparing students for AP and college admission tests will help LMISD students be prepared to attend college.

- **Recommendation 5: Develop a special education resource allocation and evaluation plan and hire additional special education teachers to improve the ratio of special education students to teachers.** LMISD should develop a special education resource allocation plan that sets students-to-teacher ratios and specifies benchmarks that will trigger staffing adjustments. LMISD should train its general education and special education teachers on how to provide instructional services in an inclusive setting to an increased number of special education students. It should train principals in monitoring inclusion to determine how effectively teachers are delivering instruction and using special education resources. The district should follow special education students with low attendance and provide tutorial and other support services to improve academic performance, decrease dropout, and increase the graduation rate of special education students. The special education director should evaluate annually the delivery of special education instructional services, staffing and other resource allocation, and student attendance, performance and graduation. Allocating adequate instructional resources to special education students will help meet their educational needs in the least restrictive environment.

- **Recommendation 6: Establish a process to monitor the number of ESL-endorsed teachers based on the number of English language learner students, and develop strategies such as training and financial incentives to achieve ESL staffing goals.** LMISD should develop 3- to 5-year projections of the number of English language learner students likely to be in the district. Based on these projections, LMISD should determine the number of ESL and bilingual teachers it may need and set up annual targets for increasing the number of staff. LMISD should increase the number of teachers with ESL endorsements at all educational levels, and especially at the secondary level, based on projected increases in the number of bilingual students. LMISD should recruit teachers who speak Spanish and encourage them to get ESL endorsements. The district should provide financial incentives by paying for ESL education courses, test preparation, and test and certificate fees. Having well-trained teachers with ESL endorsements will benefit the academic performance of English language learner students.

- **Recommendation 7: Establish a grants development office to coordinate grant identification, preparation, and management and a grants coordinator position in the Business and Operations Department.** The coordinator should develop grant identification, review, preparation, management, and financial reporting procedures and forms. The coordinator should develop and maintain a comprehensive list of federal, state, regional, and foundation grant sources. The coordinator should train staff on preparation of grant applications and grant management. The coordinator and the Technology Department should create a grant website with information on the grant preparation process, grant opportunities, and grant proposal tips. A well-organized grant process and getting more grants will help the district increase its financial resources and offer students additional programs and services.

- **Recommendation 8: Implement methods to maintain appropriate library resources to meet library standards for a collection's size and age.** LMISD should bring all of its library collections up to minimum acceptable standards for size and age. LMISD should develop a book replacement and collection expansion plan and budget over ten years, taking into consideration multiple strategies to access information

and acquire books. LMISD should consider increasing access to online databases through Region 4, an agreement with the College of the Mainland, and the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network. The district should involve the community, business, and corporate partners in obtaining books for the libraries from a librarian-prepared list through book-buying fairs and adopt-a-library programs. The district should identify and seek grants to expand and update its library collection. Having libraries expanded and updated will support students' academic performance.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FOOTBALL TUTORIAL PROGRAM

To help ensure athletic eligibility, the director of Athletics, who also serves as the head football coach, and the football coaching staff developed and implemented a tutorial program for players to increase their academic performance. The La Marque High School football program helps student athletes succeed academically by monitoring athletes' academic performance and by offering and requiring attendance at tutoring sessions before school three days a week.

Academic support begins before school starts in the summer when the student's coach makes a home visit to meet with each student's parents or guardians and discuss the upcoming year's program. Parents learn what they can expect during the year and how they can support their children academically as well as in athletics. LMISD holds a school orientation, Cougar Parents Night, each year at the start of school to bring the team parents together. Parents meet with their student's coaches and learn about opportunities to become involved in the football program. More than 90 percent of the parents of students in the program attend the meeting.

In 2004–05, the director of Athletics established school tutoring sessions for all varsity football players, grouped by defensive and offensive teams. Each student reported to the gym by 7:15AM on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week. Coaches provided tutoring from 7:15 AM until the start of school at 8:15 AM in all academic courses based on the subjects they taught. Tutoring was based on students' academic performance for the current six weeks or on individual student requests for help. At the end of the hour-long session, the students reported to their regular classrooms. Coaches monitored student academic performance through weekly reports received from teachers in each course.

This program was so well received that the high school principal extended it to the entire high school for 2005–06.

The program requires teachers to be in the classrooms by 7:15AM for three days (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) each week to provide tutoring to students.

In 2005–06, the director of Athletics modified the program to include tutoring from the high school teachers. Team members still report to the gym each morning to check in with the coaches and then proceed to a teacher's classroom as their coaches direct them, based on the student's academic performance for the current six weeks. The director of Athletics has revised the student academic performance monitoring to improve the timing and responsiveness of communications with teachers. Coaches monitor student academic performance by subject area based on their teaching assignment. For example, the coach that teaches science is responsible for monitoring and assessing the performance of each varsity member in that core subject area. He works with the teachers in the Science Department to determine the academic status of each student in time to help the student before he begins to have difficulty or fail a course.

Other aspects of the football program support academic as well as athletic goals. On game days, football players wear a white shirt, a tie, and dark slacks to class. This practice is designed to increase the self-esteem of the students and spotlight them as models for other students. Many of the skills that student players learn in the football program help them in their academic lives. For example, self-discipline, self-evaluation, and goal setting are skills that support a player's academic success. At the start of the program in January 2005, the fourth six weeks of the school year, some athletes qualified for the A-B honor roll. By the final six weeks of the year, 12 athletes qualified for the A-B honor roll.

The results of the implementation of mandatory tutorials before school three mornings a week continued in the fall 2005. Based on information supplied by the football coach, the passing rate of the varsity football team for the first two six-week periods was 98 percent, with 52 out of 53 players passing all of their classes. The passing rate was also higher for the freshmen and junior varsity teams. For the first time, the district was able to field two freshman teams, while the junior varsity team maintained 35 players for the year. This was the first time in four years that the junior varsity team was that large.

CAREER ACTION PLANNING (CAP) AND PERSONNEL GROWTH PLAN (PGP)

LMISD expanded the Career Action Planning (CAP) and Personal Growth Plan (PGP) programs to include all students

in grades 8 through 11 and provide additional guidance for students, document interventions, and encourage parental involvement. The expansion helped to serve more students and provide graduation plans for all grade 8–11 students.

In 2003, state law required that each school district designate an appropriate individual to develop and implement a personal graduation plan for each secondary student who is not performing satisfactorily on TAKS or who is not likely to receive a high school diploma before the fifth year following the student's enrollment in grade 9. Although the program the state requires was for at-risk students, the district decided that all students would benefit from a program that would guide them toward high school graduation and beyond.

The director of Career and Technology Education (CTE) and Testing, working with secondary counselors, trained 20 high school and middle school teachers to act as advisors. Each teacher volunteer received eight hours of training provided by counselors in two separate four-hour sessions. Each teacher/advisor worked with approximately 60 students in group and individual sessions to develop four-year plans, PGPs, and course selections for the coming school year. Teachers administered a career assessment to students and made this information available to advisors prior to a meeting with students and parents.

Teachers held meetings with students and parents on eight evenings from 4–8 PM during the spring of 2004. The director of CTE and Testing scheduled the meetings in the spring before students registered for the next school year. At the meetings the teachers/advisors discussed careers and planning for the future including work or college. The teachers/advisors discussed with parents and students the high school courses needed to best help the students reach their goals and how to select appropriate courses. The teachers/advisors created a PGP growth plan for each student during this process. These plans include the results of the career and test assessment data, an academic plan for the next year, and graduation requirements. The purpose of the plans is to document progress and to provide documentation of interventions to help these students graduate from high school. The teachers/advisors are planning to update the plans during the spring of 2006 using the same process that created the original plans. The counselors maintain student plans and update them as needed.

According to the high school counselor, the program was a success, based on comments from parents who attended the meetings. Informal parent and student comments have been positive, indicating better knowledge of graduation requirements, better understanding of alternatives such as Tech-Prep (a college-preparatory program for technical careers), and an increased understanding of the need for planning. The director of CTE and Testing has scheduled a similar process for the spring 2006 program, including the steps of the planning meetings with counselors and the selection of CAP advisors. The teachers/advisors will develop student assessments in the same manner as in 2005 and conduct the same number of parent and student meetings. The director of CTE and Testing also plans organize a college career night for all interested students.

STUDENT COMPUTER MAINTENANCE

The district provides the opportunity for Career and Technology Education (CTE) students in the electronics courses to help maintain high school computer systems and obtain real-world work experience as well as provide cost-free computer support at the high school. The district assigns students enrolled in Computer Maintenance I and II courses to make actual repairs on computers in the high school based on their experience and level of training. The CTE electronics teacher provides a duplicate copy of actual Computer Maintenance Request Forms to students who go to the location in the school of the needed repair. If possible, students repair computers on-site in the school classroom or office. If on-site repair is not possible, the student brings the computer to the Computer Maintenance classroom where it becomes a demonstration project for the entire class. If the problem is too difficult for the students to repair, the CTE electronics teacher, who also serves as the high school technology coordinator, makes the repair. The students complete a work order for each repair indicating their name, nature of the problem, diagnostics procedures performed, time spent, and work attempted and completed. The work order is a custom database form that the CTE electronics teacher developed. After completing the repair, the CTE electronics teacher enters the information into the database to close the outstanding Computer Maintenance Request Form.

Each student receives a theoretical wage using an hourly rate based on experience (Computer Maintenance I or II). Grades are based on the amount of theoretical wages and the quality and complexity of the work performed. The program does not allow students to work with any confidential information, never gives them passwords, and does not assign them to repairs beyond the scope of their training.

As part of this process, students learn how to strip down and rebuild and also to repair and upgrade computers. They also learn how to salvage reusable parts. If time is available, students assist in the rebuilding of lower-end computers in the elementary schools. The use of actual work orders and theoretical wages also helps students learn how to be effective and efficient in the use of their time.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CURRICULUM GUIDES (REC. 1)

In spite of recent developments of curriculum guides for core subject areas, LMISD does not have a curriculum management system for developing, reviewing, and updating the guides. LMISD has a half-page curriculum development cycle document showing a four-year development cycle and a ten-year calendar listing content areas to address. The document specifies only that Year 1 of curriculum development will consist of vertical and horizontal alignment of objectives, Year 2 will consist of alignment of resources, and Years 3 and 4 will consist of changes based on test results. The document does not provide any additional information. Curriculum guides are work plans that provide direction to teachers for the written and taught curriculum for all subject areas and grade levels. They contain student-learning objectives aligned with assessments and identify prerequisite knowledge, scope and sequence, resources, and instructional strategies. Guides provide an effective tool for monitoring teaching and assessing student learning.

The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction began the process of developing curriculum guides during the summer of 2002. At that time, the district's curriculum guides did not align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and teachers basically decided independently what and how to teach. During the next two years, the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction made several attempts to develop guides, with little success due to lack of teacher acceptance and use. The district's attempt to develop math curriculum guides in 2004 with the assistance of an outside consultant did not succeed. Teachers did not use the math curriculum guides; they regarded them as not being user-friendly. Teachers found the guides hard to follow, and the resources the guides recommended were not available in the district. The guides listed the TEKS but did not explain how to address the TEKS instructionally. Also, the instructional strategies that the guides included were more complex than the teachers were able to apply. In the summer of 2005, LMISD used different strategies to develop or revise

all its core subject guides. For example, LMISD hired a math instructional coordinator who developed highly structured math guides that provide day-by-day objectives for teachers. When the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the science instructional coordinator saw that all teachers did not use the curriculum guides developed in 2002 and that students came to middle school with little science preparation, they jointly decided in 2004–05 with a group of science teachers to purchase scope and sequence guides from Region 4 and from a commercial organization for K–8 using federal Title funds and a grant from the district's local education foundation. The scope and sequence curriculum guides purchased from Region 4 needed adjusting to the district's curriculum timeline. In summer 2005, high school lead teachers developed curriculum guides for the core areas. As a result in 2005–06, LMISD has curriculum guides in the core subject areas. The curriculum guides align vertically and horizontally across all grade levels and within subject areas.

The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the instructional coordinators said that it was difficult to get teachers to participate during the summer in the development of the guides; consequently, the district developed guides with little input and teacher participation, so teacher acceptance is a problem. Teacher use of curriculum is not uniform districtwide. Implementation of guides varies within schools. Not all teachers are following the calendar included in the guides or using the high yield instructional strategies on which they received training in the summer of 2005. High yield strategies involve the teaching of a rigorous curriculum using research-based strategies that result in highly engaged students who master the curriculum. District instructional coordinators estimated based on observations that in science, 25 percent of elementary school teachers, 15 percent of middle school teachers, and 50 percent of high school teachers use high yield strategies. In reading and social studies, the instructional specialists estimated that elementary school teachers do not use high yield strategies 50 percent of the time. They estimated that in grades K–3, 50 percent of the teachers are not using the high yield strategies. Elementary school principals estimated that 10 percent or less of the teachers use the high yield strategies. LMISD recognized that teachers needed more training on each of the nine high yield strategies and their use and scheduled additional sessions.

Until 2005–06, although principals monitored curriculum implementation through classroom visits and lesson plans, LMISD did not have a consistent districtwide curriculum

monitoring system. In 2004–05, LMISD adopted a six-step classroom walk-through model and trained principals and instructional specialists in its use; implementation began in 2005–06. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction also developed a Student Achievement Plan for 2005–06. The plan specifies the role of administrators, teachers, and staff in curriculum implementation and use of benchmark test results. The six steps consist of a (1) a snapshot of teaching and learning that take place in the classroom; (2) identification of instructional strategies including the use of high yield strategies, (3) identification of levels of student engagement, (4) survey of the learning environment, (5) analysis of the data collected through the observation, and (6) reflections with the teachers. The Curriculum and Instruction Department provided training to principals on the six-step classroom walk-through model to monitor instruction. According to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, not all principals have implemented the model or are using it fully. Only one of the principals provided evidence of the data they collected through their observations. The district has not rigorously monitored curriculum implementation through lesson plans. Principals may review lesson plans but do not cross-reference them with the curriculum guides to ensure that teachers are on target. The district started to implement the six-step model in 2005–06 but has not yet linked the model to annual teacher performance evaluations.

According to district administrators and instructional coordinators, teachers have not yet made the transition from TAAS-based instruction to TAKS instruction that requires more application, analysis, and evaluation. TAKS, a more rigorous test, replaced TAAS in 2002–03. While LMISD student performance on TAAS was about equal to or above the state average in 1999–2000 through 2001–02, its student performance on TAKS since 2002–03 has remained below the state average in all subject areas, as shown in **Exhibit 1-1**. In 2002–03, only 38 percent of all LMISD students met the TAKS transitional passing standard for all tests in all grades tested, compared to 58 percent statewide. In 2003–04, 48 percent passed, compared with 68 percent statewide. In 2004–05, 38 percent passed, compared to 62 percent statewide. LMISD student performance lagged 20 percentage points behind state averages in 2002–03 and 2003–04 and 24 points in 2004–05 for all TAKS tests in all grades tested.

LMISD students' performance on the TAKS decreased in 2004–05 from their level of performance in 2003–04 in all grade levels and subject areas with the exception of grade 7

reading, grade 8 math, grade 8 all tests, and grade 10 social studies (**Exhibit 1-2**).

Compared to its peer districts, LMISD had the second lowest passing rate in reading, math, science, social studies, and all tests in 2004–05. LMISD had the third highest passing rate in writing. LMISD's passing rates were below Region 4 and state averages in all subject areas and in all tests in 2004–05 (**Exhibit 1-3**).

In the school review survey conducted in September 2005 as part of the performance review, approximately 50 percent of students and parents surveyed considered LMISD instructional programs to be poor or below average in meeting student needs. Between 27.4 and 50 percent of all respondent groups considered the instructional programs to be average. In comparison, 40 percent of the administrators, 20 percent of the principals, 24.6 percent of teachers, and 20.3 percent of auxiliary/professional support staff surveyed considered LMISD's instructional programs to be good or excellent (**Exhibit 1-4**).

Math and science emerged in the school review survey as the two subject areas in greatest need for improvement. Between 51.2 and 86.7 percent of district and campus administrators, auxiliary/professional support staff, teachers, students, and parents surveyed said that the LMISD mathematics program needs improvement. Between 41.7 and 73.3 percent of these respondent groups said that the science program needs improvement to meet student needs (**Exhibit 1-5**).

LMISD has not yet made a successful transition from TAAS to TAKS. Its performance on TAKS has been below state averages since the state implemented TAKS in 2002–03. LMISD performance also lags behind three of its four peers. LMISD efforts in developing and implementing curriculum have not resulted in improved student performance. LMISD lacks a curriculum development and management system that ensures development of effective curriculum with teacher buy-in and use, systematically and thoroughly monitors implementation, evaluates results, and updates curriculum.

Galena Park ISD (GPISD) has an effective process for curriculum development, management, and updating. Program directors, teachers, and instructional specialists, under the supervision of the deputy superintendent of Educational Services, work collaboratively to design and update the curriculum. The GPISD curriculum cycle includes the development of course objectives based on state mandates, district expectations, and student needs; correlation

EXHIBIT 1-1
LMISD PASSING RATES ON TAAS AND TAKS
READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND ALL TESTS
1999–2000 THROUGH 2004–05

YEAR	READING LMISD	READING STATE	WRITING LMISD	WRITING STATE	MATHEMATICS LMISD	MATHEMATICS STATE	SCIENCE LMISD	SCIENCE STATE	SOCIAL STUDIES LMISD	SOCIAL STUDIES STATE	ALL TESTS LMISD	ALL TESTS STATE
TAAS												
1999-00	87.9%	87.4%	90.1%	88.2%	86.2%	87.4%	**	**	68.5%	71.8%	79.2%	79.9%
2000-01	86.2%	88.9%	88.8%	87.9%	88.7%	90.2%	**	**	72.3%	77.0%	78.0%	82.1%
2001-02	90.8%	91.3%	93.3%	88.7%	94.0%	92.7%	**	**	86.4%	83.7%	86.2%	85.3%
TAKS*												
2002-03	68%	79%	72%	83%	51%	69%	39%	60%	69%	85%	38%	58%
2003-04	79%	85%	89%	91%	56%	76%	60%	72%	81%	91%	48%	68%
2004-05	69%	83%	83%	90%	47%	72%	44%	66%	76%	88%	38%	62%

*TAKS accountability indicator results are in whole percentages.
**AEIS did not provide data.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1999–2000 through 2004–05.

EXHIBIT 1-2
LMISD TAKS PASS RATES BY SUB-TEST AND GRADE (IN ENGLISH)
2003-04 AND 2004-05

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD*

GRADE	READING 2004	READING 2005	MATH 2004	MATH 2005	WRITING 2004	WRITING 2005	ELA 2004	ELA 2005	SCIENCE 2004	SCIENCE 2005	SOCIAL STUDIES 2004	SOCIAL STUDIES 2005	ALL TESTS 2004	ALL TESTS 2005
Grade 3	82%	79%	78%	66%									71%	58%
Grade 4	83%	56%	68%	60%	90%	86%							60%	44%
Grade 5	74%	57%	66%	51%					57%	39%			44%	30%
Grade 6	82%	72%	71%	50%									65%	47%
Grade 7	62%	64%	47%	35%	88%	79%							39%	32%
Grade 8	87%	73%	36%	39%							72%	65%	32%	34%
Grade 9	74%	66%	30%	27%									30%	28%
Grade 10			40%	30%			71%	58%	49%	31%	78%	78%	31%	14%
Grade 11			75%	62%			89%	80%	78%	61%	98%	87%	61%	46%
All Grades	79%	69%	56%	47%	89%	83%			60%	44%	81%	76%	48%	38%

*Blank cells indicate test not given at that grade level.
**English Language Arts (ELA).
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04 and 2004–05.

EXHIBIT 1-3
2004-05 TAKS PASS RATES*
READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, AND ALL TESTS
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE

DISTRICT	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Texas City	84%	67%	92%	58%	86%	58%
Palestine	78%	68%	86%	59%	81%	58%
Navasota	78%	64%	78%	58%	87%	53%
LA MARQUE	**69%**	**47%**	**83%**	**44%**	**76%**	**38%**
Lancaster	68%	44%	79%	38%	75%	34%
REGION 4	**84%**	**72%**	**91%**	**66%**	**89%**	**63%**
STATE	**83%**	**72%**	**90%**	**66%**	**88%**	**62%**

*2004–05 results as presented under TAKS Accountability Indicator.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT 1-4
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DISTRICT'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS.						
Administrators	15.0%	0.0%	40.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Principals	0.0%	26.7%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	13.3%
Teachers	6.1%	21.9%	40.4%	22.8%	1.8%	7.0%
Students	17.5%	33.3%	38.6%	7.0%	3.5%	0.0%
Parents	15.5%	34.5%	27.4%	14.3%	4.8%	3.6%
Auxiliary/ Professional Support Staff	7.8%	20.3%	50.0%	15.6%	4.7%	1.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

EXHIBIT 1-5
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT
SEPTEMBER 2005

DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS						
RESPONDENTS	READING	ELA*	WRITING	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
Administrators	50.0%	30.0%	25.0%	75.0%	60.0%	15.0%
Principals	33.3%	40.0%	33.3%	86.7%	73.3%	26.7%
Teachers	43.0%	28.1%	42.1%	65.8%	44.7%	18.4%
Students	33.3%	36.8%	50.9%	75.4%	61.4%	28.1%
Parents	22.6%	25.0%	34.5%	51.2%	41.7%	19.0%
Auxiliary/ Professional Support Staff	53.1%	40.6%	46.9%	70.3%	57.8%	32.8%

*English Language Arts (ELA).
NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

of course objectives to the TEKS and state assessments; development of the scope and sequence; development of sample units of study; and development of appropriate assessments including benchmark tests. GPISD's scope and sequence is consistent across grade and educational levels (elementary, middle, and high schools) in each subject area. GPISD has a consistent framework for the development and updating of curriculum and instruction implementation for all programs. Each program incorporates the district mission, the Graduate Profile, and the content area purpose statement. The curriculum specifies the standards on which it is based. For example, the math program incorporates the TEKS, the national math standards, and the district curriculum. The program also specifies the staff development provided, defines effective or best practices, and lists the different assessments it uses.

GPISD continually updates the curriculum using horizontal and vertical teaming and horizontal and vertical articulation, using selected teachers and program directors. The director of Staff Development trains teachers in curriculum writing to make the guides teacher-friendly and to incorporate resources and instructional strategies. The district gives release time to curriculum teams during the year, and the teams also work over the summer. GPISD's long-range five-year plan contains an annual cross-subject-area calendar that shows textbook adoptions and curriculum document development or revision, benchmark test and district assessment revisions, and unit development or revision. The plan also includes five-year plans for each content area and educational level. The plans specify annual assessments to develop or revise, staff development, available resources, and curriculum revisions.

LMISD should develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system for regularly reviewing and updating the curriculum guides. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction should implement a curriculum updating process that incorporates input from all teachers and includes teacher participation in curriculum updating teams to ensure teacher acceptance and classroom use. The district could use GPISD as a model. LMISD should provide training for guide writing to teachers and staff and emphasize the benefits of teacher participation in curriculum guide development and updating. In addition to the compensation for time spent in curriculum guide development or updating, the district should offer these teachers special recognition and benefits such as conference attendance or time off allowances. To increase buy-in, LMISD should also involve principals in this task. LMISD should make the six-step model an integral part of the curriculum monitoring system and integrate it into annual teacher evaluations.

The district should use two-person teams for the updating task with vertical team leaders assisting with the writing effort as needed as well as providing oversight to ensure curriculum alignment within the various content areas. Including vertical team leaders, teachers, and administrators in the curriculum guide development, similar to Galena Park's practice, would be advantageous for LMISD given the critical need for teacher and principal acceptance.

According to the district curriculum development cycle, LMISD plans to update its health education, physical education, and fine arts curriculum in summer 2006, social studies guides in summer of 2007, English language arts in 2008, math in summer 2009, and science in 2010. The district has 87 courses in these subjects. On average, the district will update 17 guides each summer for three summers and 18 guides each summer for two summers. LMISD will use two-member teams for one day to update a guide. Based on a daily rate of $18 per hour, the total cost for updating 17 guides is estimated at $5,857, which includes $4,896 for salaries and $536 for benefits (2 teachers per guide x $18 per hour x 8 hours per day x 1 day x 17 guides equals $4,896 in salary; $4,896 x 10.95% benefit rate equals $536 in fringes) and $425 for materials, supplies, and printing ($25 per guide x 17 guides). The cost of updating 18 guides is estimated at $6,202: $5,184 for salaries + $568 for benefits (2 teachers per guide x $18 per hour x 8 hours per day x 1 day x 18 guides) and $450 for materials and supplies and printing ($25 per guide x 18 guides). Cost of updating 17 guides each summer for three summers is estimated at $17,571 ($5,857 x 3). The cost of

updating 18 guides each summer for two summers is estimated at $12,404 ($6,202 x 2). The total cost of updating the 87 guides over five summers is estimated at $29,975.

PROGRAM EVALUATION (REC. 2)

LMISD does not evaluate instructional and instructional support programs on a regular basis, thereby limiting the district's ability to effectively accommodate changing student needs. Aside from analysis of student performance on benchmark tests and TAKS, the district does not evaluate its instructional programs.

The job description for the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction includes the responsibility to guide development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs. None of the instructional coordinator job descriptions includes program evaluation responsibility, although these positions are responsible for core subject areas. The Curriculum and Instruction Department has not developed any program evaluation guidelines, does not collect any program data, and does not seek feedback from parents, students, and staff on specific instructional programs. The district has not evaluated any of its instructional programs. According to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, in the September 2005 board meeting, the board raised the need for program evaluation both overall in the district and in relation to the development of district and campus improvement plans. However, the Curriculum and Instruction Department focused its efforts on the development and implementation of curriculum guides and has not yet addressed program evaluation.

The district began efforts to restructure its guidance and counseling program with the help of outside consultants in the spring of 2004, but has not evaluated the progress of the restructuring to determine if the implemented strategies are creating the desired results. In 2004, the district began the process of developing and implementing a comprehensive guidance program based on the TEA model guidance program that it tailored to meet the needs of LMISD students.

The director of Student Services and the district counselors, working with outside consultants, used TEA's A *Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools: a Guide for Program Development, Pre K – 12th* Grade as a foundation for program restructuring. It is designed to help ensure that all students in Texas benefit from quality guidance and counseling programs. The guide sets out eight basic responsibilities for counselors including

program management, guidance, counseling, consultation, coordination, student assessment, professional behavior, and professional standards. The amount of time and resources spent on each area and the importance of each responsibility will vary based on the job assignment of each counselor. The guide sets out a process to develop and implement the program including planning, design, implementation and evaluation.

A guidance steering committee composed of the directors of Student Services, CTE, Grants and Special Education, an elementary school principal, a high school assistant principal, and eight counselors worked with a facilitator to design the program. Four of the counselors, all assigned to elementary schools and worked on program development, are still in the district.

The restructuring of the program included an analysis of the current allocation of resources, such as how counselors spend their time and the identification of non-counselor duties performed at that time by counselors. Based on a log that counselors maintained during April 2004, counselors estimated that they spent 50 percent of their time on non-guidance activities. Counselors estimated that they spent significant time focused on TAKS-related activities, averaging 15 percent of their time. Counselors performed non-guidance tasks at the elementary level that included coverings classes, TAKS testing coordination, grooming students, and lunch duty. Middle school tasks performed by the counselors included testing coordination, lunch duty, and data/PEIMS entry. High school non-guidance activities included covering classes, credit checks, and data entry. Counselors at all three levels cited special education tasks such as participation in the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) process and serving as "Section 504" coordinators as non-guidance tasks.

The district has continued to work on implementing the restructuring through the director of Student Services' monthly meetings with counselors but has not evaluated the progress accomplished through the restructuring.

Parents and students may not be aware of the restructuring efforts that are in progress. **Exhibit 1-6** describes the percentage of survey respondents that regarded the counseling programs in need of improvement. A majority of student respondents felt the programs need improvement, and more than forty percent of parent respondents felt that both career and college counseling needed improvement. Forty percent of the principals surveyed felt that the college program needed improvement. However, the majority of administrators and teachers surveyed did not indicate that the programs needed improvement.

The primary reason for conducting program evaluations is to collect data that will help with making informed decisions about various programs. Knowing the extent to which a program is meeting its goals helps determine whether or not to continue the program, modify it, or terminate it. Evaluation is necessary for determining if a program meets the needs of all students as well as needs of specific student populations. Evaluation also demonstrates how well the program supports student achievement on district and state tests. Evaluations help identify program weaknesses and pinpoint needed changes, guiding continuous program improvements. Without evaluation, districts cannot determine and address the reason for poor performance. The lack of evaluation also limits districts in their ability to develop strategies for increasing program effectiveness. Program evaluation is important in light of the great emphasis on accountability and improvement in student performance. Districts develop guidelines and procedures early in the process to ensure that

EXHIBIT 1-6
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR COUNSELING PROGRAMS
SEPTEMBER 2005

COUNSELING PROGRAMS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS

SUBJECT AREAS	ADMINISTRATORS	PRINCIPALS	TEACHERS	STUDENTS	PARENTS	AUXILIARY/ PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT STAFF
Career Counseling	25.0%	33.3%	24.6%	61.4%	41.7%	42.2%
College Counseling	30.0%	40.0%	27.2%	68.4%	46.4%	42.2%
Counseling Parents of Students	30.0%	33.3%	36.8%	52.6%	35.7%	48.4%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

the evaluation conducted is comprehensive, and that districts use the evaluation results in planning, budget preparation, and improving program effectiveness. For example, having a program evaluation system in place would have alerted LMISD that its core subject curriculum and instructional strategies were not preparing students for TAKS and helped identify needed changes. A program evaluation system would have also identified the decrease in G/T students and the reasons for that decrease.

To ensure that staff recognizes the importance of program evaluation, Dallas ISD requires all program managers to include evaluation methods in any program proposal. All evaluation designs must receive approval from the appropriate offices and the executive team before they receive funding. Dallas ISD also developed a monitoring system that allows administrators to evaluate program performance on a monthly basis and to report various performance measures to the superintendent.

Kerrville ISD identifies three programs a year for in-depth evaluation using a locally developed Program Evaluation Model. The model includes three phases: organization and design; information collection; and analysis and conclusion. It details all activities that the district has to perform and provides associated forms and examples.

Galena Park ISD (GPISD) implements a systematic ongoing evaluation process and calendar that integrate with the district's program development cycle. GPISD evaluates one districtwide department or core area and one support service annually. The district uses the evaluation data to plan and revise all its educational programs over a five-year period. The system adopted from the National Curriculum Audit Center evaluates programs based on standards of control, direction, consistency/equity, assessment, and productivity. The evaluation starts with a needs assessment implemented by an external team, followed by stakeholder surveys. The evaluation report is organized by standard, including commendations and recommendations for each standard area, student and staff demographic data, and stakeholder survey results.

The LMISD assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction should develop and implement a program evaluation system with a calendar ensuring that the district evaluates all instructional and instructional support programs on a regular basis to determine their effectiveness. The evaluation should define the purpose and scope of the evaluation, specify the type of data to collect and methods of data collection, describe how to analyze the data, and outline an evaluation report. The evaluation report should include specific recommendations and associated action plans and identify the staff responsible for implementing the plans. The evaluation system should include a follow-up report documenting whether the district has implemented the recommendations and how implementation has affected student achievement. The district should provide copies of the evaluation and follow-up reports to the board. LMISD should develop a three- to five-year calendar showing which programs it will evaluate each year.

The director of Student Services should perform a program evaluation of the restructured guidance program to ensure that the fully implemented program reflects actual LMISD needs and has widespread support. The scope of the evaluation should include the following:

- a review of the goals of the initial restructuring of the guidance and counseling program;

- a comparison of the baseline information to current information;

- development of conclusions; and

- recommendations to address any outstanding or new issues.

The evaluation should update the baseline data used in the initial restructuring process. This includes the information on how counselors are spending their time and the identification of non-counselor duties performed by counselors. The district should obtain information from students, parents, and other teachers regarding the effectiveness of the program. The director should look at student performance data to determine if the restructuring has had a positive impact on student performance. The director should analyze all of this data to determine progress made and identify current issues.

The director of Student Services should document the results of the program in a formal report and present it to the board. This report should include the following:

- a review of the initial goals of the restructuring;

- progress to date expressed in terms of the data analyzed;

- a summary of the conclusions; and

- recommendations to address any remaining or new issues.

The information provided to the board should include specific recommendations with associated costs in enough detail for the board to act. The director of Student Service should ensure that the report addresses the different counseling needs for elementary, middle, and high schools with specific goals tailored to the students served and the appropriate allocation of resources.

GIFTED AND TALENTED (REC. 3)

The LMISD Gifted and Talented (G/T) identification and screening processes under identify G/T students at all school levels and especially at the elementary level, resulting in low program participation rates. The *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* guides districts to set up G/T programs that reflect the population of the district at all grades. A G/T coordinator heads the LMISD's G/T program. The G/T committee consists of a principal, a counselor, and a designated teacher. LMISD implemented a differentiation G/T program where teachers provide special materials and assignments in the classroom to students identified as G/T. In 2005–06, LMISD added a pullout component to its differentiation program, pulling out all students identified as G/T for special activities once a month.

Parents/guardians, school personnel, peers, and community members can nominate students to the G/T program. The district G/T coordinator communicates with parents about the program primarily through letters, which inform parents about the G/T nomination and assessment process and ask parents whether they want to nominate their child. Parents of children nominated to the G/T program receive a letter asking for permission to test their child. The parents complete a permission form and the Parent Inventory and return both to the child's teacher by a specific date. Until 2004–05, the letters and forms were only in English. The district sends out a letter to all parents with children in grades K–8 in November and to parents with students in grades 9–12 in October and April. Testing for students in grades K–8 takes place in November and for students in grades 9–12 in October and May. The school notifies parents of kindergarten students of G/T test results in February, parents of students in grades 1–8 in May, and parents of students in grades 9–12 in June. The G/T coordinator does not have information on the number of nominations coming from parents but assumes that very few nominations have come from parents. The number of nominations has been especially low at the elementary school level. In the opinion of the G/T coordinator, LMISD parents have little awareness of the G/T

program and knowledge of the characteristics of a gifted and talented child. Teachers have also been conservative in nominating students, according to the G/T coordinator, because only a small number qualified. District G/T committee members realize that the G/T nomination and identification process is not well-publicized among teachers, parents, and students. In 2004–05, the district began to send letters in Spanish. In 2005–06, the district also publicized the call for G/T nominations in the local newspaper, churches, on the district web page, and on the schools' marquees. The added publicity resulted in 278 nominations in 2005–06 compared with 217 in 2004–05.

The G/T committee assesses students in their home language. Although the district requires that all kindergarten students be screened for G/T, this practice has not been followed. LMISD had no G/T students in grade 1 in 2002–03, two students in 2003–04, and one student in 2004–05. The district uses the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a norm-referenced test, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), the teacher Ranzulli-Hartman Inventory for Rating Behavior Characteristics of Superior Students, the Parent Inventory, and a portfolio of the student's daily performance. The G/T committee recognized in 2004–05 that the district's screening methods for student identification resulted in too few students passing it.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-7**, LMISD has had the second smallest percentage of students identified as G/T in comparison to its peer districts in 2003–04 and 2004–05. The district's percentage of G/T students has been below Region 4 and the state percentages from 2000–01 through 2004–05. The percentage of LMISD G/T students in 2003–04 and 2004–05 was less than half of the Region 4 and state percentages. LMISD had the highest rate of decline in student participation in G/T relative to its peers, Region 4, and the state. LMISD's percentage of G/T students declined from 2000–01 through 2004–05 by 37.9 percent compared with a decrease of 9.7 percent for Region 4 and 8.3 percent decrease for the state.

LMISD's G/T screening processes under identify elementary school students. As shown in **Exhibit 1-8**, LMISD had very few G/T students in elementary school from 2002–03 through 2004–05. In 2002–03, 28 students out of 1,449 elementary school students, or 1.9 percent, were in G/T. In 2003–04, 20 students out of 1,362 elementary school students, or 1.5 percent, were in G/T. In 2004–05, 25 out of 1,337 elementary school students, or 1.9 percent, were in the G/T program.

EXHIBIT 1-7
G/T STUDENT PARTICIPATION
2000-01 THROUGH 2004-05

DISTRICT	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE* 2000-01 TO 2004-05
Lancaster	6.1%	7.0%	5.6%	5.4%	4.7%	(22.9%)
LA MARQUE	**5.8%**	**5.4%**	**4.5%**	**3.6%**	**3.6%**	**(37.9%)**
Texas City	5.7%	5.7%	5.6%	5.8%	6.2%	8.8%
Palestine	5.0%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	3.8%	(24.0%)
Navasota	2.7%	3.4%	2.9%	3.2%	3.4%	25.9%
REGION 4	**8.2%**	**7.4%**	**7.2%**	**7.3%**	**7.4%**	**(9.7%)**
STATE	**8.4%**	**8.2%**	**7.8%**	**7.8%**	**7.7%**	**(8.3%)**

*Percentage change defined as 2004-05 values minus 2000-01 values divided by 2000-01 values multiplied by 100 percent.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2000-01 through 2004-05.

EXHIBIT 1-8
LMISD GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS BY GRADE LEVEL
2002-03 THROUGH 2004-05

	2002-03			2003-04			2004-05		
GRADE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	ENROLL-MENT*	PERCENT OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	ENROLL-MENT*	PERCENT OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	ENROLL-MENT*	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
Grade 1	0	273	0.0%	**	294	0.7%	**	296	0.3%
Grade 2	**	273	0.7%	**	256	1.2%	**	280	1.1%
Grade 3	**	305	1.0%	**	253	1.6%	8	232	3.4%
Grade 4	10	301	3.3%	**	280	1.4%	5	268	1.9%
Grade 5	13	297	4.4%	7	279	2.5%	8	261	3.1%
Grade 6	12	296	4.0%	9	274	3.3%	8	276	2.9%
Grade 7	27	284	9.5%	13	277	4.7%	13	275	4.7%
Grade 8	28	299	9.4%	17	276	6.1%	15	283	5.3%
Grade 9	25	382	6.5%	21	418	5.0%	14	404	3.5%
Grade 10	28	297	9.4%	20	260	7.7%	17	305	5.6%
Grade 11	26	239	10.9%	26	259	10.0%	20	237	8.4%
Grade 12	31	215	14.4%	29	204	14.2%	20	201	9.9%
TOTAL*	**205**	**3,461**	**5.9%**	**155**	**3,330**	**4.6%**	**132**	**3,318**	**4.0%**

*Enrollment includes grades 1-12.
**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.
***Totals include student numbers that are masked in the exhibit due to FERPA requirements.
SOURCE: LMISD, G/T coordinator, September 2005.

One elementary school did not have any G/T students in 2003-04 or in 2004-05. Two elementary schools in 2003-04 and one elementary school in 2004-05 had five or fewer G/T students (**Exhibit 1-9**).

The percentage of students in the G/T program decreased from 2002-03 to 2004-05 in middle and high school levels (**Exhibit 1-10**). The decline was steepest at the high school level. The percentage of middle school students in the G/T program declined from 7.6 percent in 2002-03 to 4.3 percent in 2004-05. The participation of high school students in the G/T program declined from 9.7 percent in 2002-03 to 6.2 percent in 2004-05. In 2004-05, the high school had no G/T nominations. According to the G/T coordinator, the number of students in the G/T program declined because nominations and assessments were low and only a small number of students assessed met the criteria.

EXHIBIT 1-9
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF G/T STUDENTS AND BUDGET BY SCHOOL
2003-04 AND 2004-05

	2003-04			2004-05		
SCHOOL	NUMBER OF G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT OF G/T STUDENTS	G/T BUDGET	NUMBER OF G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT OF G/T STUDENTS	G/T BUDGET
Highlands Elementary	*	1.6%	$33,051	10	3.1%	$109,503
Inter-City Elementary	*	0.3%	$7,070	*	0.9%	$112,025
Simms Elementary	*	0.0%	$17,626	*	0.0%	$17,151
Westlawn Elementary	14	3.8%	$198,734	12	3.4%	$307,184
La Marque Middle School	39	4.7%	$166,970	36	4.3%	$267,551
La Marque High School	96	8.4%	$271,292	71	6.2%	$351,878
TOTAL	**155**	**4.6%**	**$713,985**	**132**	**4.0%**	**$1,165,292**

*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: LMISD, G/T coordinator, September 2005; Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003-04 and 2004-05 (enrollment), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 2004-05 (budget).

EXHIBIT 1-10
LMISD GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS BY SCHOOL LEVEL
2002-03 THROUGH 2004-05

	2002-03			2003-04			2004-05		
SCHOOL	G/T STUDENTS	ENROLL-MENT*	PERCENT OF G/T**	G/T STUDENTS	ENROLL-MENT*	PERCENT OF G/T**	G/T STUDENTS	ENROLL-MENT*	PERCENT OF G/T**
Elementary	28	1,449	1.9%	20	1,362	1.5%	25	1,337	1.9%
Middle	67	879	7.6%	39	827	4.7%	36	834	4.3%
High School	110	1,133	9.7%	96	1,141	8.4%	71	1,147	6.2%
TOTAL	**205**	**3,461**	**5.9%**	**155**	**3,330**	**4.6%**	**132**	**3,318**	**4.0%**

*Enrollment in elementary includes only grades 1-5.
**Percent of G/T students was calculated at the elementary level based on enrollment in grades 1-5; excluding early childhood, pre-K, and K enrollment.
SOURCE: LMISD, G/T coordinator, September 2005; Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2002-03 through 2004-05.

The G/T coordinator, who assumed the position in September 2004, and the G/T district committee recognized the need to change the G/T program to increase student participation and set a goal of a 10 percent increase. The committee considered strategies such as increasing nominations by sending out nomination letters to parents both in English and Spanish and lowering the criteria for student identification, as shown in **Exhibit 1-11,** so that more students could qualify for the program. The G/T committee also decided to change the program in 2005-06 by adding a pullout component to the classroom differentiation program where the teacher provides special materials and assignments in class to students who are G/T. The pullout program consists of pulling students out of class once a month five times a year and bringing all G/T students districtwide together once or twice a year. In 2005-06, the district began to publicize the call for G/T nominations in the local newspaper and on the schools' marquees.

EXHIBIT 1-11
LMISD G/T ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

G/T ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS	CURRENT CRITERIA	RECOMMENDED CRITERIA
CogAT (5 points)	1 point: 101-108*	1 point: 110-104*
	5 points: 133+	5 points: 120+
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) (5 points)	98-99%	96-99%
Parent Inventory (5 points)	55-56 points	55-56 points
Renzulli: (5 points)		
Learning Characteristics	29-32	28-32
Motivational Characteristics	33-36	32-36
Creativity Characteristics	37-40	36-40

* Number indicates range on test. For example, students scoring 101 to 108 on the CogAT get one point.
SOURCE: LMISD G/T Coordinator, G/T Meeting Agenda, March 15, 2005.

The G/T committee considered program changes in 2004–05 to increase the number of students in the program and wanted to develop G/T district and campus plans. Since November 2004, the G/T coordinator requested that counselors develop G/T campus plans, but counselors did not develop any plans. Although required in the district G/T Plan/Procedures Manual, the G/T coordinator did not formally evaluate the G/T program. As shown in **Exhibit 1-12**, about half of the students, half of the administrators, and 73.3 percent of the principals and assistant principals surveyed in September 2005 said that the G/T program needs improvement.

EXHIBIT 1-12
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	PERCENT SAYING G/T PROGRAM NEEDS IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS
Administrators	50.0%
Principals/Assistant Principals	73.3%
Teachers	34.2%
Students	49.1%
Parents	33.3%
Auxiliary Staff	40.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

LMISD lags behind the state and Region 4 in G/T student participation. In 2003–04 and 2004–05, LMISD also lagged behind three of its four peer districts. The district experienced the largest decline in percentage of G/T students compared to its peers, Region 4, and the state since 2000–01. If the district continues to under identify G/T students at all school levels, the district will not identify, cultivate, or provide appropriate learning opportunities to those students with superior intellectual abilities. These students will miss out on available G/T program activities and opportunities to remain intellectually challenged throughout school and prepared for post-secondary education. G/T students typically take pre-Advanced Placement (pre-AP) and AP courses. If the district continues to have low G/T program participation at the elementary level, fewer students will be ready to participate in the district's pre-AP and AP programs.

Districts that have been successful in making their G/T student population representative of their overall student population educate all parents about gifted and talented student characteristics and the nomination and screening process, train teachers in the identification of gifted students, implement aggressive campaigns to recruit and identify students, and identify diverse tests, including non-verbal tests, and measures that best suit their population.

Georgetown ISD (GISD) has a comprehensive G/T program combining differentiation, campus, and district pullout strategies. The program, headed by a G/T district director, solicits nominations from parents, teachers, community members, and students. Screening of students in grades K–1, 3–4, 6–7, and 9–12 is based primarily on teacher observation of advanced skills and abilities, excellent production in the classroom, local reading and math assessments and benchmark tests, and on criterion-referenced assessments. In addition to classroom grades, a parent and teacher observation/learning characteristics inventory, and student products, the G/T assessment includes a mental aptitude test and an achievement test. The target score for quantitative data is 95+ percentile or 95+ performance. The district uses standardized norm reference tests with students in grades 2, 5, and 8. Students have to score in the 95th percentile or above on two or more of the following tests: total battery score of norm-referenced achievement test, total reading subset score, total math subset score, and total score on mental aptitude test. GISD's G/T program has a strong parent and community involvement component supervised by the G/T program director. Parents assist with instructional enrichment projects, evaluate program services, participate in individual parent conferences, attend G/T parent meetings, visit G/T classes, and observe G/T student presentations. Parents also participate in staff development activities and program needs assessment, volunteer for field trips, create resource materials, and serve as judges for student presentations. GISD annually prepares a detailed G/T improvement plan based on campus and district data. The district G/T program director, counselors, principals, G/T staff development facilitator, and the assessment director evaluate the program annually and provide results to each school and districtwide. Program evaluation consists of principal and G/T coordinator visits to classrooms and observation of G/T teachers and evaluation of their effectiveness based on state and local G/T goals and G/T scope and sequence; analysis of nomination and assessment data; disaggregation of G/T student performance data and review of G/T student records regarding major activities, contests, field trips, seminars, and student presentations.

LMISD should develop a G/T district plan articulating the strategies for student nominations and referrals, testing, and

services and improve the program annually based on evaluation results. The district should develop and implement a teacher, community, and parent campaign to nominate and identify gifted students from diverse backgrounds. The G/T coordinator should collect data on the number of nominations by nomination source to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign and change it as needed. In addition to modifying its G/T screening process by using tests that are more effective in identifying gifted and talented students from its economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse population, LMISD should educate all parents about the gifted child and the nomination and screening process and create multiple opportunities for their participation in the program. The G/T coordinator should track parent involvement in the G/T program and modify strategies to increase involvement in areas of low involvement. The G/T coordinator should provide guidelines and help teachers in the identification of gifted children. The G/T coordinator with the G/T committee should also visit classrooms and attend monthly school or districtwide pullout events to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of G/T instruction. The G/T plan should include a description of an annual program evaluation with methodology, data collection instruments, analysis guidelines, and a timeline. The G/T coordinator and G/T committee should present the results of the annual evaluation including recommendations for improvement to principals, district administrators, and the board. The district should use the results of the annual evaluation to guide program improvement.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (REC. 4)

LMISD lacks strategies for increasing student participation in advanced placement (AP) courses and improving performance on advanced placement and college admission exams. The AP program is part of the G/T program. In middle school, the district serves G/T students through both G/T and pre-AP. In high school, it serves G/T students through the pre-AP and AP programs. LMISD offers a large number of pre-AP and AP courses. It offers 11 pre-AP courses in the middle school and added an Algebra 1 course in 2005–06. At the high school it offers 14 pre-AP courses and 5 AP courses. LMISD has a pre-AP and AP open enrollment policy. Enrollment in pre-AP courses is higher at the middle school than at the high school. Enrollment in the AP courses at the high school is low, as shown in **Exhibit 1-13**, ranging from 12 to 45.4 percent of capacity. According to district administrators, enrollment in AP courses is low because students lack motivation to go beyond the core

requirements and take AP courses, and teachers do not encourage students to do so. Some high school students take dual credit courses in lieu of AP courses.

The percentage of LMISD students participating in AP courses was below Region 4 and state averages from 1999–2000 through 2003–04 (**Exhibit 1-14**). In 1999–2000, 12 percent of LMISD students took AP courses compared with 24.6 percent for Region 4 and 20.1 percent statewide. In 2003–04, 11.3 percent of LMISD students participated in AP courses compared with 19.8 percent in Region 4 and 19.9 percent statewide. Although LMISD publicizes its AP program during registration and lists AP courses in the catalog, the 2005–06 La Marque District Improvement Plan does not address advanced academics as part of its academic goal. While the La Marque High School Campus Improvement Plan for 2005–06 aims to increase student participation in AP exams, it does not identify any strategies for doing so. Also, according to district administrators, teachers do not encourage students to participate in AP courses and exams. La Marque Middle School's 2005–06 Campus Improvement Plan sets a goal of increasing by two percent the number of students in advanced programs by increasing parent and student awareness of the programs. The percentage of LMISD students who took AP exams and who exceeded criterion declined since 1999–2000. LMISD was also below regional and state averages since 1999–2000 in percentage taking AP courses, percentage taking AP exams, and performance on AP exams.

In addition, LMISD had the lowest participation rates in AP exams among its peers. The percentage of LMISD students taking AP exams decreased annually from 1999–2000 through 2003–04. LMISD participation rates in AP exams were also significantly below the regional and state rates (**Exhibit 1-15**).

Generally, colleges award credit for scores of 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams. **Exhibit 1-16** shows the number of AP exams LMISD students took in 2003–04 and 2004–05 and the number and percentage scoring 3 or better. For 2003–04, 100 percent of the exams taken received a grade of 3 or higher. For 2004–05 when students took significantly more exams, 52.4 percent of the exams had a grade of 3 or higher. The number of students who took AP exams increased from fewer than five to 17, and the number of AP exams LMISD students took increased from fewer than five to 21. In 2003–04, LMISD students took AP exams in biology and English. In 2004–05, students took AP exams in biology, English, U.S. history, Spanish language, physics, and calculus.

EXHIBIT 1-13
LMISD ENROLLMENT IN PRE-AP AND AP COURSES
2004–05

COURSE	MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT CAPACITY*	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	PERCENT ENROLLMENT
MIDDLE SCHOOL – PRE-AP			
Math 6	30	23	76.7%
Science 6	30	23	76.7%
Social Studies 6	30	26	86.7%
English 7	80	54	67.5%
Math 7	75	52	69.3%
Science 7	80	49	61.2%
Texas History 7	80	50	62.5%
English 8	75	60	80.0%
Math 8	25	14	56.0%
Science 8	88	73	82.9%
American History 8	110	63	57.3%
HIGH SCHOOL – PRE-AP AND AP			
Pre-AP English 1	135	54	40.0%
Pre-AP English 2	135	64	47.4%
Pre-AP Geometry	25	25	100.0%
Pre-AP Algebra 2	45	25	55.6%
Pre-AP Pre-calculus	82	38	46.3%
Pre-AP Biology	90	51	56.7%
Pre-AP IPC	90	42	46.7%
Pre-AP Chemistry	170	54	31.8%
Pre-AP Physics	75	9	12.0%
Pre-AP World History	100	63	63.0%
Pre-AP World Geography	135	56	41.5%
Pre-AP US Government	25	20	80.0%
Pre-AP Economics	25	24	96.0%
Pre-AP Spanish	30	22	73.3%
AP English 3	135	60	44.4%
AP English 4	60	21	35.0%
AP Calculus AB	25	5	20.0%
AP Biology	22	10	45.4%
AP Spanish	25	10	40.0%

*Maximum Enrollment Capacity includes all sections per course.
SOURCE: LMISD Advanced Academics Coordinator, September 2005.

LMISD students performed below regional and state levels on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Academic College Test (ACT), as shown in **Exhibit 1-17.** Compared with its peers, LMISD had the second highest percentage of students taking the SAT/ACT. The district participation rate was below Region 4 and statewide percentages. However, only 3.1 percent of LMISD students met or exceeded the SAT/ACT criteria, significantly below the Region 4 and state percentages of 30.9 percent and 27 percent, respectively. LMISD's ACT mean score of 17.0 was second lowest among its peers and below both regional and state means of 20.6 and 20.1, respectively. LMISD's mean SAT score of 828 was

the second lowest among its peers. The LMISD SAT mean score was 172 points below the Region 4 mean score and 159 points below the state mean score.

With the exception of district administrators, less than 30 percent of LMISD principals and assistant principals, teachers, students, parents, and auxiliary/professional support staff who responded to the school review survey agreed that the district does a good or excellent job preparing students for post-secondary education. Only 10.5 percent of the students, 21.5 percent of the parents, 23.7 percent of the teachers, 26.7 percent of principals, and 28.1 percent of auxiliary staff

EXHIBIT 1-14
LMISD, REGION 4, AND STATE PERFORMANCE ON ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS
1999-2000 THROUGH 2003-04*

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1.1 PERCENT TAKING ADVANCED COURSES					
LA MARQUE	12.0%	8.7%	13.1%	14.8%	11.3%
Region 4	24.6%	21.7%	20.0%	19.4%	19.8%
State	20.1%	19.3%	19.4%	19.7%	19.9%
1.2 PERCENT TAKING AP TESTS					
LA MARQUE	2.6%	1.3%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%
Region 4	12.0%	13.3%	14.3%	15.4%	16.7%
State	12.7%	14.3%	15.0%	16.1%	17.4%
1.3 PERCENT OF ALL AP SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION					
LA MARQUE	35.0%	25.0%	20.0%	*	*
Region 4	67.5%	64.0%	65.8%	63.6%	60.0%
State	53.9%	50.1%	52.9%	51.4%	49.3%
1.4 PERCENT OF EXAMINEES EXCEEDING CRITERION					
LA MARQUE	50.0%	16.7%	*	*	*
Region 4	70.5%	66.5%	68.4%	67.1%	64.5%
State	57.9%	54.0%	56.8%	56.0%	53.9%

*Latest data available is for 2003-04 exams in the 2004-05 AEIS report.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2000-01 through 2004-05.

EXHIBIT 1-15
PERCENT OF STUDENTS TAKING ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND THE STATE
1999-2000 THROUGH 2003-04*

DISTRICT	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Texas City	12.6%	8.3%	10.1%	10.4%	10.9%
Navasota	7.5%	11.5%	14.1%	10.5%	10.1%
Palestine	7.5%	10.7%	9.7%	8.2%	11.1%
Lancaster	3.8%	3.0%	2.8%	5.7%	8.5%
LA MARQUE	2.6%	1.3%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%
REGION 4	12.0%	13.3%	14.3%	15.4%	16.7%
STATE AVERAGE	12.7%	14.3%	15.0%	16.1%	17.4%

*Latest data available is 2003-04 in the 2004-05 AEIS report.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 1999-2000 through 2004-05.

EXHIBIT 1-16
PERFORMANCE ON ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS
2003-04 AND 2004-05

YEAR	NUMBER OF AP EXAMINATIONS	NUMBER WITH GRADE 3 OR HIGHER	PERCENT OF GRADES 3 OR HIGHER
2003-04	*	*	100.0%
2004-05	21	11	52.4%

*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: LMISD Student Grade Roster, 2003-04 and 2004-05.

EXHIBIT 1-17
PERCENT OF STUDENTS TAKING ACT/SAT EXAMS, MEETING CRITERIA
2004-05

DISTRICT	STUDENTS TAKING SAT/ACT EXAMS	STUDENTS MEETING SAT/ACT CRITERIA	MEAN ACT SCORE	MEAN SAT SCORE
LA MARQUE	61.1%	3.1%	17.0	828
Lancaster	65.6%	3.7%	16.4	802
Texas City	51.1%	22.5%	19.0	966
Palestine	50.0%	20.7%	20.3	952
Navasota	43.8%	20.9%	19.0	968
REGION 4	64.1%	30.9%	20.6	1000
STATE	61.9%	27.0%	20.1	987

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2004-05.

surveyed agreed that the district does a good or excellent job meeting the needs of college-bound students. Between 10 and 53.3 percent of the respondent groups thought that the district does an average job in meeting these needs (**Exhibit 1-18**). None of the district and campus administrators interviewed knew what percentage of LMISD students went to college and what percentage completed their post-secondary education. According to TEA, 50.4 percent of the LMISD high school graduates of 2003–04 enrolled in public post secondary institutions in Texas in 2004–05.

LMISD survey respondents providing written comments said that the district does not prepare the students for college or for college admission exams and does not provide the needed counseling for course selection, examinations, and college choice. More than two-thirds of the students surveyed said that the college counseling program needs improvement. Forty percent of LMISD district and campus administrators and 36.8 percent of students surveyed also thought that the district's AP programs need improvement in order to meet students' needs (**Exhibit 1-19**).

While the district offers pre-AP courses in middle school and pre-AP and AP courses in high school, it does not promote the AP program, preparation for college, and college education. By not promoting post-secondary education, encouraging students to take advanced courses and exams, and providing them with the academic preparation and skills to succeed in advanced courses and exams, the district limits students' preparedness and success in college and likelihood of college graduation. The concept behind the AP program is to provide college-level courses to high school students to ease the transition to college. According to the College Board, the organization that manages the SAT, the number of

advanced courses that students complete is one of the best predictors of success on the SAT and in college. Participation in AP courses benefits students by exposing them to college-level academic content and challenging them to complete more rigorous coursework. Students with qualifying examination scores can also earn college credit. Even without taking the exams, students who take AP courses often receive more favorable consideration in the college admission process. The Texas Education Agency's report *Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Examination Results in Texas 2002–03* shows that students who take advanced placement courses and receive scores of 3 or higher on AP exams perform better in college and are more likely to graduate in four years, graduate with honors, and continue in a graduate program.

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 advanced courses before they reach high school. These districts set participation goals and offer multiple pre-AP courses starting in middle school. They offer training to AP and regular education teachers in test-taking strategies. Districts also offer tutorials on test-taking strategies to students and provide access to computer labs supplied with applicable software. For example, W.T. White High School in Dallas ISD, with a 79 percent minority student population, enrolls 67 percent of its students in pre-AP and AP programs. The school offers a wide range of advanced placement classes and 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.

EXHIBIT 1-18
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT.						
Administrators	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%	50.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Principals	0.0%	13.3%	53.3%	26.7%	0.0%	6.7%
Teachers	7.9%	19.3%	41.2%	22.8%	0.9%	7.9%
Students	15.8%	24.6%	47.4%	7.0%	3.5%	1.8%
Parents	20.2%	26.2%	27.4%	16.7%	4.8%	4.8%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	7.8%	21.9%	37.5%	25.0%	3.1%	4.7%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

EXHIBIT 1-19
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR
ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND COLLEGE
COUNSELING PROGRAMS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	PERCENT SAYING ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND COLLEGE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEEDS IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS	
	ADVANCED PLACEMENT	COLLEGE COUNSELING
Administrators	40.0%	30.0%
Principals	40.0%	40.0%
Teachers	19.3%	27.2%
Students	36.8%	68.4%
Parents	25.0%	46.4%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	32.8%	42.2%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

At W.T. White High School, more than 80 percent of graduates attend four-year colleges and 11 percent attend two-year colleges.

Galveston ISD, in partnership with the Galveston County Local Education Association (LEA), established a five-year program to increase student participation rates and performance on AP exams. The program was first implemented in 2003–04. The Galveston County LEA is responsible for the program funding of nearly $1 million, one-third of which comes from the district and two-thirds from local partnerships with businesses and the philanthropic community. The program works with a company that trains counselors and teachers in AP instructional strategies and provides course guides. The program also trains students in test-taking strategies. The program offers financial incentives to teachers and students: when a student receives a score of 3 or higher, both the teacher and student get $100 each. Teachers and counselors emphasize the benefits of taking AP courses and exams and encourage students to do so. Along with training of students in exam-taking strategies, the district offers a monetary incentive to motivate students to participate in AP courses and exams.

The district should develop and implement strategies to improve student participation and performance on advanced placement courses and advanced placement and college admission examinations. LMISD district and campus administrators should stress the importance of college preparation through all grade levels to teachers, students, and parents. Elementary, middle school, and high school

counselors should address in their sessions to classes the importance of college education and describe how enrollment in pre-AP and AP classes helps students prepare for college. The counselors should also have the strategies and tools in place to help students completing elementary school plan and take pre-AP classes starting in middle school and continuing throughout high school. Counselors, principals, and teachers should encourage and prepare students to take AP courses and AP exams.

LMISD should set pre-AP and AP participation and exam-taking targets and identify these targets in the district and campus improvement plans. The G/T coordinator should develop strategies jointly with principals and teachers for motivating students to enroll in pre-AP and AP courses and take AP exams. The district and campus improvement plans should also incorporate these strategies. The district should bring former students who went to college and who took advanced classes and exams to speak to middle school and high school students on the importance of college education, the academic and economic benefits of taking advanced placement courses and exams, and appropriate preparation for college. The district should provide training to its teachers on how to teach and prepare students for success in AP exams. It should prepare students academically to take pre-AP and AP courses and offer resources such as AP and SAT/ACT test preparation tutorials to improve student success on AP and college admission exams. The district should recognize teachers whose students took and performed well on AP exams and offer special recognition to students who participated and performed well on AP exams.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES (REC. 5)

LMISD does not have a special education teacher allocation methodology and adequate number of special education teachers at the elementary school level. LMISD's Special Education Department has a staff of 63. Department staff includes a director, 22 teachers, 27 instructional aides, a 0.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) visual impairment teacher, two secretaries, and a Medicaid reimbursement clerk/receptionist. Staff also includes two educational diagnosticians, two education diagnostician assistants, one speech therapist, two speech therapy assistants, and one occupational therapist. LMISD contracts with a licensed speech therapist, 0.25 FTE occupational therapy assistant, and a 0.50 FTE physical therapist.

LMISD offers the full continuum of instructional arrangements for special education students at its schools.

Exhibit 1-20 lists the special education arrangements by school for 2005–06.

Mainstream—To ensure the least restrictive environment appropriate for each student, district personnel first consider providing services in general education classrooms with supplementary aids or services. The term "mainstreamed" refers to students with disabilities who spend all of their classroom hours in a regular classroom. Of the 485 special education students at LMISD 2004–05, 37 or 7.6 percent were mainstreamed and 286 or 59 percent spent at least 50 percent of the day in regular classrooms.

Resource—Resource classes in language arts, reading, and math are available for students in special education who need modified curriculum and instruction from a certified special education teacher. The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee's recommendation is the basis for assigning students to the resource classroom. LMISD has one or more resource classes at all schools.

Self-Contained—Students with moderate to severe disabilities whom a regular classroom cannot appropriately serve receive educational services in a separate, "self-contained" classroom. LMISD provides developmental skills classes that focus on socialization and communication skills and academic skills classes that offer a modified curriculum. LMISD has developmental skills classes at Westlawn Elementary, La Marque Middle School, and La Marque High School.

Adaptive Physical Education—Students receive physical education instruction in the general education physical education program. The ARD committee addresses modifications for physical education and provides these when needed for the student to be successful. Occupational and physical therapists provide adaptive physical education programs for students who would not benefit from a general education physical education program without modifications.

Behavior Adjustment Classes (BAC)—LMISD has behavioral adjustment classes in Westlawn Elementary School, La Marque Middle School, and La Marque High School. LMISD has a BAC II class in the LMISD Special Education building.

Homebound—This program provides at-home services for students at all grade levels who cannot attend school because of illness or injury. LMISD has a homebound teacher. In 2005–06, the district provides services to one homebound student.

The Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)— LMISD has a pre-school program for children with disabilities who are three to five years old at the Early Childhood Learning Center.

LMISD sends some students in 2005–06 to the Galveston Brazoria Cooperative for the Hearing Impaired located in Clear Creek ISD and Alvin ISD.

EXHIBIT 1-20
LMISD SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ARRANGEMENTS
2005–06

SCHOOL	PROGRAM	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF AIDES
Early Childhood Learning Center	Pre-school Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)	45	3	3
Highlands Elementary	Resource/Inclusion	42	1	2
Inter-City Elementary	Resource/Inclusion	44	1	2
Simms Elementary	Resource/Inclusion	34	1	2
Westlawn Elementary	Life skills			
	Behavioral Adjustment Class (BAC)			
	Resource/Inclusion	45	3	6
La Marque Middle School	Life skills			
	Resource/Inclusion			
	BAC	124	6	6
La Marque High School	Life skills			
	Resource/Inclusion			
	BAC	137	7	6
TOTAL		**471**	**22**	**27**

SOURCE: LMISD Special Education Department, December 2005.

In 2003–04 and 2004–05, LMISD had the highest percentage of special education students among its peer districts. Its percentage of special education students in 2003–04 and 2004–05 was above the Region 4 and state percentages. In 2003–04, LMISD had the second lowest percentage of budget for special education among its peers; its budget was also below Region 4 and state averages. In 2004–05, LMISD's percentage of special education budget was the third lowest among its peers and was also below the state averages (**Exhibit 1-21**).

LMISD had the third highest number of special education students among its peers but the second lowest number of special education teachers in 2004–05. LMISD had the highest special education student-to-teacher ratio among its peers in 2004–05. Its student-to-teacher ratio was also higher than both the Region 4 and the state ratios (**Exhibit 1-22**). The student-to-teacher ratio is especially high at the elementary school level. Inter-City Elementary had 50 special education students in 2004–05 but only one special education teacher,

Simms Elementary had 35 special education students and one teacher, and Highlands Elementary had 34 students and one teacher. In 2005–06, LMISD has 42 special education students in Highland Elementary, 44 in Inter-City Elementary, and 34 in Simms Elementary. These schools each have one special education teacher (Exhibit 1-20). LMISD does not have a special education counselor; campus counselors address special education student needs.

LMISD has been on TEA's 125 List for six years since 1999–2000. Although LMISD increased inclusion of special education students in the least restrictive environment during this time, the rate of increase was not sufficient to remove it from the list. The 125 List refers to the ratio of students with disabilities in segregated settings that is 25 percent higher than the statewide average ratio. Least restrictive environment refers to the right of students with disabilities to be educated in the regular school setting to the maximum extent possible. Being on the 125 List and remaining on it for six years shows that LMISD did not meet TEA's least restrictive environment

EXHIBIT 1-21
BUDGETED SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2003-04 AND 2004-05

	2003-04		2004-05	
DISTRICT	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION BUDGET	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION BUDGET
LA MARQUE	12.3%	11.7%	13.0%	13.6%
Lancaster	10.9%	13.8%	10.2%	9.4%
Navasota	10.4%	10.6%	9.9%	13.2%
Texas City	10.3%	16.9%	10.2%	16.3%
Palestine	9.8%	14.0%	10.6%	15.8%
REGION 4	10.0%	13.9%	10.1%	*
STATE	11.6%	13.3%	11.6%	14.6%

*Data not available.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04 and 2004–05 and PEIMS 2004–05 (budget).

EXHIBIT 1-22
RATIO OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS TO TEACHERS
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004-05

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS ENROLLED	PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	STUDENTS-TO-TEACHER RATIO
Texas City	585	10.3%	36.6	16.0:1
Lancaster	530	10.2%	38.8	13.6:1
LA MARQUE	485	13.0%	22.5	21.5:1
Palestine	356	10.7%	26.1	13.6:1
Navasota	294	10.1%	21.6	13.6:1
REGION 4	96,946	10.1%	6,116	15.8:1
STATE	506,391	11.6%	30,200.8	16.8:1

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05.

requirements. According to TEA's 2004–05 Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS), 12.9 percent of LMISD special education students three to 11 years old were placed in the least restrictive environment compared with a state average of 25 percent. Among students 12 to 21 years old, LMISD placed 30 percent of its special education students in a least restrictive setting compared with 46.5 percent statewide.

The district did not inform or prepare teachers for the increased rate of inclusion it implemented in 2005–06. The district did not provide professional development before or at the start of 2005–06 to general education teachers on how to address needs of an increased number of special education students in their classes. Special education teachers did not get training before or at the start of 2005–06 on how to work with an increased number of special education students in a general education setting. Elementary and middle school teachers said at the beginning of 2005–06 that inclusion increased class size and discipline problems and available resources were not sufficient.

Special education high school students had lower attendance and graduation rates and higher dropout rates. La Marque High School special education students had an 87.7 percent attendance rate in 2003–04 compared with the campus overall attendance rate of 91.5 percent. The graduation rate for special education students was lower: 64.7 percent of special education students graduated in the class of 2004 compared with 77.4 percent of the campus rate. The 4-year dropout rate for special education students was 11.8 percent compared with 2.7 percent for the school overall.

In 2004–05, 88 percent of special education students districtwide compared with 96.6 percent of LMISD students took the TAKS or the State Developed Academic Assessment (SDAA) test, up from 66.7 percent of special education students in 2003–04. However, Inter-City Elementary School received a *Missed* AYP designation in 2004–05 because of the low participation of special education students. A smaller percentage of LMISD special education students, 14.8 percent compared to a state average of 25 percent, took the TAKS in 2004–05, according to TEA's PBMAS. In 2004–05, the district tested 74 percent of La Marque High School special education students, up from 13 percent in 2003–04; 14.4 percent took the TAKS/SDAA II and 59.6 percent took the SDAA II only (SDAA II is an updated version of SDAA). Until 2005–06, the district provided tutoring only to special education students who were taking the TAAS/TAKS. Special education high school students who took the TAKS/ SDAA performed poorly both in 2003–04 and 2004–05 (**Exhibit 1-23**). The percentage of special education students tested who met the standard was very low and in most cases unreported in order to protect student confidentiality.

Between 15.5 and 46.7 percent of district and campus administrators, teachers and auxiliary staff who responded to the school review survey expressed concern about the special education program. Principals, auxiliary/professional support staff, teachers, and administrators most commonly saw the greatest need for program improvement to meet student needs (**Exhibit 1-24**).

Survey respondents made multiple comments about the limited resources of the special education program, including

EXHIBIT 1-23
LMISD TAKS/SDAA SPECIAL EDUCATION PASS RATES BY SUB-TEST AND GRADE
2003–04 AND 2004–05

	PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS/SDAA STANDARD											
	READING		MATH		ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		SOCIAL STUDIES		ALL TESTS	
GRADE LEVEL	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
Grade 9	14%	17%	*	17%	**	**	**	**	**	**	*	17%
Grade 10	**	**	*	*	17%	33%	*	*	*	67%	*	*
Grade 11	**	**	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

*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.
**Not applicable.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2004-05, using 2004-05 passing criteria for 2003-04 data.

EXHIBIT 1-24
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	PERCENT SAYING SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM NEEDS IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS
Administrators	35.0%
Principals	46.7%
Teachers	36.8%
Students	22.8%
Parents	15.5%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	40.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

personnel shortage, inadequate training for teachers, and inadequate technology. Both survey respondents and teachers also identified lack of books for special education classes. "Special education classes have never been able to get the books they needed... Why aren't there textbooks in the special education department that are used daily?" Special education elementary school teachers said during a focus group interview that three weeks after the start of the school year, they were still missing social studies books and just received the science and math books in September 2005.

LMISD lags behind its peer districts and is below Region 4 and the state in the instructional resources it allocates to special education. The district has also been behind the state rate in placing its special education students at all grade levels in the least restrictive environment. By not having a special education teacher allocation methodology to ensure enough special education teachers, especially at the elementary level, and not placing more special education students in regular settings, the district is not providing the full range of benefits to these students.

Meta analysis of research studies conducted in the 1990s confirms a small to moderate beneficial effect of inclusion education on the academic and social outcomes of special education students. A 1989 study found that over a 15-year period, the employment rate was higher for special education students that were in integrated settings (73 percent were employed) than those who were in segregated settings (53 percent were employed). The cost of educating students in segregated settings was double that of educating them in integrated settings. A 1988 study showed that the integrated classroom was more cost-effective than the resource program. Effective integrated programs, according to research, have

the following characteristics. In such programs, a continuum of placements, supports, and services is available to all students but assumes that every student's first placement is in regular education. There is teacher and staff buy-in and participation in all decision-making, planning, and evaluation. The program clearly articulates its philosophy and goals. Educators use multiple teaching and learning approaches like team teaching, co-teaching, cooperative learning, and heterogeneous grouping. The program provides extensive staff development addressing integrated curricula and interdisciplinary teaching. The program works toward unifying the general education and special education systems, using the same evaluation criteria for both. The program also has adequate licensed professionals to address the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of all students and parents, and it involves students as partners in the decision-making process.

The district should develop a special education resource allocation and evaluation plan. The plan should set student-to-teacher ratios and include benchmarks that will trigger adjustments in staffing and training based on the number of special education students and their needs. This approach will help the district ensure that the appropriate numbers of special education teachers are in place and determine that it provides adequate resources and training to successfully implement program components such as inclusion. The special education director should annually review data on the number of special education students, special education teachers, professional staff, and aides, and evaluate whether staffing resources are adequate based on set student-to-teacher ratios and student needs. The special education director with a team of general education teachers should also annually evaluate the effectiveness of inclusion in meeting the academic needs of special education students. Based on these data, the special education director should identify training needs of both special education and general education staff.

LMISD should hire additional special education teachers to improve student-to-teacher ratios for schools with the highest ratios. LMISD should create two new special education teacher positions to reduce the student-to-teacher ratio in three of the elementary schools with student-to-teacher ratios ranging between 34 to 1 and 50 to 1. The district should allocate one special education teacher position for Inter-City Elementary School and one position with divided time between Highlands Elementary and Simms Elementary. LMISD should also develop and implement a comprehensive

training program for its general education and special education teachers on how to provide instructional services in an inclusion setting. LMISD should provide training to principals on monitoring strategies for inclusion classes to determine how effectively teachers are delivering instruction and how effectively they are using special education resources. LMISD should follow up on special education students with low attendance and provide tutorial and other support services to improve academic performance in order to decrease the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate of special education students. The special education director should conduct an annual program evaluation and prepare a report addressing the delivery of instructional services, resource allocation, student attendance, dropout, academic performance, and graduation.

Creating two special education teacher positions with three years of experience is estimated to cost $87,780 a year. This estimate is based on $37,080 in salary + $2,750 annual insurance costs + $4,060 ($37,080 salary multiplied by 10.95% fringe benefits rate) = $43,890 per teacher. The annual cost for two teachers equals $43,890 per teacher multiplied by 2. The total five-year costs is $438,900 (5 years x $87,780 per year).

ESL ENDORSEMENTS (REC. 6)

The district lacks a process to ensure an appropriate number of teachers receive and maintain an English as Second Language (ESL) endorsement and that it equitably distributes teachers with ESL endorsements across the schools. An endorsement identifies the subject area in which a certified teacher has authority to teach. LMISD does not have a bilingual program because it has fewer than 20 English language learner (ELL) students at each elementary grade level. LMISD serves ELL students through an ESL program. A teacher administers the ESL program and reports to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. The goal of the ESL program is to accelerate the acquisition of English and equip students with the necessary skills to succeed in the regular English curriculum. The number of ELL students has been increasing, as shown in **Exhibit 1-25**. The ELL population increased significantly between 2002–03 and 2005–06 from 69 to more than one hundred students. In 2005–06, LMISD has 22 ELL students in kindergarten, and the law requires it to start a bilingual program: the district is seeking a waiver from the Texas Education Agency requirement to start a bilingual program in 2006–07.

A teacher with an ESL endorsement has been administering the LMISD ESL program districtwide since 2003–04. In 2004–05, LMISD assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction stopped its pullout program because parents did

EXHIBIT 1-25
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
TEACHERS BY SCHOOL
2002–03 THROUGH 2005–06

SCHOOL	ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS				TEACHERS WITH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ENDORSEMENTS
	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2005–06
Early Childhood Learning Center	20	25	24	36	6
Highlands Elementary	9	15	21	19	5
Inter-City Elementary	8	15	24	26	2
Simms Elementary	7	6	*	5	1
Westlawn Elementary	8	11	14	11	5
Lake Road Elementary**	10	**	**	**	**
La Marque Middle School	7	6	16	10	0
La Marque High School	0	*	5	*	0
TOTAL	69	***	***	***	19

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
**Lake Road Elementary closed at the end of 2002-03.
***Totals in student numbers are masked in the exhibit due to FERPA requirements.
SOURCE: LMISD, ESL Coordinator, September and December 2005.

not want their children taken out of class and began placing ELL students in classrooms with ESL-endorsed teachers, where such teachers were available. ELL students in classrooms where the teacher is not ESL-endorsed are pulled out for an English language arts class with the district ESL teacher.

The number of teachers with ESL endorsements varies across the schools and is not proportional to the number of ELL students in each school or to their grade distribution. Until October 2005, both Inter-City Elementary and Highland Elementary did not have any ESL endorsed teachers for grades 4 and 5. Inter-City Elementary School has 26 ELL students in grades 1 through 5, but only its grade 1 teacher has an ESL endorsement. Highlands Elementary did not have any ESL-endorsed teachers in grades 4 and 5 until October 2005. La Marque Middle School and La Marque High School do not have any ESL-endorsed teachers. Access to services is further restricted because none of the teachers with ESL endorsement speaks Spanish, whereas all but two of the ESL students are Spanish-speaking. Although the law does not require ESL teachers to know the students' native language, teachers and parents consider it beneficial. Teachers with ESL students call upon the Parent Center liaison, who speaks Spanish, to help with translation. Teachers' demands for assistance with ESL students on the liaison's time have limited the liaison's ability to do her job at the Parent Center. The Parent Center received computers with ESL software in 2004–05, but these computers have not yet been set up because of the liaison's time constraints due to the teacher demands for ESL assistance. Resources available for ESL students are limited. None of the elementary school computer labs have software for ESL students.

Participants in a teacher focus group and respondents to a school review survey expressed concerns about the LMISD ESL program. LMISD elementary teachers who participated in a focus group as part of the performance review questioned the level of preparedness of teachers with ESL endorsements to work effectively with ESL students. LMISD provides teachers who want to becoem ESL-endorsed with only six hours of preparations for the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) test. These teachers do not recieve any other ESL professional development prior to the exam or take ESL-related college courses. LMISD teachers with ESL endorsements annually attend a Region 4 ESL conference. The focus group teachers did not think that this was sufficient. Thirty percent or more of LMISD administrators, staff, students, and parents voiced concerns

about the ESL program. Two-thirds of the principals, 31.6 percent of LMISD teachers, and 42.1 percent of students who responded to the school review survey think that the ESL program is in need of improvement (**Exhibit 1-26**). LMISD teachers commented that "non-English speaking students are put into classrooms with little or no support." They did not think that the district is meeting the needs of ESL students. This was echoed by a parent who saw the lack of Spanish-speaking teachers as a limitation to an effective program.

EXHIBIT 1-26
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR ESL PROGRAM
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	PERCENT SAYING ESL PROGRAM NEEDS IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS
Administrators	30.0%
Principals	66.7%
Teachers	31.6%
Students	42.1%
Parents	28.6%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	32.8%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

Although LMISD encourages teachers to get ESL endorsements, it does not pay for the TExES or the ESL certificate like some districts do. This practice deters teachers from taking the exam. The district does pay a stipend to teachers who have an ESL endorsement if they have ESL Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) exam fee and the $75 certificate cost. LMISD should also pay for two ESL courses that Region 4 offers at $70 per course. Based on 2005–06 data, LMISD should encourage two elementary and two secondary teachers to get ESL endorsements. Cost per teacher is about $303 ($70 x 2 courses + $88 for exit test + $75 for certificate). Cost for four teachers is estimated at $1,212 ($303 x 4 teachers = $1,212). LMISD should continue funding ESL courses, exit tests, and certificates for four teachers annually.

GRANTS (REC. 7)

LMISD does not have a clear process for identifying grant opportunities, preparing grant applications, and securing and managing grants, which limits resources for improving student

performance. LMISD no longer has a grant coordinating position or a designated staff assigned to the identification and preparation of grants. The Department of Student Services that reports to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction had a position of coordinator of grants. The position was vacated in 2003–04 and eliminated in 2005–06. The district did not assign this task to any of its administrators or staff.

The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the instructional coordinators look, as time permits rather than systematically, for grant opportunities and prepare grant applications. Their job descriptions do not list grant identification, preparation, and management as an area of responsibility. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction informs staff about grant opportunities in the educational services area and assigns grant preparation and management to staff. Staff finds it difficult to allocate the time for grant preparation with little support. Although the district has been able to secure more than $4.4 million in grants for 2004–05, it does not have procedures or forms for grant identification and routing and for getting approval for the preparation and submission of grants. **Exhibit 1-27** lists the grants LMISD has in 2004–05.

Previously, the grant coordinator was also responsible for managing and overseeing grants. In 2005–06, this function is the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction's responsibility. The grant manager sets up a budget for each grant and the Business and Operations Department tracks expenditures and prepares financial reports. The reports on grant expenditures, according to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, are not always helpful because they do not show up-to-date expenditures and therefore it is difficult to know exactly what the district has actually spent. The current process makes it especially difficult to monitor expenditures at the school level. Principals do not have access to salary information and are not always aware whose salaries the grant covers. Consequently, they may underspend grant funds when teachers whose salary the grant covered leave the district.

Districts without a well-managed grant program tend to miss grant opportunities due to absence of a systematic grant identification process. They also tend not to respond to identified opportunities because of lack of a clear process for routing grant information and designation of staff responsible for preparing the grant application. Lack of experienced grant writers and support for grant preparation

also reduces the district's ability to receive grants. The absence of procedures for grant management and monitoring, once the district receives a grant, also affects the effectiveness with which a district can implement the grant.

Marble Falls ISD, a district smaller than LMISD, has a grants development office and detailed grant identification and preparation procedures. These procedures are available on the district's website. The website identifies sources of funding that are consistent with district, campus, and department funding priorities. It provides information on identified funding opportunities to administrators, teachers, and staff. The website provides guidance to administrators, faculty, and staff on the preparation of grant applications, including revisions, final approvals, and delivery. The website has information on the grant development process, services that the Grant Office provides, and grant decision-making criteria.

Edinburg ISD has a district grant development office that coordinates the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of districtwide elementary and secondary grant programs under the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The office also offers technical assistance to departments and schools on individual grant initiatives. A grant writer is available for technical assistance and guidance to departments and school-based initiatives. The grant writer helps with the organization of grant-writing teams and offers grant-writing workshops and training to district staff. The superintendent's administrative team for grant development directs all district grant initiatives. While the district encourages and supports individual, school, and departmental grant-writing initiatives, grant writers have to submit all grant applications and proposals to the grant development office for review and approval. To help with grant writing, the grant development office has a website and a template for grant proposals.

The district should establish a grants development office to coordinate grant identification, preparation, and management and create a grants coordinator position in the Business and Operations Department. The grants development office can oversee grants across all departments in the district. The grant coordinator will develop procedures for grant identification, review, preparation, and management. The grants coordinator should develop a comprehensive list of federal, state, regional, and foundation grant sources. The grants coordinator should develop a template for grant preparation and provide training to staff on preparation of grant applications and grant management. The procedures should clearly identify timelines and the persons responsible for grant review and approval.

EXHIBIT 1-27
LMISD GRANTS
2004-05

GRANT*	FUNDING SOURCE	OBJECTIVE	AMOUNT
Title I Part A	Federal	Academic achievement	$1,177,557
Title I SIP	Federal	Academic achievement	$174,750
Title II Part A–TPTR	Federal	Develop a highly qualified staff	$254,334
Title II Part D -Technology	Federal	Improve technology	$33,289
Title III Part A	Federal	Academic achievement of ESL	$16,857
Title IV, Community Service Grant (DAEP)	Federal	Drop-out prevention	$33,557
Title V Part A–Innovative	Federal	Academic achievement	$20,844
IDEA B Formula	Federal	Special needs	$763,389
IDEA B Preschool	Federal	Special needs	$20,901
Capacity Building and Improvement	Federal	Special needs	$7,741
Tech Prep	Gulf Coast Education at Works	Technology in the classroom	$5,725
Career & Technology (Perkins)	Federal	Vocational	$61,455
Texas Reading First	Federal	Improve reading in Grades K-3	$782,744
21st Century Grant	Federal	After school tutor	$320,295
Safe & Drug Free Title IV	Federal	Reduce discipline referrals	$24,932
COPS in Schools	State	Hire more police officers	$109,054
Tobacco Grant	State	Tobacco use prevention	$4,000
Physical Education Program (PEP)	State	Pregnant students	$48,901
Capital Investment Grant (MS)	State	Help with tutorials, and supplies needed for extended day/year tutorial program for students and parents	$50,000
Optional Extended Year	State	Academic achievement	$19,250
Intensive Reading Instruction Part I	State	Improve reading grades 4-5	$10,007
Intensive Reading Instruction Part II	State	Improve reading grades 4-5	$11,482
Texas Grants Expansion Early/Middle College	State	College courses in the petrochemical industry	$149,369
Accelerated Reading Instruction/ Accelerated Math Instruction	State	Academic achievement	$125,957
Protect Texas - Texas Department of Health	State	Teen health clinic	$124,000
Texas Accelerated Science Achievement Program (ASAP)	State	Improve performance on grade 10 and exit level TAKS science	$50,000
TOTAL			**$4,400,390**

*Grant financial information was available only for 2004–05.

SOURCE: LMISD Finance Department, September 2005.

The grants coordinator and the Business and Operations Department should develop jointly grant management procedures and financial reports. The grants coordinator with the help of the Technology Department should create a grant website with information on the grant preparation process, grant opportunities, and grant proposal tips.

The costs associated with hiring a grants coordinator are estimated based on hiring a teacher with a Master's degree and 10 years of experience. Costs include: $40,170 in salary + $2,750 annual insurance + $4,399 ($40,170 salary x 10.95 percent benefit rate) in benefits = $47,319 per year. Over five years, the total cost would be $236,595.

LIBRARY COLLECTION (REC. 8)

LMISD does not maintain appropriate library resources. Five of six LMISD library collections do not meet the minimum standards for age, and three libraries do not meet the minimum recommended state standard for collection size.

LMISD has a library in each school with a certified librarian. The Early Childhood Learning Center does not have a working library. It has a collection of books and volunteers who check out books twice a week. **Exhibit 1-28** shows LMISD library book budgets for 2003–04 and 2004–05. Basically, the library budget did not change significantly from 2003–04 to 2004–05.

EXHIBIT 1-28
SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM BOOK BUDGET
2003-04 AND 2004-05

SCHOOL	2003-04	2004-05
Highlands Elementary	$3,062	$3,052
Inter-City Elementary	$4,483	$3,144
Simms Elementary	$3,540	$3,900
Westlawn Elementary	$2,810	$2,794
La Marque Middle School	$3,030	$3,300
La Marque High School	$2,500	$2,607

Source: LMISD Detail Expenditure Status Report, 2003-04 and 2004-05.

The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas adopted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) require that the district maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 15 years at minimum. In August–September 2005, LMISD conducted a collection analysis of its libraries. **Exhibits 1-29** and **1-30** present the results of the collection analysis. A comparison of the district's library holdings to the state acceptable minimum standard shows that the average collection age of five of the six schools is 15 years old or older. An analysis of the collections (Dewey Decimal 001–099 through 900–999) showed that more than 54 percent of the high school non-

EXHIBIT 1-29
SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM COLLECTION
AVERAGE AGE AND STATUS WITH LIBRARY
STANDARDS
2004-05

SCHOOL	COLLECTION AVERAGE AGE	TSLAC LIBRARY STATUS
Highlands Elementary	16	Below Standard
Inter-City Elementary	17	Below Standard
Simms Elementary	12	Recognized
Westlawn Elementary	17	Below Standard
La Marque Middle School	23	Below Standard
La Marque High School	28	Below Standard

Source: LMISD Collection Statistics. August-September 2005.

fiction collection is older than 15 years. For example, the average age of the natural sciences and math collection and the technology collection is 28 years old. The social science collection is 27 years old, on average. Nearly 50 percent of the La Marque Middle School library collection is 15 years old or older. Between 1 and 22 percent of elementary school collections are 15 or more years old. Librarians considered their science, math, and social studies materials the weakest part of the collection. This situation is critical because of the district's low performance in math and science.

Three of the four elementary school libraries have collections that do not meet the minimum recommended state standard of 9,000 items. Although the La Marque Middle School, High School, and Inter-City Elementary School libraries have large collections that exceed the minimum standard, a large portion of these collections is out of date.

Exhibit 1-31 shows the percentages of administrators, staff, students, and parents who participated in the school review survey and who think that the library program needs improvement to meet student needs. School administrators, students, and parents expressed the greatest concerns: 53.3 percent of principals, 49.1 percent of the students, and 33.3 percent of parents said that the library program needs improvement along with 20 to 21.9 percent of administrators, teachers, and auxiliary/professional support staff. Teachers, parents, and students commented on the presence of outdated materials, old computers, and the lack of online resources within the media center.

The collection is the most important resource of a school library. To be useful, the collection has to be large enough to meet different student needs. It also has to be current, especially in areas that have changed considerably in the last decade, such as science, social studies, and technology. A library without a well equipped and current collection limits students' knowledge and academic performance and puts them at a competitive disadvantage when planning their future education and career, taking college admission tests, or applying to post-secondary education programs.

In May 1997, the TSLAC adopted the School Library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards. The state evaluated the guidelines in 2002 with revisions adopted in March 2004. Their purpose is to ensure that students and staff become effective users of ideas and information, enabling them to be literate, lifelong learners. To accomplish this task, the school library program provides instruction in information gathering and the evaluation of resources,

EXHIBIT 1-30
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, LIBRARY HOLDINGS, AND STATUS WITH LIBRARY STANDARDS
2004–05

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF BOOKS	NUMBER OF BOOKS PER STUDENT	TSLAC LIBRARY STATUS
Highlands Elementary	321	8,309	25.9	Below Standard
Inter-City Elementary	339	10,912	32.2	Recognized
Simms Elementary	327	8,750	26.8	Below Standard
Westlawn Elementary	350	8,989	25.7	Below Standard
La Marque Middle School	833	20,013	24.0	Exemplary
La Marque High School	1,141	20,384	17.9	Exemplary

NOTE: The Early Childhood Learning Center has a collection of books of unknown size and age; it does not have a librarian or an organized library.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05; LMISD Collection Statistics, August–September 2005.

EXHIBIT 1-31
LMISD EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR
LIBRARY PROGRAM
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENTS	PERCENT SAYING LIBRARY PROGRAM NEEDS IMPROVEMENT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS
Administrators	20.0%
Principals	53.3%
Teachers	21.1%
Students	49.1%
Parents	33.3%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	21.9%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

individual guidance, and access to materials in multiple formats. The guidelines offer criteria that identify library programs as exemplary, recognized, acceptable, or below standard in the areas of the library learning environment, curriculum integration, resources, library program management, and facilities. The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas addresses library collection age and collection size. The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas requires that the district maintain an overall average age of collection of less than 15 years (Acceptable). A Recognized collection will have an average age of less than 13 years. An Exemplary collection will have an average age of less than 11 years. The School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas define an Acceptable collection as a balanced collection of 9,000 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 20 items per student at elementary level, at least 16 items per student at middle school level, and at least 12 items per student

at high school level, whichever is greater. A Recognized collection is a balanced collection of at least 10,800 books, audiovisual software, and multimedia, or at least 22 items per student at elementary level, at least 18 items per student at middle school level, and at least 14 items per student at 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 24 items per student at elementary level, at least 20 items per student at middle school level, and at least 16 items per student at high school level, whichever is greater.

The district should implement methods to maintain appropriate library resources to meet library standards for a collection's size and age. LMISD should develop, based on its annual collection analysis and input from teachers and students, a book replacement and collection expansion plan and budget over ten years. The librarians should analyze collections based on the electronic databases they can access and the fiction and non-fiction books they need to supplement and complete the collection. The libraries should carefully select the non-fiction books to acquire, especially in areas subject to rapid change such as computer technology, science, and social studies. The district should use multiple strategies getting access to electronic databases and in the acquisition of books. In addition to the district's media membership in Region 4, potential strategies may include an agreement with the College of the Mainland for sharing its extensive online databases and using the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN), which has an arrangement with 15 online information database vendors. The district should also organize book-buying fairs such as the Scholastic Book Fair, where community members, parents, and students buy books

..red by the school librarians and donate
.. The district can also have area businesses
.ns adopt a library for a year. Under the
 gram, the business sponsors, in exchange
.onsorship publicized, provide materials
 .he district should also identify grant
. prepare and submit grants to expand and
. v collection. For example, the U.S.
..ucation's Improving Literacy Through
 .ogram provides annual grants to districts
 .ent of students coming from low-income
. ove student reading achievement by
 .ibrary services and resources.

. vs the school libraries' collection size and
.. or older and number of additional books
. .ld to meet the acceptable standard.

.ring all of its library collections up to
. .ble standards of size and age. To meet the

acceptable collection size and age standards, LMISD needs
to add or replace a total of 25,801 books. The average cost
of a child or young adult book in 2004–05 was $19.31. LMISD
should expand and upgrade their libraries over a ten-year
period. Adding and replacing 25,801 books at a cost of $19.31
per book is $498,217, or $49,822 a year. The school review
team assumes that by accessing electronic databases, LMISD
can reduce the number of books to replace or add by 10
percent or $5,000 a year and that the district can generate
$25,000 a year in book acquisition through book fairs and
business sponsorships. Under these assumptions, the
remaining cost to the district will be $19,822 a year
($49,822 - $25,000 - $5,000 = $19,822).

For background information on Educational Service Delivery,
see page 215 in the General Information section of the
appendices.

)OKS BELOW COLLECTION SIZE AND AGE STANDARDS

	NUMBER OF BOOKS IN SCHOOL COLLECTION	NUMBER OF BOOKS TO MEET ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	NUMBER OF BOOKS 15 YEARS OR OLDER	NUMBER OF BOOKS TO BE ADDED AND REPLACED
..ary	8,309	691	1,529	2,220
..ry	10,912	N/A	917	917
	8,750	250	79	329
..ary	8,989	21	1,978	1,999
School	20,013	N/A	9,206	9,206
..hool	20,384	N/A	11,130	11,130
	77,357	**962**	**24,839**	**25,801**

.e Wise Collection Analysis, 2004.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
1. Develop and implement a curriculum management system for regularly reviewing and updating the curriculum guides.	($5,857)	($5,857)	($5,857)	($6,202)	($6,202)	($29,975)	$0
2. Develop and implement a program evaluation system with a calendar to regularly evaluate programs and use evaluation results to improve programs and inform planning and budgeting.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3. Develop a G/T district plan articulating the strategies for student nominations and referrals, testing, and services and improve the program annually based on evaluation results.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
4. Develop and implement strategies to improve student participation and performance on advanced placement courses and advanced placement and college admission examinations.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
5. Develop a special education resource allocation and evaluation plan and hire additional special education teachers to improve the ratio of special education students to teachers.	($87,780)	($87,780)	($87,780)	($87,780)	($87,780)	($438,900)	$0
6. Establish a process to monitor the number of ESL-endorsed teachers based on the number of English language learner students, and develop strategies such as training and financial incentives to achieve ESL staffing goals.	($1,212)	($1,212)	($1,212)	($1,212)	($1,212)	($6,060)	$0
7. Establish a grants development office to coordinate grant identification, preparation, and management and a grants coordinator position in the Business and Operations Department.	($47,319)	($47,319)	($47,319)	($47,319)	($47,319)	($236,595)	$0
8. Implement methods to maintain appropriate library resources to meet library standards for a collection's size and age.	($19,822)	($19,822)	($19,822)	($19,822)	($19,822)	($99,110)	$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 1	($161,990)	($161,990)	($161,990)	($162,335)	($162,335)	($810,640)	$0
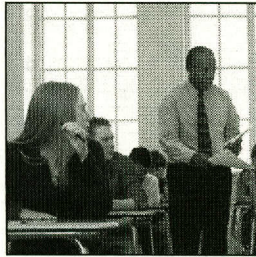
Chapter 2

District Management and Community Relations

La Marque Independent School District
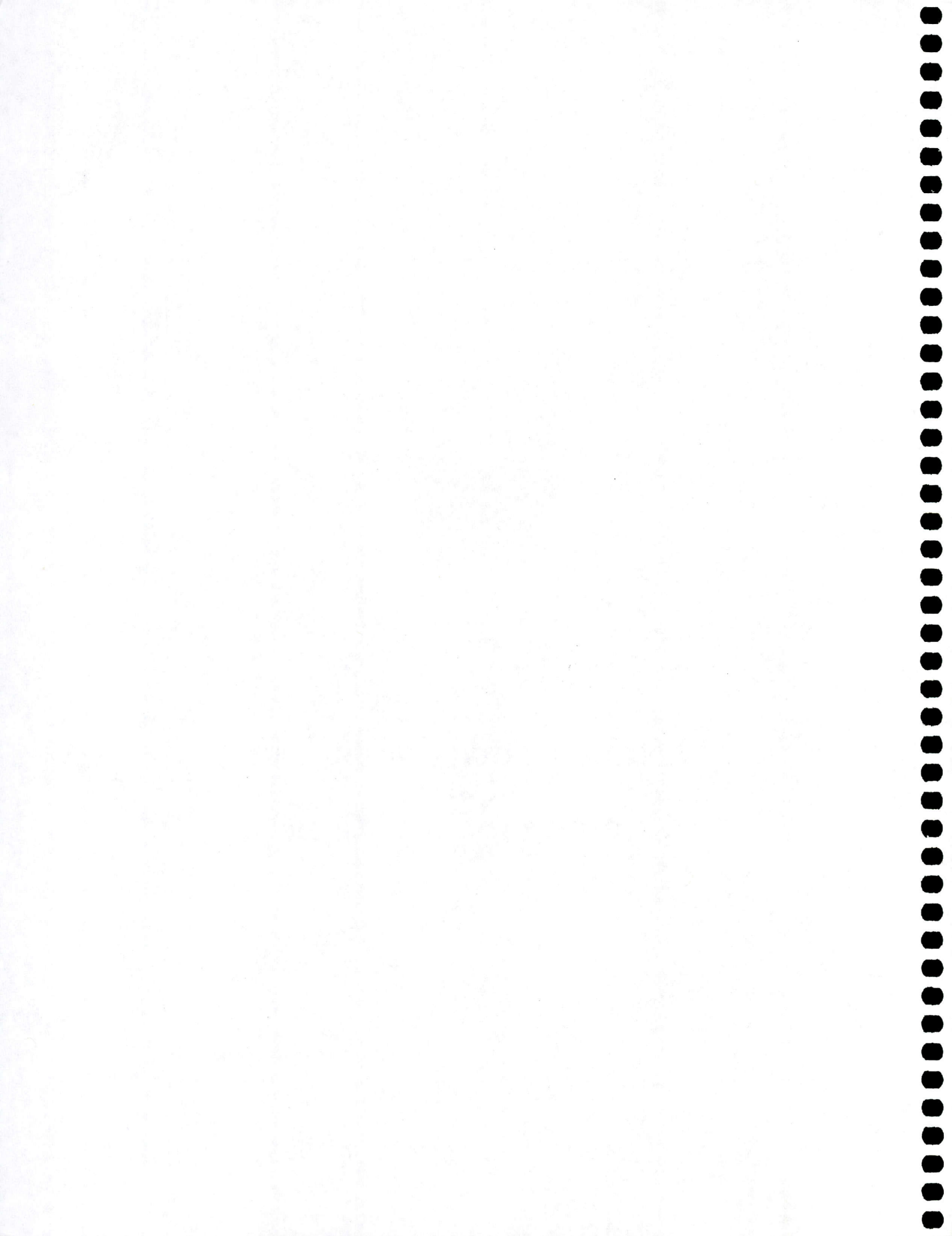
CHAPTER 2. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A seven-member Board of Trustees elected by single member districts governs the La Marque Independent School District (LMISD). The members serve three-year terms on a rotating basis. The May 2005 election was cancelled due to the lack of opposing candidates for the three members up for re-election. The district's tax rate for maintenance and operation has been fixed in recent years at the maximum rate of $1.50.

LMISD's senior administrative organization, known as the "cabinet," includes the superintendent, the assistant superintendents of Business and Operations and Curriculum and Instruction, director of Personnel and Operations, director of Student Services, director of Career and Technology Education (CTE) and Testing, director of Special Education, and the Communications officer. The school principals, Communications officer, and the director of Athletics report directly to the superintendent. The director of Student Services, director of CTE and Testing, director

of Special Education, and the four instructional specialists report to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. The director of Personnel and Operations and the Police Chief report directly to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. The district does not have a formal, approved organization structure. **Exhibit 2-1** illustrates the organization structure in place in September 2005, according to the superintendent.

In October 2004 the district established an education foundation that is focused on raising additional funds to support innovative instructional programs that cannot be funded from the district's budget. Community and business partnerships have been limited in the past and based at the campus level. One of the stated goals of the foundation is to serve as the district conduit for most district donations and to foster districtwide community and business partnerships.

Parent and volunteer activities are focused at the campus level except for two districtwide events, the Education

EXHIBIT 2-1
LMISD CURRENT ORGANIZATION CHART
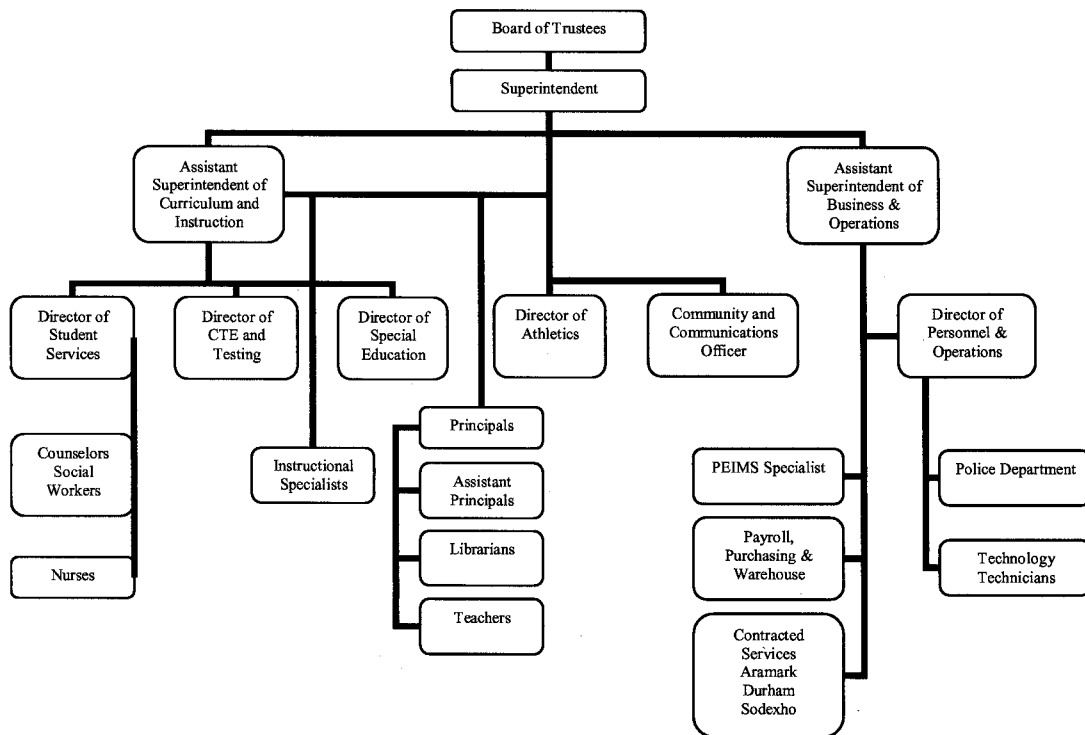
SOURCE: LMISD Superintendent, September 2005.

Summit and the Evening of Shining Stars. The district holds the Education Summit in February on a Saturday, usually from 9 AM to 2 PM. It is a collaboration of schools and community members for students and parents. Students and parents can attend a variety of workshops or visit booths sponsored by community businesses, schools, and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs). The Evening of Shining Stars has been a high point of the school year for decades in LMISD. A banquet is held by the district to honor the top high school students of the district. In 2005 the event was expanded to two nights with an elementary student banquet held on the second night. In 2006 the district plans to expand the first night's activities to spotlight the recipients of college scholarships.

Elementary schools rely on PTOs that have substantial support in some of the elementary schools and that function districtwide when needed. Recent examples are the fundraising efforts by the elementary school PTOs to provide new playground equipment at each elementary school. Parent involvement efforts at the secondary schools are more limited and revolve around booster clubs, primarily athletic booster clubs. The district recently established a Parent Center at the Lake Road Education Center, which began regular operations in the fall 2005.

In September 2005 the district began a public access television station. During the fall 2005, programming has been limited to bulletin board types of notices including student honors, calendar of events, and names and pictures of students honored by the school board or other activities. The first television program is scheduled for 2006.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LMISD's education foundation provides an effective way to reach out to the community and raise additional funds for school programs.

- LMISD's Education Summit presents health and education-related topics in an entertaining and positive environment that brings together parents, students, non-profit agencies, vendors, and administration and school staff.

- LMISD's superintendent and staff worked with the community to develop a unique LMISD brand that immediately identifies the district in all communications and serves as a rallying point for parent and community support.

- LMISD has begun a unique community partnership with the Historical Preservation Association to research and document the origins of The Settlement, a community established by five African American cowboys after the Civil War.

FINDINGS

- The school board abdicates its leadership responsibilities by not requiring the administration to provide sufficient information for timely decision-making and by failing to fulfill key board responsibilities.

- The district's current planning process does not support district efforts to set and achieve clear goals and limits the ability of LMISD to improve student academic performance.

- Reporting relationships in the district are not clearly defined and student services programs are not grouped together in one department, limiting the district's ability to address significant student problems.

- Campus staffing is not based on approved staffing guidelines and exceeds industry staffing standards in some cases, primarily for high school and middle school assistant principals and middle school clerical staff.

- The district does not have written agreements with general counsel attorneys that ensure the district receives effective legal services in the most cost-effective manner.

- The district does not have effective parent involvement programs in place to ensure that parents understand their role in the education of their children or provide needed support to their children's schools.

- District and school websites lack the content and up-to-date information to provide an effective communications tool to support school and district programs. .

- District staff is often not responsive to staff, parent, or student requests for information or communications.

- The district has not developed business/community partnerships at the school level on a consistent basis to ensure that all schools have ample access to community and business support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 9: Expand board roles, responsibilities, and activities to provide**

appropriate oversight, address compliance issues, increase effectiveness of decision-making, and increase accountability. The board should address its performance issues by conducting a self-assessment and by taking immediate steps to comply with the Texas Administrative Code regulations concerning the evaluation of the superintendent and board training. The board should hire a facilitator to assist it with developing and establishing the process for evaluating the superintendent.

- **Recommendation 10: Develop and implement a research-based planning approach that includes adequate analysis of alternatives, informed decision-making, rigorous monitoring of strategy implementation, and comprehensive evaluation of results.** The district should hire an outside facilitator to assist it with the development and implementation of the planning approach. The facilitator would be involved in documenting the steps in the approach as well as facilitating the development of quantitative performance measures and identification of the data that will need to be captured to assess and evaluate performance.

- **Recommendation 11: Review the district organization structure to ensure that reporting relationships are clear and that similar functions are grouped together to the extent possible.** The superintendent should place all instructional support functions under the supervision of the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction with the exception of Athletics, which should continue to report to the superintendent. All non-instructional functions should report to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations.

- **Recommendation 12: Develop formal staffing guidelines based on actual student enrollments using industry standards that are modified to reflect district expectations.** These staffing guidelines should be reviewed annually to reflect the changes in available funding or anticipated enrollments. If the district were to adopt staffing standards comparable to industry standards, the district could reallocate more than $1 million to new initiatives or programs during the next five years.

- **Recommendation 13: Develop and implement a written contract or retainer agreement with the** district's legal counsel specifying hourly rates and allowed charges. A written agreement will help ensure that the district continues to achieve relatively low legal costs.

- **Recommendation 14: Design and implement a districtwide initiative to increase parent and community involvement that maximizes the use of limited available resources.** The initiative should include five separate components (recruiting, training, deploying, monitoring, and rewarding) and be targeted at three separate populations: parents, senior citizens, and business and community partners. The initiative should be planned, funded, and evaluated at the district level but implemented through the schools.

- **Recommendation 15: Improve the content and up-to-date status of the district and school websites by developing and implementing a structured website plan and assigning overall responsibility for the websites to the Communications officer.** In developing a website plan, the Communications officer should chair a committee consisting of district administrators, community members, and the director of Career and Technology Education and Testing. The plan should document the website's purpose, desired target audiences, and the information to be communicated to the target audiences. It should also include design and navigation standards for the website to be user friendly.

- **Recommendation 16: Develop and implement customer service standards that include the returning of parent phone calls and requests within a specified time.** The district should also include customer service questions in any surveys and evaluate the use of comment cards or a website survey to gain insight into the responsiveness of district staff.

- **Recommendation 17: Expand district and school outreach to community members and businesses to include a variety of ways to support the schools.** District staff and PTO leaders should receive training in recruiting community/business partners. Partners should receive training in the types of opportunities available and how best to access them. Partners who are going to volunteer as mentors or tutors should receive training to help develop their skills and ensure that the process is beneficial for the student.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

LMISD's education foundation provides an effective way to reach out to the community and raise additional funds. In October 2004, LMISD established an education foundation using outside consultants to develop bylaws, provide a start-up plan, and address concerns that directors might have had regarding board service.

The board of directors has 30 members, with three permanent directors; the superintendent who acts as secretary of the foundation, one board member, and one parent appointed by the superintendent. All other members are elected for three-year terms. The bylaws provide for the following officers: president, secretary, treasurer, and one or more vice presidents. The officers are also directors and none of the officers, with the exception of the secretary, can be an "employee, trustee, agent or member of the Board of Trustees of the La Marque Independent School District." This governance structure encourages the foundation to tap additional community members as resources. The executive director, who is not a member of the board, is the district's Communications officer.

The foundation has established policies and procedures for its operations. Foundation bylaws require an annual audit, a formal strategic plan, and periodic financial statements; forbid self-dealing as defined under the Internal Revenue Code such as making loans to board members; and require prompt notification of conflicts of interest. The foundation is currently documenting its internal controls including the distribution of funds under a formal grant application process, the actual evaluation process, and its monitoring of the actual use of funds. This practice is being done to ensure that applications are encouraged from all district schools, that the applications considered meet the criteria established by the foundation, and that the funds are actually used for the purposes stated in the grant applications.

Other internal controls have been established including separate bank accounts for foundation funds managed by the LMISD Finance Department, controls over the disbursement of funds requiring dual signatures, and independent reconciliations of bank accounts. In October 2005 the foundation drafted its first strategic plan.

In the first year of operation the foundation raised $120,000, primarily through its gala in July 2005 honoring U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, a La Marque High School graduate. Three community members (Moody National Bank, Port of

Texas City, and the Galveston County Daily News) gave $10,000 or more. Eleven community members contributed between $5,000 and $9,999. Seventeen community members gave between $1,000 and $4,999.

The foundation awarded its first grant of $16,750 to the La Marque Middle School for an innovative science program requested by the school and the district's science instructional specialist. The program, Gateways to Middle School Science, is a comprehensive curriculum program for students in grades 6-8 developed by Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4). The program, implemented in August 2005, includes the specific concepts and processes mandated by Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for middle school students.

According to the grant application, the program includes a wide range of instructional strategies and integration of hands-on science, mathematics, reading, and writing. It is designed to help raise Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores for grade 8 students and to help increase the number of students taking advanced level science courses in high school. In 2004, just 12 students out of 225 students tested met the passing standard of 70 percent or above. The goal of this program is to raise the passing standard on grade 8 science TAKS to 80 percent in 2006, 85 percent in 2007, and 90 percent in 2008.

EDUCATION SUMMIT

LMISD's Education Summit presents health and education-related topics in an entertaining and positive environment that brings together parents, students, non-profit agencies, vendors, and administration and school staff. The event has been developed under the supervision of the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. In February 2004 in the first year of the event, 2,000 parents, LMISD staff members, and community members participated. In 2005 there were 2,500 participants.

The district held the 2005 Education Summit on February 5, 2005, from 9 AM to 2 PM. There were numerous exhibits and booths including community businesses and organizations such as discount stores, health clinics, credit unions, jewelers, financial consulting firms, perfumers, car dealers, military recruiters, and driving course providers. Each school and most PTOs also had booths with various school activities. District school and central administration staff contributed funds for prizes during the event. Participants could attend the following district-sponsored workshops:

- Bay Area Council On Drugs and Alcohol;

- Tackling TAKS;

- Diabetes;

- Hyperactivity in Children;

- Making Math Fun;

- Para Padres Hispanos (For Hispanic Parents);

- Science and Technology Education;

- Financial Aid for College Students; and

- Gaining College Credits in High School.

The summit began with a general session led by the superintendent. Throughout the day prizes were awarded to workshop participants, including a $1,200 grand prize of a premium digital package that included movie and sports channels for one year. The summit provides a number of benefits for LMISD as it increases communications among parents, local businesses, and district staff. The combination of educational sessions with entertainment events and prizes creates an environment that attracts many different types of parents, including many who may not participate in more traditional school events.

DISTRICT IDENTIFICATION

In 2004 the superintendent and district staff began a process to develop a unique LMISD brand that would immediately identify the district in all communications and serve as a

rallying point for parent and community support. It is used in all district communications and on the website and is shown in **Exhibit 2-2**.

A 60-member community-based committee led by the superintendent and the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction designed the brand in several meetings during 2003–04. Each element in the design has meaning, including the colors, the shooting star, and the slogan "The Ultimate Educational Choice" as shown in **Exhibit 2-3**.

The brand is used in community and district meetings to immediately identify items as district communications and to send a message that LMISD is changing for the better. Its purpose is to help build district pride and student self confidence and to support increasing expectations about LMISD and its students. According to the superintendent, the motto—a simple but effective communications tool— has begun to be heard at community meetings as not only an emerging symbol of pride but also as a rallying point for improvement and change.

THE SETTLEMENT HISTORY PROJECT

LMISD has begun a unique community partnership with the Historical Preservation Association to research and document the origins of The Settlement, a community established by five African American cowboys after the Civil War. Students will have hands-on experience working with curators and historians from the University of Houston to collect and classify items from the one remaining original structure.

EXHIBIT 2-2
LMISD DISTRICT BRAND

LA MARQUE ISD
The Ultimate Educational Choice

CHAMPIONS CIRCLE

August 19–August 26
A La Marque ISD weekly e-mail calendar and advisory designed
to keep you "in the loop" of those who know CHAMPIONS ARE
MADE when the community creates strong schools.

**WELCOME BACK TO THE PLACE
WHERE CHAMPIONS ARE MADE!**

SOURCE: LMISD newsletter, August 19, 2005.

EXHIBIT 2-3
LMISD DISTRICT BRAND ELEMENTS

ELEMENT	RATIONALE OR PURPOSE
Colors–blue, gold, and white	The district colors represent the coming together of the African American and Anglo high schools when the two schools were combined, a long cherished symbol in the La Marque community.
Rainbow	Opportunity, reflects the community support of schools.
Student Star	Academic achievement of each individual child.
Logo–The Ultimate Educational Choice	A statement of belief that La Marque can become the school district of choice for its community.

SOURCE: LMISD Communications Officer, September 2005.

According to the district Communications officer, this is the first time an historic project of this nature has been done in partnership with a Texas school district.

After the Civil War five African American cowboys came to west Texas City after working cattle drives on the Chisholm Trail. They established an independent, self-sustaining community called The Settlement in the old area of Texas City that is part of LMISD. Only one structure remains, the Frank Bell house. The Frank Bell house still rests on the cypress logs used to roll it to the site and contains its original glass windows. Descendants of these first settlers include current students in LMISD schools and a board member, Cynthia Bell-Malveaux.

The project is a partnership between the Historical Preservation Association and LMISD that includes historians and curators from the University of Houston. Project directors are applying for a grant from the History Channel but will move forward regardless. The project includes the six following components:

- obtain historical designation for the Frank Bell home;

- obtain historical designation for the old African American cemetery in The Settlement;

- survey and establish the actual boundaries of The Settlement;

- provide homework assignments based on the history of the La Marque community;

- create a website that is linked to the Galveston County Historical Center; and

- create an archival room with items from the Frank Bell home as well as the original African American high school.

As part of the project, students will be working directly with curators and historians from the university to collect and classify items from the Frank Bell home as well as other historical items from the district.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD GOVERNANCE (REC. 9)

The school board abdicates its leadership responsibilities by not requiring the administration to provide sufficient information for timely decision-making and by failing to fulfill key board responsibilities. Primary district planning documents such as the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) are approved as a part of the regular consent agenda at board meetings without extensive discussion or consideration of alternate strategies. Deficit budgets have been approved for the last two years. While some board members are critical of the performance of specific administrators, only one board member raised the issue of the board's responsibility regarding district performance. The board has not conducted an assessment of its own performance.

Board members in interviews cited recent problems in effectively working together to address racial issues, student performance, and deficit budgets. The board has failed to fully follow Texas Education Agency (TEA) regulations regarding the evaluation of the superintendent. All board members do not participate in training as required or take full advantage of training offered at conventions they attend. All of these board performance issues affect the overall effectiveness of district operations and the district's ability to improve student academic performance.

LMISD's school board members have extensive experience serving on the board and represent diverse work and community experiences. Three members have more than 10 years experience, and the member with the least experience has three years experience. Until recently district staff and board members cited board member experience and the board's historical ability to work together as some of the core strengths of the district. **Exhibit 2-4** shows the current board membership with years of experience and member occupations.

EXHIBIT 2-4
LMISD BOARD MEMBERS
2005-06

DISTRICT	BOARD MEMBER	BOARD TITLE	EXPERIENCE (YEARS)	OCCUPATION
1	Travis Smith	Member	3	Retired LMISD Administrator
2	Shirley Fanuiel	Member	11	Economist
3	Cynthia Bell-Malveaux	Vice President	11	Registered Nurse
4	Bill Spillar	Member	15	College Vice President
5	Frank Proctor	President	9	Machinist and Union Steward
6	Joseph Cantu	Secretary	6	Actuary
7	Merritt Lockwood	Member	7	Plant Construction Supervisor

SOURCE: Board member interviews and Superintendent's office, September 2005.

Although the board is experienced and stable, it has not held the district administration accountable for the results of operations or required information in a timely manner for oversight and effective decision-making. The board has also not met its duties in some areas that follow.

PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT
In August 2005, the board again adopted a deficit budget, a practice that the board began in 1999–2000. The final 2005–06 budget was provided to board members two days before the board meeting in which the budget was approved. In both years, these budgets were adopted with the understanding that reductions in budgeted expenditures would be made during the year to bring the budget into balance. The budget was adopted over the objections of a minority number of board members, three members in August 2004 and two members in August 2005. While board members planned to address the deficit in 2005–06 by using a finance committee of board members to consider budget reductions, Hurricane Rita delayed the meetings until mid-November. By adopting deficit budgets, the board is relying on external forces such as employee turnover to reduce deficit spending, rather than making needed decisions on allocation of resources to meet district goals.

The board does not conduct informed discussions of alternative uses of staffing or prioritization of resources. Once funded, positions and programs tend to remain in place although actual needs may have changed. For example, the salaries of the Dean of Students and the secretary to the dean at the high school have continued to be funded out of Compensatory Education funds for at least four years. This practice has occurred despite declines in the high school's overall student performance, which was due in part to the unaddressed needs of at-risk students. Another example is

the continued prioritization of funding of the athletics program while other areas of need are not addressed. Although the athletics program is funded at a rate comparable to other successful programs in the region, significant district needs in technology and facilities remain unaddressed because of a lack of funds.

LMISD's DIP and CIPs are the district's major planning tools to achieve performance goals. Although the board receives these items a week in advance, the board approves these documents without adequate time spent on the analysis of alternatives or an evaluation of the results of prior plans. The plans are approved at a regular board meeting after a short presentation by administrators with little board discussion. This lack of review limits the board's ability to help ensure that the actions taken by the administration will result in achievement of district goals. The lack of review also limits the board's ability to determine if the budget approved by the board provides the necessary resources needed for effective operations.

In another example, the board did not approve the final design specifications for the current bond program. The board does not receive monthly updates on the construction, and problems have not been formally brought to the board's attention. Instead the board receives periodic verbal updates by the architect. The lack of board oversight was a contributing factor to the bond construction problems encountered by the district. Written monthly reports would have required district staff to disclose the status of construction projects; the number, amount, and basis for change orders; and problems related to the quality of construction. By not requiring frequent reports, the board did not ensure that the administration addressed construction problems. These problems were noted by the review team

during the on-site field work and are described in detail in Chapter 3 of this report, Facilities and Construction Management.

Kerrville ISD used a concise monthly report to the board in its recent bond program to build a new high school. The report listed the original estimates included in the bond referendum, the original contract amounts, the amount of change orders to date, current change orders for that month, and the current estimated cost based on the total amount of change orders. Copies of the actual change orders for that month were also included. Under this process, board members could follow the construction process as construction costs changed and as contingencies or allowances such as equipment/furniture allowances were applied to specific projects.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATIONS

Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) sets out major statutory provisions that school boards must follow in evaluations of the district superintendent. The statutes provide for a written evaluation of the superintendent at least annually based on a process authorized by the Commissioner of Education. The board may use this process or develop its own. If it chooses to use its own process, it must do so in consultation with the statutorily prescribed district planning committee and campus-level planning committees (TEC §21.354).

The commissioner's rules appear in Chapter 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). The evaluation must include three steps: (1) setting goals that define expectations and priorities for the superintendent; (2) at least one formative conference, or interim meeting, where the board and superintendent measure progress in meeting expectations and discuss ideas for improving performance; and (3) an evaluation conference, where an instrument is completed summing up performance for the year, and that assessment is discussed (19 TAC §150.1022(a)). These steps must be included in an annual calendar for appraisal developed by the board in consultation with the superintendent (19 TAC §150.1022(a)). The board also must have been trained in the appropriate evaluation skills (19 TAC §150.1022(c)).

The board does not evaluate the superintendent in accordance with the TEA-recommended process, which includes a formal goal-setting process and both formative and summative conferences to review the performance with the superintendent. A review of board minutes from August 2003 through September 2005 failed to document the following:

- required training on goal setting;

- a meeting to set goals for the forthcoming year;

- a formative or interim conference to discuss progress toward those goals; and

- a summative or end-of-year conference to discuss the superintendent's performance in achieving those goals or to set goals for the next year.

Instead the board president compiles evaluations by individual board members and provides a summary of the ratings to the superintendent as well as a set of goals for the next year. The board president retains the individual board member copies of the superintendent's evaluation. This informal process does not provide an opportunity for the board and the superintendent to discuss performance issues or reach agreement regarding remedies. By failing to include the entire board in a discussion with the superintendent, the board misses a key opportunity to evaluate the operations and performance of the district. The board's evaluation of the superintendent is a critical tool in the overall governance process. It serves to establish and articulate district goals and priorities. The evaluation is also the board's primary means of holding the administration accountable for performance.

The complete list of superintendent goals from the 2004–05 evaluation in February 2005 are shown in **Exhibit 2-5**. While a number of these goals are noteworthy, the list as a whole fails to address the major concerns addressed by board members in interviews with the review team or staff, or concerns provided in parent and community comments. These concerns include student performance, lack of resources, student discipline, and too many inexperienced teachers.

Only one of the 15 goals directly addresses academic performance, and it fails to establish quantifiable goals or objectives. One other goal addresses the need for a balanced budget for 2005–06, but that was not accomplished during the 2005–06 budget process. A number of the goals such as No. 1 and 2 under Staff-Personnel Relations are descriptions of expected or desired events (science fairs, academic decathlon, and a middle school summer Spanish class) rather than a goal to be accomplished. Another goal (No. 3 under Business-Financial Matters concerning stipends) is a question rather than a goal. Other goals appear to be statements of problems or situations. For example, the first goal under Maintenance: "twenty seven lights out of 56 are not working (high school library)" indicates a problem but does not state

EXHIBIT 2-5
SUPERINTENDENT GOALS
2005–06

FUNCTIONAL AREA	GOALS
Board-Superintendent Relations	1. Notify the board of major incidents (things that could be or are on television or in the newspaper and outside sources). 2. Present items to the board as information items one month prior to placing it on the agenda, (i.e., outsourcing/contract, inflammatory items such as Sandstone, etc.). 3. Notify board of all appointments of administrators (i.e., assistant principals, etc.).
Community Relations	1. Communications Office. 2. Involved in lots of organizations.
Staff-Personnel Relations	1. Science Fairs, Academic Decathlon--start time and preparations/implementation. 2. Spanish Class--Middle School Summer Class. 3. Improving academics, test scores, and accountability.

Business-Financial Matters	1. Need to see more long range planning (2-4 years in advance).
	2. Balanced budget--this year 2005-06
	  • New school year--June/July
	  • Quarterly reports
	3. Stipends: Are they consistent?
	  • Travel allowance versus mileage
	  • Level playing field
	
	Need for March meeting: Other districts' stipends and review and explain policy.

Student Management	1. Policies more strictly enforced (example: students leaving campus, clothes/parking lot). 2. Ensure that the rights of students are upheld.
Maintenance	1. Twenty-seven lights out of 56 are not working (high school library). 2. Inventory computers and televisions.

SOURCE: LMISD Superintendent, October 2005.

a goal. The two goals under Community Relations: "Communications Office" and "Involved in lots of organizations" appear to be statements of fact rather than goals. Few of the goals are quantifiable, and most are difficult for board members or the superintendent to monitor except by noting exceptions.

Organizations like the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) provide training for school boards to use the superintendent evaluation process as part of a larger planning process. The evaluation is focused on the superintendent's progress in meeting previously established goals. An evaluation calendar is developed and agreed upon very early in the annual cycle, often in June or July before the beginning of the following school year. All board members and the superintendent collaboratively develop and agree upon final goals. The goals are based on district goals and priorities, initiatives related to major areas of district operation, and data related to student performance.

After establishing goals at an interim meeting, the board holds a formative conference during the year with the superintendent to check on the superintendent's progress toward meeting the established district goals and to discuss any recent or pertinent developments. An evaluation or summative conference is held usually at the end of the cycle

to discuss the results of the year. Before the end-of-year evaluation of the superintendent, the board may begin the process with a self-assessment by board members of their individual performance and that of the board as a whole. The superintendent's evaluation is not a summary of individual assessments but rather the considered judgment of the board as a whole after thoughtful discussion.

BOARD TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

LMISD's board has not met individual and collective continuing education requirements set by the State Board of Education (SBOE) regarding training, team building, and announcement of deficiencies. Some individual board members have not met continuing education requirements for 2004–05. The board president has also failed to announce board member annual compliance with the SBOE requirements as required by state law and LMISD policy. Instead the board president announces the cumulative training that each board member has received since joining the board. In some cases this training covers more than 10 years. Failure to regularly participate in training reduces board members' effectiveness by limiting their understanding of the issues and also limits the ability of board members to communicate with one another outside of board meetings.

Exhibit 2-6 shows the training received by board members for 2004–05. Two of the seven board members failed to attend the required eight hours of annual training. All members have the opportunity to attend state and national conventions. A review of training indicated that two board members attended less than four hours of training out of 21 possible hours of training at the 2004 Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) convention.

EXHIBIT 2-6
LMISD BOARD MEMBER TRAINING
APRIL 2004 TO OCTOBER 2005

| | BOARD TRAINING HOURS | | |
BOARD MEMBER	REQUIRED	PERFORMED	DEFICIENCIES
Travis Smith	16.0	26.75	None
Shirley Fanuiel	8.0	16.5*	None
Cynthia Bell-Malveaux	8.0	22.5	None
Bill Spillar	8.0	3.5	4.5
Frank Proctor	8.0	14.75*	None
Joseph Cantu	8.0	9.5	None
Merritt Lockwood	8.0	3.75	4.25

*Does not include training from TASB convention that had not been posted at the time of the review.
SOURCE: TASB Continuing Education Report, November 2005.

The SBOE sets training requirements for new and existing board members in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §61.1. The training requirements are 16 hours of annual training for new board members and eight hours for existing board members. Annual requirements are also based on the terms of office, usually lasting from May of one year to April of the following year. Board training requirements are also defined in LMISD board policies, which are posted on the district website. Board policy BBD (LEGAL) requires board members to comply with any training required by the SBOE, including local district orientation for new members and an annual team-building session.

The superintendent and all board members are required to participate annually in a three-hour team building session led by Regional Education Service Centers or other providers. Existing board members often fulfill three of the eight hours of required training by attending this session. The purpose of this session is to enhance the effectiveness of the board and superintendent team and to assess the team's continuing education needs.

School boards can take advantage of board training opportunities offered at the annual state and national conventions, local training offered through Regional Education Service Centers, and online training offered by TASB as well as other providers. Board training offered at local workshops provides a supportive environment for learning and sharing view points outside of the demands of regular board meetings. This local training also provides situations for board members to understand one another and develop team relationships. Board training at outside events such as the TASB convention provides opportunities to learn from experienced presenters and also learn how other districts have dealt with similar problems. The 2004 TASB convention provided 21 possible hours of professional development training for board members. LMISD's board members attended some of the sessions and earned varying numbers of training hours at this annual convention.

The district should expand board roles, responsibilities, and activities to provide appropriate oversight, address compliance issues, increase effectiveness of decision-making, and increase accountability. The board should address its performance issues by conducting a self-assessment and by taking immediate steps to comply with the Texas Administrative Code regulations concerning the evaluation of the superintendent and board training.

The LMISD board should conduct a self-assessment of its own performance before beginning the superintendent's evaluation. This self-assessment should include:

- evaluating the board's effectiveness during the past year, including the role that the board has performed in the accomplishment or lack of accomplishment of stated goals and objectives;

- identifying ways to increase communications among board members;

- defining appropriate roles and responsibilities in the decision-making process; and

- establishing goals for the board as a team in the next year.

The board should hire a facilitator to assist it with developing and establishing the process for evaluating the superintendent based on the Commissioner of Education's recommended process for evaluating superintendents. An important part of this process is the agreement by the board and the superintendent on the goals and priorities for the upcoming year. The very process of goal setting and monitoring serves to improve district performance by focusing efforts on the district's major priorities. At the beginning of the evaluation

cycle, the board and the superintendent should meet together to set goals and develop a calendar to ensure that all needed steps take place. The calendar should include a meeting to discuss and agree on goals and priorities, an interim meeting or meetings to discuss progress toward meeting those goals and the developments and events that affect the goals, and an evaluation meeting at the end of the cycle to discuss the results of the year's work.

At the formative and summative conferences to evaluate the superintendent, the board should first meet without the superintendent to review individual responses, discuss differences, and try to reach agreement before holding the meeting with the superintendent. If there are major performance issues with the superintendent, this meeting provides an opportunity for the board to consider its approach to addressing the issues. It also allows the board to address any factual or other misunderstandings or differences among its members. If it is impossible to reach consensus, the evaluation instrument should reflect the majority view, and the minority and majority views should be discussed with the superintendent.

The board president should ensure that all board members are aware of continuing education requirements and that members are offered multiple opportunities to meet these requirements. The board president and superintendent should develop a process to monitor both individual and collective board training that includes development and distribution of a calendar with multiple training opportunities from several sources and detailed steps outlining registration, attendance, reimbursement, and completion verification requirements. The developed calendar should also include a scheduled time for the announcement of individual board member compliance with annual training requirements as outlined by law.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is a one-time cost for a facilitator to assist the board in developing and implementing the evaluation process. The cost is based on 20 hours at $100 per hour for a total of $2,000.

PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND EVALUATION (REC. 10)
The district's current planning process does not support district efforts to set and achieve clear goals and limits the ability of LMISD to improve student academic performance. The district uses the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the related Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) as its primary planning tools but treats the process as a separate function

that is not related to the budget process and which has little board involvement. The process does not include a rigorous analysis of current performance or a consideration of alternative courses of action. The availability of resources or identification of additional resources is not a structured part of the planning process. Community, parent, and business representation is not adequately included in the process.

LMISD's planning results in an uneven or inappropriate allocation of resources—a brand new gym for high school athletes but only elementary school desks for secondary students at the district's alternative schools, or counselors at each small elementary school but not at the larger Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) until January 2006. Academic performance falls further behind performance at the region and state level, even though it has been a major goal of the district for more than three years.

Promising new district projects such as the middle school science curriculum appear to be initiated outside of the DIP/ CIP planning process and simply added to the plan as an additional strategy. The planning process fails to link or build on major district efforts such as the education foundation or the student achievement plan, which are only briefly mentioned as two of the 138 strategies in the 2005–06 DIP.

The DIP and CIPs are required by the Texas Education Code (TEC 11.251). The plans consist of major goals to be accomplished by the district as further defined by specific measurable objectives. The plans also define strategies or actions needed to achieve each objective with related costs, responsibility and timing, and the means to measure the results. The superintendent and principals develop the plans with the assistance of site-based planning committees. The TEC requires these committees to include teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, parents, community members, and business representatives. Each DIP goal is assigned to a senior administrator to coordinate development and assessment activities.

The district spends significant staff resources on the development of the plans at both the district and school level, including numerous site-based committee meetings. Site-based committees work with the principal or superintendent to develop the goals, objectives, and strategies to accomplish the objectives set out in the plan. A needs assessment is performed as part of the plan development process. Administrators review draft plans at the annual planning retreat in August, and the board approves them in September.

In its review of the district's DIP and CIPs documents, the review team noted several weaknesses in the plans and results of the planning process. **Exhibit 2-7** presents the five goals of the DIP for 2005–06 and sets out the number of related objectives and strategies. It also includes review team observations on the specific strategies in the goals as well as ongoing issues that remain unaddressed by the plan.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-7**, the district DIP has five goals, 24 objectives, and 138 strategies. The same goals in the 2005–06 DIP have been in place since at least 2003–04. While the number of goals (5) appears reasonable given the district's size and the available staff, the large number of objectives and related strategies creates a planning document that is cumbersome and difficult for staff to monitor or measure the results of individual strategies.

LMISD CIPs are based on the same goals and objectives with varying strategies. Like the DIP, these goals have also been in place since at least 2003–04. There are similar types of strategies in each CIP for a particular campus. Strategies are not prioritized and appear in many cases to be simply a list of good ideas that might address the objective.

The current planning process fails to meet the needs of the district because plans do not comply with laws or policies, are not based on analysis, do not link to financial plans, and do not include the means to measure results for accountability.

The current DIP and CIPs do not comply with state law or the district's own policies regarding committee representation. Texas Education Code 11.251(e) specifically defines the composition of the planning committees. Local district policies BQA LOCAL and BQB LOCAL require that at least two parents, two community members, and two business representatives serve on the district-level committee that assists in the development of the DIP and CIPs. Campus planning committees are also required to have district level representation.

Exhibit 2-8 displays the committee makeup for the development of the 2005–06 DIP and CIPs that were approved by the board in September 2005. **Exhibit 2-8** shows that the composition of the site-based committees at either the district or campus levels does not comply with the TEC or the district's own policies. Only two of the eight planning committees met the requirements for parent and business representation: the ECLC and the District Planning Committee. Only four of the seven campus-level committees had district-level representation as required by board policy. District-level representation on CIPs helps ensure that

planning committees discuss and address district-level expectations.

The lack of parent, community, and business representation limits the ability of these groups to have input in the district's primary planning process. It also deprives the district of a potentially valuable source of advice and support.

The current DIP and CIPs show a lack of analysis. Significant time is devoted to developing the plans, and most objectives contain quantifiable attributes that can be measured and evaluated, but the plans contain little analysis of the results of prior planning efforts to guide the current year efforts. A needs assessment is performed on each goal prior to the development of strategies for next year's plan. However, the specificity of the needs assessments varies, and the assessments are often simple compilations of prior year activities or statistics that are not set in context.

Few of the assessments reviewed provided an evaluation of the actual results of the prior planning efforts, or even a comparison of prior years' needs to current needs. For example, District Goal 4 states "LMISD will provide a safe and orderly environment that is conductive to learning." The needs assessment documents the number of discipline referral cases and the number of student code of conduct violations, but draws no comparisons to prior years or discusses the reasons for these cases. Strategies were not analyzed to determine if they are producing results. There is no overall analysis of the district's position, financially or academically, compared to other districts or the regional or state averages.

Although an evaluation mechanism is defined for each objective and strategy, the results are not documented at year end. An overall evaluation is not performed to determine the results of the prior year plan. The lack of analysis results in limited baseline or benchmark information to focus planning efforts or to measure success.

The current DIP and CIPs are not linked to financial planning. None of the 138 strategies in the DIP contains estimated costs, nor are the strategies identified in the district's 2005–06 approved budget. The 2005–06 DIP includes strategies that will require major investments such as creating a math and science magnet school, increasing salaries to match those of surrounding school districts, and setting aside one percent of the budget for infrastructure and equipment purposes.

If cost estimates are not prepared for strategies and those requiring significant investment are not linked to financial planning documents such as the budget, the likelihood that

EXHIBIT 2-7
DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2005–06

GOALS

GOAL 1: LMISD WILL MAINTAIN A HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF THAT UPHOLDS THE INTEGRITY OF THEIR PROFESSION.
Includes four objectives and 37 strategies.
OBSERVATIONS:
- Goal and objectives are unchanged from previous year although the needs assessment indicated that at least one objective, requiring all instructional aides be highly qualified, was met during the last year.
- The objective that requires that all teachers be considered highly qualified by the end of the year does not taken into consideration that No Child Left Behind requires that all teachers meet these criteria by the beginning of the 2005–06 school year.
- Needs of inexperienced teachers and teachers who were hired through an alternative certification process are not addressed although this problem was mentioned consistently by board members, staff, parent, and community participants during interviews.
- None of the strategies have costs attached, although some strategies such as the strategy of increasing salaries to the level of surrounding districts will have a significant budget impact.

GOAL 2: LMISD WILL MAXIMIZE THE USE OF AVAILABLE FUNDING WHILE MAINTAINING THE EFFICIENCY OF SERVICES.
Includes six objectives and 13 strategies.
OBSERVATIONS:
- Plan calls for a balanced budget in 2005–06, but a deficit budget of $1,295,500 was adopted for the 2005–06 fiscal year.
- Objectives call for a budget with adequate funds for infrastructure needs and routine and preventive maintenance and retaining students within the district. However, strategies consist primarily of developing plans to address. Little consideration is given to determining the causal factors for the problems and specific strategies to address and measure results.
- There are no minimum standards in place to ensure that each student has the equipment and materials needed to effectively perform. Participants in the principal focus group estimated that approximately 1,100 additional student desks are needed in the district to replace broken or missing desks. The ability of students to actually use computers is very limited, and the actual number of student computers in the district falls significantly below state standards. All students in the DAEP are using elementary desks because no desks for secondary students were provided when the program was moved to the Lake Road facility in the fall of 2003.
- None of the strategies has costs attached, although some strategies, such as devoting one percent of the budget (estimated by the review team to be $259,945) to replacement of vehicles, equipment, infrastructure, and contingencies, have a significant budget impact.

GOAL 3: LMISD WILL MAINTAIN A CONSISTENTLY HIGH LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY BEGINNING WITH PRE-K THROUGH GRADUATION.
Includes four objectives and 21 strategies.
OBSERVATIONS:
- Objectives are similar from year to year.
- A number of strategies are already in place in the district such as translation of material sent to non English speaking parents and the superintendent's column in the local newspaper. It is not clear how these strategies would have any additional impact on goals and objectives.
- None of the strategies have costs attached.

GOAL 4: LMISD WILL PROVIDE A SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING.
Includes five objectives and 16 strategies.
OBSERVATIONS:
- Objectives are similar from year to year.
- Needs assessment does not provide comparable information.
- None of the strategies have costs attached.

GOAL 5: LMISD WILL COMMIT TO THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS.
Includes five objectives and 51 strategies.
OBSERVATIONS:
- Objectives indicate that 98 percent of the students will meet TAKS standards for their grade level and subject by the end of the year. The current level is as low as 30 percent in grade 10 science. It is unclear from a review of the strategies how student achievement can increase as much as 68 percent in one year.
- Strategies include simple projects such as a science field trip for grade 4 students and "History Alive Day" where all students dress as a historical character. Other strategies are complex such as implementation of the TAKS Student Achievement Plan. All seem to be treated equally without regard for the impact of the strategy on the objectives and goals.
- Significant new initiatives such as the Gateways to Middle School Science curriculum project funded by the LMISD Education Foundation and grant projects such as Reading First have been included as strategies that could provide a mechanism to link the district planning process to funding sources.
- Key changes in district operations such as the recent district decision to mainstream special education students are not ad dressed in any depth in the plan except to provide professional development for all certified staff.
- None of the objectives in this goal specifically addresses the problem of poor academic performance of special education students that was noted by district staff and principals in interviews. The five strategies that address the issue are similar in nature and call for the alignment of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with each core curriculum.

SOURCE: LMISD District Improvement Plan, 2005–06.

EXHIBIT 2-8
COMPOSITION OF LMISD DISTRICT AND CAMPUS PLANNING COMMITTEES
2005–06

SCHOOL	PARENTS	COMMUNITY MEMBERS	BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES	DISTRICT LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES
La Marque High	0	1	0	1
La Marque Middle	1	0	0	0
Early Childhood Learning Center	2	1	2	1
Highlands Elementary	1	1	1	1
Inter-City Elementary	1	0	0	0
Simms Elementary*	1	1	1	1
Westlawn Elementary	1	0	0	0
District Planning Committee	7	0	3	NA

NOTE: Business representative are counted by company not by individual.
SOURCE: LMISD 2005–06 DIP and CIPs.

the district will actually carry them out is small. A lack of specific cost information also indicates an unwillingness by district administration to address the implementation issues of specific strategies requiring substantial investment, relegating these strategies to wish list type items.

The current DIP and CIPs also lack accountability. Several aspects of the current plans limit the ability of the district to measure accountability for results. The sheer number of objectives (24) and strategies (138) complicates the monitoring process and frustrates administrators charged with implementation.

Objectives appear to be established without consideration of the reasonableness of the objective or the likelihood of achieving the goal. For example, one objective in the 2005–06 DIP is "98 percent of all students will score at or above grade level on TAKS Science." However, the needs assessment for the related goal showed that 2004–05 TAKS science scores in the three grades tested were: 37 percent of grade 5 students, 30 percent of grade 10 students, and 50 percent of grade 11 students having achieved this level. The expectation that any administrator can accomplish this objective in one year appears very unreasonable. Objectives that cannot be accomplished within the annual planning cycle become long-term goals rather than targets that administrators can be held accountable to achieve.

The lack of funding for strategies requiring investments further limits the ability of the board and superintendent to hold administrators accountable for results. The board is not involved in setting goals and objectives and approves the completed plans without a commitment to provide the funding needed to implement a number of strategies that require investment. This lack of board involvement, support, and accountability in turn reduces its ability to hold administrators accountable for results.

Many school districts identify long-term goals in their planning process that are addressed by the achievement of annual objectives. A limited number of strategies are established to achieve those annual goals. During the planning process strategies are assessed for reasonableness to determine if they have a measurable impact on the achievement of a specific annual goal. Strategies that do not have a measurable effect are not included in the plan. If a strategy is simply part of the way the district operates, the activity is not included in the DIP or CIPs.

Plans are presented to the board as part of a workshop or retreat devoted to the planning process so that there is sufficient time to thoroughly discuss the research supporting the plan, the plan itself, and the expected results. The administrators' ability to achieve the objectives set out in the plan is linked to and becomes part of each administrator's annual evaluation for accountability.

The district should develop and implement a research-based planning approach that includes adequate analysis of alternatives, informed decision-making, rigorous monitoring of strategy implementation, and comprehensive evaluation of results. The district should hire an outside facilitator to assist it with the development and implementation of the planning approach. The facilitator would be involved in documenting the steps in the approach as well as facilitating the development of quantitative performance measures and identification of the data that will need to be captured to assess and evaluate performance.

Exhibit 2-9 describes a model planning process that the district could adopt. The first step should be the development of a planning calendar that defines each event, the persons responsible for the activity, and the timing of each step. The planning calendar should work in conjunction with the budget cycle so that all aspects of the plan will include related costs.

EXHIBIT 2-9
MODEL PLANNING CALENDAR

PLANNING STEPS	TIMING
1. Develop planning calendar for next year in conjunction with budget calendar.	September
2. Develop baseline information using PEIMS and other indicators regarding goals and objectives.	November
3. Review district performance with board compared to goals and objectives in workshop setting.	January
4. Design draft plan including: • Goal changes • Preliminary objectives and strategies • Cost estimates • Alternatives considered • Other resources identified	February–May
5. Evaluate results on current year-to-date progress by objective and strategy.	June
6. Develop final draft plan.	July
7. Review plan at annual administrator's retreat (currently being done).	August
8. Adopt annual budget.	August
9. Revise plan to incorporate administrator comments and budget adoption.	September
10. Review plan by board at workshop.	September
11. Adopt plan at board meeting.	September
12. Implement the plans.	September–August
13. Monitor quarterly and present results to the board.	December, March, June, August

SOURCE: School Review team, November 2005.

The next step is the evaluation of the results of the prior year's plan to determine what worked and what didn't work. The evaluation should focus on determining the district's success in achieving its objectives and how the strategies contributed to that success. To create a starting point for the evaluation in the first year, the district should classify the existing strategies as unfunded, part of normal operations, and funded. Strategies that were classified as either part of

normal operations, such as conducting fire drills, or were unfunded and thus incapable of being implemented, should not be evaluated.

After the evaluation is complete, the district administration should share the evaluation results and district performance with the board in a workshop environment away from the time constraints of a regular board meeting. The presentation should allow adequate time for questions and provide opportunities for board members to make their own contributions. Materials should be provided to board members at least a week before the workshop to allow time for review. Ideally this workshop should take place as the board and the district begin the budget process for the next year so that key outcomes of the planning evaluation can become part of the financial planning for the next year.

After the evaluation has been completed and the results shared with the board, the district should spend the next few months developing the draft plan for the next year. While the plan is being developed, the current plan should be monitored to provide information for the planning process. Responsibility for the development of each goal should continue to be assigned to an individual administrator to ensure that necessary coordination takes place.

During the development of the draft plan, district administrators should focus their planning time at all levels on a smaller number of objectives and strategies that can actually be implemented. All strategies should have estimated costs developed as part of the strategy development. It is not necessary to develop individual cost estimates for strategies that require little investment for implementation. For example, strategies that will cost less than $500 could be simply noted as $500 or less in the plan. Once the draft DIP is developed, the goals and objectives can be shared with campus committees for development of their individual CIPs.

When the draft plans are completed, they should be reviewed by administration before presentation to the board in another workshop setting that allows time for discussion and comment. Once adopted, each of the plan's strategies should be measured each quarter and reported to the board to make certain that appropriate actions are being taken. The ability of an administrator to achieve the objectives assigned in the plan should be part of the administrator's annual evaluation process.

The proposed process emphasizes rigorous evaluation, substantive reviews, detailed measurement, and increased monitoring. For this process to be successful, the number of

objectives undertaken in any given year and the related strategies should be limited.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is a one-time cost of a facilitator to assist in the development and documentation of a comprehensive planning approach. The estimate assumes 100 hours at $100 per hour for a total of $10,000 (100 hours x $100 per hour = $10,000).

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION (REC. 11)

Reporting relationships in the district are not clearly defined and student services programs are not grouped together in one department, limiting the district's ability to address significant student problems.

The current organization of the district as provided by the superintendent is shown earlier in **Exhibit 2-1**. This organization separates instructional support activities from school operations and business operations. Principals report directly to the superintendent. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for all instructional support activities except Athletics, which reports directly to the superintendent. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for all non-instructional functions such as finance, personnel, and the contracted services in the district (transportation, food services, and maintenance).

Student services are under the direction of the following four administrators:

- the director of Career and Technology Education (CTE) and Testing, who oversees the CTE program and the Gifted and Talented program and is assuming testing responsibilities in 2005–06;

- the director of Student Services, who coordinates the work of counselors, social workers, and nurses;

- the director of Special Education, who oversees the Special Education program; and

- the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, who directly supervises the PEIMS specialist.

The current organization resembles organizations found in many districts of similar size. It can be very effective to group instructional support functions under one administrator and non-instructional functions under a second administrator. This type of organization provides clear lines of reporting and places the greatest number of similar resources under a single administrator who has the flexibility to shift resources to meet changing demands. It is clearly beneficial for smaller

districts to group like functions together, as administrators often are responsible for multiple functions with differing levels of activity.

According to interviews, this set-up is not how the organization actually functions in LMISD. In actual practice, the directors of Student Services, CTE and Testing, and Personnel and Operations report directly to the superintendent and operate independently of the assistant superintendents. The job descriptions for these positions indicate that they report directly to the superintendent. This lack of clear reporting lines limits the ability of the assistant superintendents to hold the directors accountable for performance or to shift responsibilities to meet changing needs. It also limits the superintendent's ability to hold the assistant superintendents accountable for their performance when significant departments operate independently.

Instructional functions that are spread among various administrators as stand alone units limit the district's ability to operate as efficiently as possible. It is harder to provide coverage when individuals are not in the office or to share resources when needed. Adequate training for primary and backup positions may not be provided. It is also more difficult to supervise technical positions, such as the PEIMS specialist, when the requirements of the positions may vary from those of other positions in the department.

School districts can use the organization structure to provide clear reporting relationships and to hold administrators accountable for their own performance and the performance of the staff reporting to them. Similar functions are grouped together to create sufficient resources to perform the work effectively.

LMISD should review the district organization structure to ensure that reporting relationships are clear and that similar functions are grouped together to the extent possible. The superintendent should place all instructional support functions under the supervision of the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, with the exception of Athletics, which should continue to report to the superintendent. All non-instructional functions, including Personnel and Operations, should report to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. The Communications officer should continue to report to the superintendent as this is a districtwide function supporting the schools as well as the district administration.

The primary change to the current structure is the grouping together of Student Services, CTE and Testing, and PEIMS

reporting functions under one director, the director of Student Services, to maximize resources and provide additional coverage. The director of Special Education should report to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction so that the key issue of academic performance of special education students can be addressed by the combined instructional resources in the department.

CAMPUS STAFFING (REC. 12)

Campus staffing is not based on approved staffing guidelines and exceeds industry staffing standards in some cases, primarily for high school and middle school assistant principals and middle school clerical staff. Staffing assignments are not made on the basis of staffing formulas but rather by school based upon past staffing patterns. The district does not prepare enrollment projections as part of its financial planning.

The review team used staffing standards developed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a recognized educational certification organization, for comparison purposes. SACS staffing standards are scaled to fit the needs of elementary and secondary schools according to the size of enrollments. For comparison purposes, SACS standards that recommended part-time positions were rounded up to full-time positions. This was done to reflect additional reporting requirements of Texas school districts.

Exhibit 2-10 provides a comparison of district assistant principal staffing to SACS standards. Since none of the elementary schools in the district have assistant principals, they were not included in the comparison. Based on the SACS standards, La Marque High School has two more assistant principals than required, with five assistant principals for a school with a student enrollment of 1,130. La Marque Middle School also has one more assistant principal than required, with three assistant principals for a school with a student

enrollment of 851 students. SACS standards for schools of this size are three assistant principals at the high school and two assistant principals at the middle school.

Exhibit 2-11 provides a comparison of clerical staffing at all regular district schools to SACS standards. Staffing at the elementary schools and at the high school meets the established standards. La Marque Middle School has individual secretaries assigned to each assistant principal as well as a principal's secretary, bookkeeper, secretary/receptionist, and registrar. Based on SACS standards, the school has two more clerical positions than required for a middle school of this size.

Exhibit 2-12 compares LMISD staffing for counselors and social workers at each regular school in the district.

As demonstrated by **Exhibits 2-10, 2-11,** and **2-12,** the lack of staffing standards based on student enrollment may result in inadequate staffing in areas where growth is occurring and excessive staffing in declining areas. The ECLC has been the largest school in the district serving elementary age children as well as younger children for at least the past three years. In 2005–06 the ECLC, which does not have a counselor, has an enrollment that is 35 percent larger than Simms Elementary, the next closest school in size, which has a full-time counselor. All of the regular elementary schools have a full-time counselor. In interviews the ECLC principal stressed the need for a counselor due to the large number of economically disadvantaged students on the campus, at 73 percent.

By contrast, the enrollment at the high school and middle school has decreased since 2000–01, approximately 100 students at the high school and 50 students at the middle school, yet the district has added staff at the assistant principal level to address discipline and academic performance

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EXHIBIT 2-10
COMPARISON OF LMISD ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL STAFFING
AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO SACS STANDARDS
2005–06

SCHOOL	2005–06 ENROLLMENT	LMISD STAFFING	SACS STANDARDS*	DIFFERENCE
La Marque High School	1,130	5.0	3.0	2.0
La Marque Middle School	851	3.0	2.0	1.0
TOTAL	**1,981**	**8.0**	**5.0**	**3.0**

NOTE: SACS standards are rounded upward to a full position for comparison purposes.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, November 1, 2005, enrollment; LMISD 2005–06 Staffing Roster; and SACS Public School Standards 2005.

EXHIBIT 2-11
COMPARISON OF LMISD CAMPUS CLERICAL STAFFING TO SACS STANDARDS
2005–06

SCHOOL	2005–06 ENROLLMENT	LMISD STAFFING	SACS STANDARDS*	DIFFERENCE
La Marque High School	1,130	8.0	8.0	0.0
La Marque Middle School	851	8.0	6.0	2.0
Early Childhood Learning Center	503	2.0	2.0	0.0
Highlands Elementary	345	2.0	2.0	0.0
Inter-City Elementary	370	2.0	2.0	0.0
Simms Elementary	373	2.0	2.0	0.0
Westlawn Elementary	315	2.0	2.0	0.0
TOTAL**	3,889	26.0	24.0	2.0

*SACS standards for clerical staffing were rounded upwards and increased by two positions at the high school and one position at the middle and elementary schools to reflect PEIMS reporting requirements in Texas.
**Enrollment does not include three students currently at the JJAEP.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, November 1, 2005, enrollment; LMISD 2005–06 Staffing Roster; and SACS Public School Standards 2005.

EXHIBIT 2-12
COMPARISON OF LMISD GUIDANCE STAFFING TO SACS STANDARDS
2005–06

SCHOOL	2005–06 ENROLLMENT	LMISD STAFFING	SACS STANDARDS*	DIFFERENCE
La Marque High School*	1,130	3.0	3.0	0.0
La Marque Middle School*	851	3.0	1.5	1.5
Early Childhood Learning Center	503	0.0	0.5	(0.5)
Highlands Elementary	345	1.0	0.5	0.5
Inter-City Elementary	370	1.0	0.5	0.5
Simms Elementary	373	1.0	0.5	0.5
Westlawn Elementary	315	1.0	0.5	0.5
TOTAL**	3,889	10.0	7.0	3.0

*Includes a social worker position at each school that also functions districtwide.
**Enrollment does not include three students currently at the JJAEP.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, November 1, 2005, enrollment; LMISD 2005–06 Staffing Roster; and SACS Public School Standards 2005.

concerns and has maintained clerical staffing levels at the middle school.

Districts that do not use staffing standards based on student enrollment often rely on staffing allocations that reflect past conditions and not the current situation. This practice can lead to overstaffing in situations where enrollments have declined, such as the number of LMISD assistant principals, or understaffing where enrollments have increased, such as the lack of a counselor position until January 2006 at the LMISD ECLC. Cases of overstaffing lead to unnecessary costs and understaffing leads to unmet needs. In either case,

the lack of staffing standards based on student enrollments limits the ability of the district to first define appropriate staffing levels for its schools and secondly to respond to changes in enrollments in a proactive manner.

Hays Consolidated Independent School District uses staffing formulas to assign staffing at all schools. Staffing assignments are adjusted each year at the start of the budget planning process based on enrollment projections for the next year. Principals have input into the development of these standards, which the Finance Department reviews each year and compares periodically to staffing levels in similar districts.

The use of staffing standards across the district ensures equitable allocation of resources and provides a basis for planning at each school. It also helps to control costs over the long term, as the district can adjust staffing to reflect declines in enrollment as well as increases.

The district should develop formal staffing guidelines based on actual student enrollments using industry standards that are modified to reflect district expectations. These staffing guidelines should be reviewed annually to reflect the changes in available funding or anticipated enrollments. If the district were to adopt staffing standards similar to those recommended by SACS, it could reallocate more than $1 million to new initiatives or programs during the next five years. The district could also reallocate existing counseling positions to meet its needs at the ECLC.

The savings associated with the reduction of three assistant principals and two clerical positions are estimated on the basis of average salaries for each of these positions. Savings for the reduction of two high school assistant principals include $61,037 in salary + $2,750 annual insurance + $6,684 (10.95 percent) in benefits = $70,471 multiplied by two positions, or $140,942. Savings for the reduction of one middle school assistant principal include: $56,199 in salary + $2,750 annual insurance + $6,154 (10.95 percent) in benefits = $65,103. Savings for the reduction of two middle school clerical positions include $18,186 in salary + $2,750 annual insurance + $1,991 (10.95 percent) in benefits = $22,927 multiplied by two positions, or $45,854. The total annual savings for the five positions is $251,899.

The district may be able to phase in some reductions in 2006–07, but full savings for eliminating the five positions would not begin until 2007–08. First year savings in 2006–07 are based on the reduction of the two clerical positions.

LEGAL SERVICES (REC. 13)

The district does not have written agreements with general counsel attorneys that ensure the district receives effective legal services in the most cost-effective manner. LMISD has an adopted board policy (BDD LOCAL) governing legal service that includes the requirement of a written contract between the board and the attorney.

The district uses a Houston firm with extensive educational expertise as its general counsel and a firm with extensive tax collection experience for tax collections and addressing protests of taxable values with the state. The district has a contract with the tax collection law firm covering collections and protests, but it does not have a contract or retainer agreement with the general counsel firm. According to interviews, LMISD has used its current general legal services attorney for many years and has not formally evaluated the quality of services provided or compared the cost to that of other firms. The superintendent said that the district is very satisfied with the services provided by both firms. Access to legal services is limited to the board, superintendent, and the assistant superintendents. The superintendent reviews the invoices to monitor costs.

Exhibit 2-13 lists the legal fees paid by LMISD for the last three years. Fees dropped in 2004–05 due to a decrease in district requests. The district budgeted legal fees in 2005–06 to reflect expected fees based on past experience.

Exhibit 2-14 compares legal fees by total legal fees and cost per students paid by LMISD in 2004–05 to legal fees paid by peer districts selected for this study for the same period. In 2004–05, La Marque ISD had the lowest cost per student.

While the district has maintained relatively low legal fees compared to its peers, the lack of a retainer agreement with the general counsel firm could result in unnecessary legal costs. The district's legal firm could increase hourly rates for legal services or add other types of charges such as administrative surcharges or research fees that could increase costs.

Effective school districts rely on written contracts or agreements to define the terms of services and the related

EXHIBIT 2-13
LMISD LEGAL FEES
2002–03 THROUGH 2005–06

LEGAL FEES	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	ANNUAL LEGAL FEES	AMOUNT PER STUDENT
2002–03	3,883	$37,517	$9.66
2003–04	3,745	$39,913	$10.66
2004–05	3,737	$14,227	$3.81
2005–06 (BUDGETED)	**3,892**	**$29,200**	**$7.50**

Source: LMISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations; Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and PEIMS enrollment numbers, 2002–03 through 2004–05; and November 1, 2005, PEIMS Enrollment Report.

EXHIBIT 2-14
LMISD PEER DISTRICT LEGAL FEES COMPARISON
2004–05

DISTRICT	FEES PAID	ENROLLMENT	COST PER STUDENT
LA MARQUE	$14,227	3,737	$3.81
Navasota	$17,250	2,926	$5.90
Palestine	$34,193	3,334	$10.26
Lancaster	$76,070	5,203	$14.62
Texas City	$218,967	5,860	$37.37

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

costs. This practice helps ensure that the district receives quality services at the best possible price. Nacogdoches ISD has a retainer agreement with its general counsel firm that describes the hourly rates it will pay based upon the experience of the attorney and provides a limited no-cost telephone support for initial calls on a given issue.

The district should develop and implement a written contract or retainer agreement with the district's legal counsel specifying hourly rates and allowed charges. The requirement of a written agreement will help ensure that the district continues to achieve relatively low legal costs.

SCHOOL LEVEL PARENT/VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES (REC. 14)

The district does not have effective parent involvement programs in place to ensure that parents understand their role in the education of their children or provide needed support to their children's schools. While the district has had successful events at the district level, such as the Education Summit, and at the school level, participation at the events has not translated into effective parent support for the educational process. The program at Highlands Elementary is a good example. During 2004–05, 108 parents attended the Thanksgiving lunch, 40 parents attended the October Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting and 65 parents attended the December meeting, and the school held five parent workshops. However, less than 20 percent of grade 3 and grade 5 parents attended the parent/family meetings and less than 25 percent of grade 4 parents attended their parent meetings.

The school held a variety of meetings on different dates, usually at night. The schedule for 2004–05 included the following meetings:

- Meet the Teacher (August 12, 2004);

- Open House and PTA Meeting (September 19, 2004);

- Parent Connection Day (October 11, 2004);

- PTA meeting and Family Math and Science Night (October 18, 2004);

- Fifth Grade Parent Meeting (October 27, 2004);

- Third Grade Parent Meeting (November 17, 2004);

- PTA meting and school report card discussion (December 13, 2004);

- Fourth Grade Parent Meeting (January 19, 2005);

- PTA and Open House (February 28, 2005); and

- Playground Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (no date provided).

There is no district-level effort to recruit volunteers, provide them with training, or track and monitor the level of support. School principals, staff, and other parents recruit volunteers at the school level. School principals recruit parent volunteers to work in the schools at PTO meetings and Back to School nights. They use parent volunteer sign-in sheets to document parents' presence in the school buildings but do not track the level of participation or support. PTOs, especially at the elementary level, provide valuable services to the schools, such as developing districtwide fundraising efforts. A recent example is the successful initiative to raise funds to replace playground equipment for each elementary school in 2003–04. Parents are encouraged to attend numerous school events such as holiday lunches, workshops, and parent teacher conferences. High school parent activities are largely limited to participation in athletic and band booster clubs.

In September 2004 the district began development of a Parent Center designed to provide a place where parents and district staff can work together to supplement the children's education. The center makes books, videos, games, and activities available for parents to check out and use at home

with their children. The Parent Center began operations during the fall 2005. Events included three monthly Parent-Make-&-Take Workshops attended by seven parents in September, seven parents in October, and two parents in November. The district has developed a series of workshops in reading, math, and science to help parents learn about their children's studies.

The parent center is under the direction of the Parent Center liaison, a paraprofessional position that spends the majority of time working with the ESL community in the schools. She translates for non-English speaking parents at meetings. She translates every form that is sent home to students of Spanish speaking origin. She also works with ESL students in their instructional program, attending assemblies and programs with the students, even translating homework at times. The Parent Center liaison made a presentation for Spanish speaking parents at the Education Summit in February 2005.

The Parent Center liaison conducted a survey of parents throughout the district in October 2004. While the number of participants was not documented, the overview of the plans for the Parent Center indicated that almost 50 percent of the parents who participated in the survey requested that the Parent Center remain open until 7:00 pm at least two days a week. In the survey, parents expressed an interest in checking out videos, educational software, and adult self-help books. Parents also expressed interest in workshops on discipline, homework, computer literacy, and helping their children learn English. While materials are available, the center does not have evening hours and is often closed during the day because the Parent Center liaison is at the schools performing services for ESL children and their parents.

The lack of parent involvement is a key concern in the district. The DIP for the past three years has listed "maintaining a consistently high level of parent and community participation" as one of its five goals. Each school has the same goal in its CIP. The objectives in this goal rely for the most part on continuing strategies that the district implemented in past years. For example, the objectives associated with this goal in the DIP are focused on increasing communications through continuation of existing newsletters, the superintendent's monthly column in the local paper, and the distribution of the Champions Circle and board notes. Another district objective is to increase participation at events and workshops such as the continuation of the Education Summit and ESL workshops. New strategies for 2005–06 include:

- La Marque ISD day at the mall;

- a ministerial outreach program;

- a Volunteer in Public Schools program (VIPS) with a recognition program in May 2006;

- literacy, ESL, and computer workshops and programs for parents and the community;

- a districtwide PTO Council that will meet at least twice a year;

- a marquee in front of the administration building to announce opportunities for parents to be involved; and

- evaluation forms for parents to complete after every parent activity.

CIPs contain the same goal and similar objectives aimed at increasing parent participation. Strategies consisted of various activities such as writing workshop, Thanksgiving lunch for parents, and parent conferences. The needs assessment of Goal 3 prepared as part of the development of the DIP and CIPs consisted primarily of lists of events. Assessments were not quantified except for one school, Highland Elementary.

Parent involvement was a significant issue raised in surveys conducted with parents, high school students, and district staff. Parents and students rated the effectiveness of district parent involvement programs lower than district staff (**Exhibit 2-15**). A majority of parents (52.4 percent) and students (52.6 percent) rated the programs as poor or below average, and only 14 percent of the students and 13.1 percent of the parents rated the program as good or excellent. Twenty percent of administrators and 27.2 percent of the teachers ranked the parent involvement programs as poor or below average, and 40 percent of the administrators and 23.7 percent of the teachers rated the programs as good or excellent.

Comments made by participants in the surveys, the Community Open House, and focus groups expressed concerns about parental involvement and the schools. Participants criticized parents for not taking advantage of parent involvement opportunities and the schools for not offering worthwhile programs. Work conflicts and other barriers such as lack of telephones were mentioned. School events were criticized as being too repetitive, such as "meet the teacher" before school starts and then occurring again a few weeks later.

Several participants mentioned that parents need to feel that there is some kind of reward in the event for them before

EXHIBIT 2-15
LMISD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005
EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTRICT PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DISTRICT'S PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS.						
Administrators	5.0%	15.0%	35.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Principals	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%
Teachers	7.9%	19.3%	41.2%	22.8%	0.9%	7.9%
Students	29.8%	22.8%	33.3%	7.0%	7.0%	0.0%
Parents	27.4%	25.0%	28.6%	11.9%	1.2%	6.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	7.8%	21.9%	37.5%	25.0%	3.1%	4.7%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

they will attend. A number of participants mentioned that parents do not understand what goes on at the schools, do not understand the link between school and home, and fail to understand the importance of their role in the schools. Several participants commented that one of the challenges facing the schools and the district regarding parent involvement is a long-held view by some parents that it is the school's responsibility to provide for all of their children's needs, including food and school supplies as well as actual instruction.

Participants made a number of suggestions to increase parent involvement including: academic booster clubs; an African American community committee to study ways to address the instructional needs of those students; more activities at the schools after school and at night; and more mentoring programs with members from churches and community

groups. Some activities such as the Education Summit, Cougar Parent Night, and home visits by coaches with parents before the start of school were cited as positive opportunities for parent involvement.

Participants frequently mentioned poor communications, primarily at the school level, as a source of concern. Concerns regarding late notices for events and progress reports, events rescheduled at the last minute, and lack of information about events were mentioned. **Exhibit 2-16** lists the survey participant ratings regarding the effectiveness and regularity of district communications with parents.

Parents and students rated the programs lower than district staff. Almost half of the parents (47.6 percent) and students (47.4 percent) rated the program as poor or below average. Less than 20 percent of the parents (19.1 percent) and

EXHIBIT 2-16
LMISD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE EFFECTIVENESS AND REGULARITY OF THE DISTRICT'S COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS.						
Administrators	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%	50.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Principals	0.0%	0.0%	46.7%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Teachers	3.5%	17.5%	45.6%	21.1%	4.4%	7.9%
Students	26.3%	21.1%	36.8%	14.0%	1.8%	0.0%
Parents	21.4%	26.2%	29.8%	13.1%	6.0%	3.6%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	4.7%	23.4%	57.8%	9.4%	1.6%	3.1%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

students (15.8 percent) rated the program as good or excellent. None of the principals rated the effectiveness of communications as poor or below average, and 53.3 percent rated communications as good. Thirty percent of the administrators rated the program as poor or below average, and 55 percent rated it as good or excellent. Twenty-one percent of the teachers rated the program as poor or below average, while 25.5 percent rated the program as good or excellent.

Exhibit 2-17 lists the ratings regarding the availability of volunteers in the schools. Participant responses to this question were similar to responses regarding communications and parent involvement. Most groups rated the availability of volunteers as poor or below average, while only 20 percent or less of the survey respondents rated the availability of volunteers as good or excellent.

Student performance is negatively affected by the lack of parental support. Students who do not have parental support at home often perform poorly in school as measured by standardized tests and graduation rates. These students are generally absent more and, at the secondary level, are more likely to hold after-school jobs that interfere with homework and studying for tests.

Active parents are one of the best communication tools that schools have. By not maximizing the use of parent volunteers, LMISD loses the opportunity to educate parents and the community about the positive things that are happening in the schools. Knowledgeable, involved parents are a significant source of support for individual schools and the district.

The lack of parent involvement is a significant issue in schools everywhere. Effective parent involvement programs are tailored to meet the needs of their individual school communities. These programs include opportunities for district staff to listen to their parents and to involve them in the planning of activities. Parents are viewed as active participants in all parts of the parent involvement process, including planning or design, implementation, and evaluation. District staff does not define parents as simply consumers of events or workshops.

Successful programs described in *Schools That Learn* focus significant efforts on building trust with their parents and community members and involving them in addressing specific issues such as elementary reading or discipline. This book describes successful practices across the country, based on the premise of schools that function as an extended learning community, involving students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members. Parents are often trained to help recruit other parents to work in the schools and with their children. This type of program helps create trust and provides additional resources to overburdened principals and teachers.

The district should design and implement a districtwide initiative to increase parent and community involvement that maximizes the use of limited available resources. The initiative should include five separate components (recruiting, training, deploying, monitoring, and rewarding) and be targeted at three separate populations: parents, senior citizens, and business and community partners. The district should plan, fund, and evaluate the initiative at the district level but implement it through the schools rather than in stand-alone centers such as the Parent Center. The role of the Parent Center liaison should be focused on increasing parent involvement in all the schools, rather than providing translation services.

EXHIBIT 2-17
LMISD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE AVAILABILITY OF VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH STUDENTS AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS.						
Administrators	25.0%	30.0%	30.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Principals	6.7%	46.7%	26.7%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Teachers	14.9%	36.0%	28.9%	11.4%	2.6%	6.1%
Students	29.8%	21.1%	33.3%	10.5 %	5.3%	0.0%
Parents	21.4%	25.0%	33.3%	9.5%	2.4%	8.3%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	21.9%	29.7%	35.9%	9.4%	0.0%	3.1 %

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

The first step in implementation is to define the nature of successful parent involvement in a district like LMISD with a majority of African American students, a significant number of economically disadvantaged students, and an increasing Hispanic student population. Best practices in school districts with a similar makeup of student populations should be identified and modified to reflect LMISD community expectations and student needs. Parents and community members should be included in this process to define parental involvement in terms that go beyond the traditional parameters of attendance at various events.

When successful parent involvement has been defined, the next step is to use the DIP and CIP planning process to determine the current level of parental involvement in each school based on the new definition. Once the baseline is established, appropriate objectives can the identified to increase parent involvement over a period of time. A limited number of strategies should be identified to achieve the objectives. Some of the suggestions made by participants in the surveys, Community Open House, or focus groups such as academic booster clubs or communications through the churches or African American committees to work on specific needs of that community could become successful strategies.

Volunteer efforts that help parents acquire or improve office or paraprofessional job skills could be used to recruit parents. Outreach through community churches could be an effective tool to reach parents who are unwilling to come to the schools due to language barriers or past experiences. Other strategies in the current DIP and CIPs, such as ministerial outreach, could also become successful strategies if the strategies help achieve specific objectives under the new definition of parental involvement.

DISTRICT WEBSITES (REC. 15)

District and school websites lack the content and up-to-date information to provide an effective communications tool to support school and district programs. The district website consists of a district homepage with information such as the district's address, a list of upcoming events, and the district open enrollment policy. There are links to secondary pages containing basic information identifying the administration (name, title, contact information), board information (names of board members, minutes, board policy), a district calendar, employment openings, and the schools. There is also a link to the district newsletter, the Champion's Circle. The color layout for headings for all pages is consistent, with blue background and white lettering on the headings and the use of the La Marque brand.

School websites consist of a link from the main web page. The school home pages vary in content but generally consist of a photograph of the school, school location, and contact information. The school home pages also contain the name of the principal and assistant principals if applicable.

The district purchased a commercial web development software package to use in its website development. Two staff members from each campus were selected by their respective principals as points of contact to maintain individual websites. The designated staff received two days of training from an outside consultant familiar with the commercial software. The training was in two separate sessions, approximately 30 days apart. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations also provides ongoing assistance and training as needed. Each department was asked to send two representatives to the classes. The first session including logging in/out of the server, creating desktop/start page, support and editing of newsletter-style homepages and calendars, and adding other web page links. The second session included advanced editing techniques, adding color and pictures, and building customized forms.

The district does not view its website as a strategic communications tool. Neither the district improvement plan nor individual campus improvement plans list any strategies to use the websites to communicate effectively with parents, students, or the community or to use them to promote the district. The district's Career and Technology Education (CTE) program does not provide the type of technology classes that could be used to support district and campus website expansion efforts.

In developing its website, the district did not have a written development plan that defined a consistent design, target audiences, or describe desired content. There were also no web development standards that were developed or distributed to assist users in developing clear, consistent formats and content.

As a result, information on the website is not organized or focused. The district's home page contains basic information, but the information is not grouped to be easily accessible to specific audiences. For example, the home page does not have links to a secondary page that specifically identifies a target audience such as parents, students, or the community. Instead, links are functional, or department-focused. Consolidated information that would be of interest to those particular groups is not available. The website also does not provide Spanish translations of key information to reach non-English speaking audiences.

Many key pieces of information that are of interest to the general public, or to specific groups such as students or parents, are not available online either as a direct link from the home page or located in individual school websites. Examples of the types of missing information include:

- code of conduct;

- dress codes;

- District Improvement Plan;

- Campus Improvement Plans;

- bus routes;

- health/immunization requirements;

- school supply lists;

- food service policies, prices, and menus; and

- employee handbook and employment policies.

Contact information is limited. The district home page has a link entitled Administration that provides names, titles, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses for administrators. However, there is no districtwide directory located on the home page that identifies all faculty and staff. Individual school websites provide teachers and staff names, but there is often no contact information such as telephone or e-mail listed.

The lack of planning also results in website pages that are inefficiently structured, with multiple tiers of links that are not user-friendly. Some school web pages require the user to navigate three levels before specific information is available. For example, to find staff assignments at La Marque High School, the user must select three levels: faculty, department, and teacher name. Once the user clicks on the name, the information provided is either the teacher name and a picture, or a notice that the web page is under construction. In most instances, the website does not identify a teacher's assignment area such as Spanish, music, or specific CTE area.

In addition, many times the links do not provide any information. For example, most school websites have secondary pages for clubs and organizations or the library. In most cases, the secondary pages contain little or no descriptive information about the particular topic. The LMISD clubs and organizations page contains the name of the organization and possibly the sponsors but no specific information such as the purpose of the club, meeting times, scheduled activities and updates, or membership requirements. Several of the library pages either say they are

under construction or contain minimal information such as a graphic and greeting from the librarian. There are no links to search engines or reading lists that would assist parents and students in researching materials.

Links are also redundant. For example, both the district and all school websites contain links to TEA. The middle school home page contains two links on the sidebar to the district's home page, one under a page entitled Links and one under a page entitled LMISD Main, even though the same link is a footer on each web page. The high school website home page has two headings on its sidebar, School Documents and School Report Card, that both contain a link to the AEIS report for the high school.

Besides the lack of a website development plan or website development standards, the district also lacks a specific, assigned resource that has the responsibility for ensuring data timeliness, content, and accuracy of website information. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations serves as the district's webmaster, with assistance from two teachers on each campus and staff in the administration building.

As the webmaster, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for coordinating the update and maintenance of website information. Individual principals are responsible for the content of their respective schools' website information and for reviewing material before it is put on the website. The Communications officer, the designated public information position for the district, is not responsible for developing or reviewing the content or format of the district's websites.

Without a specific, assigned resource, much of the website information is not up-to-date, or is incomplete. For example, the district home page does not have any current announcements, list special events, or acknowledge achievements. A weekly newsletter does exist, but the link on the sidebar is identified by its title (Champion's Circle), not by a link entitled Newsletter for an unfamiliar user to easily find. In addition, a significant number of school web pages are simply marked as under construction. By not keeping website information current, the district is missing a valuable opportunity to promote the positive activities and initiatives in the district as they occur.

In addition, the lack of a specific assigned resource with responsibility for quality review results in websites that contain grammatical and typographical errors. In November 2005, the review team noted several misspelled words and grammatical errors on several web pages.

In its publication, *Raising the Bar for School PR: New Standards for the School Public Relations Profession,* the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) sets a website standard. The standard is, "The organization has an Internet website that is well-constructed, user-friendly, and contains timely information of use to staff, parents, and community members, and helps to recruit future employees and parents/students for the district."

The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) Star Awards recognize excellence in district websites. In its 2004 awards for districts with less than 10,000 members, the TSPRA recognized White Settlement ISD's website as best in its category. Gold Star award winners included several districts geographically located near LMISD: Dickinson, Friendswood, and La Porte ISDs. Gold stars are given to district websites that achieve their purpose with creativity, craft, and skill in exceptional ways. The recognized websites shared many common design features. For example, the websites had pages directed toward a specific audience. White Settlement and Friendswood had web pages for parents. Friendswood ISD also had a page for students that contained topics of interest such as extracurricular activities, graduation requirements, credit by exam, and dual credit.

District information was profiled on two of the websites, Friendswood ISD and White Settlement ISD, to present the user with a quick, clear description of the district, including its goals and operations. Friendswood ISD's About Us page contained a brief history of the district and provided current information related to its TAKS student performance, budget expenditures, goals, mission, and programs. White Settlement's district information web page contained similar information including enrollment and budget information. It also highlighted district achievements as well as recognizing district community and business partnerships.

In addition, all three websites contained up-to-date information promoting district activities and events of interest. Dickinson ISD's home page included press releases, announcements, and news. It also contained a link to the latest board report with detailed articles about specific board agenda items. Friendswood ISD listed student achievements, and it also contained archives of past announcements and news releases. White Settlement ISD's website also contained a monthly activity calendar that not only listed district level events such as the end of a grading period but also provided activities by school.

LMISD should improve the content and up-to-date status of the district and school websites by developing and implementing a structured website plan and assigning overall responsibility for the websites to the Communications officer. In developing a website plan, the Communications officer should chair a committee consisting of district administrators, community members, and the director of CTE and Testing. The plan should document the website's purpose, desired target audiences, and the information to be communicated to the target audiences. It should also include design and navigation standards for the website to be user friendly.

The district could leverage community and student resources such as CTE students and journalism students in implementing the plan. The Communications officer should work with the director of CTE and Testing, CTE teachers, and journalism teachers to develop curricula that includes projects for students to design website layouts and update district and school website content. To maintain security in implementing the plan, the Communications officer should work with the high school CTE teacher and district technology specialist to restrict student access in posting information to the website.

Assigning the Communications officer with the responsibility for the website will provide many benefits. It will enable the Communications officer, who has a background in communications, to work actively with principals and staff in defining their communication needs and those of their teachers and parents. Once needs are defined, the Communications officer can work with staff to design layouts and formats that effectively capture and present the information and identify opportunities to promote a positive district image. It will also provide a single individual, who will be responsible for quality review to ensure information is accurate and grammatically correct.

CUSTOMER SERVICE (REC. 16)

District staff is often not responsive to staff, parent, or student requests for information or communications. Both parent and high school student focus groups cited lack of response to parent-initiated telephone calls or emails as a communications problem. Focus group participants talked about instances where teachers told parents that they did not check their emails and that it was necessary to go to the school principal to get a response from some teachers or administrators. Another focus group member mentioned one case where a parent's letters to central office staff did not receive a response.

School-based communications and customer service activities are fairly effective at the elementary level with weekly take-home folders known as Tuesday Folders that parents review and return with their comments and concerns. The communications process starts to decline at the middle school where parents no longer have an established method of communications and must depend on periodic notes sent home with their children. Changes in uniform dress with no notification until after school started, changes in school starting and ending times with no input from parents, and meetings that are rescheduled at the last minute were cited as examples of poor customer service at the middle school. At the high school, informational materials are sometimes received after the date of the event.

The district has no documented standards for responding to parents and no process to address customer service complaints or evaluate the responsiveness of its teachers and other staff. Teacher responsiveness varies based on the willingness and energy of the individual and the expectations of individual principals. There are also infrastructure barriers to teacher responsiveness. The schools have few telephones located in classrooms, so teachers may have to use telephones in the teacher lounge or office to return calls, which may sometimes be difficult to do during the school day.

Poor customer service fosters a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of school and district operations. Parents who are trying to be actively involved can become frustrated by their failed efforts and the lack of responsiveness. Poor customer service also limits the effectiveness of LMISD's efforts to improve its image in the community.

Austin ISD (AISD) has established customer service standards that at a minimum require district staff to respond to parent telephone calls within 72 hours. A customer service survey is posted on AISD's website that allows parents to comment on both good and poor service. The first month that the website survey was in place the district received more than 700 comments. AISD also includes customer service questions in its annual parent survey at all schools. Other school districts use comment cards provided at each school to obtain comments on school services, both good and bad.

The district should develop and implement customer service standards that include the returning of parent phones calls or written requests within a specified time. The district should also include customer service questions in any surveys and evaluate the use of comment cards or a website survey to gain insight into the responsiveness of LMISD staff.

COMMUNITY/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS (REC. 17)

The district has not developed business/community partnerships at the school level on a consistent basis to ensure that all schools have ample access to community and business support. Until the education foundation was established in October 2004, the district did not have a district-level focus on community/business partnerships and did not track them or provide district-level support to the schools to help develop ongoing partnerships.

One of the goals of the recently established education foundation was to provide a non-athletic opportunity for community members to support their schools and school district. The education foundation has been very successful in addressing this goal, raising approximately $120,000 in less than one year of operation. One grant has been awarded through October 2005, a $16,750 grant to the La Marque Middle School to implement a new science curriculum for middle school students.

Community businesses have supported the Education Summit that has been held during the last two years to encourage parent involvement and communications between the parents and the schools.

Specific district programs receive substantial support from the community in terms of donations and supplies. For example, more than $20,000 was donated by community businesses and individuals for the football banquet in 2005. In June 2005, the La Marque High School Band Booster club contributed $10,000 for band instruments. In the same month a local company provided contributions to support academic and fine arts programs at elementary schools, and another business provided $2,000 to the district for the administrative retreat.

The District Improvement Plan (DIP) for 2005–06 continues the Education Summit as a strategy to encourage community partnerships. The high school 2005–06 Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) includes a strategy to compile a list of businesses and encourage them to volunteer, mentor, and participate in LMHS Career Night. Three of the elementary schools—Inter-City, Simms, and Westlawn—list strategies in their individual 2005–06 CIPs that are designed to increase community/business partnerships in their schools. La Marque Middle School, the Early Childhood Learning Center, and Highlands Elementary School CIPs do not mention identification of possible community/business partnerships. None of the results of these strategies have been documented as yet.

In January 2005, the district began an outreach program to the community's church ministers as part of its DIP. Activities have included monthly meetings between the superintendent, board president, and seven to ten local church ministers. Church members are encouraged to be visible and active at the high school. A "Dream Keepers" event has been scheduled in November in a local church to encourage male mentoring and involvement with young male teenagers.

While the district has tapped a number of community and business resources, there is no structured approach in place to ensure that all possible resources are contacted and that community members and businesses have multiple opportunities to participate in the schools by volunteering time as well as providing funds. By not maximizing the use of community/business partnerships, the district also loses a significant positive communications tool to publicize actual school operations in the community.

Some school districts implement a districtwide program that focuses on recruitment of community members and business to serve as partners. Activities include training for principals and central office administrators and parents as recruiters, orientation sessions for potential partners, and tracking and acknowledgement of partner contributions. District administrators cited the need for both the organizations serving as partners and the school district to have a clear vision of goals set by the district for organizations that support the education process.

In these districts, district-level staff provides a variety of interrelated activities for the district, business partners, and the community including the following:

- providing training for organizations and mentors;

- providing leadership training for parents and organizations;

- working closely with PTAs and PTOs;

- acting as a liaison for government affairs;

- promoting and establishing a resource center;

- coordinating goals and activities with all community organizations working with the district;

- coordinating city businesses, student organizations, and city services interested in promoting educational, social, and economic opportunities of the community; and

- creating a full school-community service concept.

LMISD should expand district and school outreach to community members and businesses to include a variety of ways to support the schools. The Communications officer should provide training to district staff and PTO leaders in recruiting community/business partners. The Communications officer, working with the principals, should also provide training to potential community/business partners in the types of opportunities available and how best to access them. This training could be done in an orientation session similar to the sessions provided for prospective foundation directors. Once selected, principals or instructional specialists should provide training to community/business partners who are going to volunteer as mentors or tutors to help develop their skills and ensure that the process is beneficial for the student. The Communications officer should also monitor and track community partnership contributions to ensure that proper recognition is made and that all schools participate.

For background information on District Management and Community Relations, see page 226 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
9. Expand board roles, responsibilities, and activities to provide appropriate oversight, address compliance issues, increase effectiveness of decision-making, and increase accountability.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($2,000)
10. Develop and implement a research-based planning approach that includes adequate analysis of alternatives, informed decision-making, rigorous monitoring of strategy implementation, and comprehensive evaluation of results.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($10,000)
11. Review the district organization structure to ensure that reporting relationships are clear and that similar functions are grouped together to the extent possible.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
12. Develop formal staffing guidelines based on actual student enrollments using industry standards that are modified to reflect district expectations.	$45,854	$251,899	$251,899	$251,899	$251,899	$1,053,450	$0
13. Develop and implement a written contract or retainer agreement with the district's legal counsel specifying hourly rates and allowed charges.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
14. Design and implement a districtwide initiative to increase parent involvement that maximizes the use of limited available resources.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
15. Improve the content and up-to-date status of the district and school websites by developing and implementing a structured website plan and assigning overall responsibility for the websites to the Communications officer.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
16. Develop and implement customer service standards that include the returning of parent phone calls and requests within a specified time.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
17. Expand district and school outreach to community members and businesses to include a variety of ways to support the schools.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS–CHAPTER 2	$45,854	$251,899	$251,899	$251,899	$251,899	$1,053,450	($12,000)
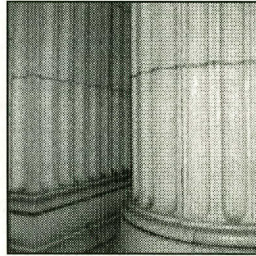
Chapter 3

Facilities Management

La Marque Independent School District
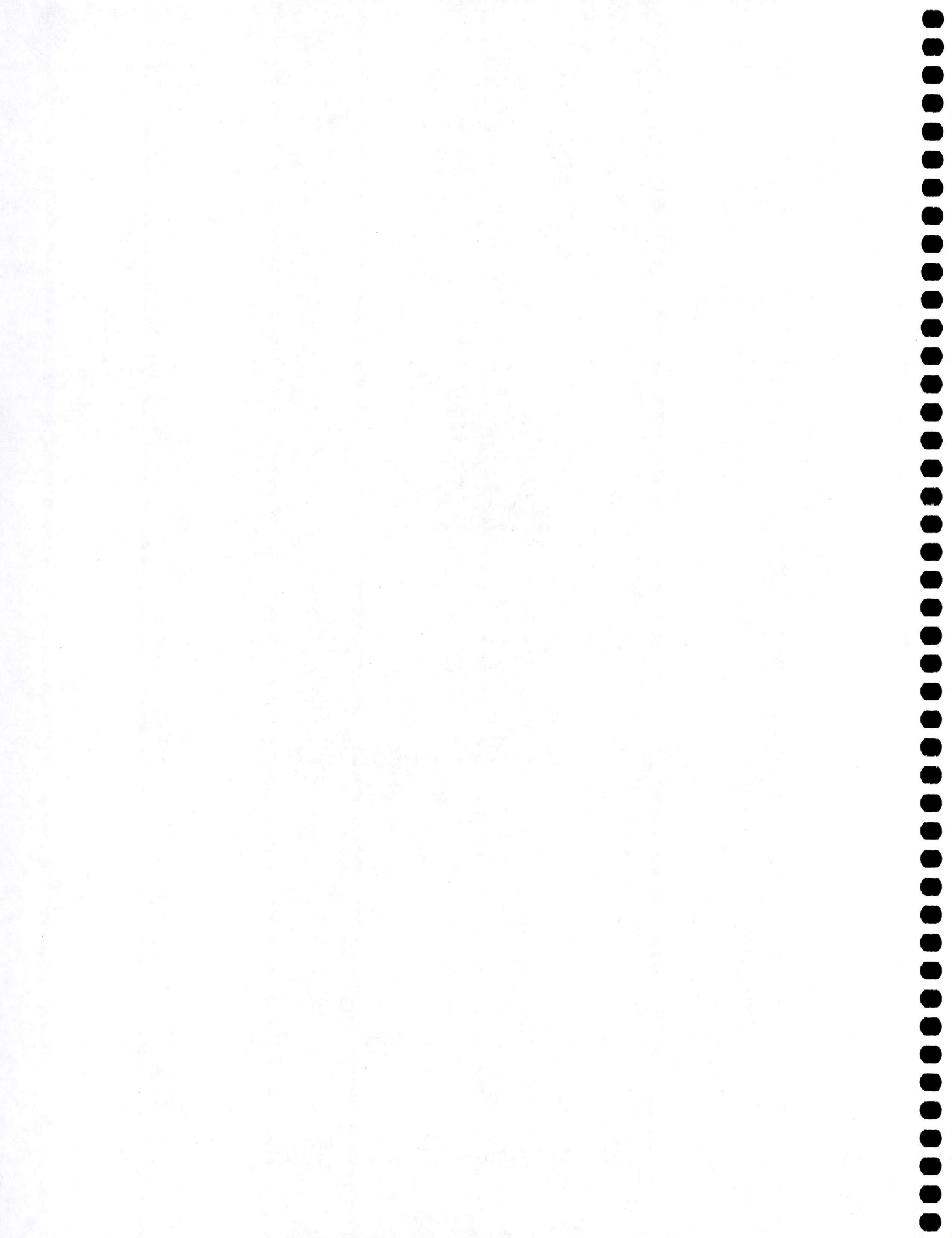
CHAPTER 3. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

An effective school facilities program coordinates all of the district's building resources, including facility planning, construction management, maintenance, custodial, groundskeeping and energy management. The program's goal is to provide a safe and clean environment where students can learn and to integrate facility planning with other aspects of school planning.

The La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) has instructional, sports, and administrative facility space totaling more than 854,000 square feet. Most buildings were constructed in the 1940s and 1950s with upgrades in the 1990s. District voters passed a $24 million bond program in October 2002 to renovate and upgrade all district schools. Renovations began in 2003 and are nearing completion. There are no portable classroom or office facilities.

LMISD's enrollment has declined 15.9 percent during the 10-year period from 1995–96 through 2004–05. Because of declining enrollments, the district has closed facilities and converted their use to maintain reasonable facility capacity utilization. The district converted the former junior high school complex into the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC), with space for special programs and food service. The former Lincoln High School complex currently houses the maintenance operations. A portion of the complex has also been leased to the Texas City Parks and Recreation Department and the Head Start Program. Lake Road Elementary School has been converted to house the district's alternative education programs. In addition, LMISD leases a portion to College of the Mainland for a teacher alternative certification program.

LMISD has capacity for 4,879 students. Enrollment as of November 1, 2005, is 3,892. LMISD's districtwide facility utilization rate is 80 percent. Elementary schools and the ECLC have a combined utilization of 90 percent. La Marque Middle School and La Marque High School have utilization rates of 66 and 77 percent, respectively.

The district outsources its maintenance, custodial, and groundskeeping functions to Sodexho. The initial facilities services agreement is a five-year agreement that started on April 1, 2003, and runs through March 31, 2008. Under the terms of the agreement, the vendor receives a fixed price monthly installment. The payment is wired electronically and is payable on or before the first of each month. There is an annual inflation adjustment equal to the greater of three percent or the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) averaged for the previous 12-month period. Since contract initiation, the vendor has received two 3 percent increases. The agreement is amended annually to reflect compensation changes and installment payments. The latest renewal was dated July 14, 2005.

In addition to custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services, the vendor's responsibilities outlined in the contract include:
- employee wages, salaries, taxes, and insurance;
- janitorial equipment and supplies;
- computer equipment for office staff;
- uniforms;
- operations support including payroll, human resources, accounting, legal, training and development, and general administration;
- manuals, forms, and training aids;
- pest control;
- fertilizers and seed;
- work order software and equipment;
- window washing for windows less than six feet off the ground; and
- laundering and treatment of mop heads.

The district's responsibilities outlined in the contract include:
- utilities and electrical power;
- office space;
- supplies and equipment storage space;
- trash removal;
- maintenance and repair of district furniture, desks, cabinets (beyond what the vendor can reasonably repair);
- physicals or vaccinations required by district or law;
- vehicles;
- walk-off mats at building entrances;
- maintenance-purchased services, hand tools and supplies;
- ground equipment; and
- window washing for windows more than six feet off the ground.

The district is also required to provide capital equipment as mutually agreed to by both parties.

Vendor staffing consists of 60 total staff. Staff is managed by the resident manager, who is assisted by two custodial supervisors and two clerical staff. There are nine head custodians and 30 full- and part-time custodians and substitutes. Maintenance staff consists of one electrician, one plumber, one mechanic, one painter, three heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) staff, and three general maintenance staff. The grounds staff includes a foreman and a crew of five.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- The district's pre-bond planning process was comprehensive and included steps to gain public input and support throughout the process, resulting in approval of the bond program by a two-to-one margin.

FINDINGS

- The bond construction program oversight process did not include key steps and active hands-on district oversight to ensure design requirements were included and construction was adequately performed.

- LMISD did not meet the intent of job order contracting (JOC), a procurement method used for minor construction and renovation, to procure $6.5 million of construction projects for the 2002 bond.

- The district's existing facilities services agreement does not set expected industry performance standards for all service areas, link contractor performance to financial increases and renewals, provide visibility to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to all contract service areas, or contain clauses that minimize the district's liability.

- The district has not actively monitored the contract to address weaknesses in the contractor-provided maintenance function.

- LMISD uses a separate warehouse facility for central receiving, which is inefficient.

- LMISD does not have a comprehensive energy management program that includes energy management goals, utility cost monitoring, and energy conservation initiatives to control expenditures.

- The district does not have a comprehensive recycling program as required by law and board policy and is missing an opportunity to decrease waste removal costs

and increase revenue from recycling by increasing student and staff awareness and participation.

- The district does not have an annual planning process to develop and maintain facility information in a facility master plan to identify future facility needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 18: Implement comprehensive internal construction program management techniques for remaining and future bond projects.** The district should designate a position to serve as a construction manager (CM), working with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations in reviewing design documents and inspecting the worksites to ensure all requirements are addressed. In addition, the district should implement more detailed written reporting to the board on a monthly basis. The reporting should include project status reports that identify the tasks that have been performed and include a schedule with estimated completion dates, as well as financial summaries that outline budgetary information such as original project budget, budget changes, expenditures, and projected balances.

- **Recommendation 19: Cease using job order contracting for construction projects.** The board should direct the superintendent to use one of the other procurement methods allowed by state law for construction projects such as competitive bidding, competitive sealed proposals, construction manager-agent, construction manager at-risk, or design/build. Implementation of this recommendation will ensure the district is receiving the best value for the price paid for construction projects.

- **Recommendation 20: Evaluate weaknesses in current contract terms, develop standards and contract clauses to strengthen contractor accountability, and incorporate these items into the existing contract and solicitations for future contracts.** The district should obtain technical assistance to address weaknesses identified in its current contract related to lack of performance measures, automatic financial escalations, limited visibility, and lack of protective measures to limit district liability. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should develop performance standards and contract clauses to address the identified weaknesses and should

use these standards and clauses to negotiate changes in the existing contract as well as to develop specifications to re-bid the contract by the time the existing agreement expires in 2008. Changes to the existing contract that include performance measures, clauses to limit district liability, and that link performance to financial increases will assist the district in holding its vendor accountable for performance.

• **Recommendation 21: Address maintenance weaknesses by implementing an active contract monitoring process that includes short- and long-term actions.** In the short-term, the district should address its existing maintenance issues by developing a corrective action plan with expected completion dates. Ongoing monitoring should include reporting and evaluation of maintenance performance. To ensure long-term effectiveness, the district should evaluate its options and determine whether or not to continue full outsourcing, outsourcing of maintenance management only, or returning to internal maintenance. The district should solicit proposals accordingly with a target date of having completed a re-solicitation by March 31, 2008, the expiration date of the current maintenance agreement. A robust contract monitoring process will allow the district to hold the vendor accountable for maintenance performance and to take corrective action as necessary to address maintenance shortcomings.

• **Recommendation 22: Move the central receiving function to the maintenance warehouse.** The district should relocate the mail delivery and central receiving position to the maintenance facility and use the maintenance facility as its central receiving location. Since the maintenance facility is manned by other vendor employees and is designed to receive goods, this change will eliminate the need to operate the separate warehouse office location. In addition, the maintenance staff can replace the business office staff as a backup for receiving when the individual is out performing mail and delivery functions. This change will improve the productivity of the business office by removing an interruption of a primary job function and eliminate the need to operate the separate warehouse office.

• **Recommendation 23: Implement a comprehensive energy management program to control energy costs.** The energy management program should include three components: a board policy that provides guidance for the program along with specific goals and

temperatures for district buildings; constant and ongoing monitoring of utility invoices; and user conservation education to reduce energy consumption. The district should enforce the facilities services agreement that designates the vendor's manager as being responsible for energy control activities, including the review of utility bills and initiation of energy conservation techniques. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should work with the vendor's manager to identify necessary actions to fulfill these duties and implement an ongoing monitoring process to ensure that these activities occur. The district should also form an energy committee consisting of principals, teachers, staff, and students to work with the vendor manager to research and implement available programs, such as the Watt Watchers user education program, to control energy use and reduce costs. A comprehensive energy program will allow the district to control its energy use and achieve long-term savings.

• **Recommendation 24: Implement a comprehensive recycling program.** The recycling program should include initiatives to increase the types of materials recycled and encourage student and staff participation. In developing the recycling program, the district should research existing programs and determine their applicability for use in LMISD. The district could also use the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Texas School Recycling Guide which contains a 10-step approach that was developed to assist school districts in establishing recycling programs. The district should research possible grants such as waste pass-through grants administered by the Houston-Galveston Area Council to minimize the costs of establishing the program.

• **Recommendation 25: Develop a process to maintain current facility data and incorporate it into a facility master plan that is updated annually.** The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should establish a facilities planning team consisting of six to 10 members that includes board members, community members, district staff, and the vendor maintenance manager. The plan should contain current facility study data, student enrollment projections, and projected funding requirements and budgets. The planning team should compile elements of a master plan from the existing facility study as well as updates from bond project renovations. The team should also project

student enrollments for the five-year period based on conditions that affect enrollment such as economic development or opening of schools. The process should include an annual evaluation and update of the plan.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

PRE-BOND ELECTION PLANNING PROCESS

The district's pre-bond planning process was comprehensive and included steps to gain public input and support throughout the process. The bond process began in the spring 2002 for an October 2002 bond election. The process included formation of a facilities study committee that included 20–25 community members. Each board member recommended individuals for the committee, and the superintendent made additional selections to provide broader input.

In May 2002, the district hired an architect to develop an assessment of the condition of district facilities. To gather initial information, the architect sent questionnaires to principals, teachers, maintenance personnel, administrators, food service staff, and athletic department staff to obtain feedback about facility needs. The architect used the questionnaire responses to develop a list of needs for each facility. Maintenance personnel and administrators reviewed the list. The campus lists were separated into three priority levels: those to complete in 1–2 years; those to complete in 3–5 years; and those to complete in 6–10 years.

During preparation of the lists, campus surveys were also conducted. The architect, the district's director of Maintenance, and committee members met at each site and walked through each facility, with the architect and the director of Maintenance pointing out problem areas. The architect developed the districtwide facility study based on his assessment and input from the committee and district staff. The study was used as a basic budget planning tool during the summer of 2002 to shape the final size and scope of the bond program. It identified the final scope as $24 million. In August 2002, the board adopted the order for the bond election to be held October 5.

In July, August, and September of 2002, the superintendent spoke at an estimated 20 to 30 events and meetings to inform the public about the district's facility needs and how a bond program would address the needs. Events included church activities, the Tiki Island City Council meeting, Rotary Club meetings, and chamber of commerce events. The outreach effort was so successful that groups such as senior citizens, who no longer had children in the schools, appeared at several board meetings to voice their support for a bond initiative.

A citizen's group, Keep Improving District Schools (KIDS), was formed and developed a bond brochure to provide the community with additional information about the proposed bond program. The brochure identified what the district would use the bond program for; explained why the district needed bonds as opposed to normal operating funds; specified the cost of the bonds to the average taxpayer; and provided a list of voting sites.

In addition to the brochure, the district also set up a hotline to allow the public to ask additional questions. The communications office staff not only responded by telephone to individuals, but also posted responses on the district's website.

Because of the efforts to inform and include the public in the process, the bond election held in October 2002 passed by more than a two-to-one margin. The final bond results were 839 for the bond program and 382 against.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOND CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM (REC. 18)

The bond construction program oversight process did not include key steps and active hands-on district oversight to ensure design requirements were included and construction was adequately performed. LMISD passed a $24 million bond for renovations and upgrades to district facilities, with more than half of the funds allocated to high school renovation projects. Construction began in May 2003 with the final projects scheduled for completion by the end of 2005. The district estimates approximately $424,000 in remaining funds will be available for additional projects.

According to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, priority items for the remaining funds include a sound system for the high school auditorium, including construction to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements; asbestos tile removal and minor renovation of the special programs building; additional heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) repairs; and resurfacing the athletic track.

Exhibit 3-1 presents a list of projects and their actual cost.

EXHIBIT 3-1
LMISD BOND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

PROJECT	PROJECT BUDGET	CONTRACT AMOUNT	CHANGE ORDERS	TOTAL CONTRACT	ARCHITECT FEES/ EXPENSES	TOTAL PROJECT COST (ARCHITECT + TOTAL CONTRACT)
New Tennis Court Construction	$483,000	$344,701	($15,642)	$329,059	$21,177	$350,236
District Parking Lots and High School Bus Loop	1,000,000	796,744	35,456	832,200	76,563	908,763
Stadium Renovations	1,575,000	1,455,904	84,099	1,540,003	120,486	1,660,489
Middle and Elementary School Maintenance for MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems)	2,263,915	1,935,000	179,828	2,114,828	171,450	2,286,278
Phase I High School Renovations and Additions including:	3,757,000	4,989,171	88,392	5,077,563	398,512	5,476,075
- Glazing (window replacement)	250,000	332,855	8,554	341,409	0	341,409
- Commons	107,000	210,920	0	210,920	0	210,920
- MEP Upgrades	2,650,000	3,491,494	87,943	3,579,437	0	3,579,437
- Kitchen Renovations	750,000	953,902	(8,105)	945,797	0	945,797
- Architect Fees	0	0	0	0	398,512	398,512
Phase II High School Renovations and Additions	8,223,000	7,046,000	822,165	7,868,165	546,182	8,414,347
Pool Renovations	600,000	605,700	(40,000)	565,700	45,034	610,734
Early Childhood Learning Center Electrical Upgrades	250,000	204,928	0	204,928	15,372	220,300
Roofing (Districtwide)	2,454,463	2,575,708	0	2,575,708	0	2,575,708
Other Items						
Chalkboards	212,000	112,777	0	112,777	0	112,777
Furniture, Fixture & Equipment (FFE)/Other	1,752,000		0	0	0	0
Owner Controlled Insurance Program (OCIP)	600,000	730,948	0	730,948	0	730,948
Incidentals (All Projects)	0	0	0	0	0	519,666
TOTALS	$23,170,378	$20,797,581	$1,154,298	$21,951,879	$1,394,776	$23,866,321

SOURCE: LMISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, LMISD bond construction documents, October 2005.

Effective construction management requires the following:

- thorough and comprehensive review of design documents by knowledgeable staff to finalize all details before construction begins;

- daily monitoring and inspection of construction progress to ensure quality workmanship, compliance with design specifications and responsive identification and resolution of issues;

- regular budget monitoring and status reporting to the board to keep the board and public informed; and

- well-documented status reports that provide a clear audit trail of issues and actions taken to address the issues.

During the bond program, these necessary activities were not performed in an organized or consistent manner. The review team assessed LMISD's construction management to key requirements identified in the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG). A plus sign ("+") in the status column indicates that LMISD adequately met the requirement; a minus sign ("–") indicates it did not. **Exhibit 3-2** presents the results of the assessment.

FIGURE 3-2
COMPARISON OF LMISD CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
TO RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT	STATUS (+/-)*	RATIONALE FOR STATUS
Complete review of all plans and specifications with relevant construction code requirements	−	Functional reviews were held. District did not have internal staff available with expertise and chose not to hire external construction manager to represent its interests. Instead district relied on architect's capability. District staff that reviewed plans and design documents did not have trades or construction background.
Thorough reference check of general contractor and subcontractors	+	Done by architect during review of bids for various projects.
Inspections coordinated by architect to provide quality control	−	Periodic inspections were done by staff hired through architect's firm. City inspectors also participated as warranted. District's interests were not represented by district staff or on-site vendor's facilities manager (Sodexho) participating in the inspections to verify quality or compliance. District relied on staff supplied by architect.
Comprehensive status reports provided in a timely manner by the architect and district staff	−	Weekly meetings between architect, assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, and vendor facilities manager. Reports presented to the board by the architect were oral, not written.
Established procedures for progress payments	+	Well established process. Before making payments, both the staff hired to be the "eyes and ears" of the architect and the architect reviewed and signed off. District relied heavily on outside review—no active internal review.
Monitoring of contractor insurance coverage and all bonding requirements	+	District received regular updates and file reports from bonding companies on progress.
Change orders for projects signed by the architect, superintendent, and board	+	Change orders are coordinated through recommendations of the architect. Reviews involve administrators, contractor personnel, and the architect's staff and consultants. Process includes submitting change orders over $10,000 to the board for approval after first getting approval from the architect and assistant superintendent of Business and Operations.
Change orders are fully documented with reasons for increase/decrease in costs clearly specified	+	Adequate examples provided.
Approvals by board of all design and construction documents	−	No documentation provided to verify this activity occurred. Board minutes indicate informational reports provided, but not that reports were written or of any approvals.
Monthly project progress reports containing budget, expenditures, encumbrances, and balances	−	Reports are periodic, not monthly.
Facility project budget reports with current and accurate budget data	−	Budget summaries were provided by project. Detailed spreadsheets that tracked payments were by vendor, not project. Multiple spreadsheets were not cross-referenced to architect project numbers to easily validate costs per project for budget analysis.
Procedures for accepting completed projects with approvals by: construction supervisor, architect, appropriate inspector, administration	−	Acceptance based on architect's recommendation. Documents indicated that walk-throughs occurred. Vendor facilities manager and assistant superintendent assert district was well represented at walk-throughs. Meeting notes to discuss program show district representation. However, the walk-through documents do not show that there was consistent representation from all parties: architect, district representative, and the staff hired by architect firm.

FIGURE 3-2 (CONTINUED)
COMPARISON OF LMISD CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
TO RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT	STATUS (+/-)*	RATIONALE FOR STATUS
Monitoring of timely completion of any "punch list items"	−	No documentation provided as to status of completion to assess timeliness. Assistant superintendent of Business and Operations indicated that district withholds final payment until architect indicates punch list is complete.
Procedures for holding a retainage until final acceptance of the project	+	District has a process in place and has withheld retainage on certain projects.
Ensuring complete "as built" plans are delivered to the district	−	Do not exist.

*A plus sign ("+") in the status column indicates that LMISD adequately met the requirement; a minus sign ("-") indicates it did not.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, FASRG, LMISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, and LMISD bond construction documents, October 2005.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-2**, many of the areas where requirements were not met (marked as a "-") demonstrate that throughout the bond project design and construction phases, LMISD did not have dedicated individuals with trades or construction backgrounds available on staff to protect its interest in reviewing design documents. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, who did not have a construction background but had previous experience with building projects, was assigned as the district's construction manager.

The district originally planned to offer the position to its then director of Maintenance, who terminated when the district outsourced its maintenance function in the spring of 2003. However, the director of Maintenance accepted a position in another district. District staff discussed hiring a separate individual to manage the program, but decided that the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations' previous experience, coupled with support from architects and maintenance personnel, could achieve acceptable results while saving money to use in the bond program.

Because the district did not have knowledgeable staff available to protect its interests, it relied extensively on the bond program architect and staff hired by the architect to perform these tasks and to support the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. As a result, there were many items that were either omitted, unfinished, or of poor workmanship that cost the district in terms of staff time and materials. For example, an elevator shaft for the high school to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was left out of a drawing. The re-work to overcome this omission required a change order and cost the district approximately $19,000.

In another example, a contractor painted latex paint over epoxy paint. The new paint caused the old paint to bubble and peel. The problem wasn't discovered until after some of the painting had been done. The painting subcontractor had to scrape and repaint the areas, which resulted in a change order to cover the extra project cost. In addition to the re-work, many items were of poor workmanship or left unfinished. At the high school, for example, restroom stalls that were supposed to be enlarged to comply with ADA were still unfinished as of September 2005. There are holes in the floor with no toilets. Also, some bathroom tiles were coming up. In other building areas of the high school, some of the tiling had large and uneven gaps. According to the vendor facility manager in December 2005, these items have been rectified on punch lists; however, no supporting documentation was provided to the review team to verify this assertion.

Besides the lack of available district staff with construction-related backgrounds, the district's overall management was informal. Many of the progress reports delivered to the board were oral and not written. Also, budget information to keep the superintendent, board, and the community up-to-date on the progress of the program was not correlated and was only reported periodically and not monthly.

Construction management programs use knowledgeable and dedicated staff to manage the project coupled with ongoing monitoring and reporting. The Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) in its publication, TSPR's Top 10 Ways to Improve Public Schools, identifies that effective construction management is critical. As stated in the publication, TSPR found that "fraud, poor workmanship, poor quality components and general cost overruns can be avoided or

reduced by having an appointed or specially-hired employee of the district monitoring daily construction progress and regularly reporting back to the board." Districts that do not have internal staff with these capabilities will often use an agent, such as a construction manager-at-risk. Lancaster ISD, a peer district selected for this review, uses a construction manager for its construction projects.

Other districts use a construction manager and tap community skills and knowledge. Christoval ISD (CISD) hired a construction manager-at-risk to perform all tasks before and during construction, such as providing a preliminary evaluation of CISD's program and project budget; regularly monitoring project costs; and securing and transmitting to the architect and engineers required guarantees, affidavits, releases, bonds, and waivers. In addition, CISD formed a committee of three board members with construction experience to oversee the project. The board's knowledge base gave the district a measure of quality control that many smaller districts do not have.

Project tracking is another key element of construction management. Fort Bend ISD developed project-tracking reports in multiple formats to track and keep up with all new construction and renovations. Some of the forms developed were monthly construction department work-in-progress reports for the board, project observation reports on all ongoing projects, inspection request reports done by staff at the request of the contractor, and material testing and water and air balance report reviews done by staff. The forms allowed the Construction department to quickly compile and submit information.

Public reporting of progress is important to increase public awareness and support for the bond program within the community. San Antonio ISD's (SAISD) Construction Management Department provided monthly status reports to the board in four different formats. The department provided an end-of-month status report that included the status of all assets and liabilities; the total by general category (land acquisition, construction, insurance, and fees); the total appropriation, encumbrance, expenditure, and balance for each project; and a detailed financial statement for each project. This report allowed the reader to quickly see the status of the bond program and determine where the funds had been spent.

SAISD's Construction Management Department also provided a chart detailing the progress schedule for each project. With this report, the reader could review the progress of a particular project in graphic form, easily determine how much of the project had been completed, and identify the expected schedule for additional improvements. The final two monthly reports were a summary of all projects and their stages of completion and a summary of projects within a particular stage of construction.

LMISD should implement comprehensive internal construction program management techniques for remaining and future bond projects. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations estimated that there are approximately $424,000 in remaining bond funds that the district can apply to additional work. The district should designate a position to act as an on-site construction manager (CM) to oversee and manage any future projects on behalf of the district in addition to resources used by the architect. The CM should be responsible for thoroughly reviewing any design documents and discussing them with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, the relevant building supervisor, and the architect to ensure all requirements are addressed. The designated CM should also perform daily inspections of the worksite in addition to the individual hired by the architect. If additional expertise is warranted, the CM should leverage corporate resources available as part of the district's contract.

In addition to a CM, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should implement more transparent and detailed reporting to the board. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should require the architect to provide monthly written summary reports. Formats such as those used by San Antonio ISD could be obtained and modified for LMISD use. In addition, the board should receive a monthly status spreadsheet of bond project costs. The budget report should identify the project budget, any changes to the budget and reasons for the change, expenditures to date, and remaining balance.

JOB ORDER CONTRACTING (REC. 19)
LMISD did not meet the intent of job order contracting (JOC), a procurement method used for minor construction and renovation, to procure $6.5 million of construction projects for the 2002 bond. The district procured the JOC through the Texas Association of School Board (TASB) BuyBoard purchasing cooperative. The job order contracts were awarded to a single vendor, Jamail Construction, and were used for high school renovations as well as the renovation of Etheredge Stadium. **Exhibit 3-3** identifies the total contract award amounts by project.

EXHIBIT 3-3
LMISD PROJECTS PROCURED USING JOB ORDER CONTRACTING
2002 BOND PROGRAM

PROJECT	COST
High School Renovations: Glazing (windows replacement)	$341,409
High School Renovations: Commons area	$210,920
High School Renovations: Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing	$3,579,437
Etheredge Stadium	$1,540,003
District Parking Lots and High School Bus Loop	$832,200
TOTAL	**$6,503,969**

SOURCE: LMISD, Business Office, September 2005.

Arizona State University's Alliance for Construction Excellence (ACE) states, "JOC is a way of getting small, simple, and commonly encountered construction projects done easily and quickly. A JOC contract usually applies to a specific site or sites and can be used for any number of jobs that need to be done for as long as the contract is in effect. Essentially, JOC provides owners with an on-call general contractor who is familiar with the site and the owner's needs."

Under a job order contract, the execution of an order signed by the school district's representative and the contractor authorizes specific work projects. A JOC contract uses a unit-price book (UPB) that establishes a unit price for each of a multitude of construction line items. The contract price is put in terms of a coefficient, which is a multiplier that covers the contractor's overhead and profit as well as any adjustment between the UPB and actual local prices. The contracted price coefficient is applied to all labor and materials line items from the UPB necessary for each job to arrive at a firm price for the job.

Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 44.031 (a)(8) specifically authorizes "a job order contract for the minor construction, repair, rehabilitation, or alteration of a facility." TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) states, "The types of contracts that qualify for award under this procurement method are those:

- That call for the minor construction, repair, rehabilitation, or alteration of a facility; and

- Where the work called for by the contract is of a recurring nature, but delivery times and quantities are indefinite; and

- The job orders are awarded substantially on the basis of pre-described and pre-priced tasks."

There are many types of work that could qualify for award under a job order contract. Some examples are ceiling tile replacement, repainting, sidewalk or parking lot repairs, roof repairs, and floor covering replacement. ACE also states, "The JOC method should not be used for large, complex new construction projects that require extensive or innovative design or are likely to encounter changes and revisions during construction. In fact, some states require each job completed under a JOC contract to cost less than $750,000."

TEC, FASRG, and ACE do not authorize or recommend JOC for major or complex construction projects. The scope of the projects completed by LMISD using JOC represented more than 27 percent of the projects authorized by the 2002 bond program and would qualify, in terms of dollars expended, as major projects.

The purpose of competitive procurement is to stimulate competition and obtain the lowest practical price for the work needed. The Handbook on Purchasing for Texas Public Schools, Junior Colleges, and Community Colleges states, "If a district advertises purchasing needs relating to large expenditures, then economies of scale—purchasing in large quantities—will probably result in lower costs either per unit item or in the aggregate."

Although the JOC was competitively procured by the purchasing cooperative, JOC is based on a unit price, and that unit price applies to one or 100 of the items priced. Therefore, economies of scale are not realized through JOC. By using JOC instead of other construction competitive procurement methods for $6.5 million in construction projects, LMISD did not ensure that it received the best value for the price paid.

The district, however, believes that the JOC method provided it with several advantages. According to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, the district used JOC upon its architect's recommendation to avoid delays and begin construction the first summer after receipt of bond funds for several projects. The use of sealed proposals would have delayed the initiation of projects by a year. For the stadium renovation and bus loop projects, which required significant amounts of cement, a year's delay would have increased costs due to cement shortages. In addition, the JOC provided the district with opportunities to reduce the scope and adjust to emerging situations to fit the scope to the budget.

TEC authorizes several different procurement methods specifically for construction projects. These methods include competitive bidding, competitive sealed proposals, construction manager-agent, construction manager-at-risk, and design/build. The FASRG has a model process for each of these methods.

Many school districts use competitive procurement methods other than JOC for construction projects to ensure they receive the best value for the price paid. For example, Hays CISD used competitive sealed proposals and construction manager at-risk to procure projects in its 2001 bond program. The district ensured that it received the best value for the price paid using these methods.

The district should cease using job order contracting for construction projects. The board should direct the superintendent to use one of the other procurement methods allowed by state law for construction projects such as competitive bidding, competitive sealed proposals, construction manager-agent, construction manager at-risk, or design/build. Implementation of this recommendation will ensure the district is receiving the best value for the price paid for construction projects.

CONTRACT ACCOUNTABILITY TERMS (REC. 20)

The district's existing facilities services agreement does not set expected industry performance standards for all service areas, link contractor performance to financial increases and renewals, provide visibility to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to all contract service areas, or contain clauses that minimize the district's liability.

The district's agreement for facilities management is largely task-driven, rather than performance-driven. The agreement contains specifications that are lists of tasks to be performed.

The specifications include daily and weekly cleaning schedule tasks, project cleaning tasks, miscellaneous custodial duties, minor maintenance tasks performed by custodians and technicians, and grounds maintenance tasks. The agreement, however, does not include performance standards for these tasks.

In its review of the district's five-year agreement for facilities services, the review team noted that the agreement did not establish performance standards for accountability. Examples include:

- Standard of Work (Section 8.18) is defined in general terms—a statement that the standard of work shall be in accordance with the best commercial practices and standards in the industry, rather than specific performance measures.

- Expected staffing levels based on industry custodial staffing levels and standards of cleanliness are not specified.

- Expected maintenance level is not defined in terms of customer service and response times, customer satisfaction, mix of expected preventive and reactive maintenance, interior, exterior, and lighting aesthetics, maintenance service worker efficiency, systems reliability, and budget.

- Expected responsiveness to maintenance work orders and prioritization is not specified.

- Expected staffing levels based on an expected level of maintenance are not specified.

- Expected staffing levels for groundskeeping and responsiveness are not specified.

- Contractor Reports (Section 15 A through M) are not required to be provided, but are generated only upon district request.

- Provisions that would strengthen program evaluation by providing for the district to evaluate the contractor performance based on surveys and compliance with the contract and other statutory requirements are not included.

The agreement's financial and renewal terms and conditions are unfavorable to the district because they are automatic and not tied to performance. Section 3.1 of the contract states that "the term of the agreement is five years and that it shall continue from year to year thereafter." There is no language

that specifies an annual option to renew based on a review of performance. The existing contract annual amendments merely change the annual financial compensation amount and fixed monthly installment payment amounts based on the annual amount. The only means for the district to not renew is to exercise the termination clause that allows the district to terminate either for cause or convenience with a 60-day notice.

Increases in the cost of the facilities agreement allow for a minimum three percent automatic escalation, regardless of performance or actual inflation. Section 7.3A states that the price shall be increased by a percentage equal to the greater of three percent or the percentage increase of the consumer price index (CPI) national average, averaged for the prior 12-month period. Besides the automatic annual increase, the agreement allows the contractor to adjust the overall contract price and subsequent monthly payments within a current agreement year. Despite the fact that the CPI increase will reflect price volatility in the upcoming year, section 7.4 D of the agreement calls for a quarterly review of costs associated with paper and plastic supplies and allows the agreement to be increased during the year to reflect these additional costs. It also allows a mid-year increase associated with an increase in the minimum wage.

The facilities agreement also does not provide visibility for the district to be able to determine if sufficient resources are being allocated to meet needs. There is no process requiring the contractor to develop and submit an annual budget for discussion or to receive input from the district in the annual budget development. Without this consideration, the district has no means to ensure district needs are adequately funded. The review team compared the district's budgeted maintenance repair supplies cost for 2001–02 to the vendor's proposed maintenance repair supplies budget for 2005–06. Both costs were approximately the same at $168,000, despite inflation costs allowed annually to the vendor. This fact supports staff and community comments from the survey administered by the review team that the vendor is not applying sufficient funds, particularly to the maintenance area. The vendor's manager attributes the lack of change to the vendor's size and its ability to purchase quality items more economically because of its buying power.

The agreement also does not contain clauses to minimize the district's liability and protect district interests. For example, section 7.6(g) of the agreement requires the district to provide all necessary vehicles for use by the vendor and

vehicle maintenance. According to the vendor facility manager, the vendor's internal safety policy requires all drivers to have a driving check as well as an annual re-check. However, there is no contract requirement clearly specifying that the vendor check driving records. The insurance clause in the contract does not specify if the district is covered in the event the vendor's employees are in an accident while using district vehicles.

In addition, the agreement does not require the vendor to screen employees and conduct background checks for both new and returning employees as a security measure. In addition, there are no clauses that allow the district to assess financial penalties or withhold payments for non-performance of contracted duties.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said that no formal method exists to evaluate the facilities contractor's performance. The district does not use benchmarks to measure accomplishments or identify areas needing improvement. Instead, evaluation is informal.

Clearly defined, quantifiable performance measures allow a district to track service quality or identify corrective actions for the vendor to take when actual performance does not meet the established standard. Without them, it is difficult to hold vendors accountable. For example, it is easier to evaluate vendor performance with an established standard such as "emergency maintenance response shall occur within 30 minutes of notice" than with a contract task that states the vendor shall respond to work order requests in a timely manner. Performance measures also allow district administrators to evaluate the value of the contracted service and determine whether or not to continue the service.

Contracts that have open-ended periods of performance and automatic financial escalation clauses such as LMISD's contract do not provide any financial incentive for a vendor to perform. The vendor receives the increase whether or not performance was acceptable. In addition, the lack of a renewal option based on performance limits the district's options to address non-performance. Without renewal options, termination becomes the only method for non-performance. This alternative is generally not a viable option because the 60-day time period does not provide sufficient time for the district to plan and develop the capability to re-assume the services or to develop a cost-effective agreement with another vendor.

The lack of visibility into the budget allocation coupled with the lack of performance measures limits LMISD's ability to ensure that the district is not being shortchanged in service levels. The lack of specific protections in the current contract, such as background checks and insurance requirements, also increases the district's potential risk for liability. Should an incident or accident occur, the district might be held financially responsible in the event of litigation.

Effective contract monitoring relies on clearly defined contract responsibilities and the means to hold a vendor accountable. According to the State of Texas Contract Management Guide, "The purpose of any written contract is as a reference document that records the terms of an agreement to prevent misunderstanding and conflict as to those terms at a later date, and creates a legal, binding, and enforceable obligation." In areas such as facilities management and maintenance, districts may obtain outside technical assistance from either the private sector or public sector agencies such as Regional Education Service Centers to define performance standards for their contracts.

The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers, known as APPA, publishes established standards for evaluating custodial and maintenance operations. The APPA publication Custodial Staffing Guidelines for Educational Facilities identifies three ground rules for evaluating custodial staffing: appearance levels or cleanliness standards, identifying standard space types, and assigning cleanable square feet per staff. The APPA publication Maintenance Staffing Guidelines for Educational Facilities also identifies standards. It includes five levels of maintenance ranging from level 1, a showpiece facility, to level 5, a crisis response. It specifies characteristics and measures for each level of maintenance.

The district should evaluate weaknesses in current contract terms, develop standards and contract clauses to strengthen contractor accountability, and incorporate these items into the existing contract and solicitations for future contracts. The district should obtain technical assistance from an outside agency to evaluate its current contract to identify weaknesses associated with performance measures, automatic financial escalations, visibility, and protective measures to limit district liability. After identifying these weaknesses, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, who is the contract manager for the existing contract, should work with the outside agency to develop standards for performance and potential clauses that can either be negotiated into the existing agreement or used as specifications for a new solicitation.

The performance standards should reflect industry standards such as those identified in the APPA guidelines. Once the clauses have been developed, they should be submitted to the district's legal counsel for review.

Since the district is in the third year of an initial five-year agreement, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should attempt to negotiate and include these items by March 2007 to be effective for the remaining duration of the existing agreement. At the same time, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should also develop a new specification that includes the standards and addresses the weaknesses in the existing contract. The target date for completing the specification and beginning the re-bid process should be March 2007 to allow sufficient time to negotiate and have a new contract in place by March 31, 2008, which is the expiration date of the current agreement.

The total cost of implementing this recommendation is $13,250, which includes a one-time cost for technical assistance and legal review. The cost is based on 50 hours of assistance and legal review at $265 per hour (50 hours x $265 = $13,250).

MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE (REC. 21)

The district has not actively monitored the contract to address weaknesses in the contractor-provided maintenance function. LMISD's maintenance activities have not been planned or supervised in a consistent manner to ensure well-maintained facilities.

According to The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) publication Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, key elements for effective maintenance include:

* preventive maintenance plans based on facility audits;

* a computer maintenance management system to track preventive and other maintenance costs;

* flexible work schedules where maintenance is scheduled during non-school hours; and

* management of work order flow to minimize maintenance down time and user frustration.

In addition, the publication recommends preventive maintenance to minimize long-term costs with ongoing evaluation through customer surveys and use of a computer work order system that allows the user to track maintenance staff productivity and monitor trends.

The vendor's agreement has many of the elements identified above, but they have either not been implemented or not implemented effectively. For example, the agreement required the vendor to develop and submit a deferred maintenance plan within the first year of the agreement. The vendor is in the third year of the agreement and still has not developed or submitted a plan.

According to the vendor manager, the reason that the vendor did not develop a deferred maintenance plan is that at the time the vendor began working with the district, the district was beginning its bond renovation program to address many deferred maintenance issues. Since the vendor was not involved in the planning for the bond renovation projects, it was difficult to do an effective study.

The preventive maintenance system with preventive as well as corrective work orders required by the agreement does not exist. The preventive maintenance program consists of a monthly replacement of filters for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment. There was no documented evidence that preventive maintenance plans existed for HVAC, plumbing, or buildings, or that preventive maintenance activities for equipment such as cleaning coils, checking and replacing belts, or lubricating motors occurred. Outside contractors perform fire equipment inspections and maintenance.

Since the new vendor manager's arrival in 2004, the vendor has begun activities to implement a comprehensive maintenance program. Activities included a survey of district mechanical equipment, including bar coding of all equipment and district spaces. The vendor's mechanical engineering department is continuing work on specific preventive maintenance requirements for the equipment that was bar coded.

The vendor has a computer maintenance management system as required by the agreement. However, the system is not an effective tool for tracking costs and productivity. The vendor manager said that costs for materials used were not consistently documented by the maintenance staff and entered into the system for about 18 to 24 months, resulting in an understatement of maintenance costs. In addition, there are no procedures that define work order priorities as special, urgent, or routine for the users, which can affect user perceptions of responsiveness. The work order clerk assigns a priority based on common sense. According to the vendor manager, users have been informed as to what constitutes a true emergency—one that relates to flooding, fire, or life

safety. Users are instructed to telephone this type of request to the maintenance office for immediate response. Statistics reflecting maintenance productivity and responsiveness are skewed because the system's demand work statistic summary report captures both maintenance and custodial work-related requests. Examples in the report of custodial-related work requests include "clean bathroom" or "clean furniture."

Management and workflow assignment of work requests as recommended by the NCES publication does not occur. Assignment and prioritization of work orders is generally left to the discretion of maintenance staff. The vendor manager said that he will occasionally intervene if there is a hot button issue to make sure it is handled expeditiously; otherwise, he leaves it to the staff. The manager said that he informally tracks productivity by periodically checking work order requests at the end of the work day. Maintenance staff works daily from 7 AM to 4 PM. According to the vendor manager, most maintenance occurs in non-instructional areas of the schools. The manager further indicated that maintenance in classroom areas is scheduled to occur during non-school hours to avoid conflict with school activities; however, documentation to substantiate this statement was not available to the review team.

Ongoing program evaluation and feedback also do not occur. The vendor's agreement requires its manager to liaise with school district staff and principals regarding the status of work order requests within 10 working days. Although the work order system provides an e-mail when a request is received and one when the work order is completed, additional communication happens only on an as-needed basis when initiated by district staff. A written monthly manager's report of maintenance activities and objectives required by the agreement and provided by the vendor does not provide management information for decision-makers. The work order system can provide a variety of custom reports based on user requirements. However, the monthly vendor report provided to principals and administrators consists of a work order summary report generated from the work order system.

The work order summary report identifies the activity code and description such as lights, the number of work orders, the labor hours, labor, material and vendor costs, and total costs. The report does not provide analysis of work order productivity by identifying how many work orders were submitted and completed, or identify issues that affect completion of work orders such as parts that are on order.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for contract monitoring and oversight of the facilities management contract. His oversight consists of daily discussions with the vendor manager related to facilities tasks and issues. The assistant superintendent does not review the contract terms and conditions to see if they have been met. Maintenance issues are addressed in an as-needed manner based on calls from district staff for specific issues.

The lack of monitoring to ensure effective maintenance has resulted in user dissatisfaction. Staff interviews, surveys, and comments from focus groups all identified maintenance as a concern. **Exhibit 3-4** displays responses to the facilities portion of the survey administered by the review team regarding building maintenance.

Exhibit 3-4 shows that a significant number of staff, teachers, and students rate building maintenance as poor or below average. More than half of the students, half of the staff, and 45.6 percent of teachers surveyed rated maintenance as poor or below average. Principals and administrators rate building maintenance less negatively, with 20 percent of principals and 35 percent of administrators rating maintenance as poor or below average.

Air conditioning was the number one complaint in the facilities survey comments received. More than 20 comments, or approximately one-fourth of the total comments received, directly identified concerns about building temperatures. The review team's survey received multiple comments about temperature variability between areas, with some areas being very cold while other areas were extremely hot. Survey participants indicated that temperature problems were worse after the renovations.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations and the vendor manager acknowledged that air conditioning had been an ongoing problem, particularly at the high school. During the renovation, the district transitioned from pneumatic controls to digital temperature controls. The controls were not programmed to work effectively with the new equipment. The bond program architect, contractors, and controls contractor have been working with the district and the vendor manager to resolve the issue and programming changes have been made. According to the vendor manager, several rooms are still being analyzed for mechanical issues that would affect the HVAC.

Although the district and the vendor manager have been working to resolve HVAC system issues, HVAC related issues continue to be a problem. Of the 158 work orders identified in the October 2005 monthly report, 33 work orders, or 21 percent of the total, were either temperature or ventilation-related.

Maintenance responsiveness was also a concern identified by survey comments. A report summarizing completed work orders from September 2004 through July 2005 indicated the average completion age of all work orders was 18.4 days. The average age of all open work orders was 160.3 days. However, this report included custodial and groundskeeping work orders, not just maintenance. The review team obtained copies of open and closed work orders for September 2005 for electrical, plumbing, and HVAC staff and analyzed the completion rates and aging for open and closed work orders. **Exhibit 3-5** presents the analysis.

EXHIBIT 3-4
LMISD FACILITIES
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
BUILDINGS ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED IN A TIMELY MANNER.						
Teachers	16.7%	28.9%	27.2%	15.8%	6.1%	5.3%
Students	31.6%	22.8%	33.3%	5.3%	5.3%	1.8%
Parents	15.5%	13.1%	32.1%	26.2%	6.0%	7.1%
Principals	13.3%	6.7%	53.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Administrators	10.0%	25.0%	30.0%	25.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	17.2%	32.8%	21.9%	25.0%	1.6%	1.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

EXHIBIT 3-5
MAINTENANCE WORK ORDER MEASURES
SEPTEMBER 2005

MEASURE	ELECTRICAL	HVAC	PLUMBING	TOTAL
Open work orders	19	21	16	56
Closed work orders	5	15	7	27
Total work orders	24	36	23	83
Open work orders as percent of total	79%	58%	70%	67%
Closed work orders as percent of total	21%	42%	30%	33%
Average age of open work orders (calendar days)	14.3 days	14.9 days	11.1 days	13.6 days
Average age of closed work orders (calendar days)	13.6 days	20.1 days	13.4 days	17.1 days

SOURCE: Completed Demand Work Orders by Requestor (Detail) Report, September 2005; Open Demand Work Orders by Employee (Age) Report, September 2005.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-5**, the ratio of total open to closed work orders was about two to one, with 67 percent remaining open and 33 percent closed. The overall average age of closed work orders was 17.1 calendar days, with HVAC work having the longest open average, 20.1 calendar days.

The lack of monitoring and follow up to ensure that maintenance is being performed responsively and thoroughly has also resulted in buildings that are not well maintained. The review team did walk-throughs of the schools and buildings and noted several examples of poorly maintained areas. At the Lake Road Learning Center, there was a leak from a condensation unit in the library area. A large waste can was placed under the leak to catch the drips. At Inter-City Elementary School, there was a broken lavatory and a sink had been ripped from a wall. There was also a condensation drip at Westlawn Elementary School. Stained tiles were found in several schools. At the high school, the ceiling tiles in one of the hallways not only had stains but also black mold on them.

As cited in the NCES Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, facilities maintenance does cost money, but it also produces savings by:
- decreasing equipment replacement costs over time;
- decreasing renovation costs because fewer large-scale repair jobs are needed; and
- decreasing overhead costs (such as utility bills) because of increased system efficiency.

Strong maintenance management is key, and when the service is outsourced, contract monitoring and oversight are the means to ensure that maintenance is well managed. The State of Texas Contract Management Guide (Guide) Version 1.1

states, "Monitoring the performance of the contractor is a key function of proper contract administration. The purpose is to ensure that the contractor is performing all duties in accordance with the contract and for the agency to be aware of and address any developing problems or issues."

To establish an effective monitoring program, the Guide further recommends, "Review the statement of work and other contract terms, including contractor compliance requirements. All of these requirements are deliverables that the contractor agreed to when the contract was executed or the purchase order was issued. Design the monitoring program to focus on items that are most important. Generally, this means to focus the monitoring on the outcomes that result from the contract."

The district should address maintenance weaknesses by implementing an active contract monitoring process that includes short- and long-term actions. To address short-term issues, the district should implement a contract monitoring function using the steps outlined in the State of Texas Contract Management Guide as a model. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, who is responsible for the contract oversight, should address the immediate maintenance weaknesses by completing the following:

1. Review the contract thoroughly to understand the terms and conditions and develop a checklist specifying the requirements.

2. Obtain specific performance feedback from building principals and supervisors regarding maintenance issues.

3. Develop a discussion item list identifying contract requirements that have not been met, such as the deferred maintenance plan and preventive maintenance

activities, as well as specific building-related maintenance issues provided by the principals.

4. Meet with the vendor manager and use the discussion list items as the means to develop corrective actions and expected completion dates.

5. Require weekly written status reports that outline progress towards completing the corrective actions.

6. Review status of the corrective actions with principals on a monthly basis to verify that maintenance needs are being met.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations and the vendor management should also identify expected response times for emergency, priority, and routine maintenance work orders. To assist with evaluation and monitoring, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should require that vendor reports required by the agreement provide analysis of maintenance work order status and resolution, not merely summarize the number of work orders and costs. The reports should identify, by maintenance area and priority, the number of open and closed work orders as well as provide an aging report that shows how long it took to complete work orders as well as how old the work orders are that are still open. Work orders that fall outside the expected response times should include an explanation so that the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations can evaluate if the delay was justified, such as waiting for a part to arrive.

At the same time that immediate weaknesses are being addressed, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should also look at options to ensure that maintenance will be addressed long-term. The assistant superintendent should develop a new specification and re-bid maintenance services. The target date for completing the specification and beginning the re-bid process should be March 2007 to allow sufficient time to negotiate and have a new contract in place by March 31, 2008, which is the expiration date of the current agreement.

In re-bidding the agreement, the district should consider several options: continuing to outsource all maintenance functions, outsourcing maintenance management only with maintenance staff as district employees, or bringing the entire maintenance function in-house. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should review and evaluate performance throughout the five-year period in making the final determination and should solicit proposals accordingly.

CENTRAL RECEIVING (REC. 22)

LMISD uses a separate warehouse facility for central receiving, which is inefficient. The warehouse facility is next to the stadium in a complex that includes the transportation facilities and food service warehouse. The warehouse facility includes a climate-controlled office and a storage building. The warehouse is manned by an employee of the custodial and maintenance contractor who is responsible for receiving goods shipped to the warehouse. This individual is also responsible for the mail delivery in the district.

Some products are delivered directly to the schools and departments while others are delivered to the warehouse. The warehouse staff performs the receiving function at the warehouse as follows:

- receives goods;

- compares contents to packing slip and purchase order;

- if complete, forwards purchase order to accounts payable for payment;

- files freight claim, if necessary; and

- delivers goods to school or department.

The mail delivery function is housed at the central office. The mail is picked up at the post office each morning and taken to the central office for sorting. The mail is delivered to the schools and departments along with packages received at the warehouse on the previous day. After making the deliveries, the individual returns to the central office to stamp mail and deliver it to the post office.

The warehouse office is 768 square feet, or 5.3 percent of the 14,451 square feet contained in all buildings in the complex. **Exhibit 3-6** shows the cost of operating the warehouse office.

The warehouse does not maintain an inventory of goods shipped to the schools and departments. Bulk items such as paper and office supplies are shipped directly to the school or department that orders them. Janitorial and maintenance supplies are delivered to and warehoused at the maintenance facility operated by the custodial and maintenance contractor.

Because of the mail and delivery duties of the position that is responsible for the warehouse, the warehouse office is not manned during the entire day. When shipments arrive at the warehouse during these times, an employee from the business office must leave their primary job function to drive to the warehouse and accept the shipment. The accounts payable clerk is the position designated to go to the warehouse. During

the course of the day, the accounts payable clerk loses at least 15 minutes of work driving to the warehouse, accepting the shipment, and returning to the business office each time a delivery occurs. The productivity loss is extended by the time it takes to refocus on the work that the accounts payable clerk was doing before the interruption.

Many districts consolidate functions manned by a single person to locations that have other employees on duty at the location all day. For example, Dripping Springs ISD houses its textbook warehouse at the maintenance department, and the textbook custodian, who has other job duties, is located at the middle school. The maintenance department is manned throughout the day and also has its own warehouse, allowing the district to receive textbooks without interrupting the other job duties of the textbook custodian.

LMISD should move the central receiving function to the maintenance warehouse. The district should relocate the mail delivery and central receiving position to the maintenance facility and use the maintenance facility as its central receiving location. Since the maintenance facility is manned by other vendor employees and is designed to receive goods, this change will eliminate the need to operate the separate warehouse office location. In addition, the maintenance staff can replace the business office staff as a backup for receiving when the individual is out performing mail and delivery functions. This change will improve the productivity of the business office by removing an interruption of a primary job function and eliminate the need to operate the separate warehouse office.

Implementing this recommendation will result in an annual savings of $2,641 for the district, as identified by the calculations in **Exhibit 3-6**.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT (REC. 23)

LMISD does not have a comprehensive energy management program that includes energy management goals, utility cost monitoring, and energy conservation initiatives to control expenditures. The district's energy management program consists largely of initiatives implemented in 1996 and in 1998, when the district entered into a 10-year agreement with an energy savings contractor. In 1996, inefficient lighting and ballasts were replaced.

The district also uses some energy conservation methods during the summer. The district uses "summer hours" for year-round staff. During the summer, staff works four 10-hour days, and the district is closed on Friday. In addition, the district tries to limit the number of facilities in use over the summer. In buildings that are unused, or in unused areas of buildings with summer programs, the district runs HVAC units on a limited schedule of two hours twice daily. The HVAC is run long enough to keep mold and mildew from forming because of the district's humid climate.

While the district uses some energy strategies, the program is not well-defined or continuously monitored, and staff and students are not engaged in energy conservation. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities has identified key factors that help districts achieve more efficient energy management. **Exhibit 3-7** compares LMISD's efforts to the key factors.

As displayed in **Exhibit 3-7**, weaknesses in the district's energy management program relate to three areas: a documented policy, ongoing monitoring, and conservation initiatives. First, the district does not have a written energy management policy that specifies district energy goals, assigns responsibility to students and staff to help meet the goals,

EXHIBIT 3-6
LMISD WAREHOUSE OFFICE COST
2004-05

COST COMPONENT	TOTAL COST FOR COMPLEX	WAREHOUSE OFFICE PERCENT OF TOTAL	WAREHOUSE OFFICE COST*
Water	$300	5.3%	$16
Gas	$4,980	5.3%	$264
Electricity	$8,208	5.3%	$435
Telephone	$2,160	5.3%	$114
Copier	$1,812	100.0%	$1,812
TOTAL	**$17,460**		**$2,641**

*Warehouse cost was calculated as the total cost for the complex multiplied by the warehouse office percent of the total.
Source: LMISD, Business Office, October 2005.

EXHIBIT 3-7
COMPARISON OF LMISD ENERGY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES TO BEST PRACTICES

KEY FACTOR	REQUIREMENT MET/UNMET	COMMENTS
Energy policy with specific goals and objectives.	Unmet	District policies that deal with energy management include CH(H) and CL(LEGAL), which allow district to enter into an energy savings performance contract and specifies requirements, and specifies that state funds may only be used for outdoor lighting fixtures if it meets specific energy conservation standards.
Assign someone to be responsible for the district's energy management program and give the energy manager access to top-level administrators.	Unmet	LMISD's facilities services contract with Sodexho assigns vendor manager with the following duties: maintain monthly energy usage records; review all utility bills; initiate, coordinate, and emphasize conservation activities both internally and with corporate staff; and actively pursue conservation techniques. Of the four duties, the vendor is maintaining monthly energy usage records through the energy management system. The other three activities are not performed.
Monitor each building's energy use.	Partially met	LMISD energy management software monitors energy use. However, there is no monitoring of monthly utility bills to see if charges correlate to use. District terminated 10-year agreement with energy management company because it was not performing the monitoring. There is no one in the district currently assigned with this specific duty.
Conduct energy audits in all buildings to identify energy-inefficient units.	Partially met	LMISD replaced many units in the bond renovation program. Energy audit was conducted initially in 1996 as part of the district's contract with an energy savings performance provider.
Institute performance contracting when replacing older, energy-inefficient equipment.	Unmet	No documentation that energy efficient units were part of the specifications for equipment purchased in the bond program. Some transformers do have Energy Star ratings.
Reward schools that decrease energy use.	Unmet	No programs exist to raise awareness for conservation or to provide incentives for reduced use.
Install energy-efficient equipment, including power factor correction units, electronic ballast, high-efficient lamps, night setbacks, and variable-speed drives for large motors and pumps.	Partially met	In 1996, energy management project switched out inefficient lighting ballasts. Setbacks do not exist.
Install motion detectors that turn lights on when a room is occupied and off when the room is unoccupied.	Unmet	Motion detectors do not exist.

SOURCE: NCES, Maintaining School Facilities and Grounds, 2003; interviews with LMISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations and Sodexho manager, September 2005.

establishes temperature levels to be maintained in district buildings, or communicates results.

Second, ongoing monitoring of utility costs is not occurring. This function was previously performed by the outside energy management company engaged by the district in a 10-year agreement that started in 1998. The district terminated the contract because the company was not responsively monitoring or reporting energy use to allow the district to take corrective action. The vendor's facilities services agreement assigns the vendor manager responsibility for this duty, but he is not performing it. He does monitor energy

use through the energy management software but does not track utility invoices to ensure accuracy. The accounts payable office receives the utility invoices, but copies are not forwarded for his assessment.

Third, energy conservation initiatives that engage students and staff do not exist. In the walk-through of facilities performed as part of the field work for this review, the review team noted that many classrooms still had the lights turned on and the air conditioning running full blast, although the school day was over and the room was no longer in use.

Exhibit 3-8 shows electricity costs from 2001–02 through 2004–05. As displayed in **Exhibit 3-8**, energy costs have increased significantly since 2001–02. The vendor facility manager attributed some of the increases in 2003–04 to inactivation and inoperability of the energy management systems because of bond-funded building renovations, price fluctuations in utility line and delivery charges, and increased square footage and building use resulting from the bond renovation projects.

Without a comprehensive, coordinated energy program that is based on a definitive policy with articulated goals and objectives, ongoing monitoring to identify problem areas for corrective action, and energy conservation efforts that engage district staff and students in meeting the district's energy goals and objectives, the district will have difficulty controlling its energy costs.

School districts use many strategies in a comprehensive energy management program. In addition to the strategies already used by LMISD, such as an energy audit and the use of an energy management performance company, school districts have user education programs. Watt Watchers is a state-sponsored program provided free of charge to school districts. The program challenges students to look for energy waste in their schools. The Watt Watchers program has a free kit that is available to districts. Galveston ISD (GISD) was a pilot site for the Watt Watchers program. GISD reduced its electric bill by $25,000 a year.

Another energy strategy is the use of rebate programs to encourage schools and students to participate in energy conservation. Spring ISD developed a rebate program that rewarded each of its schools for efficient energy use. The rebate program shared savings with any school that reduced its usage below its budgeted amount. Under the rebate program, the school receives 50 percent of the savings amount. The district estimated that it has achieved savings of between 7 and 14 percent.

Individual schools in Killeen ISD developed individual conservation plans to meet their needs and requirements. Students and staff participated in the energy conservation planning and implementation. As part of the plan, each school designated an individual to be responsible for shutting off all energy-consuming equipment each day. Each school also developed and used shutdown checklists for daily use as well as for holidays and summer.

The district should implement a comprehensive energy management program to control energy costs. The program should focus on three components: a board policy that provides program guidance along with specific goals and temperatures for district buildings; constant and ongoing monitoring of utility invoices; and user conservation education to reduce energy consumption.

The district should enforce the facilities services agreement that designates the vendor's manager as being responsible for energy control activities, including the review of utility bills and initiation of energy conservation techniques. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should work with the vendor's manager to identify necessary actions to fulfill these duties and implement an ongoing monitoring process to ensure that these activities occur.

The district should also form an energy committee consisting of principals, teachers, staff, and students to work with the vendor manager to develop a policy with goals and objectives that will be used to define the program and submit the policy

EXHIBIT 3-8
LMISD UTILITY COSTS
2001–02 THROUGH 2004–05

UTILITY	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	PERCENT INCREASE (2001–02 TO 2004–05)
Electricity	$346,258	$575,723	$808,802	$757,421	118.7%

Source: LMISD Vendor Payment Histories, 2001–02 through 2004–05.

for board approval. The policy should contain goals and objectives to reduce energy consumption and control costs. Besides development of the policy, the committee should work with the vendor's manager to research and identify user education programs such as Watt Watchers or incentive programs where the district shares savings from reducing energy costs with campuses.

Implementing this recommendation should save the district $7,574 annually. The review team estimates the district could achieve energy cost avoidance of one percent annually starting in 2007–08 through energy conservation measures. This equals $7,574 (0.01 cost avoidance x $757,421 electricity costs for 2004–05 = $7,574).

RECYCLING PROGRAM (REC. 24)

The district does not have a comprehensive recycling program as required by law and board policy and is missing an opportunity to decrease waste removal costs and increase revenue from recycling by increasing student and staff awareness and participation.

The district's recycling program does not comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety Code §361.425 and LMISD Board Policy CL(LEGAL), which states, "In cooperation with the Texas Building and Procurement Commission or the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the District shall establish a program for the separation and collection of all recyclable materials generated by the District's operations, including at a minimum, aluminum, steel containers, aseptic packaging, poly-coated paperboard cartons, high-grade office paper, and corrugated cardboard. Recyclable materials include materials in the District's possession that have been abandoned or disposed of by the District's officers or employees or by any other person. The District shall also:

1. Provide procedures for collecting and storing recyclable materials, provide containers for recyclable materials, and provide procedures for making contractual or other arrangements with buyers of recyclable materials.

2. Evaluate the amount of recyclable material recycled and modify the program as necessary to ensure that all recyclable materials are effectively and practicably recycled.

3. Establish educational and incentive programs to encourage maximum employee participation."

The district's recycling program consists entirely of recycling bins placed outside at campuses by a vendor to collect recycled paper. During the on-site visit in September 2005, the review team did not observe any bins or other containers to collect aluminum or paper inside the buildings. There was also no evidence of educational or incentive programs to encourage maximum employee participation as outlined by board policy. The district's outsourced food service operation generates a large amount of paper waste, yet the contract does not emphasize recycling as a component. In addition, the facilities services contract does not incorporate recycling and the collection/separation of recyclable materials as part of the custodial tasks and specifications listed in the contract.

Without a comprehensive recycling program, the district is missing opportunities to generate savings through reduced waste and landfill costs and increase revenues from recycling. In addition, the district is missing opportunities to increase student awareness regarding the benefits of recycling. Student learning in core subjects such as math and science can be enhanced with activities associated with a recycling program. In its publication Texas School Recycling Guide, TCEQ provides several examples of programs, efforts, and activities such as conducting a waste audit, calculating cost savings, and identifying environmental benefits as activities that will enhance student learning in math, earth science, and social studies.

Districts use a variety of strategies to implement recycling programs. The TCEQ publication Texas School Recycling Guide provides a 10-step approach to implementing a program. Districts obtain financial assistance through grants to minimize the costs of fully implementing a program. For example, Alief ISD received a $98,000 grant from the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) to implement its program. Some districts develop joint projects with their Parent Teacher Associations or parent groups, establish competitions, and initiate award programs among schools based upon the amount of material collected. Some districts also allow departments or campuses to retain the recycling revenue in their activity funds to increase interest in the program.

To encourage participation and increase student interest, some programs are student-directed. Nacogdoches ISD's (NISD) gifted and talented students developed and directed the district's recycling program. NISD students formed the Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful Youth Advisory Board (YAB) to oversee the program. The YAB performed a solid waste audit at one elementary school and extrapolated the results

districtwide. The students then presented the findings to the board along with a proposal for a pilot program. The students estimated that NISD could generate income and savings in landfill costs of between $28,692 and $34,346 annually. NISD implemented the program and evaluated the results. Based on the results, the district expanded the program, and in 2004–05, all but one elementary school participated. In December 2004, the program received a second place National Award for Waste Reduction from Keep America Beautiful. Students traveled to Washington, D.C., to accept the award.

The district should implement a comprehensive recycling program. The recycling program should include initiatives to increase the types of materials recycled and encourage student and staff participation. In developing the recycling program, the district should research existing programs and determine their applicability for use in LMISD. The district could also use the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Texas School Recycling Guide, which contains a 10-step approach that was developed to assist school districts in establishing recycling programs. The district should research possible grants such as waste pass-through grants administered by the Houston-Galveston Area Council to minimize the costs of establishing the program.

FACILITY MASTER PLANNING (REC. 25)

The district does not have an annual planning process to develop and maintain facility information in a facility master plan to identify future facility needs. TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) states, "Planning for facilities based on student growth, programmatic needs, and legislative requirements is essential to provide for student needs without overcrowding, use of substandard facilities, or use of costly portable alternatives."

LMISD has elements of a facility master plan based on the districtwide facility study done in 2002 in preparation of the bond election. The facility study included a comparison of enrollment versus capacity for each school; an appraisal of the condition of existing facilities; results of a facility audit outlining deferred maintenance items and a recommended time frame to address issues outlined in the facilities audit; and drawings and schematics of all buildings.

While the 2002 facility study contained many key elements of a facility master plan, it did not include a projection of student enrollments. Since 1995, LMISD student enrollment has declined approximately 16 percent. Enrollment projections are a key data element for analyzing whether or

not buildings should be closed and consolidated, renovated, or expanded. The district still does not currently forecast enrollments, other than monitoring and updating attendance numbers every six weeks, even though district staff is aware of conditions that will affect LMISD's enrollment such as projected housing developments and opening and expansion of charter schools in the area.

The assessment study has not been updated since the bond projects have been completed to reflect current facility condition information and deferred maintenance needs as well as changing conditions. In addition, the elements of the facilities study have not been assembled into a comprehensive plan that reflects the district's overall facility needs and priorities.

The facility master plan is a blueprint for a district to develop short-, intermediate-, and long-term projects to ensure that it provides the right educational environment for students in the most cost-effective manner. Key elements of a facility master plan identified by the FASRG include:

- student enrollment projections to determine the amount and type of space needed and whether expansion or consolidation of facilities should occur;

- existing capacity of each school facility to identify whether it is being efficiently utilized or if additional space is needed;

- an inventory of the use and size of each room to ensure mandated space requirements are met;

- a list of attendance zones that links to the enrollment projections to identify target points for re-zoning to redistribute student populations to avoid overcrowding or under-use of schools;

- a capital improvement that identifies necessary improvements and funding sources for the improvements to keep buildings in proper operating condition;

- a facilities deferred maintenance assessment to identify items that are either obsolete or those that soon will be in order to develop budgets to address the maintenance needs; and

- an estimate of the remaining life cycle of all major building systems such as roofs, HVAC, and security systems to assess the feasibility of replacement versus new construction.

A facility master plan is an essential planning tool to assist districts in defining facility needs and addressing them efficiently and cost effectively. Without a process to update plans annually, the district does not have key information such as up-to-date enrollment needs by demographic area, educational and space requirements, and facility repair and renovation needs to make decisions regarding reassignment, expansion, or consolidation of facilities.

Navasota ISD, a peer district selected for this study, has a facility master plan. The plan contains enrollment projections, up-to-date listings of facility repair and renovation needs, as well as inventories of space by type. The plan also contains established facility use rates as well as comparisons of future space needs against existing inventories. The facility master plan also includes annual plans and operating budgets for recurring maintenance needs.

The district should develop a process to maintain current facility data and incorporate it into a facility master plan that is updated annually. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should establish a facilities planning team consisting of six to ten memnbers that includes board members, community members, district staff, and the vendor maintenance manager. The plan should contain current facility study data, student enrollment projections, and projected funding requirements and budgets. The planning team should compile elements of a master plan from the existing facility study as well as updates from bond project renovations. The team should also project student enrollments for the five-year period based on conditiosn that affecct enrollment, such as economic development or opening of alternative schools. The process should include an annual evaluation and update of the plan.

For background information on Facilities Management, see page 227 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
18. Implement comprehensive internal construction program management techniques for remaining and future bond projects.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
19. Cease using job order contracting for construction projects.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
20. Evaluate weaknesses in current contract terms, develop standards and contract clauses to strengthen contractor accountability, and incorporate these items into the existing contract and solicitations for future contracts.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($13,250)
21. Address maintenance weaknesses by implementing an active contract monitoring process that includes short- and long-term actions.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
22. Move the central receiving function to the maintenance warehouse.	$2,641	$2,641	$2,641	$2,641	$2,641	$13,205	$0
23. Implement a comprehensive energy management program to control energy costs.	$0	$7,574	$7,574	$7,574	$7,574	$30,296	$0
24. Implement a comprehensive recycling program.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
25. Develop a process to maintain current facility data and incorporate it into a facility master plan that is updated annually.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 3	$2,641	$10,215	$10,215	$10,215	$10,215	$43,501	($13,250)
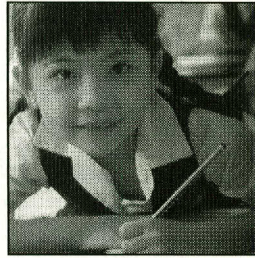
Chapter 4

Safety and Security

La Marque Independent School District
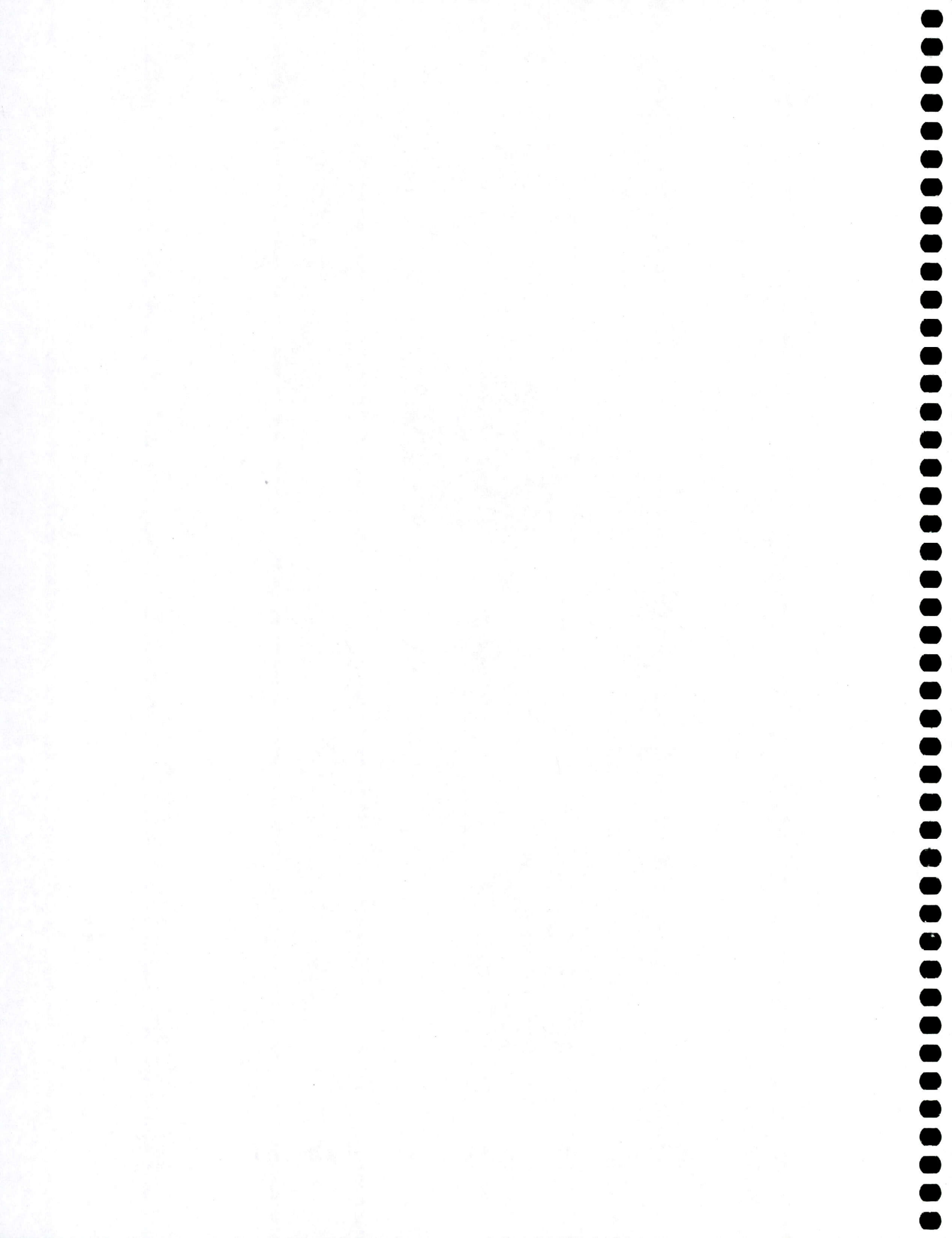
CHAPTER 4. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety is a major goal of most organizations because it affects costs and the ability to accomplish objectives. For schools, a safe and secure environment is an essential element of learning. Texas school districts secure a wide variety of assets. Districts must also keep students and staff safe. This task can be challenging for school districts whose diverse services include education, transportation, food service, facilities use, and financial administration. While no person or organization can ensure absolute safety, districts can minimize risk by identifying threats, developing strategic plans, and implementing performance reviews to ensure the effectiveness of safety and security programs.

La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) is located in Galveston County and is part of a highly developed metropolitan area between Houston and Galveston. LMISD is near petrochemical refineries and the Texas coast with its potential for extreme weather systems. Although LMISD is in an urban area, **Exhibit 4-1** shows the crime rate surrounding LMISD is generally less than that of the state.

LMISD has a police department to provide security to the district. It was organized in August 1992 under the authority of Texas Education Code §37.081. A chief and six officers comprise the department's staff. The district assigned three officers to the high school, two to the middle school, and one to the disciplinary alternative education school. The state of Texas certifies officers, whom provide law enforcement services such as arresting offenders, issuing citations, and investigating crime. LMISD officers do not routinely provide preventive services such as patrolling of district property or safety training for staff, students, or parents.

As required by law, LMISD annually adopts a student code of conduct. The code describes acceptable student behavior and sets standards for punishment. Principals may remove misbehaving students from class to an alternative class setting on school grounds or assign them to the disciplinary

alternative education program (DAEP). The minimum assignment to the district's DAEP is generally 60 days.

The district provides behavior intervention services through school counselors, a social worker, and area social service providers. La Marque High School has recently opened an on-campus drug prevention and treatment center. The Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol (BACODA) and Sandstone Health Care, Inc. provide services for the center. The DAEP campus does not have a district counselor, but agencies such as Sandstone provide services to assigned students. The DAEP presents character education lessons to its students, and elementary schools have programs that teach character, civility, and self-esteem.

FINDINGS

- The district does not adequately plan or budget for safety initiatives, resulting in a lack of basic security infrastructure and an increase in the district's vulnerability to crime.

- LMISD does not clearly define the role of law enforcement in the school setting, or effectively communicate enforcement priorities to district educators, resulting in staff frustration and missed opportunities for improving service.

- LMISD does not adequately evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of discipline, contributing to perceptions that discipline is not fairly applied and administrators do not support teachers in their efforts to maintain classroom order.

- LMISD lacks a clearly defined truancy reduction program with sufficient accountability for non-performance of truancy related tasks, making the process an ineffective tool for compelling student attendance.

EXHIBIT 4-1
CRIME RATE COMPARISON: CITY OF LA MARQUE TO AREA CITIES, COUNTY, AND STATE 2004

CRIME RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION	CITY OF LA MARQUE	CITY OF SANTA FE	TEXAS CITY	GALVESTON COUNTY	STATE OF TEXAS
2004	3,801.7	3,000.7	7,507.0	2,922.0	5,032.0

SOURCE: Texas Department of Public Safety, Uniform Crime Reports, 2004.

- LMISD does not perform preventive checks for known risks to district safety or hold staff accountable for ensuring the success of safety initiatives, resulting in a failure to identify and correct problems that could reduce the potential for harm.

- The LMISD Police Department lacks adequate clerical or communications support for field officers, which can reduce police responsiveness, provide less coverage in the field, and require more of an officer's time in the office.

- The LMISD Police Department's policies and procedures manual does not guide officers in many risk-based activities, which causes potential liability for the district.

- The district lacks a formal plan for producing, assigning, and tracking building keys, which has resulted in unauthorized access to district buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 26: Develop a planning process for the LMISD Police Department and districtwide safety management that defines goals and implementation strategies, sets goal priorities, and incorporates the plan into the district budget process.** With full participation from the chief of Police, the safety committee should review calls for service, arrest data, property crime reports, and discipline reports to identify and rank the district's safety and security needs. The committee should research potential equipment or programs that address each need, and the potential costs of various solution scenarios. Each solution should identify a potential source of funding such as grant, donation, bond program or general fund, and the year funding should become available for implementation, allowing the district to reduce risks while controlling costs.

- **Recommendation 27: Develop roles, responsibilities, and written guidelines for police services through a process that includes teacher input, communicates performance expectations, encourages resolution of problems, and provides for continuing review and improvement.** Working with teachers, principals, and the director of Personnel and Operations, the chief of Police should define performance expectations for each assignment, including the chief's position. The guidelines should communicate law enforcement roles and responsibilities to officers, employees, and the community. The expectations should reflect the services necessary to maintaining a safe and orderly campus, and provide an appropriate balance between administrative tasks and enforcement activities. The development process should provide for continued input throughout the year, and encourage the resolution of problems as they arise. The chief should present the final product to the superintendent and board for approval, providing a blueprint for enhancing police effectiveness.

- **Recommendation 28: Establish a discipline management working group of teachers and administrators to develop performance measures; develop stronger guidelines for capturing performance data, analyzing behavior incidents, and reporting discipline; and provide training for staff and management on its application.** School administrative staff should enter discipline records into the district's computer system with sufficient information to allow for review and analysis of the misbehavior and the discipline assessed. Administrators should identify the reasons that discipline varies from the guidelines and address inconsistencies, increasing confidence in the fairness of the process.

- **Recommendation 29: Develop and implement a truancy reduction program that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, goals, resources, and measures performance.** Truancy reduction programs require a variety of components that range from social services to criminal enforcement. LMISD's safety committee should meet with area organizations such as social service agencies, the local Justice of the Peace, municipal court, and the district attorney's office to determine what level of truancy assistance is currently available, and identify additional programs to cover gaps in service. The safety committee can then draft procedures, standards, and performance measures for district staff with truancy duties. By increasing truancy enforcement efforts, LMISD can strengthen attendance programs and reduce student absences.

- **Recommendation 30: Design and implement risk reduction procedures for known threats that include a process for testing program effectiveness.** As part of the safety planning process, the chief of Police should identify areas where drills, unidentified visitors, unannounced inspections, or other performance testing mechanisms could highlight security weaknesses. The

district's procedures should include an annual testing process with a follow-up review by district staff to determine if safety procedures are successful or identify areas of possible improvement. By evaluating safety and security programs, LMISD can increase the success of its safety and security strategies during actual incidents.

- **Recommendation 31: Implement a process to improve clerical and communications support and create a clerical position for the LMISD Police Department.** As the district defines and seeks board approval for the new position, it should evaluate staff assignments and computer support to ensure the communication process is efficient and effective. The district should undertake a review and redesign of administrative processes to minimize officer performed clerical tasks and maximize law enforcement services.

- **Recommendation 32: Draft and adopt law enforcement policies and procedures that cover all areas that create potential liability for the district.** The chief of Police should research and request copies of procedure manuals from other law enforcement agencies as well as model policy guides from professional law enforcement associations to use as a model in updating the LMISD Police Department's manual. Once drafted, legal counsel should review the manual to ensure policies are legally appropriate. The chief of Police should incorporate legal counsel input, finalize the manual, and submit it to the superintendent and board for approval. By defining guidelines for police activities, LMISD can control its risks associated with law enforcement activities performed by LMISD police.

- **Recommendation 33: Develop a key control and building access program that includes a key assignment and responsibility policy.** The district's program should determine which locks need replacing. The district locksmith should assess the cost to change cores. Principals should identify the priority for key changes at their campus and, with assistance from the district safety committee, develop a schedule for phasing in replacement of cores and keys based on a balance of security and funding concerns. Procedures for key assignment, key tracking, and responsibility for costs should a key become lost or stolen promotes improved key control and reduces the risk of unauthorized access to district buildings.

DETAILED FINDINGS

PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY (REC. 26)

The district does not adequately plan or budget for safety initiatives, resulting in a lack of basic security infrastructure and an increase in the district's vulnerability to crime. LMISD is missing essential communication, detection, and enforcement equipment. Despite numerous burglaries, internal thefts, and drug arrests, the district does not have burglar alarms, controls for its building keys, adequate communication for parents and staff, or patrol vehicles for response and transport.

EQUIPMENT AND BUILDING ACCESS ISSUES

LMISD has one high school, one middle school, four elementary schools, a disciplinary alternative education school, an early childhood learning center, special education offices, administrative offices, and numerous auxiliary buildings. Recent renovation of the high school included installing 53 video cameras and eight video monitors for security surveillance. The other district buildings do not have video surveillance.

In September 2005, only one district building had an alarm system. The alarmed building housed the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. None of the remaining district buildings had working burglar alarms to alert law enforcement to unauthorized entries. Elementary schools had alarm wiring, but the district did not keep the alarm systems activated or in service.

Burglars entered district buildings at least three times between August and October 2004. In one instance, thieves stole gas from district vehicles. In other burglaries, thieves stole student activity funds and technology equipment. Burglars broke into the LMISD Teen Health Clinic on numerous occasions. Due to two burglaries at the Lake Road facility, the district removed the drink machines that service students in College of the Mainland educator programs.

During interviews, principals said they have gone to their school after hours and found community members inside the building. The district does not know who has building keys and has not changed the locks to prevent unauthorized access. Main entrances to schools do not have security pads to show who is in buildings after hours. Principals have opened school in the morning to find students waiting inside, having entered through an unlocked door. With the existing lock configuration, there is no way to determine if custodial

staff failed to lock the building, or if someone else entered and failed to lock the building when leaving.

In October 2005, shortly after the school review's completion of fieldwork for this review, LMISD implemented limited night patrols by district officers to address crimes against district property. The district Police Department has two vehicles. LMISD purchased one vehicle in 1987 for $10,954 and purchased the other vehicle in 2004 for $9,100. The chief of Police drives one vehicle; the officer that services the elementary schools usually drives the other vehicle. Both officers can take the vehicles home in order to respond to night emergencies. According to the chief of Police and other district officers, both vehicles are often out of service, and repairs are not a priority for the transportation maintenance facility. The limited number and unreliability of police vehicles has also resulted in officers using personal vehicles to transport arrestees and providing fewer police services to elementary campuses.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES

One of the key elements in a safety and security program is two-way communication between the district and the community. The district has a crisis management plan that relies upon its prompt dissemination of important information to students and parents in order to activate evacuations, facility lock downs, or other safety measures. Parents must know if they are to pick up their children, or if children are to remain on campus until the emergency ends.

The district relies on parents and students to communicate important information. For example, LMISD has safety programs such as crime stoppers, which asks persons with information relating to a crime to call and report the crime in exchange for rewards. Additionally, attendance reporting is dependent upon accurate information relayed by parents to schools when a child will be absent.

Despite the importance of communication, the number of phone lines and available staff to answer them limits telephone access to the district. Most schools and departments do not have voice mail. During a nearby plant explosion in 2005, district radio contact was occasionally lost, phone lines were jammed, and district personnel had to use personal cell phones to maintain contact due to limited access to radio or backup communication systems.

PLANNING AND BUDGETING ISSUES

Principals are responsible for safety and security of their assigned school. The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction has oversight of behavior intervention programs. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for district planning and budget. The director of Personnel and Operations oversees the Police Department. The chief of Police said that he reports to the director of Personnel and Operations for personnel issues but takes any budget or funding-related issues directly to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations.

The Police Department does not have an internal planning process. The chief does not set department goals or develop strategies to reduce crime. The chief reviews call information to identify emerging problems that may require adjusting officers' deployment. The chief of Police may also develop an initiative to reduce crime in a particular trouble area. The chief said that there is little need for department planning because the district's budget process gives a percentage increase that is determined by central administration. Departments must operate within the amount allotted, with little flexibility to fund new strategies.

The district uses a number of planning mechanisms that affect safety and security, but none is comprehensive or coordinated with the police department. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, the chief communications officer, and principals comprise LMISD's district safety committee, which is responsible for safety planning. The police have little or no participation in the district planning processes. The chief of Police said his participation was generally limited to providing crime statistics to administrators, who developed their own safety strategies.

The district did not involve the police in providing input for the facility assessment report developed for the district's bond program for facility renovations and upgrades. In spring 2002, LMISD developed a facility assessment report that listed needed repairs, upgrades, and additions. The district classified its findings according to short-term, mid-term, and long-term needs. The report included cost estimates for many of the identified projects. With the exception of suggestions for traffic flow and for the design of the Police Department's office space, police provided little input into the security aspects of the project. The resulting bond-funded renovations and upgrades did not include alarms or surveillance systems for buildings other than the high school. The high school surveillance system was the result of a change order during the construction project, not part of the original facility plan.

In its planning process, LMISD does not assign or hold staff accountable for implementing safety initiatives. In 2003–04,

LMISD developed a strategic plan. The strategic plan identified a goal of creating a safe learning environment, but it did not provide for corrections to the known security and communications problems. For example, the strategic plan noted that the district did not perform any crisis drills in the previous school year, but it did not require development of a drill schedule or drill participation. In 2005, the district still does not consistently conduct drills in all facilities.

In June 2004, the district created an emergency management committee that includes the superintendent, assistant superintendents, directors of personnel and student services, the chief of Police, the high school principal, the middle school principal, one elementary school principal, and representatives of the companies providing facilities maintenance and food services. The committee is responsible for developing crisis response procedures. It also coordinates with area businesses and agencies in communitywide crisis response.

In 2004, the Police Department performed a safety audit at district schools. The safety committee or emergency management committee did not request the audit. A police officer who had attended training and felt it important that the district have a threat assessment initiated the audit. The audit identified numerous safety concerns such as inadequate panic buttons for teachers, inadequate outside lighting, lack of radio contact between some principals and law enforcement, inadequate alarm systems, and unsecured doors. As of September 2005, no department head or administrator budgeted or purchased security equipment to address the concerns identified in the audit. By December 2005, the district purchased emergency radios and installed an alarm system in the Teen Health Center building.

In response to a request for documents, LMISD provided a list of safety initiatives. The district identified five safety initiatives: crossing guards, one-way traffic signs near select schools, flashing signals in school zones, playground equipment inspections, and visitor sign-in at the front desk of each school. Despite numerous opportunities, schools still do not have alarms, communication links are poor, and other identified safety issues remain unaddressed. In interviews, principals and police officers said that the district's intent was good, but there was no follow-through on addressing many safety concerns.

The emergency management committee is responsible for implementing the recent legislative requirements for crisis planning. Beginning in September 2005, all Texas school districts are required to perform safety audits every three years. Texas districts must complete the first legislatively required audit by March 2006. LMISD took the initiative to perform a voluntary audit in 2004 even before the law required it; however, the district did not assign staff with responsibility for implementing corresponding corrections to the identified problems. If a district assigns responsibility for performing the audit but holds no one accountable for implementing its findings, safety audits have little value.

Exhibit 4-2 shows how various respondent groups perceive the effectiveness of LMISD in keeping students safe and property secure.

Exhibit 4-2 shows 13 percent of teachers, 13 percent of principals, 30 percent of administrators, and 19 percent of professional support/auxiliary staff surveyed believe the district's ability to keep students safe is either below average or poor. By comparison, 40 percent of teachers, 80 percent

EXHIBIT 4-2
LMISD SAFETY AND SECURITY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE STUDENT'S LEVEL OF SAFETY AND SECURITY AT SCHOOL.						
Teachers	3.5%	9.6%	38.6%	28.9%	11.4%	7.9%
Principals	0.0%	13.3%	6.7%	66.7%	13.3%	0.0%
Administrators	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%	35.0%	15.0%	5.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	7.8%	10.9%	32.8%	32.8%	12.5%	3.1%
Students	24.6%	21.1%	36.8%	10.5%	1.8%	5.3%
Parents	11.9%	6.0%	34.5%	25.0%	9.5%	13.1%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

of principals, 50 percent of administrators, and 45 percent of professional support/auxiliary staff surveyed believe the district is doing a good to excellent job.

Only 12 percent of responding students feel their level of safety and security at school is good or excellent, with 46 percent rating LMISD's safety and security as below average or poor.

While LMISD has planning and budget processes, it does not identify and address safety concerns. A budget based on incremental increases rather than on identified needs and changing priorities does not provide the flexibility to adapt and meet emerging threats to persons or property. Without a planning process that is linked to budgeting, limited resources may go to projects of less importance and needs may go unmet. Without a budget process based on identified strategies and performance measures, an organization may continue to fund ineffective programs. Planning and budget processes lacking meaningful input from key stakeholders or knowledgeable staff, such as the police chief or officers, may result in short term decisions that are more costly over time.

Safety and security programs can be expensive, but inadequate security can also be costly. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations estimates that the district incurred property loss of $10,000 in 2004–05, and $6,000 from August to October 2005. With proper planning, an organization can spread security implementation costs over a period and develop prevention strategies that may be less costly than emergency response and repair.

The district does not always include appropriate expertise in its planning and development of the best safety and security solutions. For example, police did not participate in the selection or placement of the high school video surveillance system. The high school principal said there are areas of the school that continue to have vandalism because they are not high visibility areas, and they have no cameras. One police officer noted that the equipment did not have adequate protection from damage or tampering. While the chief of Police believes the addition of the surveillance equipment is positive, some cameras provide poor quality images because they are not near an adequate light source.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) provides a best practice guide for budgeting in small police agencies. The guide advises the department to develop a strategic plan that solicits input from the community or other stakeholders that use department services. The planning

process helps to identify weaknesses and improve the quality of service. Planning can also help in the development of a realistic schedule for addressing problem areas. Finally, the guide recommends that the goals and objectives developed during the planning process should link to budgetary expenditures. Many organizations apply performance budgeting at the department level, as well as to safety and security project budgets for broader initiatives.

LMISD should develop a planning process for the Police Department and districtwide safety management that defines goals and implementation strategies, sets goal priorities, and incorporates the plan into the district budget process. With full participation from the chief of Police, the safety committee should review calls for service, arrest data, property crime reports, and discipline reports to identify and rank the district's safety and security needs. The committee should research potential equipment or programs that address each need, and the potential costs of various solution scenarios. Each solution should identify a potential source of funding such as grant, donation, bond program or general fund, and the year funding should become available for implementation, allowing the district to reduce risks while controlling costs.

As part of the annual budget process, the chief of Police should evaluate current operations and determine if changes to safety programs or strategies the safety committee recommended will affect police operations. The IACP recommends that police departments develop written justifications for requested funds even if the governing body does not require them. The justification should identify the problem, the additional resources needed, and the expected results. The best practice guide also suggests that departments continue to monitor the budget execution and determine the reasons for any variance between budgeting and spending. The department should use the variance analysis in developing its budget in the upcoming year.

SERVICE EXPECTATIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT (REC. 27)

LMISD does not clearly define the role of law enforcement in the school setting, or effectively communicate enforcement priorities to district educators, resulting in staff frustration and missed opportunities for improving service.

The Texas Education Code Section 37.081 authorizes school district boards to define the services provided by its commissioned officers. LMISD adopted policies that provide some guidance. Board policies set standards for use of force, issuing citations, and making arrests. The district job

description for campus police officers states an officer's goal is to "provide for the safety of all students, faculty, and staff and the security of all district and campus property and equipment." The job description further defines the position's tasks as:

- patrol assigned campuses and routes walking or driving within district jurisdiction;

- respond to all calls from campuses concerning crisis situations, accidents, and reports of crime;

- investigate all criminal offenses that occur within district's jurisdiction;

- collect and preserve evidence for criminal investigations including witness statements and physical evidence;

- arrest perpetrators, file appropriate charges, and ensure placement in jail or juvenile detention centers for law violation as necessary;

- write effective legal incident reports;

- testify in court as needed;

- help provide traffic control at athletic events, school closings or openings, or at any other time;

- provide protection to or escort district personnel as needed; and,

- operate all equipment including firearms according to established safety procedures.

The LMISD Police Department handbook adds the following services:

- assist principals with child custody complaints or trespassing complaints when requested;

- assist transportation with problem bus stop areas and chronic disruptions on school buses when requested;

- assist staff with after hour functions when requested;

- stop and identify suspicious persons and vehicles; and,

- enforce all rules and regulations promulgated by the Board of Trustees.

With the exception of enforcing board policy, these assigned tasks are traditional law enforcement duties and do not include training, mentoring, counseling, or other tasks associated with establishing a climate of safe behavior by students or staff. While one officer holds a certification in gang resistance

training for students, district officers do not routinely provide student training in areas of safety and security.

In the introduction to the policy manual, the chief of Police expresses a philosophy of community policing. Community policing is a management approach to staffing and services that emphasizes helping the community correct problems that lead to crime. Community policing in a school setting has additional challenges created by the nature of public school. Education laws provide additional protections for students, as well as additional enforcement requirements for districts. For example, federal law regulates the exchange of certain student information. State law requires school staff to report certain criminal activity to law enforcement officials.

Although the manual's introduction expresses a community policing philosophy, the Police Department is not undertaking any activities to communicate this philosophy with district staff or the community and to publicize its ability to help the community correct problems. The LMISD manual states that the Police Department is to assist school district administration with any problems they may have. The manual is an internal document for police officers and not generally provided to students or staff. The Police Department has access to the district website, but does not use this resource to communicate its philosophy, services, or solicit input from staff or the community. The chief is a long-time resident of the community and has informal communication with parents, students, and staff. However, there is no specific process encouraging discussion of law enforcement priorities or solutions to crime with the community.

The application of an agency's law enforcement philosophy is evident in its calls for service. **Exhibit 4-3** details police services provided in 2004–05.

An analysis of **Exhibit 4-3** shows a substantial portion of the department workload does not directly relate to investigation of criminal behavior. Of the 632 calls for service, 43 percent were miscellaneous and not related to specific criminal behavior. Another 25 percent of police calls were for student counseling services. The district's officers do not have specific training in student counseling, but the Police Department handbook explains that police listen to problems to gain student trust, gather information, and solve crimes. They also counsel students on how to handle themselves if stopped for a traffic offense, who to contact if arrested, and how to get out of jail.

The lack of information provided to teachers and administrators about the role and law enforcement duties of

EXHIBIT 4-3
LMISD POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE
2004-05

DESCRIPTION OF CALL	NUMBER OF CALLS	PERCENT OF TOTAL CALLS
Miscellaneous Calls	271	42.9%
Counseling with Students	155	24.5%
Disorderly Conduct	48	7.6%
Truancy	30	4.7%
Emergency Removal	25	4.0%
Assaults	14	2.2%
Thefts	10	1.6%
Public Intoxication	10	1.6%
Traffic Stops	10	1.6%
Assist other Agency	8	1.3%
Gambling	6	0.9%
Bona Fide Residence	6	0.9%
Criminal Mischief	5	0.8%
Narcotics Related	5	0.8%
Phone Harassment	5	0.8%
Burglary	4	0.6%
Weapons	4	0.6%
Criminal Trespass	3	0.5%
Tobacco Violations	3	0.5%
Traffic Accidents	3	0.5%
Assault on Staff	2	0.3%
Terrorist Threats	2	0.3%
Arson	1	0.2%
Auto Theft	1	0.2%
Indecency with Child	1	0.2%
TOTAL	**632**	**100.0%**

SOURCE: LMISD Police Department Year End Report, 2004-05.

the police can cause confusion and misunderstanding. In interviews, police said teachers and principals ask them to perform non-law enforcement tasks such as monitoring hallways or responding to classrooms when students misbehave. Police officers who respond to a classroom incident may take law enforcement action if a violation of criminal law occurred, while the teacher may only expect the officer to escort the misbehaving student to the office. The expectation that the officer will only provide classroom management assistance can result in dissatisfaction when the officer makes an arrest. One officer said they overhear staff comments that police response is too harsh but believes staff does not understand the officer has a sworn duty to suppress crime and arrest offenders.

In addition, school staff does not always communicate important information to officers so that they can properly manage an incident upon arrival. For example, an officer arrived at a call for service but did not know of the special needs of the involved student. The resulting action taken by the officer aggravated the situation. Once the officer learned of the special issue, the situation was resolved. The district does not have a formal process for communicating this type of information, which is frequently confidential, to responding officers. Instead, officers often receive information at the scene only when someone with knowledge of the special circumstances arrives.

As another example, principals do not always report criminal behavior to the police. In interviews, officers said the principal might decide to discipline the student under school policy and not involve the police in the criminal misbehavior. Principals said they report what they believe to be criminal activity. They also consult with police but after consultation may decide the behavior does not constitute criminal behavior. LMISD reported 83 fights and one assault in the *2004–05 Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Program* annual evaluation report. During the same period, the police reported only 48 disorderly conduct calls, which would be the criminal charge for a public fight, and 18 assault calls.

While the SDFSC program report and the police report use different terms to report similar activity, the difference indicates 84 students engaged in conduct defined as criminal by the Texas Penal Code, while the police received a call to respond only 66 times (48 disorderly and 18 assault calls). The annual SDFSC evaluation report also cited 24 incidents of marijuana or other substance use. The police reported only five narcotic calls, three tobacco related calls, and 10 public intoxication calls, totaling 18 substance related calls for service. In response to these figures, central administrators said that LMISD always involves the police when crimes occur, but acknowledged that there may be differences in the information communicated.

Principals interviewed said police services were generally adequate but cited areas where schools need additional help. For example, police did not always provide enough visible presence around the school or in gathering areas. One principal said the police chief would not stagger officer shifts to increase police coverage before and after school. Another principal said the chief temporarily reassigns the campus officer to provide crowd control at high school pep rallies, leaving the disciplinary campus that is in an area with crime concerns without a law enforcement presence.

The lack of clear expectations for police response, poor communication of the department's community police approach, and the failure to apply a problem-solving attitude to daily interaction between police and faculty have resulted in a working relationship that is average to poor. The review team surveyed district parents, students, and staff and asked them to rate the "working relationship that security personnel have with principals, teachers, staff, and students." **Exhibit 4-4** shows the survey responses for each group.

According to survey responses in **Exhibit 4-4**, 40 percent of student and 35 percent of administrator respondents rated security personnel's working relationship to be below average to poor. A higher percentage of teachers, principals, and auxiliary/professional staff surveyed believe the service relationship is good or excellent than other respondents.

Confusion over roles and responsibilities can also create frustration among students, staff, and the community who may think officers should be performing certain tasks that the police do not see as their responsibility. For example, campus teachers currently monitor hallways and common areas to suppress potential misbehavior. Some believe regular police patrols of hallways and common areas would suppress potential criminal activity. However, if officers view police presence in hallways as behavior monitoring rather than patrolling, a district service need may go unaddressed.

Many police agencies developed around community policing concepts have processes that promote officer and citizen communication. Officers are encouraged to work to solve problems before they lead to criminal activity, even if the solution is not a traditional law enforcement activity.

School district police departments use a variety of methods to communicate information, solve problems, and manage service expectations. The neighboring Santa Fe Independent School District Police Department uses its district website to provide information about its mission, services, special projects, crime stoppers tip line, and training opportunities. The website provides answers to frequently asked questions about officer authority and police activity. The International Association of Chiefs of Police provides a best practice guide to developing a website in small police agencies and offers suggestions for promoting the website.

The Nacogdoches Independent School District Police Department records training and informational programs for broadcast on the local cable access channel. Officers also help with intervention services, such as transporting a parent to a critical meeting with counseling staff if the parent has no other way of attending. The Donna Independent School District (DISD) Police Department works with school administrators to develop student training for a specific problem. For example, when certain drugs began surfacing at DISD schools, the police targeted training information to the use and abuse of that particular substance.

LMISD should develop roles, responsibilities, and written guidelines for police services through a process that includes teacher input, communicates performance expectations, encourages resolution of problems, and provides for continuing review and improvement. Working with teachers, principals, and the director of Personnel and Operations, the chief of Police should define performance expectations for each assignment, including the chief's position. The guidelines should communicate law enforcement roles and responsibilities to officers, employees, and the community.

EXHIBIT 4-4
LMISD SAFETY AND SECURITY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT SECURITY PERSONNEL HAS WITH PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, STAFF, AND STUDENTS						
Teachers	1.8%	9.6%	31.6%	32.5%	13.2%	11.4%
Principals	6.7%	6.7%	33.3%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%
Administrators	25.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	15.0%	10.0%
Students	29.8%	10.5%	35.1%	17.5%	1.8%	5.3%
Parents	8.3%	13.1%	29.8%	20.2%	13.1%	15.5%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	6.3%	12.5%	29.7%	34.4%	15.6%	1.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

The expectations should reflect the services necessary to maintain a safe and orderly district and provide an appropriate balance between administrative tasks and enforcement activities.

The development process should provide for continued input throughout the year and encourage the resolution of problems as they arise. Guidelines should instruct faculty on what to expect when an officer responds to a call for service and provide for the exchange of information between officers and staff as it relates to students and enforcement action. After developing the final guidelines, the chief of Police should present them to the superintendent and board for approval, and resubmit the guidelines as revisions occur.

After the board approves the roles, responsibilities, and guidelines, the chief of Police should update the police manual and job descriptions, recording performance expectations for each assignment for use in evaluations. The director of Personnel and Operations should assist in the drafting and approval of the updated job descriptions by using LMISD personnel processes.

The chief of Police should develop an implementation schedule, including a communication plan that uses a variety of methods to communicate with administrators, staff, students, and parents. Annual orientation of new district staff should include a segment on working with the Police Department, the services they provide, and legal standards they must meet. The chief should use the district website to provide information about the department and its services, and solicit comments and concerns. The district's public information officer may also assist the department in developing additional methods for communicating with the various groups that interact with district police. The LMISD Police Department should also use its annual report of police activity to the board as an opportunity to present a recap of successes and submit any suggestions for improvement to the guidelines.

DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT (REC. 28)

LMISD does not adequately evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of discipline, contributing to perceptions that discipline is not fairly applied and administrators do not support teachers in their efforts to maintain classroom order.

LMISD has adopted a code of conduct, which generally mirrors the legal requirements of the Education Code. The code of conduct includes general standards such as:

- demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not;

- behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline;

- attend classes regularly and on time;

- prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class;

- meet district and campus standards of grooming and dress; and

- obey all campus and classroom rules.

The code also describes general conduct violations such as:
- failing to comply with directives given by school personnel;

- leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission;

- refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or principal;

- using profanity or vulgar language or making obscene gestures;

- engaging in bullying, harassment and making hit lists;

- engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by work, gesture, or any other conduct, including requests for sexual favors director toward another student or district employee; and

- defacing or damaging school property.

The code also describes discipline management techniques such as:
- verbal (oral or written) correction;

- rewards or demerits;

- behavioral contracts;

- detention;

- assignment of school duties such as cleaning or picking up litter;

- out of school suspension;

- placement in a DAEP;

- expulsion; and,

- other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

These general descriptions do not link the violation to the list of discipline techniques, provide guidance on factors considered when assessing punishment, or distinguish between a first offense or a fourth offense. The general descriptions also do not distinguish between an accident and a deliberate violation. They do not consider if the violation was individually committed, or part of an organized, planned violation. The descriptions do not express whether the district favorably considers student participation in extra-curricular activities or how they view an unwilling participant over the instigator.

State law requires punishment of certain conduct by removal from the regular classroom setting to a disciplinary alternative education setting. The district code of conduct also defines the type of conduct by law that requires a mandatory placement. The general categories of consequences and the restatement of the law form the standards by which LMISD assesses discipline.

Teachers initially administer discipline in the classroom. When a student's misconduct is repetitive, or is of a serious nature, school administrators such as the principal or vice principal may assess punishment. Punishment at the campus level could be detention, removal to an on campus suspension program, or other sanctions. When a student's misconduct results in a recommendation for removal to the DAEP, the district hearing officer reviews the incident, discusses concerns with the student and parents, and determines if removal is appropriate.

In March 2005, in response to complaints that administrators did not support teacher-assessed discipline, district administrators met with school administrators to clarify district discipline standards. Administrators revised and aligned discipline standards for the high school and middle school. The result was a standardized discipline plan for the secondary schools.

The high school discipline guide for teachers and assistant principals includes additional detail for administering discipline. For example, the first time a student curses, the student will receive a 30-minute teacher detention with parent notification. The second time the student curses the student receives an office referral. The first office referral for profanity results in punishment of one to three days of in-school suspension plus a police citation for disorderly conduct. The second trip to the office for profanity will result in between one and three day's suspension, assignment to the DAEP, and another police citation.

The middle school adopted a similar set of guidelines. The guidelines include definitions to assist teachers and assistant principals in consistent application. For example, the definition of a classroom disruption is one that keeps the teacher from teaching, including throwing objects when told to stop, being out of a seat when told not to get up, and continuous talking. The guidelines define fighting as mutual combat, squared off and trying to overpower the other, multiple punches, falling on the ground or into lockers, disheveled clothing, or visible injuries. Also included is an example of actions that do not meet the definition of a fight. Teachers must keep a notebook or other documentation of all discipline problems.

Under the new high school guidelines, staff must document the discipline measure they applied. The high school principal is monitoring the application of the new standards. While the data is too new to determine its effect, the high school experienced a decline in disciplinary incidents in the first two months of 2005–06.

To provide further discipline oversight, teachers emailed copies of each discipline referral to the high school and middle school principals. This email provided the principal with daily notice of discipline issues that previously went only to the assistant principal or other position responsible for campus discipline. Initially, principals were receiving 200 emails a day. In 2005–06, this number dropped to between 25 and 50 emails a day.

The district collects and reports discipline information the Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires. LMISD reports student offenses to the TEA for a statewide comparison of incidents according to grade, gender, ethnicity, and similar categories. Administrators can generate a report that provides a monthly count of behavior incidents. LMISD does not routinely collect information specific to determining consistency of discipline. This information would include which teacher assessed the discipline, which administrator upheld or modified the teacher's assessment, or the effectiveness of campus-based consequences. The information LMISD collected does not support trend analysis to determine if external, correctable factors contributed to behavior incidents.

The district does not have a documented process for evaluating incidents that do not receive punishment. All Texas school districts must report suspensions and disciplinary alternative education referrals to the TEA. If police decide not to file charges on a student or if discipline decisions

change at the request of the board or an administrator, current processes do not document the decision or the basis for the decision.

The district does not consistently report available information, and there is no review process to ensure data is accurately gathered. In 2004–05, the police reported two assaults on employees, the DAEP received five students who assaulted employees, and the Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) performance measures report showed no assaults on employees. In 2004–05, the police reported filing 30 truancy citations for the district. Principals reported filing 20 to 25 cases per year for their campuses. The SDFS performance measure report showed no truancy cases filed.

While the TEA reporting process can cause some confusion by allowing Texas districts to report assaults as either an assault or a violation of the student code of conduct, districts make the decision on how they report the information when they code the incident for the report. LMISD also noted that the standard for reporting truancy to the TEA and the standard for reporting under SDFS varies. Truancy for Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting purposes can be three or more unexcused absences for full or parts of days, while the SDFS evaluation only reports three or more unexcused full day absences. With this explanation, the SDFS number might be accurate, but only if none of the LMISD students had less than three unexcused full day absences.

The review team surveyed teachers, principals, administrators, students, and parents on the performance of district discipline processes. **Exhibit 4-5** displays the perception of district discipline by students, parents, and staff.

Exhibit 4-5 shows that more than 40 percent of teachers, administrators, students, and parents surveyed believe equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline is below average to poor. By comparison, 60 percent of principals surveyed rated discipline equity, consistency, and fairness as good or excellent. Support and auxiliary staff surveyed are split, with 37.5 percent rating consistency and fairness below average to poor and 32.9 percent believing it to be good or excellent.

In addition to the survey consistency ranking, respondents provided specific comments on discipline. Some survey respondents provided stories of alleged favoritism. For some incidents described in the comments, students engaging in criminal behavior received no consequences for the misbehavior. In interviews, district employees believed that relationships with district management and participation in certain sports were factors in discipline results.

In interviews, principals believed the discipline process is generally fair. Some said that any alleged problems are a result of inexperienced teachers needing assistance with classroom management strategies. Others believed the lack of discipline management support was a contributing factor to teachers leaving the district. Comments by community and staff identified administration as contributing to the lack of consistent discipline. The closeness of the community allows parents direct access to board members and central administrators without first using the district's complaint resolution process.

The district's behavior management process does not allow for review, analysis, or correction of the type of incidents that are creating the perception of inconsistent discipline. The lack of data does not allow the district to confirm or

EXHIBIT 4-5
LMISD SAFETY AND SECURITY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE EQUITY, CONSISTENCY, AND FAIRNESS OF DISCIPLINE STUDENTS RECEIVE FOR MISCONDUCT.						
Teachers	16.7%	23.7%	28.9%	20.2%	2.6%	7.9%
Principals	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	6.7%	0.0%
Administrators	25.0%	15.0%	30.0%	20.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Students	29.8%	21.1%	26.3%	10.5%	3.5%	8.8%
Parents	16.7%	25.0%	23.8%	16.7%	6.0%	11.9%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	12.5%	25.0%	28.1%	26.6%	6.3%	1.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

deny the allegations of favoritism. Without clear guidelines, accurate documentation, and regular analysis, LMISD cannot identify underlying problems creating the misperceptions. As a result, the district's discipline strategies may be ineffective and resources misplaced.

The National Association of School Psychologists has identified school practices that contribute to the development of behavior problems. They include:

- inconsistent and punitive school-wide, classroom, and individual behavior management practices;

- unclear rules and expectations regarding appropriate behavior;

- uncorrected rule violations; and

- failure to reward adherence.

In its "Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence" (Guide), the International Association of Chiefs of Police advocates clear and consistent discipline. The Guide includes individual strategies for success such as ensuring the clear purpose of all rules and their consistent application.

In its School Master Plan for Discipline, the Louisiana Department of Education requires that school leaders use data to drive discipline decision-making. The data management expectations include data collection in a way that permits efficient monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the district discipline system. Suggested performance measures for data collection and evaluation include average discipline referrals per day per month, referrals by problem behavior, referrals by location, referrals by time, referrals by student, referrals by staff, individual student reporting by month and year, and referrals by grade level. School leadership is responsible for consistent and fair administration of discipline polices, which are achievable through monitoring discipline decisions, adjusting procedures, and/or training as indicated by performance data evaluation.

The district superintendent should establish a discipline management working group of teachers and administrators to develop performance measures; develop stronger guidelines for capturing performance data, analyzing behavior incidents, and reporting discipline; and provide training for staff and management on the application of evaluation results. School administrative staff should enter discipline records in the district's computer system with enough information to allow for review and analysis of the misbehavior and the discipline they assessed. To increase the confidence in the fairness of the process, administrators should identify reasons

that discipline varies from the guidelines and address inconsistencies.

The discipline reporting procedures should also provide guidance on when to report criminal activity and require police to document the call. The discipline management-working group and the police chief should develop a performance report form as a basis for routine reports. These reports will contain data that principals can review in assessing the performance of discipline processes and behavior management strategies. The director of Student Services should review the information annually to determine the consistency of discipline and if staff require additional training.

TRUANCY REDUCTION (REC. 29)

LMISD lacks a clearly defined truancy reduction program with sufficient accountability for non-performance of truancy related tasks, making the process an ineffective tool for compelling student attendance. In 2004–05, LMISD filed only 30 truancy cases despite a substantially higher number of full or partial day absences. Staff gave a variety of reasons for the failure, including slow setting of court dates by the Justice of the Peace, slow paperwork processing by school staff, and a lack of designated program responsibility.

Exhibit 4-6 shows truancy enforcement activity in a neighboring school district. In addition to its geographic proximity to LMISD, the Texas City Independent School District (TCISD) is a peer district for this review. Both districts are in Galveston County and have the same county prosecutors for misdemeanor and juvenile crime.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-6**, TCISD files several hundred cases a year. LMISD files 25 to 30 cases. Once filed, a truancy case usually results in a judge's order for a student to attend class. Continued absenteeism violates the court order. Districts file contempt cases when students under court orders continue to miss school. LMISD did not have any statistics on contempt cases filed.

The district attendance process consists primarily of providing student attendance information to parents and students. School handbooks include a description of the attendance policies and reporting procedures. Each campus provides a copy to parents and students. The handbook briefly summarizes state compulsory attendance law. It also provides the process for documenting an excused absence.

Different support staff has attendance duties at the campus level. With the exception of the DAEP, which reports

SAFETY AND SECURITY   LMISD MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

EXHIBIT 4-6
TRUANCY CASE FILINGS: TEXAS CITY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

COURT ACTIVITIES	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Cases Filed	371	333	381	331	246
Cases Heard in Court	371	297	273	195	132 ·
Contempt Cases Filed	30	47	18	55	32
CONTEMPT AS PERCENT OF CASES FILED	8.1%	14.1%	4.7%	16.6%	13.0%

SOURCE: Texas City Independent School District, Response to a Review team data request, October 2005.

attendance through the student's home campus, all district schools have an attendance clerk. School attendance duties include entering attendance information into the computer, compiling attendance data, sending notices to parents, and referring information on excessive absences to the principal.

The district has an at-risk counselor who works with students who are identified as at-risk of dropping out of school. One of the early warning signs of at-risk behavior is student attendance. The counselor makes home visits, locates absent students, and attempts to address the underlying cause of absenteeism with referrals to social or other services. The at-risk counselor does not have specific procedures for contact and referral.

LMISD reports attendance as required by law. The time for taking official daily attendance is second period, and the count determines the amount of state funding the district will receive. The district enters attendance information into a computer database but does not routinely analyze the information to determine how best to address excessive absences. While meeting the minimum legal requirements for reporting attendance, LMISD schools have not always captured adequate information for effective enforcement. For example, in 2004 district police performed a safety audit that noted certain schools did not routinely take or maintain attendance records for every class period. When the review team asked about the 2005 attendance process, the middle school and disciplinary alternative education school responded that they take attendance each period. Elementary schools take attendance once per day.

LMISD attendance processes do not have strong enforcement protocols. The LMISD board adopted a policy that outlines the powers and duties of a police officer serving as an attendance officer, or for others selected as attendance officers. The policy is a broad listing of the legal authorization in the Texas Education Code. It does not contain district specific procedures such as an expected number of attempts

at parent contact before filing a truancy case, or timelines for reporting truant students to the court. Although police keep statistics on the number of cases filed, the district does not have a formal process for tracking and evaluating truancy cases.

The district has also assigned a police officer to work truancy cases. The truancy officer does not have specific guidelines for truancy enforcement activities. The district has not provided the officer with regular access to a district vehicle to locate or transport students back to school. The officer understands the goal for his position is to "do the best you can with what you have."

When discussing attendance procedures with the review team, staff acknowledged the program has weaknesses, but said that enforcement was lacking an essential component that is not within district control. Failure to attend on the part of the student and failure to compel attendance on the part of the parent are crimes under Texas law. Truancy offenses are the equivalent of a traffic ticket, punishable by fine, and filed with a local Justice Court, municipal court, or in certain cases with Juvenile Court as a child in need of supervision complaint. LMISD files its truancy cases in Justice Court. According to district staff, cases filed in the fall are not set by the court for hearing until summer. The district is considering other options for judicial enforcement, but it has not made any alternative arrangements either with the municipal court or through the Juvenile Court process.

Until September 2005, filing charges against a student for truancy was a discretionary decision by schools. State law required filing on a parent who was not making every effort to compel their child's attendance, but there were no truancy specific filing deadlines. The 79th Legislature amended the statute to require schools to file cases within seven days of a student's last absence if the student is absent 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

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The mandated language applies to student cases and parent cases, as well as referrals to juvenile court for conduct in need of supervision. A court must dismiss a complaint or referral from a district that has not followed the requirements of the provision. The intent of the bill is to provide a filing deadline so courts receive timely notice of truancy.

Truancy cases also have special court costs and fine provisions. Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 102.014 requires an additional $25 assessed as costs on each truancy case. Local governments must use the money for child safety programs such as crossing guards, or split funds with school districts. Under the Texas Education Code, local governments must split fines assessed in failure to compel attendance cases against parents with the school district. Cities can assess an additional $5 fee on certain parking violations to fund crossing guards or similar child safety activities. Additionally, the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure allows victims of crime to request restitution. While this amount has limitations in Justice Court, school districts incur a monetary loss from truancy crimes similar to victims of other crimes.

The lack of an aggressive truancy program negatively limits the district's ability to affect behavior that may contribute to the potential for future misbehavior. Although it is an entry-level misdemeanor, law enforcement considers truancy a gateway crime. Excessive absences can be one of the earliest signs of problem behavior. Students who do not attend school miss educational opportunities. Missed educational opportunities can become a path to continued problems with career and earning advancements throughout life.

The lack of truancy reduction efforts also negatively affects school funding. Schools receive state funding based on average daily attendance. When students do not attend, districts receive less funding. Fewer funds can mean fewer programs, less technology, and less adequate tools for all students. A hand count of high school students in 2004–05 with 20 or more absences in three or more classes revealed 209 incidents of substantial absenteeism. In some instances, class absences ranged from 50 to more than 100 in a single school year.

In 2004–05, LMISD filed 15 citations on high school truants. The average daily attendance funding for LMISD is $6.38 per student per day. Using these figures as an estimate, the district lost $26,668 ($6.38 ADA funding per student x 209 students x 20 absences per student) in state funding on 209 students with 20 absences each. This amount is slightly higher than the annual salary of one LMISD police officer position,

or from an equipment perspective, the amount would cover the purchase price of a patrol car to assist in locating and returning truants to class.

Many Texas school districts have difficulty with court treatment of truancy cases. Dallas ISD and other Dallas County school districts were frustrated with the priority given truancy dockets and a generally unsatisfactory response by the area justice system. Dallas schools worked with judges, prosecutors, and juvenile agencies to develop a more rapid and serious response to truancy cases. The program had numerous obstacles to overcome. For example, forms, notices, and other legal paperwork required approval by a diverse group of independent officials. To reduce time to trial, Dallas County started a truancy court. Cases that previously took 75 days to come to trial reached court docket within 14 to 21 days, which meant school officials had to be ready to testify. The Dallas truancy process includes increasing sanctions for continuing absenteeism. It also includes an assessment and a case plan that addresses the issues that underline chronic absences.

The Austin Independent School District started a working group that drew together interested area school districts, juvenile prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, Justices of the Peace, District Judges, and other juvenile service providers. The working group developed a cooperative agreement that includes uniform notice letters and complaint forms drafted by prosecutors, home visits by county law enforcement that included social service referrals where indicated, and special docketing that attempted to set cases in order to minimize administrator absences for court. The district continually reviews the program and different programs piloted to determine if the process could be more effective. For example, the county assigned a magistrate to hear only truancy cases. As another example, a Travis County district judge held truancy court at area schools with high absenteeism to make court attendance easier for families without transportation.

The Texas City ISD truancy process relies on aggressive case filing, including contempt cases when a student or parent does not follow the court's order. TCISD tracks cases and dispositions to ensure performance and continuing improvement of its truancy program.

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) model programs guide identifies attendance policy best practices. According to the guide, policies should be strong and thoughtfully developed.

Participation in the development of policies should be broad. Expectations and consequences should be written and well publicized. Districts should consistently enforce policies at all levels.

LMISD should develop and implement a truancy reduction program that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, goals, resources, and measures performance. Truancy reduction programs require a variety of components that range from social services to criminal enforcement. LMISD's safety committee should meet with area organizations such as social service agencies, the local Justice of the Peace, municipal court, and the district attorney's office to determine what level of truancy assistance is currently available, and identify additional programs to cover gaps in service. The recent legislative changes should provide an impetus for county court systems to participate in a discussion on delivery of services that reinforce school attendance. Any resulting agreement should clarify the collection and disposition of truancy fines and fees, and the process for requesting restitution.

Once the enforcement process is determined, an LMISD safety committee should draft procedures, standards, and performance measures for district staff with truancy duties. Committee participants should include principals, police, counselors, and the director of Student Services. Procedures should identify the person or position responsible, tasks and timelines for each part of the process, and realistic measures for success. For example, if district police are responsible for tracking case disposition, the duty should also include providing the information to the business office. The business office would be responsible for monitoring payment to ensure the district receives any fine, fee, or restitution. By increasing truancy enforcement efforts, LMISD can strengthen attendance programs and reduce student absences.

Where the district identifies additional resources needed for implementation of the truancy program strategies, administrators should submit requests through the budget process. For example, if patrolling for students leaving campus in the morning and returning them to class is an assigned task, the district should provide a suitable vehicle.

The final component of the program should be the development of electronic tools that track truancy case filings. Commercially available software can capture information in a database format, provide forms that merge information in the database, and can extract data into a report format. The district has education-based software that may have the capability for similar manipulation of data. Tracking truancy cases will provide information for improving truancy strategies as well as assist the district in making sure it receives its share of fines, fees, and restitution.

While LMISD can accomplish the procedure and policy development activities with existing resources, potential truancy duties for the police officer will be more effective with the addition of a patrol car. The purchase of a patrol car with light bar, spotlights, emergency equipment wiring, and window tint would be a one-time cost of $20,870. While the district may already have a database application that will merge data into forms and reports, a commercially available program costs $125, or $750 to provide access to six schools. The one-time total cost for a truancy database application is $750 ($125 database program x 6 schools = $750).

While the assessment of fines and restitution is not within the control of LMISD, if the district filed 150 truancy cases, and if the court awarded restitution equivalent to the average daily attendance for 10 absences for each case, the district could recover $9,570 [($6.38 x 10) x 150 = $9,570] in lost state funding. If the district filed on 100 parents who were fined $100 each, the district would receive half of the fines collected and realize $5,000 in fine revenue [(100 x $100)/2 = $5,000]. The annual additional revenue is $14,570, and over five years the district would realize $72,850 ($14,570 x 5 = $72,850).

PREVENTIVE SAFETY INITIATIVES (REC. 30)

LMISD does not perform preventive checks for known risks to district safety or hold staff accountable for ensuring the success of safety initiatives, resulting in a failure to identify and correct problems that could reduce the potential for harm. Despite recent refinery and weather incidents, LMISD has not participated in crisis drills with area emergency responders or required its schools to perform periodic emergency drills other than fire drills. The district does not routinely use drug dog services although it recognizes a student drug problem, and staff reported drug use and drug possession on campus. The district has policies to keep unauthorized persons from school grounds but does not test the policies to ensure they are enforced.

Through safety audits, disciplinary events, and community involvement, LMISD identified areas needing safety or security programs. The district developed initiatives to address some of the identified needs. **Exhibit 4-7** provides a scorecard for LMISD threat reduction initiatives.

EXHIBIT 4-7
LMISD RISK REDUCTION INITIATIVES
2005

DESCRIPTION	GRADE*	EXPLANATION OF GRADE
Traffic Safety	√+	School zones are marked with electronic signs. Fire zones are painted although some areas are faded. Bus loading areas are clearly marked. Most traffic signs are in reasonable condition although some are cracked or faded.
Visitor Identification	-	Schools had visitor procedure signs on main entrances. Schools with multiple entrances did not have all entrances marked. Unmarked entrances were accessible.
Crisis Management	√	District has recently taken a leadership role in developing close working relationships with emergency response agencies, but the district does not routinely perform crisis drills in all schools and has not corrected all identified weaknesses. LMISD did address a communication weakness. As of October 2005, radios have been ordered and delivered.
Drug Prevention	√-	The district incorporated a Teen Health Clinic and a drug prevention and treatment clinic into the high school campus, but the district does not perform preventive drug sweeps to reduce incidents of on campus possession. According to police, available dogs were not effective but they have not attempted to locate another source for improved service.
Building Security	-	The district installed surveillance equipment at the high school but has not placed crime detection equipment at other campuses. The district did not test high school surveillance equipment under actual conditions. The district failed to keep all building alarms in service and is now pricing reactivation of the alarms.
Threat Assessment	+	While not required in 2004, district officers performed a safety audit to identify threats to district schools.

*Grade signs are used as follows: "√" means practice is acceptable, "+" means the practice is good, and "-" indicates a need for improvement. The application of two signs indicates the district practice may have a combination of qualities that makes placement between categories.
SOURCE: Review team interviews with LMISD staff and observations of review team members during fieldwork, 2005.

LMISD distributes safety and security responsibilities among various positions at the department and campus level. For example, the Police Department is responsible for law enforcement and general district security. Principals are responsible for safety and security on their particular campus. Central administrators have responsibilities for planning, budgeting, and overseeing implementation of safety initiatives. Despite examples of poor security performance such as repeated burglaries and unauthorized entries on district property, the district has not held any of its staff accountable for testing security initiatives and making corrections until they work. As one principal noted when reporting a burglary, the general staff attitude is crime is something that just happens.

The lack of preventive testing and correction has resulted in safety initiatives that are less effective than the district expected. For example, the image quality of the video surveillance equipment was inadequate to identify

perpetrators in several instances of criminal activity. The failure to test surveillance equipment under actual conditions resulted in equipment that is effective only 50 to 60 percent of the time.

Without testing and correcting visitor identification procedures, campuses remain at risk for unauthorized access. The high school implemented a procedure that confirms the identity of visitors, but visitors do not have to display the building pass to have access to the building. Review team members signed in but moved about the building without showing the pass.

At various campuses within the district, the review team gained entry through doors that were not marked with the visitor sign-in procedure. Review team members could gain access through locked doors by asking students or staff to open the doors. Once inside no one directed or accompanied the team member to the office for identification. Review team

members walked through buildings with no identification and no inquiries by staff or students.

Prior to September 2005, Texas schools were encouraged to perform safety audits, develop safety plans, train students and staff on safety protocols, and perform drills to ensure understanding of emergency procedures during times of crisis. In 2005, the 79th Legislature amended Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code to require districts to prepare a multi-hazard emergency operations plan that addresses mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The new law requires adoption of risk reduction strategies and requires a safety audit based on procedures developed by the Texas School Safety Center. LMISD is in the process of implementing the new requirements.

Testing and evaluation is an important component of any prevention strategy. Testing helps identify weaknesses when there is time to make a correction. Evaluating and adjusting programs or equipment before a crime or crisis occurs reduces the risk of injury to people or property.

The Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies standards manual states that the crime prevention function should target criminal activity on the basis of data analysis and include an evaluation process for determining the effectiveness of crime prevention programs.

Texas school districts test a variety of safety initiatives. For example, the Harris County Department of Education provides safety review services to area districts. The services include sending unannounced visitors to test open doors and unauthorized access to students and property. Santa Fe Independent School District tests its drug policies by contracting for random, unannounced sweeps of district schools by trained drug detection dogs.

Nacogdoches Independent School District (NISD) tests the effectiveness of crisis procedures by taking unannounced actions such as quietly removing a student from drill activities to see if missing student identification procedures are effective. NISD police also train with the Nacogdoches Police Department tactical team in district facilities. The city tactical team responds to critical incidents such as hostage situations, and the joint training allows the team to become familiar with district buildings and identify their weaknesses.

Kingsville Independent School District holds crisis drills with area emergency responders on possible community disasters such as a hazardous materials train derailment. The

coordinated drills allow agencies to identify communication and other weaknesses in incident response procedures.

LMISD should design and implement risk reduction procedures for known threats that include a process for testing program effectiveness. As part of the safety planning process, the chief of Police should identify areas where drills, unidentified visitors, unannounced inspections, or other performance testing mechanisms could highlight security weaknesses. The district's procedures should include a testing process with a follow-up review by district staff to determine if safety procedures are successful and identify areas of possible improvement. By evaluating safety and security programs, LMISD can increase the success of its safety and security strategies during actual incidents.

While the law requires a safety audit every three years, LMISD should test and correct its initiatives at least annually. The testing process should also include a follow up review with district staff to determine if safety procedures were successful and identify areas of possible improvement. The evaluation process should also identify consequences for uncorrected problems or unenforced policies. The superintendent should also evaluate campus and central administrators with safety related responsibilities on the performance of risk reduction strategies in their area of control or oversight.

The financial impact of implementing random sweeps with a drug dog will depend on the number of visits the district contracts. One vendor charges $180 per visit for a similarly sized school district. The annual cost of implementing random drug dog sweeps is $1,800, and is calculated assuming 10 visits in a school year at $180 per visit (10 visits x $180 per visit = $1,800). The total five-year cost is $9,000 ($1,800 per year x 5 years = $9,000).

The financial impact of expanding the building alarm system to the primary district buildings is based on recent installation costs that the district incurred when it installed alarms in a district building. The cost for the alarm was $610 for a single alarm pad, plus hardware and motion detectors for two doors. The alarm company also charges a monthly monitoring charge of $45. District buildings have multiple entrances and configurations, which will determine the actual cost of an adequate alarm system. If two doors can be alarmed for $610, the district could triple the number of covered doors from two to six for $1,830 ($610 x 3 = $1,830]). Assuming six doors are alarmed on each of 10 buildings, the cost of the system will be $18,300 ($1,830 x 10 = $18,300). Assuming the monthly cost of monitoring each building is $45, the

annual cost of monitoring services is $5,400 [($45 per month x 12 months) x 10 buildings = $5,400]. The five-year cost of monitoring is $27,000 ($5,400 per year x 5 years = $27,000).

The total annual cost for implementing both initiatives is $7,200 ($1,800 drug dog service + $5,400 for alarm monitoring) with a one-time alarm installation cost of $18,300.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (REC. 31)

The LMISD Police Department lacks adequate clerical or communications support for field officers, which can reduce police responsiveness, provide less coverage in the field, and require more of an officer's time in the office. The lack of a central communication point can reduce rapid response should the officer need assistance. The lack of clerical support results in more time spent by officers on administrative tasks and less time covering enforcement duties in the field.

The LMISD Police Department has one chief, six sworn officers, 13 full-time, and three part-time civilian crossing guards. The district police station is located at the high school in a secured area with surveillance monitors and juvenile offender holding areas. The chief of Police's office is in the station, while remaining officers work on various campuses. Officers assigned to the high school share space in a second floor work area for district staff. Crossing guards do not have offices, but stay in contact with the chief or other officers by coming in to the police offices or calling the Police Department. Some district administrators have radios that use the police radio frequency and use the radio to call for service. The general procedure for calling for police services is to call the chief, who will contact an officer.

Officers in the field communicate by radios that link to the City of La Marque Police Department dispatch. The connection to the City of La Marque Police Department dispatch allows officers to call for information not available through the LMISD Police Department. For example, district police do not have direct access to the state of Texas criminal history or driver's license database. A district police officer who has made a traffic stop and needs to check for outstanding warrants will ask the City of La Marque Police Department dispatcher to confirm the information.

While the LMISD police share a radio frequency with the city, the city dispatcher does not perform all of the communication services the LMISD officers need. If an officer is trying to confirm a student address, the officer must call the school secretary or other administrative staff for the

information. If the officer cannot reach the school staff by radio or if the officer is not carrying a telephone, the officer has to return to the school to get the information.

Officers must write reports for each call for service or enforcement action taken. If an officer files charges, additional paperwork requirements include affidavits, complaints, or other legal paperwork. If the officer takes law enforcement action that results in a report, the time spent drafting and entering the report takes time away from field assignments such as preventive patrolling. While the LMISD Police Department does not keep statistics on the amount of time spent in the field and the amount of time spent on paperwork or other administrative duties, principals said officers did not spend enough time in visible activities such as preventive patrols of school hallways and grounds. The middle school principal said middle school officers spend a large amount of time with the students, but estimated that the officers spend as much as five hours, or 12.5 percent of their time, each week in the office.

Officer time needed for paperwork may also increase due to the capability of the software package used or configuration of the police computers. One officer described the computers as "handmade and slow." The review team also had difficulty in obtaining reports from the LMISD Police Department. Although the police chief indicated the software was capable of producing a report for calls for service that is standard for most police agencies, the chief only provided a summary and not an actual report generated from a software package.

The LMISD Police Department previously had a support position that provided clerical and communications support. The clerk answered telephones, took messages, typed documents, and provided a point of contact for district officers when they were out in the field. The district eliminated the position due to budget constraints. As a result, the reception area of the Police Department is unattended. If all officers are out of the office, visitors wait without knowing where officers are, how to reach them, or when they will return. If an officer needs assistance, there is no central point for communicating that need. Officers now spend time on administrative tasks previously performed by the support position, reducing the amount of time available to answer calls for service or perform preventive patrols.

The standards manual developed by the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) states that the function of a law enforcement communication system is to satisfy the immediate information needs of the agency

in the course of its normal daily activities as well as during emergencies. The system conveys information from the citizens to the officer responding to the call for assistance. The manual further notes that the speed and accuracy of the information flow is one of the measures of an agency's ability to respond to the needs of its community.

CALEA commentary for communications standards notes that immediate communications capability provides a measure of safety and security to law enforcement officers and the public. The standards require that communications personnel track the status of each officer. Law enforcement training includes educating officers on the importance of identifying their location and status at all times while on duty. Officers depend on central communications to recognize when they might be in danger. A central communications position should know where and how long each officer has been out on a call.

Many small police departments as well as school district police departments have a position that provides clerical and communications support. Operations increase in efficiency when law enforcement personnel know the status of other officers, their locations, the nature of calls for service, and the developments in investigations. Additionally, having clerical support to complete paperwork enhances productivity by allowing officers to return more quickly to their campus patrol assignments.

The district should implement a process to improve clerical and communications support and create a clerical position for the LMISD Police Department. As the district defines and seeks board approval for the new position, it should evaluate staff assignments and computer support to make sure the communication process is efficient and effective. The district should undertake a review and redesign of administrative processes to minimize officer performed clerical tasks and maximize law enforcement services.

The chief of Police should design the position to enhance officer safety and operational productivity. The position should require excellent typing and communication skills and the ability to attend to multiple details under pressure. In addition to excellent clerical skills, the employee should receive dispatcher certification training to enhance radio and officer status tracking skills.

LMISD Police Department staff should review and redesign administrative processes to increase efficiency and productivity. As clerical tasks transfer from officers to the support position, the chief should determine how much of

an officer's time to allocate to direct service and to administrative and clerical tasks. Officers should use additional field time to enhance current services. If the current software cannot support the activities of a law enforcement agency, including maintaining the status of each officer, the district should upgrade the software.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation includes the cost of upgrading computer software and creating a clerical support position. The district should purchase police software with entry, search, and tracking features for five computer stations with one-time costs of $3,834 for upgrading the software and $93 for dispatcher training; the total one-time cost of the implementation is $3,927.

The creation of a clerical position will cost $22,000 plus fringe benefits per year. The cost of district benefits is 10.95 percent or $2,409 per year ($22,000 annual salary x 0.1095 fringe benefit rate = $2,409). The annual cost of insurance is an additional $2,750. The total annual cost for the position is $27,159 ($22,000 salary + $2,409 fringe benefits + $2,750 insurance = $27,159. This position and salary is consistent with a Level II paraprofessional position and assumes the individual hired will have clerical skills and experience to place the salary slightly above midpoint in the Level II salary range. The cost for this position over five years will be $135,795.

POLICE OFFICER GUIDELINES (REC. 32)

The LMISD Police Department's policies and procedures manual does not guide officers in many risk-based activities, which causes potential liability for the district. The manual does not address acceptable weapons, off-duty activity, or other procedures typically addressed in police manuals. The police procedures manual includes use of force guidelines, but it does not limit the types of weapons or ammunition an officer may use. Officers said they could select the type of handgun and ammunition carried as long as the bullets are not hollow point.

The caliber of gun and type of ammunition determine the penetration of shots fired. Bullets have specific design properties. Hollow point bullets, for example, break apart as they make contact with an object. Some ammunition creates heavy internal damage to the person or object hit as it stays within the target. Other bullet types do not break apart, passing through objects and potentially hitting persons next to the target. Many can pass through the wall of a portable building, striking persons inside. Because of the characteristics of bullets and guns, firearms and ammunition selections reflect anticipated use and the potential threat to be controlled.

The LMISD police manual does not identify or limit the number or type of less-than-lethal weapons officers use, or require that officers train on the weapons they carry. A less-than-lethal weapon can include wooden or collapsible metal batons, electric shock devices, or a variety of chemical sprays. Each weapon has the potential of inflicting serious injuries if an officer does not use it properly.

In addition, LMISD allows officers to work off-duty security jobs but provides few guidelines to limit district liability for police actions taken while off-duty. The LMISD Police Department has a policy that prohibits off-duty jobs at locations that serve alcohol, but has no other written guidelines. There are no limits on the hours an officer can work in a single day or work week. Some officers outfit their own cars with a police package, but the district provides no guidelines for car use in off-duty employment.

Many officers engage in off duty security employment, some with multiple off duty jobs. These jobs have a potential for law enforcement action. In certain circumstances, law enforcement action taken while off-duty may put the officer "on-duty" for purposes of the action taken. If this type of situation occurs, it could draw the district into legal consequences. An injured suspect may look to the district for compensation in a federal civil rights violation action. An injured officer may look to the district for workers' compensation.

Exhibit 4-8 compares sample standard policies required for accredited police agencies to LMISD police policies. As shown in Exhibit 4-8, LMISD has only two of the eight standard policies.

Without adequate guidelines, officers may make decisions that the district finds unacceptable. Without procedures for use of weapons other than firearms, an officer could inappropriately apply the weapon causing unexpected injury to the officer or suspect. Without procedures for off-duty activities, officers could provide security services to less than desirable establishments, which could reflect on the district should the officer take law enforcement action and testify in court. Without guidance on appropriate firearms for on- or off-duty use, officers could decide to carry high-powered firearms capable of piercing the outer walls of frame or manufactured houses or the inner walls of classrooms.

Model police agencies provide guidelines that aid officers in decision-making. Policies typically touch on areas with legal implications but are also consistent with agency values. Police agencies designate which firearms and ammunition are acceptable for a particular assignment. Police agencies with strong risk management programs have procedures that describe acceptable off-duty activities that might require law enforcement action, limit the number of hours an officer can work on- or off-duty during a workweek, and define procedures for taking off-duty law enforcement action.

EXHIBIT 4-8
COMPARISON OF DISTRICT POLICIES TO ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
2005

ACCREDITATION STANDARD	DISTRICT POLICY
A written directive defines the legally mandated authority and responsibilities vested in all categories of sworn agency personnel.	Yes
A written directive governs the use of authorized less-than-lethal weapons by agency personnel.	No
A written directive states that an officer may use deadly force only when the officer reasonably believes that the action is in defense of human life, including the officer's own life, or in defense of any person in imminent danger of serious physical injury.	Yes
A written directive specifies procedures for ensuring the provision of appropriate medical aid after use of lethal or less-than-lethal weapons, or other use of force incidents as defined by the agency.	No
A written report is submitted whenever an employee discharges a firearm for other than training or recreational purposes; takes an action that results in or is alleged to have resulted in, injury or death of another person; applies force through the use of lethal or less-than-lethal weapons; or applies weaponless physical force at a level as defined by the agency.	No
The agency has a procedure for reviewing use of force reports.	No
A written directive requires that agency personnel only use weapons and ammunition authorized by the agency in law enforcement responsibilities, and the directive applies to both on- and off-duty.	No
A written directive requires that only agency personnel demonstrating proficiency in the use of agency-authorized weapons be approved to carry such weapons.	No

SOURCE: Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies, Standards Manual of the Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Program, 2005.

The chief of Police should draft and adopt law enforcement policies and procedures that cover all areas that create potential liability for the district. The chief of Police should research and request copies of procedure manuals from other law enforcement agencies as well as model policy guides from professional law enforcement associations to use as a model in updating the LMISD Police Department's manual. Once drafted, legal counsel should review the manual to ensure policies are legally appropriate. The chief of Police should incorporate legal counsel input, finalize the manual, and submit it to the superintendent and board for approval. By defining guidelines for police activities, LMISD can control its risks associated with law enforcement activities performed by LMISD police.

Using the billable rate of $265 per hour and an assumption that review by legal counsel of new policies with a potential to affect district liability will take two hours, the financial impact of this recommendation is a one-time cost of $530 ($265 x 2 = $530).

MASTER KEY CONTROL (REC. 33)

The district lacks a formal plan for producing, assigning, and tracking building keys, which has resulted in unauthorized access to district buildings. LMISD does not have a written policy detailing who has the authority to assign or order replacement keys, or the consequences of losing a key. In interviews, principals said community members have keys, former employees have keys, and on occasion, they have found unauthorized persons in their school after hours.

Custodians are responsible for opening and closing facilities and have keys for that purpose. Custodians are not district employees, but are part of a contracted service. Principals have master keys to their building and make decisions on who can have a key to the facility. The high school principal said he has found school doors unlocked at the end of the weekend and did not know if a custodian or school staff forgot to lock the door.

An elementary principal said the district discourages allowing employees to have keys after an incident where an employee reportedly used a key to enter district buildings for purposes of theft. The principal said that the lack of keys for teachers made it difficult for teachers to work extra hours in their classroom after their normal work hours or on weekends. The lack of keys also affects crisis drills, as the additional entrances are locked for security purposes, making re-entry difficult.

The district has a trained locksmith with the ability to make keys and change locks. However, the district has not changed cores or locks. The district and the contract company that supplies the custodial staff are currently discussing adding electronic key pads to school entrances but have not agreed upon a solution for secured access.

Without secured doors and limited key access, the district will not be able to control theft of district property or malicious mischief to district buildings. Unauthorized persons will still have access to the schools, where unintentional harm could occur to the visitor or to district property. Without enforcement of key assignment and tracking policies, the district cannot maintain the security of doors after they assign the keys.

Combined with an assignment and replacement policy that determines who should have access to which doors, a system that can track and identify missing keys is essential to controlling building security costs. A lost key requires replacement of the lock core. The district should replace the cores of all doors that a lost key can open and then issue new keys.

Implementing a key control and tracking system is essential to building security. An organization cannot easily identify a missing key without a tracking system. Many school districts label keys, have employees sign a document when they issue and retrieve keys, and have formal policies guiding assignment and fiscal responsibility for keys. If a key is missing, the district re-keys the lock to ensure the safety of students and staff. The employee who lost the key is responsible for the cost of replacing the core or re-keying the lock.

The Waco Independent School District (WISD) implemented a computer software system for creating, storing, locating, and accessing information on WISD keys. The system creates the master keying details that follow stringent security requirements. WISD combines master key details with an automated computer coded metal key cutting machine. The new process is quicker and allows the locksmith to immediately identify a lost key and produce a replacement key on site.

LMISD should develop a key control and building access program that includes a key assignment and responsibility policy. The district's program should determine which locks need replacing. The district locksmith should assess the cost to change cores. Principals should identify the priority for key changes at their campus and, with assistance from the district safety committee, develop a schedule for phasing in

replacement of cores and keys based on a balance of security and funding concerns. Procedures for key assignment, key tracking, and responsibility for costs should a key become lost or stolen promotes improved key control and reduces the risk of unauthorized access to district buildings.

Principals should work with the director of Personnel and Operations in developing a key assignment and replacement policy. Key assignment should match an employee's need with the level of access. For example, teachers should have access to the front door and their classroom. By limiting access to basic need, the loss of a key requires fewer lock replacements. If a teacher does not have a classroom in the main building of a school, not providing key access to the main building limits the number of keys and cores that would need replacement if the teacher loses a key. The key assignment policy should provide notice to key holders that they cannot duplicate or lend keys without permission, and of their responsibility to pay the costs associated with replacing lost keys or changing lock cores if the employee violates the key assignment policy.

Procedures for key assignments should include tracking and reporting protocols. Key assignment should occur at the beginning of each school year with key return at the end of each school year. Principals should maintain a list of each key assigned and each key an employee returns. Principals should be responsible for ensuring that staff leaving during the school year returns their key. To assist principals in enforcing the policy, at the time of assignment, employees should sign an acknowledgement form that they understand and will follow the policy, including their reimbursement obligations.

While tracking and cost assignment can be developed on standard spreadsheet software with existing district resources, specific key tracking software is available that will help establish the access hierarchy, track key assignments, and determine the total replacement cost of changing cores should a key be lost. The financial impact of purchasing tracking software is approximately $693.

While an exact count of campus doors is not available, a cost of changing lock cores was estimated at 150 doors at the high school, 75 doors at the middle school, and 40 doors at each of the four elementary schools and at the disciplinary alternative education school, for a total of 425 doors [150 +75 + (40 x 5=200)]. The estimated cost for changing lock cores in LMISD school buildings is $16 per core for a total cost of $6,800 (425 doors x $16 per core = $6,800).

The total one-time cost for the software and new cores is $7,493 ($693 + $6,800).

For background information on Safety and Security, see page 228 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
26. Develop a planning process for the LMISD Police Department and districtwide safety management that defines goals and implementation strategies, sets goal priorities, and incorporates the plan into the district budget process.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
27. Develop roles, responsibilities, and written guidelines for police services through a process that includes teacher input, communicates performance expectations, encourages resolution of problems, and provides for continuing review and improvement.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
28. Establish a discipline management working group of teachers and administrators to develop performance measures; develop stronger guidelines for capturing data, analyzing behavior incidents, and reporting discipline; and provide training for staff and management on its application.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
29. Develop and implement a truancy reduction program that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, goals, resources, and measures performance.	$14,570	$14,570	$14,570	$14,570	$14,570	$72,850	($21,620)
30. Design and implement risk reduction procedures for known threats that include a process for testing program effectiveness.	($7,200)	($7,200)	($7,200)	($7,200)	($7,200)	($36,000)	($18,300)
31. Implement a process to improve clerical and communications support and create a clerical position for the LMISD Police Department.	($27,159)	($27,159)	($27,159)	($27,159)	($27,159)	($135,795)	($3,927)
32. Draft and adopt law enforcement policies and procedures that cover all areas that create potential liability for the district.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($530)
33. Develop a key control and building access program that includes a key assignment and responsibility policy.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($7,493)
TOTALS–CHAPTER 4	**($19,789)**	**($19,789)**	**($19,789)**	**($19,789)**	**($19,789)**	**($98,945)**	**($51,870)**
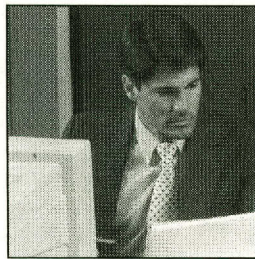
Chapter 5

Computers and Technology

La Marque Independent School District
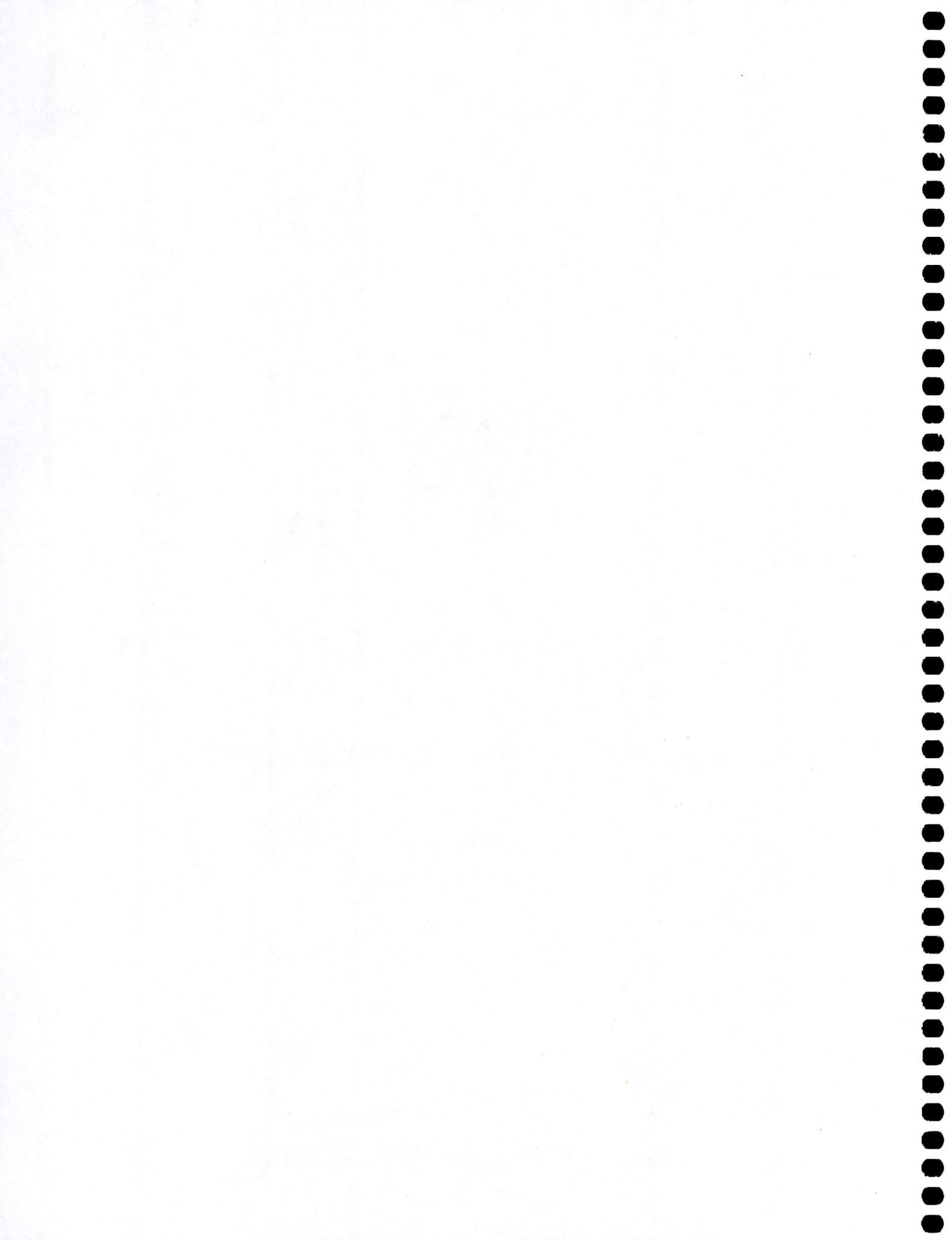
CHAPTER 5. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

A technology-rich educational environment requires a balance between hardware, software, training, and administrative support. Texas public school districts vary in the assigned responsibilities of their technology services operations. Some offices support administrative functions only, while others are responsible for supporting both administration and instruction. To achieve its technology-related goals, a school district must have an organizational structure that encourages using and supporting new technologies. A well-managed technology and information services department is based on appropriate goals and organization with clearly assigned responsibilities, well-defined procedures for developing new applications, and a customer service orientation to meet and anticipate user needs.

The La Marque ISD (LMISD) computers and information technology function is performed internally by district staff dispersed throughout the district. Two budgeted technology specialist positions that report to the director of Personnel and Operations provide districtwide computer hardware maintenance and network support. In 2005–06, one position is filled and the other is vacant. The technology specialists perform network administration and provide hardware maintenance of the student and administrative workstations as well as peripheral devices such as printers. In addition to the centralized positions, one high school career and technology education (CTE) teacher serves as the high school technology coordinator, responsible for maintaining its network and computer workstations. The PEIMS specialist position that reports to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations performs the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting.

The district's wide area network (WAN) for its education and administrative operations consists of T1 lines in a star configuration since the district does not have a fiber network. LMISD has 953 computer workstations to support more than 4,100 students and staff. Of the 953 workstations, 570 are student workstations, 233 are teacher workstations, and 150 are administrative workstations. Each classroom has a teacher workstation with Internet connectivity.

Student workstations are mostly in fixed laboratory configurations. At the elementary schools, labs are open format and used for instruction, administrative tasks, and research. Each elementary school has at least one lab. Westlawn Elementary School is an exception. It has two labs,

one of which received grant funding. The middle school has four labs, including the library. The library has 16 workstations, and other labs have 24 workstations. The journalism class has a 5-station mini-lab. The high school has seven full labs with 20 to 24 workstations each. Four of the labs are for Career and Technology Education (CTE) courses, one laboratory is for math/science, and two labs are general purpose.

The district uses computer software for its business system to manage and monitor its budget, financial, and purchasing activities. There is a planned upgrade for the business system funded in the 2005–06 budget. The student management computer software system is used to track and report PEIMS student data such as student demographic information as well as attendance and discipline data.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- The district's participation in a local consortium of districts in the Galveston/Brazoria County area, known as the Galveston-Brazoria Technology Education Network (GBTEN), benefits the district by leveraging knowledge and resources between the members.

FINDINGS

- LMISD does not have a comprehensive, documented computer acquisition and replacement program with strategies to target multiple funding sources to ensure that it has sufficient computers with appropriate capability to support instruction.

- The district does not have a comprehensive staff development program that establishes and incorporates technology proficiency standards into performance measurement and appraisal systems to ensure staff proficiency in technology.

- The district does not have a disaster recovery plan or processes to protect the integrity and security of its technology and information in the event of a disaster.

- The district does not have sufficient internal technology staff or expertise to perform technology planning and management activities.

- LMISD does not have a comprehensive plan providing a blueprint for the district to standardize and enhance

its technology infrastructure to efficiently and cost effectively meet its long-term needs.

• The district does not have districtwide policies and procedures with assigned responsibilities for quality assurance to ensure that it accurately reports PEIMS data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• **Recommendation 34: Develop and implement a comprehensive computer acquisition and replacement program that identifies and targets multiple sources to acquire computers to meet target ratios and replacement needs.** The program should include a plan that focuses on two key goals: meeting the TEA-recommended student access ratios and implementing a five-year replacement cycle to maintain technology with sufficient capacity for instructional use. The documented acquisition plan will provide the district with a blueprint and coordinated effort for cost effectively obtaining the additional computers. The technology specialist should work with the district's technology committee to identify the numbers of computers and replacements needed between 2006–07 and 2010–11 to meet the plan's goals. The committee should develop strategies to obtain the needed computers. The strategies should consider multiple sources of funding including the technology allotment, reallocating network and telecommunications costs currently funded by the technology allotment to E-Rate funds, grants, and donations, as well as refurbishment programs such as the Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) computer recovery program.

• **Recommendation 35: Establish a comprehensive staff development program to ensure all staff is proficient in technology.** The district should form a committee to develop a comprehensive program to include three components: technology proficiency standards for all staff, training programs using multiple delivery methods to provide opportunities for staff to attain proficiency, and an appraisal system that ensures the staff demonstrates technology proficiency. Implementing a comprehensive staff development program with the three components will provide the means for the district to hold staff accountable for attaining the proficiency standards.

• **Recommendation 36: Develop a disaster recovery plan and ensure that it contains the key elements**

to protect the district's interest. The technology specialist should work with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations to identify outside organizations, such as Regional Education Service Centers, other districts, or vendors that could facilitate and provide technical assistance to develop the plan. The plan should identify key individuals, their responsibilities, and recovery tasks. After completing the plan, the technology specialist should develop an annual test schedule and update the plan based on test results. The recovery plan should also contain provisions for remote backup and storage of key system data for added security.

• **Recommendation 37: Expand use of outside technology planning and management assistance for development of plans, procedures, and E-Rate applications.** Outsourcing management and planning activities on an as needed basis will provide LMISD with a cost-effective means to acquire these services. The district could contract with an organization like a Regional Education Service Center to obtain these services on both a one-time and recurring basis. The goal of one-time outsourcing is to obtain services to develop much needed planning and management documents such as a disaster recovery plan, network management/maintenance plan, and standard operating procedures, and then transition the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of these documents to district technology staff. As part of the services, the Regional Education Service Center could provide training to district staff to keep the documents up-to-date.

• **Recommendation 38: Develop and implement a time-phased network enhancement plan that features standardized components and long-term efficiency in network management.** The district could obtain outside technical assistance to develop and implement a five-year network enhancement plan. The plan should provide a blueprint for the district to standardize district network components and increase the efficiency of its network management. The network enhancement plan should build upon the findings in the 2004 network assessment study conducted by outside consultants, using the assessment as a baseline for identifying necessary improvements. Standardization of components at all levels, efficiency in daily network management, and achieving the lowest total cost of ownership possible for the long-term are guiding

principles that the district should use in the development of a plan.

- **Recommendation 39: Develop and implement districtwide procedures and an accountability process for principals and administrators to ensure accurate PEIMS reporting.** The district should institute a multi-dimensional approach to ensure the accuracy and quality of its PEIMS data. The approach should be based on the development and implementation of districtwide procedures and an accountability process for verification. The PEIMS specialist should work with the PEIMS attendance clerks and registrars to develop the procedures. The procedures should clearly explain steps and tasks and the expected inputs and outputs for each area. The procedures should also assign roles and responsibilities to all positions with PEIMS responsibilities.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

TECHNOLOGY CONSORTIUM

LMISD is part of a technology consortium, the Galveston-Brazoria Technology Education Network (GBTEN), formed to share information about technology operations and resolve issues cooperatively. The GBTEN was formed in February 2004. The technology director at Clear Creek ISD initiated the effort. Members include 10 independent school districts (ISDs) in Galveston and Brazoria counties, including Clear Creek, Dickinson, Friendswood, Galveston, Hitchcock, La Marque, Santa Fe, Texas City, Alvin, and Pearland ISDs.

The group initially met every other month in 2004, but in October 2004 established a quarterly meeting schedule. Topics discussed are generally of a technical nature, such as the results of the Galveston/Brazoria County ISD optical fiber network feasibility study. The study's results were presented to the group to explain the proposed collaborative, shared communications network that could connect all of the participating school districts.

Besides technical issues, the group also shares business and curriculum issues. For example, one of the group's discussions included standardizing the group's technical requirements for workstations and equipment and leveraging their buying power to lower operating costs. The group also discussed legislative issues, funding and grants, bond programs, network build-outs, disaster recovery and business continuity strategies, and technology planning and process strategies.

One of the primary benefits of the group is that its members interact and call each other to share resources and knowledge. By sharing information and collaborating, the group has developed a standardized approach to computer network upgrades. It has also been able to negotiate reduced pricing from vendors for items that are used by all group members. The group has also developed shared tools to resolve problems and documented their processes.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STUDENT WORKSTATIONS (REC. 34)

LMISD does not have a comprehensive, documented computer acquisition and replacement program with strategies to target multiple funding sources to ensure that it has a sufficient number of computers with appropriate capability to support instruction.

In 2005–06, LMISD has 953 computers. Of the total, 570 are student workstations used by 3,892 students. The districtwide student-to-workstation ratio is approximately seven to one, which is 1.75 times higher than the four to one student-to-workstation access ratio recommended by TEA as a short-term goal to accomplish by 2003–04. The workstation count includes 199 systems that were out of service in September but which the district plans to refurbish and reuse at the elementary level by December 2005.

Although the *La Marque ISD Technology Plan 2005–2008* needs assessment identified that the district was not meeting TEA student access standards, there is no program to reduce the high student-to-workstation ratios over a period of time. The district's existing acquisition program does not identify the target numbers of new computers to be purchased with an associated timeline to assist the district in complying with the TEA recommended ratios. It also does not identify coordinated, focused strategies to seek multiple sources of funding for new computers such as donations, grants, business partnerships, and education foundation funds. Instead, the acquisition program relies almost entirely on the use of technology allotment funds.

Technology allotment funds—a $30 per student allotment from the state of Texas—are restricted; districts can only use them for instructional purposes such as electronic textbooks, access to technology related to student learning, or for training educational personnel directly involved in student learning. LMISD's technology allotment for 2005–06 is estimated as $92,602. Of the total, $32,500 is designated for network equipment-related upgrades. According to the

technology specialist, after basic network upgrades and replacements have been purchased, the remaining technology allotment funds allow the district to purchase approximately 100 workstations a year. The new workstations are not additions to the number of total workstations but are mostly replacements for older machines.

The district does not maximize its use of the technology allotment to purchase workstations because it does not apply for and use E-Rate discounts for connectivity equipment that is E-Rate eligible. Districts participate in the federal Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Program known as E-Rate and receive discounts for acquiring telecommunication services. Internal connections such as network components that allow technology usage in the classroom are eligible for this discount. Although $32,500 worth of networking equipment funded by the district's 2005–06 technology allotment is eligible for an E-Rate discount, the district has not applied for the E-Rate. Instead, it is funding the equipment through the technology allotment, which reduces the amount of funds available for student workstations.

Although the district sometimes receives donated equipment, donations are not a major source of new computers. In general, organizations contact the district when they are upgrading their equipment and offer the district the equipment they are replacing. The technology specialist said that much of the equipment proposed for donation has less capability than existing district systems proposed for replacement, so the district does not accept some donations.

Similarly, the district receives some computers as part of grants, but there is not a focused technology acquisition program funded by grants. The district does not have a clear process or dedicated staff assigned to identify grant opportunities, prepare grant applications, or secure grants. The district previously had a coordinator of grants position that was vacated in 2003–04 and eliminated in 2005–06. As a result, it does not actively pursue grants as a funding source, and technology equipment gained is often a byproduct of the grant, not a focus.

As a result, the district continues to have high student-to-workstation ratios, and the ratios are not decreasing. In addition to the high ratios, the district does not have a documented replacement program to ensure that aging computers are replaced. Outside consultants who reviewed the district's hardware noted this situation. The needs assessment of the district's technology plan also documented

it. The consultants recommended that the district establish a five-year replacement cycle. Because the district does not have a planned replacement program, it has 115 primary use student, teacher, and administrative systems that are at least six years old or older. These systems have slower processors, such as the Pentium 2, and cannot run newer software applications. Older systems are also more costly to maintain since replacement parts become more difficult to find and acquire.

For students to become proficient in technology use, they must have sufficient access to computers. The computers must be new enough and have enough capacity in terms of memory and speed to be able to run the latest educational software programs. With high student-to-workstation ratios, students do not have universal access to technology and are not using technology daily. Older computers with insufficient memory result in computers that run very slowly or may shut down or stop working when users attempt to access newer software applications that require more memory.

Student focus group participants indicated that they had to use computers at home or only used computers for dual language courses. A number of student survey comments indicated that computer technology was slow and outdated and that waiting for the computer to boot up or load an application sometimes wasted class time. The review team surveyed parents, teachers, students, administrators, and staff and asked them to rate the students' ability to access computers and technology and to rate the age and condition of computers. **Exhibit 5-1** presents the survey findings.

Students, teachers, and principals rated student access to sufficient computers the most negatively, with 47.3 percent of students, 44.7 percent of teachers, and 40 percent of principals rating access as poor or below average (**Exhibit 5-1**). The ratings for the age and condition of computers showed similar results. Principals gauged the age and condition of computers most negatively, with 46.7 percent of respondents rating the age and condition as poor or below average, followed by students at 43.8 percent and teachers at 42.1 percent.

School districts use a variety of strategies in their acquisition and replacement programs to meet the established targets for student access outlined by TEA in the State of Texas *Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996-2010 (LRPT)*. The LRPT recommends that districts target a technology equipment student-to-workstation ratio of 4:1 by 2003–04. An additional target to reach is a student-to-workstation ratio of 1:1 by

EXHIBIT 5-1
LMISD COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
STUDENT ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT COMPUTERS FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN AND APPLY TECHNOLOGY.						
Students	29.8%	17.5%	31.6%	12.3%	5.3%	3.5%
Teachers	18.4%	26.3%	28.1%	12.3%	3.5%	11.4%
Parent	14.3%	14.3%	33.3%	11.9%	6.0%	20.2%
Principals	20.0%	20.0%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
Administrator	15.0%	15.0%	45.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	9.4%	17.2%	50.0%	14.1%	1.6%	7.8%
THE AGE AND CONDITION OF COMPUTERS AND THEIR USEFULNESS IN APPLYING NEW TECHNOLOGY						
Students	33.3%	10.5%	35.1%	10.5%	7.0%	3.5%
Teachers	14.0%	28.1%	29.8%	15.8%	0.9%	11.4%
Parent	11.9%	16.7%	33.3%	14.3%	3.6%	20.2%
Principals	6.7%	40.0%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
Administrator	25.0%	10.0%	40.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	15.6%	26.6%	40.6%	10.9%	1.6%	4.7%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

2010 with on-demand access for every student to workstations and/or the best available technologies.

As part of their programs, districts can identify the number of computers needed and target multiple sources of funding. To keep acquisition costs reasonable, some school districts plan to spread the acquisition equally over a time period, while others use one-time funding such as bond funds to meet the ratios. For example, Texas City ISD, a peer selected for this review, achieved the TEA-recommended ratio through a combination of funding sources including grants, technology loans, and the annual technology allotment.

Galena Park ISD (GPISD) used one-time funding in its computer acquisition. The district developed a computer acquisition plan that allocated bond funds to purchase computers for every school to meet the TEA recommended 4:1 ratio. GPISD implemented a districtwide standard of at least four computers for every classroom and one computer for every five students. To develop the standard, the district identified the following information for each school: number of classrooms, number of students, and number of student computers.

Many districts replace aging technology on a planned basis to keep the annual replacement costs reasonable. Planned replacements allow the district to maintain a minimum

technical capacity needed to run newer software and minimize maintenance costs. Navasota ISD (NISD), another peer district selected for this review, has met the student access standards at four of its six campuses. According to NISD's director of Technology, the district has achieved this feat by replacing computers every three to five years and using E-Rate discounts to fund technology such as student and teacher workstations, wireless laptop carts, software, and interactive whiteboards used with a computer and projector to create a touch screen display. The whiteboard projects computer images and allows teachers and students to control the image by touching the board instead of the keyboard or mouse. E-Rate provides most schools and libraries in the United States with discounts to obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access. The Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company, a not-for-profit corporation appointed by the Federal Communications Commission, administers the E-Rate program.

Dallas ISD (DISD) uses partnerships and outreach efforts to increase its student workstations. In many of the partnerships, DISD assigns specific district staff to solicit used computer donations from other governmental agencies, businesses, and the general public. DISD receives the computers and then refurbishes them for district use. DISD

also has a partnership with the Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) Computer Recovery Program. TCI receives surplus and salvage data processing equipment from state agencies and other organizations, refurbishes and upgrades it, and distributes it to public schools in Texas. Computers that are provided to districts have a minimum capability of a Pentium III processor with 128-megabyte random access memory. Districts request to receive these systems by completing a form that they can download from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice website. Requests are prioritized according to a district's poverty rating from the TEA. The DISD special projects specialist estimates that since 2002, DISD has received more than 2,000 free computers through this program. Other school districts that have received computers through this program include Houston, Huntsville, Copperas Cove, Laredo, and Masonic Home.

Tyler Independent School District (TISD) has received several technology grants. TISD's long-range technology plan calls for the district to look for ways to finance a technology plan without going to the taxpayers. TISD received nearly $1.8 million in grants from private and public sector entities such as the Technology Infrastructure Fund and Tyler Junior College Distance Learning. In 2000–01, TISD anticipated reaching $2.5 million in external funding.

Hays Consolidated ISD's education foundation has awarded grants for technology equipment. In 2004, the foundation provided a grant titled Clicking to Success with E-Instruction. The grant provided two campuses with a Classroom Performance System (CPS), used for both instruction and assessment. Students use wireless infrared response pads to access the CPS and ask questions. The CPS allows teachers respond to every student on every question during classroom instruction while maintaining student confidentiality.

LMISD should develop and implement a comprehensive computer acquisition and replacement program that identifies and targets multiple sources to acquire computers to meet target ratios and replacement needs. LMISD's technology committee and the technology specialist should work together to develop and implement a comprehensive program that includes a time-phased plan to acquire and replace computers. One of the plan's goals should be to meet the long-term TEA student-to-workstation ratio of 1:1 by 2013. Another goal should include the establishment of a five-year replacement cycle for all computers.

Once the goals have been established, the committee should use the following process to develop the plan. First, the technology specialist and committee should identify the number of computers needed to meet the student ratio and replacement cycle goals. This step should also analyze and define the type of computer, either fixed workstation or wireless mobile laptop cart, which will provide the greatest student accessibility.

The next step is to establish a time-phased acquisition and replacement cycle. After identifying the cycle, the district should establish the target number of computers to acquire using non-local funding sources such as E-Rate, grants, donations, and the TCI recovery program. One of the guiding principles in establishing the targets is that all computers acquired need to meet minimum configuration standards.

Subtracting the target computers to acquire with alternate funding sources from the total computers to be acquired produces the net number of computers to purchase with local funds. **Exhibit 5-2** uses actual LMISD data and presents an example of the calculations needed to develop a time-phased acquisition and replacement plan for the five-year time period from 2006–07 through 2010–11.

The final step is for the technology committee to assign various members to develop strategies to meet the targets. One strategy is to maximize available funding from the technology allotment by seeking E-Rate reimbursement for items that are currently purchased from the allotment that are E-Rate eligible. To implement this strategy, the technology specialist should work with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations to identify all telecommunications, network, and internal connection items currently funded from technology allotment funds that are E-Rate eligible. The assistant superintendent of Business and Communications should itemize these items and apply for E-Rate funds. After receiving the E-Rate reimbursement, the district should use available technology allotment funds to purchase new systems.

Another strategy is to seek donations from individuals, governments, and businesses similar to the outreach efforts used by Dallas ISD. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should work with the communications officer, who is also the LMISD education foundation's director, to use the foundation to coordinate and solicit donations. Coordinating donations through the foundation is consistent with one of the foundation's stated goals—to serve as the district conduit for most district donations and to foster districtwide community and business partnerships.

EXHIBIT 5-2
EXAMPLE ACQUISITION PLAN CALCULATIONS

GOAL 1: ACHIEVE TEA WORKSTATION RATIO OF 3:1 BY 2009, 2:1 RATIO BY 2011, AND 1:1 RATIO BY 2013.
GOAL 2: ESTABLISH FIVE-YEAR REPLACEMENT CYCLE FOR ALL DISTRICT COMPUTERS.
ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS:

- Existing student workstations (2005-06): 570 Student Enrollment (November 1, 2005): 3,892

- Number of annual computers needed to meet 3:1 ratio in three-year time period to 2008-09: 242 [(3,892 students / 3 - 570 existing computers) / 3-year time period = 242]

- Incremental average computers to be acquired over two-year period to achieve 2:1 ratio by 2010-11: 325

- [(3,892 students / 2 - 1,297 existing computers in 2008-09) / 2-year period = 325]

- Actual replacements needed based on current computer acquisition dates projected for 2006-07 through 2010-11: 850. Average annual replacements: 170 [850 / 5 = 170]

- Continued technology allotment annual rate of computer purchase: 100

- Technology Allotment reallocation for E-Rate reimbursable network-related equipment computers: 29 Calculation: [($32,500 eligible expenditures x 0.76 discount rate) / $846 cost of system purchase = 29]

DESCRIPTION	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Average number of new computers to meet 3:1 ratio	242	242	242		
Average number of new computers to meet 2:1 ratio				325	325
Replacements (assumed 5-year cycle)	170	170	170	170	170
TOTAL COMPUTERS TO BE ACQUIRED TO MEET GOAL THROUGH 2011	**412**	**412**	**412**	**495**	**495**
TARGET GOALS FOR COMPUTERS ACQUIRED BY NON-LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES					
Continuing Technology Allotment funded computers	100	100	100	100	100
Reallocation of technology allotment funding covered by E-Rate	29	29	29	29	29
Donations/Grants/Education Foundation	40	40	40	40	40
TCI Refurbished Computers	200	200	200	200	200
TOTAL COMPUTERS (NON-LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES)	**369**	**369**	**369**	**369**	**369**
NET COMPUTERS TO ACQUIRE WITH LOCAL FUNDS	**43**	**43**	**43**	**126**	**126**

SOURCE: LMISD inventory data, September 2005; LMISD technology specialist; and School Review team.

In addition to donations, the district should seek out and apply for technology-related grants. It should form a sub-committee of the technology committee and assign it the responsibility for researching grants. The sub-committee should present the grant opportunities to the technology committee for review and approval monthly. Members of the technology committee should be assigned to jointly coordinate and develop grant applications. The assistant superintendents of Business and Operations and of Curriculum and Instruction, who are members of the technology committee, should supervise the preparation and submission of the grant applications. A key part of the grant development process is coordination and review by the technology specialist to ensure that the equipment proposed to be obtained by the grant will meet district configuration requirements and will integrate with existing district systems.

The final strategy is to obtain computers from the TCI computer recovery program. To apply for computers, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should go to the program's website located at http://www.tci.tdcj.state.tx.us/services/cr/assets/ML-115b.pdf. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should complete the form, requesting computers in increments of 100, and fax it to the number identified in the form.

LMISD is currently obtaining student workstations with monitor and standard software for $846. To implement reduced ratios and a five-year replacement cycle by 2011, the district will need to acquire 2,226 additional computers (1,376 computers to meet TEA ratios plus 850 replacement computers = 2,226). The fiscal impact assumes that LMISD will incrementally reduce the student-to-workstation ratio to

meet TEA requirements in three stages. Two stages will occur in the five-year period through 2011 covered by this report. The final stage will occur by 2013.

The first stage, attaining a 3:1 ratio, will occur in the three-year period from 2006–07 through 2008–09. The second stage, attaining a 2:1 ratio, will occur in the two-year period from 2009–10 through 2010–11. In addition to computers needed to meet TEA ratios, the district will also need to replace 850 computers, or an average of 170 computers each year for five years, to establish a five-year replacement cycle. This projection is based on the actual replacements needed using the current age of existing district computers (850 total replacement computers / 5 years = 170 computers).

The net number of computers that LMISD needs to acquire is based on the total number of computers needed, offset by obtaining computers using non-local funds. The fiscal impact assumes that LMISD will be able to acquire a total of 1,845 computers, or 369 computers annually, at no additional cost to the district using a combination of grants, donations, and other funding sources. The net number of computers needed during the five-year period is 381 (2,226 new computers – 1,845 computers funded by non-local funds = 381 net computers).

The total cost of implementing this recommendation over the five-year period is $322,326, based on funding 381 net computers at a cost of $846 per system (381 computers x $846 per computer = $322,326). The fiscal impact assumes the district will fund 43 net computers or $36,378 annually for the 3-year time period from 2006–07 through 2008–09 and 126 net computers or $106,596 annually in the remaining 2-year period.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (REC. 35)

The district does not have a comprehensive staff professional development program that establishes and incorporates technology proficiency standards into performance measurement and appraisal systems to ensure staff proficiency in technology.

The district's board policy DMA (Legal) states that staff development shall be primarily campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives and developed and approved by the campus-level committee. The policy further states that district-provided staff development must be conducted according to standards developed by the district and designed to improve education in the district. Technology training is one type of staff development identified in the policy.

The district improvement plan (DIP) only minimally identifies technology proficiency and staff development in two strategies, one for PEIMS training on the student management system and one for integrating technology in the curriculum. While the DIP mentions these strategies, there are no technology proficiency standards or district-level mandatory technology training requirements for employees, as confirmed by the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. While there is no districtwide mandatory training requirement, the technology specialist said that some specialized training is required for certain employees. For example, training in the district's financial system is required for finance staff and administrators. Also, training in library resource software use is required for librarians.

District-provided staff development initiatives for teachers are not scheduled but are conducted as needed depending on the campus. According to the LMISD technology specialist, district-provided teacher training largely consists of new employee and refresher training in network login procedures and in the use of the district's gradebook and attendance software. The technology specialist provides the training on an as requested basis. The training consists of basic system use such as reviewing and practicing how to access the network or software, how to enter gradebook and attendance information, and how to exit the system.

Training offered by the district consists of attendance-based training at scheduled training sessions. Outside training consists largely of attending workshops and seminars put on by the Regional Educational Services Center IV (Region 4). Online training is not available via the district's website. Distance learning equipment at the middle school that LMISD obtained from a grant is not connected or used to provide training. It was used in the past to meet requirements for a math grant as well as a distance learning classroom for Gifted/Talented and foreign language classes that were not available locally. However, usage declined because the individual who started and developed the distance learning programs and was the most knowledgeable about the equipment left the district. The district is planning to re-establish distance learning at the middle school and the special programs building once it installs the fiber network.

In the *La Marque ISD Technology Plan 2005–2008*, LMISD recognized the need for professional development in technology and identified three goals with associated objectives and strategies to address the need. Although goals, objectives, and strategies have been identified in the technology plan, the district has yet to begin implementation

of any of the strategies because it just received final approval of the technology plan in December 2005.

A key element in holding staff accountable for becoming proficient in technology use is developing a comprehensive program that defines expected standards of performance, requires demonstration of proficiency, and is linked to annual performance evaluations. If instructional staff does not understand how to use technology, their ability to integrate it into the curriculum is limited. This limitation shows up in LMISD's School Technology and Readiness (STaR) chart results for educator preparation and development (**Exhibit 5-3**).

The Texas STaR chart is a tool developed by the statewide Educational Technology Coordinating Council (ETCC). It assists districts in assessing their ability to effectively integrate technology across the curriculum. The STaR chart measures proficiency in the four key areas of the *Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996–2010: Teaching and Learning, Educator Preparation and Development, Administration and Support Services, and Infrastructure for Technology.* The STaR chart profiles progress using one of four ratings: Early Technology, Developing Technology, Advanced Technology, or Target Technology. The ultimate goal is for educators to reach the fourth level, Target Technology, where technology is fully integrated into the curriculum. As shown in **Exhibit 5-3**, LMISD is at the beginning of the second level, Developing Technology, in the area of Educator Preparation and Development.

A lack of technology proficiency also affects staff productivity. For example, the technology specialist said that in one school, clerical staff spent the entire day making certificates to recognize staff and students. The staff did not have the knowledge or proficiency to efficiently generate certificates by using the mail merge function of word processing software and then printing the certificates on paper stock with pre-printed borders. Instead, the staff used an inexpensive, certificate-generating program. The program generated the certificates individually and required the clerical staff to repetitively enter a name on the certificate, print it, change the name, and then print the new certificate. The program also "drew" the border on a plain sheet of paper for each certificate, which used up several print cartridges.

Many school districts develop comprehensive professional development programs that enable staff to achieve proficiency in technology. The programs define staff proficiency standards and requirements, use multiple delivery methods to provide training opportunities, specify objective performance measures to assess staff proficiency, and link standards to annual performance appraisals. Navasota and Palestine ISDs, peer districts selected for this review, both have documented proficiency standards for teachers and non-instructional staff. Navasota ISD requires teachers and instructional assistants to meet the eighth grade minimum technology skills requirement by the end of their third year of employment. It encourages administrative staff but does not require them to follow the same program. In addition to standards, Palestine ISD has mandatory training requirements for both teachers and administrative staff.

Galena Park ISD (GPISD) developed a comprehensive technology training approach with defined proficiency requirements for all teachers, clerical staff, and administrators coupled with training in multiple formats and objective measurements. GPISD's Technology Proficiency Standards program has three levels of proficiency that are designed to build upon each other. The program has defined standards for new and returning teachers and staff, with specified completion dates for demonstrating the proficiency. GPISD measures each standard objectively through observation, testing, or submitting a project evaluated by a grading rubric. GPISD's technology department offers training, but it is not mandatory if an employee can pass the proficiency test without it. The district also provides extensive training manuals online on its website.

EXHIBIT 5-3
LMISD STAR CHART RESULTS FOR EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT
2004–05

KEY AREA II: EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT — DEVELOPING (9-14)						
CONTENT OF TRAINING	CAPABILITIES OF EDUCATORS	LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS	MODELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	UNDERSTANDING AND PATTERNS OF USE	TECHNOLOGY BUDGET	SCORE
2	2	2	1	2	1	10

SOURCE: LMISD Texas Education Agency STaR Chart, 2004–05.

LMISD should establish a comprehensive staff development program to ensure all staff is proficient in technology. The district should form a committee consisting of the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, principals, the instructional specialists, the technology specialist, and the director of Personnel and Operations. The committee should meet and develop recommended policies, proficiency standards, and measures. In developing the standards, the committee should research models from other districts. The standards should define expected proficiency, including measures to objectively assess proficiency.

The committee should also develop and specify a target timeline, such as three years, for staff to demonstrate the required proficiencies. In developing the program, the committee should also outline how it will link demonstrated proficiency to the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) for teachers and to the district's appraisal system for other staff. The committee should obtain technology proficiency standards and measures from other districts such as Galena Park and Navasota and adapt them for LMISD's use.

The committee should submit the standards and measures to the superintendent for approval. After approval, the committee should develop training plans, schedules, and training formats to ensure all staff receives training within the target time period. It should consider multiple training formats such as distance learning and online tutorials as well as classroom training. As part of this step, the committee should research and obtain online copies of tutorials and training materials that have been developed by other districts. Since LMISD already has distance learning equipment, the committee should also contact Region 4 and other area education institutions such as the College of the Mainland to assess the feasibility of distance learning as a training delivery method.

The superintendent should assign the director of Personnel and Operations with the responsibility to monitor and evaluate staff compliance with attaining required proficiencies by the expected due date. The director of Personnel and Operations should develop a process to ensure this information is communicated to appropriate supervisors and is incorporated into performance appraisals.

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN (REC. 36)
The district does not have a disaster recovery plan or processes to protect the integrity and security of its technology and information in the event of a disaster. In 2004, outside

technology consultants hired by the district identified, and in 2005 the review team confirmed, that the district does not have a disaster recovery plan to identify detailed information about the district network, its computer hardware and software assets, and key vendor information. There is no document that assigns staff responsibilities and describes detailed tasks and procedures to recover data in the event of a disaster.

LMISD's disaster planning and recovery efforts consist entirely of performing nightly tape backups of its servers located throughout the district. Since the servers are not located centrally, each location has designated staff, usually the librarian or principal's secretary, that is responsible for rotating and storing tapes in secured locations. Server tape backups are kept in the libraries at the elementary campuses, in the server rooms at the high school and middle schools, in the office at the Early Childhood Learning Center, and in the vault in the administration building. The high school and administration building storage areas are fireproof.

Although each campus individually backs up the student management system and stores its tapes on-site, there are no locations outside the district for tape storage. The student management system that stores data required for PEIMS reporting such as grades, attendance, discipline, and student demographic data is not web-based and cannot be backed up and stored at a remote location outside the district by the vendor. The software does have a feature that individual school registrars use to backup current data files to a compressed file. The registrars store these backups in their offices.

Although the district's process is to back up tapes nightly and store them in safes in the district, this process is insufficient to protect the district's data. For example, the technology specialist must rely on the designated staff at each location to rotate the tapes and store them. If staff forgets, the systems are not backed up at their location with the latest data, and there is potential for inaccurate or lost data if a disaster occurs.

The district is in an area subject to hurricanes, flooding, and potential damage from explosions from petrochemical plants located in the vicinity. While fireproof safes provide some protection, they are not water-proof. A flood could damage the tapes and the district's data could be lost. This deficiency was identified in September 2005 during the mandatory evacuation preparations for Hurricane Rita. The district protected student and financial data by unplugging its major

servers and transporting them inland in a school van. The technology specialist and the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations each took a set of backup tapes with them to different locations. District staff also moved administrative building workstations into the vault to avoid possible wind damage and moved computers to the second level at the high school and middle school. Without a backup site located outside the district, data could also be lost if there were severe problems in close proximity to district buildings.

A disaster recovery plan is critical for districts to be able to quickly respond and recover key business and student data in the event of a catastrophic event such as fire, flood, or vandalism. In addition, a plan can help the district to quickly restore essential business and reporting functions such as payroll, accounts payable, or PEIMS student and financial reporting. The National Center for Education Statistics publication "Safeguarding Your Technology" identifies the following key elements in disaster recovery planning (**Exhibit 5-4**).

Organizations protect their operations by developing plans that will protect and safeguard their data in the event of a disaster. They also identify steps to recover data and re-start key operations quickly after a disaster. Often these organizations will use outside technical assistance to develop or review the plan to ensure that no key elements or tasks are excluded.

Glen Rose ISD has developed a comprehensive disaster recovery plan for handling the loss of its information systems. The plan includes emergency contacts for its technology staff, the district, and software and hardware vendors. It contains protocols for both partial and complete recoveries to ensure that the technology staff is knowledgeable in every aspect of recovery and restoration. The plan also outlines designated alternate sites dependent upon the type of outage that occurs, includes system redundancy and fault protection protocols, and contains a tape backup plan.

Texas City ISD, a peer selected for this review that is in close proximity to LMISD, has a disaster recovery plan. It includes storing critical data in secured locations within and outside the district and was tested during Hurricane Rita. Data related to the website, finance system, and substitute calling system is housed remotely for additional protection.

Lockhart ISD also uses a continuous remote backup service for its student and financial records. Before subscribing to the service, the district used tape backup. With the service, Lockhart ISD was able to restore its payroll system instantly

when an error caused a doubling of the payroll. Without the remote backup service, Lockhart ISD's staff would have had to re-key the salaries for 600 employees.

The district should develop a disaster recovery plan and ensure that it contains the key elements to protect the district's interest. The technology specialist should work with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations to identify outside organizations, such as Regional Education Service Centers, other districts, or vendors that could facilitate and provide technical assistance to develop the plan. After completing the plan, the technology specialist should develop an annual test schedule and update the plan based on test results.

The recovery plan should also contain provisions for remote backup and storage of key system data for added security. The technology specialist and the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations could contact Texas City and Lockhart to see how they are using remote backup. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations could also contact vendors that provide remote backup services to see what services they may offer.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is a one-time cost of $4,000 for technical assistance to develop the disaster recovery plan. The estimate assumes 40 hours of technical support at $100 per hour for a total cost of $4,000 [40 hours x $100 per hour = $4,000].

Ongoing costs for backup services are estimated as $36,465 annually and are based on remote backup of 275 gigabytes of data continuously. The calculation assumes that this service qualifies for the district's E-Rate discount of 76 percent, with the first year of funding eligibility in 2007–08. With the discount applied, the ongoing cost of the service is $8,752 [$36,465 x (1 − 0.76 E-Rate discount) = $8,752].

TECHNOLOGY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY (REC. 37)

The district does not have sufficient internal technology staff or expertise to perform technology planning and management activities. Due to funding constraints, the district does not have a technology manager or director position that it would assign the responsibility to develop technology planning or management documents on an ongoing basis that are required for the district to participate in various programs or to meet basic operational needs. The district's only two funded technology positions currently are two technology specialist positions that focus entirely on daily network management

EXHIBIT 5-4
KEY ELEMENTS OF DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING

RECOMMENDED STEP	CONSIDERATIONS
Build the planning team.	• Include key policy makers, building management, end users, key outside contractors, local authorities, and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	• Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the district. • Estimate the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Identify a time frame for starting initial operations after a security incident. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	• Create an inventory of all computer technology assets including data, software, hardware, documentation, and supplies. • Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organizations or lease backup equipment to allow the district to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. • Make plans to procure hardware, software, or other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations are resumed as soon as possible. • Establish contractual agreements with backup sites as appropriate. • Identify alternative meeting and start-up locations in case regular facilities become damaged or destroyed. • Prepare directions to all off-site locations. • Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. • Locate support resources that the district might need, such as equipment repair, trucking, and cleaning companies. • Arrange priority delivery with manufacturers for emergency orders. • Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements. • Arrange for site security with local police and fire departments.
Specify details within the plan.	• Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title. • Define actions to take in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. • Define actions to take at the onset of an undesirable event to limit damage, loss, and comprised data integrity. • Identify actions to take to restore critical functions • Specify actions to take to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	• Test the plan frequently and complete. • Analyze test result to improve the plan and identify additional needs.
Deal with damage.	• If a disaster occurs, document all costs and videotape the damage. • Immediately contact professional recovery technicians to deal with water damage to technical equipment. • Be prepared to overcome downtime on your own as insurance settlements take time to be resolved.
Give consideration to other significant issues.	• Do not make the plan unnecessarily complicated. • Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that others are authorized and prepared to implement it if needed. • Update the plan regularly and whenever changes are made to your system.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology" (modified by School Review team).

and support activities as well as hardware maintenance. To address the need for a technology plan, the district contracted with an outside technology consulting firm in January 2004. The firm assisted the district in developing its technology plan for 2005 to 2008, which has been submitted and received approval from TEA in December 2005.

Without a focused technology planning and management function, districts do not accomplish many planning and management activities. **Exhibit 5-5** compares technology best practice management activities to LMISD efforts and outlines the impacts.

Lack of some management activities also affects opportunities for the district to leverage outside funds. For example, districts can participate in the federal Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Program known as E-Rate and receive discounts for items such as Internet access and telephone service. However, LMISD has not consistently participated in the E-Rate program and has missed opportunities for outside funding. Since E-Rate funding year 2000, LMISD has received E-Rate three times (**Exhibit 5-6**).

Many school districts that do not have the internal capability to cost effectively perform technology planning, and management functions contract with outside entities to perform these activities on an as needed basis. These districts may contract with private vendors who are familiar with district operations, other districts, or regional educational service centers. Navasota ISD, a peer district, has contracted with a private vendor to assist with network management planning and upgrades. LMISD has also begun to outsource its E-Rate development activities. At the time of field work for this review, September 2005, LMISD relied on the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations to develop and submit its E-Rate application. In November 2005, LMISD contracted with an outside consultant to assist it in developing its E-Rate submittal for 2006–07.

LMISD should expand use of outside technology planning and management assistance for development of plans, procedures, and E-Rate applications. Outsourcing management and planning activities on an as needed basis will provide LMISD with a cost-effective means to acquire these services. The district could contract with an organization like a Regional Education Service Center to obtain these services on both a one-time and recurring basis. The goal of one-time outsourcing is to obtain services to develop much needed planning and management documents such as a disaster recovery plan, network management/maintenance

plan, and standard operating procedures and then transition the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of these documents to district technology staff. As part of the services, the Regional Education Service Center could provide training to district staff to keep the documents up-to-date.

The district could also contract with the Regional Education Service Center for technology plan evaluation and updates and continue to contract with other outside consultants for recurring assistance in E-Rate analysis and proposal development. In contracting for these services, LMISD needs to develop a statement of work that clearly identifies expected tasks to be performed, schedules for completion, and deliverables.

By implementing this recommendation, the district can save approximately $146,052 over the next five years. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is a one-time cost of $6,000 for assistance to develop network management plans and procedures identified in **Exhibit 5-5**. This fiscal impact does not include the cost of developing a disaster recovery plan since its cost is included in a previous recommendation. The estimate assumes 60 hours of technical support at $100 per hour for a total cost of $6,000 [60 hours x $100 per hour = $6,000].

Since the technology plan should not need significant revisions, the school review team estimates recurring costs for assistance on the technology plan update as $1,500 every other year beginning in 2007–08. This estimate assumes 15 hours of technical assistance at $100 per hour for the technology plan update every other year (15 hours x $100/ hour = $1,500). The recurring cost for E-Rate assistance is estimated as $1,500 annually based on 30 hours each year at a rate of $50 per hour (30 hours x $50/hour = $1,500).

The costs of implementing this recommendation will be offset by receipt of E-Rate funds that the district is eligible for. The fiscal impact assumes the district is eligible for a 76 percent discount based on the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. This calculation applies the discount to existing costs for Internet access ($8,000), long distance ($10,143), and telephone charges ($33,354). Total estimated E-Rate funds are $39,138 [0.76 discount rate x $51,497 ($8,000 Internet access + $10,143 long distance + $33,354 telephone) = $39,138]. Since the funding application deadline for 2006–07 is February 2006, the fiscal impact assumes that the first year for the district to receive E-Rate funds is 2007–08.

EXHIBIT 5-5
COMPARISON OF LMISD TECHNOLOGY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES TO BEST PRACTICES

AREA	BEST PRACTICE	CURRENT LMISD SITUATION	IMPACT IF PRACTICE NOT FOLLOWED
Planning	Technology Plan that correlates with E-Rate, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and TEA Long Range Technology Plan.	Technology Plan developed by outside consultants. District received approval in December 2005.	District misses opportunity to increase available technology funding. Approved plan is required document to receive E-Rate funds and NCLB Title II funds.
	Disaster recovery plan that contains detailed information about the district's systems; location of backups; key vendors; staff involved in disaster recovery, their roles and responsibilities; and recovery tasks and procedures.	Does not exist.	District does not have plan or process to safeguard data and quickly recover data in the event of a disaster.
	Network configuration plan that focuses on standardization of network infrastructure, operating systems, and hardware (server) platforms.	Does not exist. Lack of standardization across all levels. There are eight different vendors for network components, two for operating systems, and two for server systems.	Increased labor required to manage more contracts. Increased costs for spare parts because the district needs to maintain multiple components from different vendors rather than redundant components. Increased complexity in managing and maintaining network because training is required in multiple systems rather than a single system.
	Network management/ maintenance plan that details equipment in use and outlines maintenance schedules.	Does not exist. No identification of equipment or maintenance schedule.	Key element in disaster recovery. Results in higher risk of equipment failure if not routinely maintained.
Policies and Procedures	Clear procedures that are defined and promulgated to users for purchasing technology, acceptable use, application of copyright laws, and control of hardware and software inventories.	Written purchasing manual and acceptable use policy (AUP) exist. AUP has not been updated in two years. Individual machines are locked down to prevent unlawful software use or to change hardware configurations.	If policies are not up-to-date, district increases risk of non-compliance with Texas Education Code requirements.
	Standard Operating Procedures that governs day-to-day operations for technology staff. Manual is accessible and easy to read.	Written manual does not exist.	There is no reference guide to ensure that staff consistently performs tasks. Training new personnel takes staff time away from daily maintenance support activities.
	Procedures for end users that outline procedures for basic hardware troubleshooting and software use.	Does not exist.	Technology staff time is diverted from daily network management and support tasks to respond to issues that users could resolve.
Evaluation	Work order system exists to monitor and track calls to assess user and desktop issues, allowing for constant evaluation of needed systems, training, and hardware.	Online work order system does not exist to easily track data. Paper requests exist. Staff completes the work orders but does not compile them for analysis.	District does not have metrics to analyze and evaluate systems for replacement or to develop strategies such as training to address user issues.

SOURCE: LMISD technology specialist and LMISD Network/Desktop Assessment document, 2004.

EXHIBIT 5-6
LMISD E-RATE FUNDING
2000–2005

FUNDING YEAR*	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
E-Rate funds received	$0	$0	$60,253	$0	$43,416	$62,133

* E-Rate funding years run from July 1 of reported year through June 30 of subsequent year.

SOURCE: Universal Service Administrative Company website, www.sl.universalservice.org.

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE (REC. 38)

LMISD does not have a comprehensive plan providing a blueprint for the district to standardize and enhance its technology infrastructure to efficiently and cost effectively meet its long-term needs. The district's network consists of three components: internet connection, local area networks (LANs) located at each school and the administration building, and a wide area network (WAN) located at the middle school that connects the district's LANs. Access to the internet and connections between campuses are via T1 lines (**Exhibit 5-7**).

EXHIBIT 5-7
LMISD NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE
2005–06
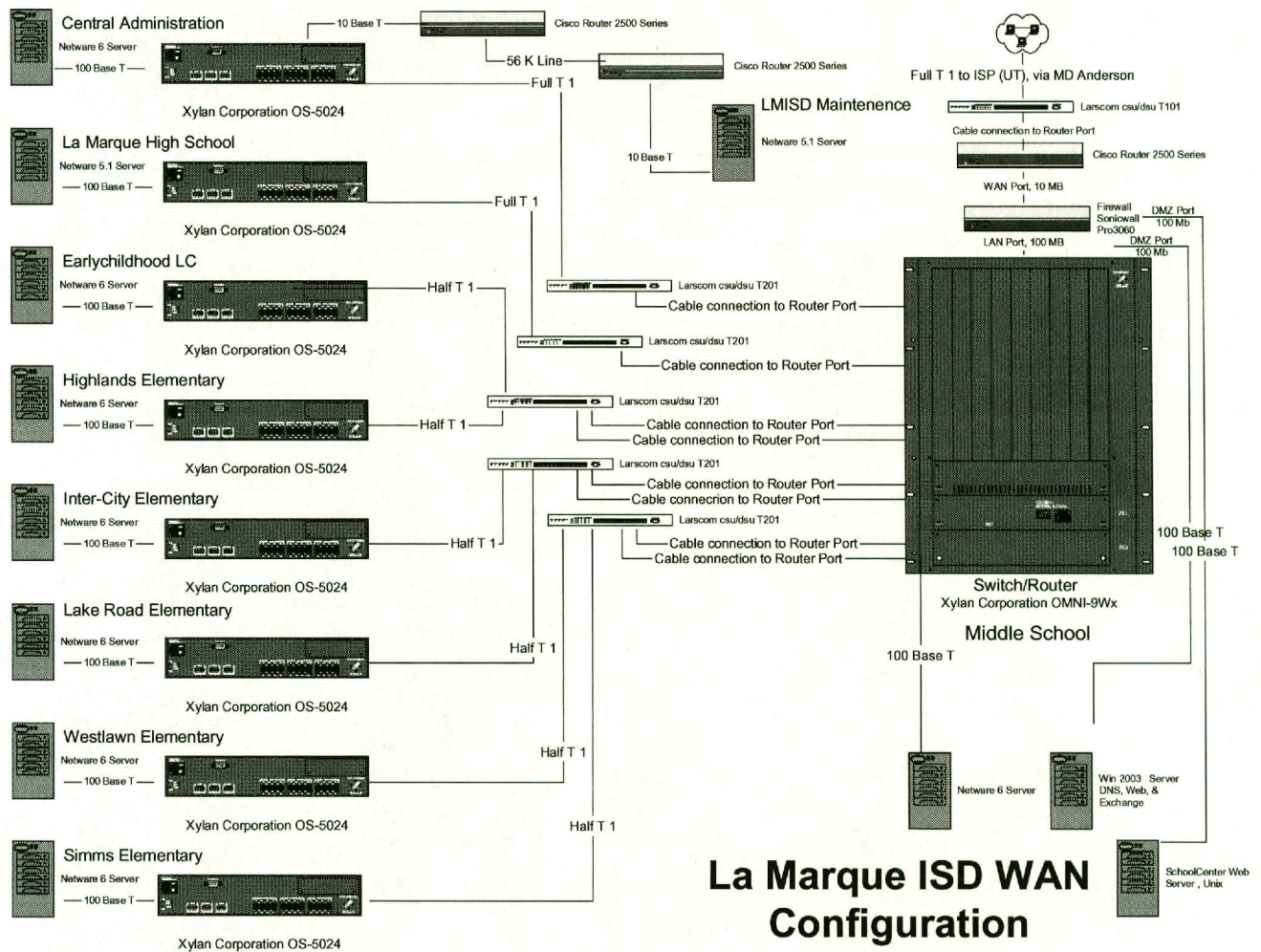
SOURCE: LMISD technology specialist, September 2005.

The district contracted with an outside vendor in 2004 to assess its infrastructure. The vendor identified many deficiencies confirmed during the review team's fieldwork in September 2005. **Exhibit 5-8** provides a list of the deficiencies with their impacts identified by the vendor and the review team.

Lack of a comprehensive plan and inconsistent funding levels have contributed to the current state of the district infrastructure. Decisions for acquiring components were based on a short-term view of available immediate funding rather than a total cost of ownership (TCO) viewpoint that

considers not only the acquisition cost but also costs of maintaining and supporting the component.

In January 2004, the district hired consultants to assess its infrastructure. The consultants identified the need for a network enhancement plan using TCO to analyze and investigate alternative acquisition practices. The technology plan identified similar strategies, but the district has not yet begun to implement the strategies. In addition, the district is moving forward to implement initiatives to address the findings of the network/desktop assessment outside the framework of an overall plan that identifies a structured

EXHIBIT 5-8
LMISD TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIENCIES

DEFICIENCIES	IMPACT
District does not have a fiber backbone for its network and uses T1 lines. T1 lines are not robust enough to adequately support network activities.	• Access to internet and applications is slow. Users get frustrated with slowness and use it for the least amount of time possible. • T1 lines cannot support installation of long-term tracking tools such as help desk and work order software. • T1 lines do not provide sufficient capacity (bandwidth) to implement proposed district initiatives such as online testing and streaming video for distance learning.
There is a lack of standardization across all levels of the network. There are eight different vendors for network components, two for operating systems, and two for server systems.	• Inefficient contract management because more staff time is needed to manage separate contracts to multiple vendors. • Increased costs for spare parts because the district needs to maintain multiple components from different vendors rather than redundant components. • Increased complexity in managing and maintaining network because training is required in multiple systems rather than a single system.
District does not have consistent network standards for equipment installations and retrofits.	• Occurrence of spaghetti-like cabling that obscures visual inspection for maintenance and troubleshooting and causes connectors to fail or jacks to pull out, resulting in more potential for failure and downtime. • Lack of grounded racks and equipment cabinets to protect operators and equipment from electrical surges. • Excessively bent or crimped cabling resulting in premature failure of cables or erratic network operation. • Unlabeled jumper cables between distribution panel and switches that hinder problem diagnosis and analysis. • Distribution panels not clearly marked.
District network components are no longer supportable by vendor.	• Eight locations have Novell Netware 6.0 release operating system. Novell is no longer producing support packs or upgrades for the 6.0 system and discontinued all technical support in November 2005. • Intel discontinued switches at two locations in 2002. Intel honored warranties through July 2005, but the company no longer provides any type of support assistance or firmware upgrades for these components.
District has multiple key functions on one server–Domain Name Server (DNS) – a directory that stores address and name pairs to assist in correct routing to specified locations like websites, web, and e-mail.	• If there is a security breach on this server, it compromises several functions. • Key functions are affected if server goes down.

SOURCE: LMISD Network/Desktop Assessment document 2004, and LMISD technology specialist.

approach using TCO and identifies the actions needed to secure funding for the acquisition. For example, the district issued and received responses to proposals for implementing a fiber network in February 2005. The district evaluated and selected a vendor. E-Rate funding was identified as a funding source; however, the district missed the deadline and has had to delay the application for another year to obtain ongoing E-Rate funding.

Without a comprehensive plan based on TCO to provide a blueprint, the district will not develop a network that is based on principles of standardization and efficient management and will be unable to reduce long-term maintenance and support costs. Instead, the district's approach will continue to be fragmented and the district will continue to make decisions based on short-term funding issues.

Many districts have designed and developed technology infrastructures and have been able to more efficiently manage their networks and reduce long-term operating costs. For example, Navasota ISD replaced T1 lines and implemented its fiber network in 2001 with E-Rate funding. It has provided students and teachers with the ability to access more software programs than previously, increasing collaboration and file sharing. In another example, Texas City ISD implemented its fiber network in 1997 using local money obtained through a loan. The fiber allowed the district to more efficiently manage its network by centralizing e-mail, student data, gradebooks, attendance, and other resources.

LMISD should develop and implement a time-phased network enhancement plan that features standardized components and long-term efficiency in network management. The district could obtain outside technical assistance to develop and implement a five-year network enhancement plan. The plan should provide a blueprint for the district to standardize district network components and increase the efficiency of its network management. The network enhancement plan should build upon the findings in the 2004 network assessment study conducted by outside consultants, using the assessment as a baseline for identifying necessary improvements. The plan should focus on upgrading the three main components of the district's network: its LANs, its WAN, and connectivity. Standardization of components at all levels, efficiency in daily network management, and achieving the lowest total cost of ownership possible for the long-term are guiding principles that the district should use in the development of a plan.

Once the enhancements have been identified, the plan should propose a phased acquisition of components, starting with the fiber network. Replacements of additional components should occur based on existing supportability, replacing first those items no longer supported or under warranty. The plan should also identify a minimum committed level of funding for the improvements and identify alternate funding sources such as E-Rate that the district could use.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation includes a one-time cost of $10,000 for assistance to develop the network enhancement plans, based on an estimate of 100 hours of consulting time at a rate of $100 per hour (100 hours x $100 per hour = $10,000). The net cost of implementing the fiber network in 2007–08 is $6,832 and assumes that the district will use E-Rate funding with a 76 percent discount and existing funds allocated for T1 lines to fund the network [$61,800 annual cost of the network – ($61,800 x 0.76 E-Rate discount) = $14,832 – $8,000 local funds used for T1 access = $6,832].

The fiscal impact also assumes that the district will commit to funding a minimum replacement of two servers and associated equipment each year once the fiber network has been implemented. The annual purchase cost of two servers is $17,274 based on a server cost of $8,637 (2 servers x $8,637 purchase price = $17,274). The fiscal impact assumes that E-Rate funding, with a discount rate of 76 percent will be available to offset the purchase cost of the servers for an annual net cost of $4,146 during the three-year period from 2008–09 through 2010–11 [$17,274 annual server cost x (1 – 0.76 E-Rate discount) = $4,146]. The total cost of implementing this recommendation from 2008–09 through 2010–11 is $10,978 ($6,832 fiber network cost + $4,146 server replacement costs = $10,978).

PEIMS REPORTING (REC. 39)

LMISD does not have districtwide policies and procedures with assigned responsibilities for quality assurance to ensure that it accurately reports PEIMS data. Quality assurance measures and tools designed to ensure the accuracy of PEIMS data reporting are either incomplete, ineffective, or do not exist for registrars and campus attendance clerks that perform these duties.

The PEIMS specialist has data collection and reporting procedures, which currently consist of a fall PEIMS timeline with a checklist and screen prints. The targeted completion date for procedures is the end of 2005–06 school year.

Attendance accounting procedures are also under development. The PEIMS specialist said that she has obtained attendance accounting procedures from the other districts to use as a model for LMISD. The targeted completion date for attendance accounting procedures is the end of the 2005–06 school year.

Although there are procedures for the fall 2005 submission, the checklist in the existing procedures is not user-friendly. The checklist is technical in nature and does not provide detailed information as to the purpose of the steps. The screen prints are not self-explanatory and do not include the name of the field and expected data inputs. For example, one of the steps listed in the fall PEIMS checklist is to "verify term duration page of school atom". It does not explain that the term duration relates to the beginning and end dates of the fall and spring semesters and what the source of the reference information should be.

In addition, the procedures do not clearly identify responsibilities and assignments. There are no organizational charts or flow diagrams to assist staff in understanding their roles in the system and how they interact with others.

Various district training is held annually to help individuals involved with PEIMS reporting; however, attendance is not mandatory to ensure individuals understand the information and are aware of new updates and changes to reporting requirements. Each year in September, the PEIMS specialist holds training for individuals involved with special student populations such as gifted and talented, special education, and bilingual. Topics include the PEIMS submission timeline, changes and additions from previous years, attendance accounting and PEIMS data standards that apply to the particular program area, documentation requirements, and how to enter data into the software application.

In October, the PEIMS specialist and the director of Student Services provide PEIMS overview training to principals that includes a review of the goals of the fall PEIMS submission, with associated tasks and timelines. At the training, principals also designate who is responsible for coordinating the PEIMS data at their campuses. In addition to the topics discussed, the director of Student Services provides support documents and definitions for discipline, at-risk, and migrant categories to help principals properly identify and classify students.

The PEIMS specialist also meets monthly with attendance clerks and registrars who are responsible for entering the student and attendance data at the campuses. At the meetings, the PEIMS specialist shares any changes or updates to PEIMS

reporting requirements such as new or revised reporting codes, timelines, or reporting tasks. Mandatory attendance is not required, so individuals may or may not receive the updates. The PEIMS specialist indicated that although attendance is not mandatory, clerks and registrars understand that they should attend the meeting and generally attend.

The district does not provide training by the PEIMS specialist for finance or personnel staff; however, they are encouraged to attend the PEIMS meetings held by Region 4 to become familiar with data reporting requirements.

The district software and PEIMS submission software used by TEA have logic checks to identify missing data elements or data elements that are inconsistent with PEIMS data standards. The PEIMS specialist generates reports and provides them to individual campuses or departments for review. Campus staff or program staff in a particular area, such as gifted and talented, is responsible for researching the cause of any errors and making corrections as needed.

While the software has logic checks and the ability to run reports showing logic errors, data submitted from multiple departments for a particular program area were not cross-correlated and available in a single report at the time of the review in September 2005. This can lead to errors and inconsistencies in reporting program data. For example, gifted and talented program PEIMS data consists of budget, staff, and student data that are submitted independently. Campus staff submits student data, human resources staff submits staffing data, and finance staff submits budget data. The PEIMS specialist generates reports for each area and provides them for review. Independently, each organization that submits the data can review the information and certify that it is accurate. However, if the district cross-correlated the data, it may find data that is inconsistent and inaccurate. The review team noted the inconsistency in its review of gifted and talented program data (**Exhibit 5-9**).

As shown in **Exhibit 5-9**, there are schools that show budget but no students, schools that show students and no teachers, and schools that show budget and no teachers or students. Since the review team's on-site field work in September 2005, the PEIMS specialist has discovered a report that cross-correlates staff and student counts by campus for different populations served such as G/T, regular education, and special education.

The PEIMS specialist and director of Student Services meet with principals and administrators twice a year to stress the importance of accurate data. According to the director of

EXHIBIT 5-9
LMISD GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM DATA
2003–04

SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF G/T STUDENTS	G/T ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	G/T TEACHERS	BUDGET PER STUDENT
Highlands Elementary	*	$22,158	0.0	$5,540
Inter City Elementary	0	$6,531	0.0	Not divisible
Simms Elementary	0	$19,498	0.0	Not divisible
Westlawn Elementary	8	$100,402	0.0	$12,550
La Marque Middle School	37	$164,920	1.3	$4,457
La Marque High School	87	$277,222	0.0	$3,186
TOTAL	**136**	**$590,731**	**1.3**	**$4,344**

*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: LMISD Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2003–04, and LMISD Detail Expenditure Report, 2003–04.

Student Services, the district has three levels of individuals that are associated with the data verification: the clerk that enters the initial data, a campus contact (often the same clerk that entered the data), and a district coordinator or director. The individuals involved in the verification process are encouraged to review data after PEIMS edit reports are produced and to correct any incorrect data they find.

As part of the data verification process, principals and administrators are required to run their own audit reports each six weeks and sign off on the integrity of the data for their campus or assigned program area. However, there is no process to compel principals and administrators to actively confirm their data and no accountability for incorrect data. There is also no assigned staff or individuals to perform secondary review and quality assurance to ensure that staff accurately enters data. The designated data entry clerk and campus contact are often the same individual. As a result, data may be certified and still be inaccurate.

Although there is monthly training and communication with registrars and attendance clerks that have PEIMS responsibilities, without procedures and mandatory training attendance, the district's mechanism to ensure that it consistently communicates requirements, that staff involved in the PEIMS process is aware and understands the procedures, and that staff is following the same procedures is limited. As a result, errors and misunderstandings can occur because staff must rely on judgment, rather than written documentation, which affects data quality and accuracy. Similarly, the lack of cross-correlated reports and secondary quality assurance affect data quality and increase the risk of inaccurate data reporting.

Two data quality measures, the Person Identification Database (PID) error rate and underreported students, show the accuracy of reported PEIMS data used in the AEIS. The PID is the identification record given to individual students and staff who are reported in PEIMS. It is unique and contains demographic data such as Social Security number or alternate identification number, name, date of birth, sex, and ethnicity.

A PID error occurs if there is missing data such as identification number, first name, last name, or date of birth; if there is duplicate demographic information for more than one identification number; or if there is a duplicate identification number but the demographic information does not match. The PID error rate is the number of PID errors divided by the number of records. Underreported students occurs when PEIMS enrollment or leaver records indicating a student did not return to school are expected but are not received. The underreported student rate is the number of underreported students divided by the number of records.

Exhibit 5-10 compares data quality trends for LMISD against state trends. LMISD's data quality has fluctuated and the incidence of PID errors increased from 2002–03 to 2004–05 from 0.1 percent to 0.9 percent. At the same time, statewide averages steadily declined from 0.5 percent to 0.3 percent. LMISD's underreported student error rate increased from 2002–03 to 2003–04 but declined to a rate lower than the state average in 2004–05.

When asked about the increase, the PEIMS specialist said that the district had researched the cause for the errors and found that with turnover, campus staff did not identify and code many students who did not show up to school as "no shows". Also, new staff did not check and correct Social

EXHIBIT 5-10
LMISD DATA QUALITY MEASURES TRENDS
2001–02 THROUGH 2004–05

DATA MEASURE	2001–02		2002–03		2003–04		2004–05	
	LMISD	STATE	LMISD	STATE	LMISD	STATE	LMISD	STATE
PID Error Rate	0.7%	0.8%	0.1%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	0.3%
PID Errors	32	36,813	4	26,480	20	18,846	41	14,227
Underreported student rate	0.2%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	2.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
Underreported students	3	15,752	13	11,385	38	6,858	2	4,572

Source(s): LMISD AEIS reports 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04, and 2004–05.

Security numbers and the same student was reported in two different years under two different numbers. The PEIMS specialist also indicated that the district switched software programs between 2002–03 and 2003–04, which may have contributed to the increase.

Poor data quality can trigger sanctions, on-site monitoring, or designations that may require additional effort and expenditures. TEA has been phasing in a data quality standard for accuracy that requires student data submitted in 2005–06 to have 10 or fewer student records with PID errors or a PID error rate of 1.0 percent or lower. If a district fails to meet the PID error rate standard, it will be required to prepare a plan that addresses the problem and identifies steps that will be taken to reduce the PID error rate. Sanctions may also be applied for incorrect dropout data. Under Section 39.055(a) of the Texas Education Code, a district found to be at high risk of having inaccurate dropout records is subject to on-site monitoring by the TEA.

Incorrect discipline data can also increase district reporting requirements under No Child Left Behind. The state of Texas uses discipline data from the PEIMS 425 student discipline record to identify if a school is persistently dangerous. Districts with schools that have been designated as persistently dangerous must notify parents and offer transfer opportunities, where possible. The district must also develop and implement a corrective action plan, and campus administrators and PEIMS personnel must complete an updated PEIMS training program. In addition, the district must collect and maintain documentation of information related to the transfer of students and of the required development and implementation of its corrective action plan.

Various users access school district information on a regular basis for decision-making purposes. Users should have confidence that the data is correct and complete. A school

district can implement a variety of methods to ensure that reported information is complete and accurate. The Financial Accountability System Resource Guide recommends that districts incorporate procedures for editing, testing, and analyzing data into their day-to-day operations. The more verification that a school district can incorporate into its regular data-generating activities, the better data the school district is likely to produce.

Southwest ISD (SWISD) has a well-defined process to ensure accuracy when entering and submitting PEIMS data. SWISD's process groups data elements into categories such as basic demographic data or payroll data. The procedure designates the input person, the resource person to help the designated input person, and the person responsible for verification. Three independent individuals—the PEIMS clerk who entered the data, the principal, and each department head responsible for a particular area—check the PEIMS data to verify that it is correct. As a result, SWISD has had no PEIMS resubmissions in the past five years due to data errors.

LMISD should develop and implement districtwide procedures and an accountability process for principals and administrators to ensure accurate PEIMS reporting. The district should institute a multi-dimensional approach to ensure the accuracy and quality of its PEIMS data. The approach should be based on the development and implementation of districtwide procedures and an accountability process for verification. The PEIMS specialist should work with the PEIMS attendance clerks and registrars to develop the procedures. The procedures should clearly explain steps and tasks and the expected inputs and outputs for each area. The procedures should also assign roles and responsibilities to all positions with PEIMS responsibilities.

The district should strengthen the verification process by adding a three-level review for quality assurance modeled after the one used by Southwest ISD. Each campus or

department should have a designated input person, a review person, and a verification person. As an example, for attendance reporting, the attendance clerk could be the input person and the registrar could be the review person. For student data, the registrar could be the input person and the attendance clerk could perform the review. The principal would be the verification person for both areas.

The district should also develop reports that cross-correlate program data to assist staff in easily and quickly determining if data is accurate and consistent. The PEIMS data specialist should work with program directors in areas such as gifted and talented, bilingual, special education, and career and technology education to identify the types of reports that would be useful. Then the PEIMS specialist should work with the district's student management system vendor to develop the necessary reports.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is a one-time cost of $1,300 for one day of specialized vendor assistance and training for the PEIMS specialist in developing the reports that cross-correlate information.

For background information on Computers and Technology, see page 236 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
34. Develop and implement a comprehensive computer acquisition and replacement program that identifies and targets multiple sources to acquire computers to meet target ratios and replacement needs.	($36,378)	($36,378)	($36,378)	($106,596)	($106,596)	($322,326)	$0
35. Establish a comprehensive staff development program to ensure all staff is proficient in technology.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
36. Develop a disaster recovery plan and ensure that it contains the key elements to protect the district's interest.	$0	($8,752)	($8,752)	($8,752)	($8,752)	($35,008)	($4,000)
37. Expand use of outside technology planning and management assistance for development of plans, procedures, and E-Rate applications.	($1,500)	$36,138	$37,638	$36,138	$37,638	$146,052	($6,000)
38. Develop and implement a time-phased network enhancement plan that features standardized components and long-term efficiency in network management.	$0	($6,832)	($10,978)	($10,978)	($10,978)	($39,766)	($10,000)
39. Develop and implement districtwide procedures and an accountability process for principals and administrators to ensure accurate PEIMS reporting.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($1,300)
TOTALS–CHAPTER 5	($37,878)	($15,824)	($18,470)	($90,188)	($88,688)	($251,048)	($21,300)
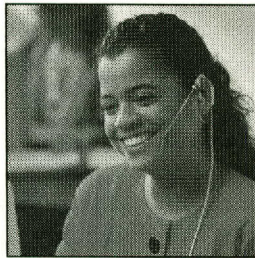
Chapter 6

Human Resources Management

La Marque Independent School District

CHAPTER 6. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Educational services depend heavily on human resources. As a result, personnel management plays a substantial role in an organization's financial picture. Payroll and benefits usually comprise the largest portion of a school district's budget. In 2004–05 the average payroll costs were 73 percent of Texas school district budgets and 62 percent of the La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) budget.

Because staffing affects educational performance and service delivery, human resources management plays a critical role in the success of an organization's mission. Human resources management ranges from development of compensation programs to recruitment of competent staff to compliance with a variety of state and federal laws. Recruitment efforts must attract employees with the skills, experience, and attitudes desired by the organization. Compensation programs carefully balance employee and organizational needs. Daily personnel management strategies must advance organizational goals as well as comply with a wide variety of state and federal legal requirements.

In 2004–05, LMISD served a student population of 3,730 with 413.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions. The district's Human Resource Department has a staff of three, consisting of a director and two clerical positions. The two clerical positions are primarily responsible for maintaining employee leave benefits and teacher certifications, but also perform basic tasks such as new employee processing, personnel file maintenance, and data entry of personnel information into the human resource module of the financial system.

In addition to personnel duties, the director is responsible for oversight of the district's safety and security programs, which includes supervision of the district police force. The split of director duties results in an equivalent of 2.5 positions that provide personnel service to employees and administrators. The ratio of district human resource staff to total organization staff is 1:165. The ratio for all industries is 1:100. Texas school district staff ratios are generally higher than the industry average, and LMISD is within normal ranges for Texas school districts.

Professional positions such as teachers, principals, and administrators comprise the majority of district staff. The district also has clerical support staff, a police department, and a few other educational support positions such as counselors, nurses, and aides. Private companies provide food service, transportation, and custodial services, keeping the number of support positions and district payroll costs low.

FINDINGS

- The director of Personnel and Operations has not structured human resource services to support changing district needs, resulting in a failure to achieve district staffing goals.

- LMISD does not have a well-defined, written compensation program for all employees in the district.

- LMISD has additional compensation programs such as stipends or allowances that do not have defined standards and are not regularly reviewed for continued effectiveness.

- The Personnel Department does not gather or evaluate data to ensure recruitment and retention strategies are effective, which may result in misplaced resources and an inability to reach organizational goals.

- LMISD does not fully use available technology to increase productivity, decrease paperwork, or provide central oversight to personnel processes, resulting in redundant and inefficient activities.

- The district does not regularly update its job descriptions, which results in inaccurate descriptions of position expectations and evaluation standards that no longer apply.

- The district does not adequately document, secure, or maintain complaints and investigations in a format convenient for tracking and analysis.

- LMISD does not regularly document all administrator or employee performance through the district evaluation process, which can result in missed opportunities to improve employee performance, help employees identify career goals, and develop staff that meets performance expectations.

- LMISD does not perform an independent review of legal changes to ensure district compliance with current state and federal law, which has resulted in areas of procedural non-compliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 40: Provide additional, intensive human resource training to the director of Personnel and Operations to increase the knowledge base necessary for development and management of the support programs needed by the district.** With additional personnel specific training, the director should be capable of improving current processes, developing needed support services, and leading the district to develop successful strategies for recruitment and retention of staff. Properly applied, this knowledge should increase productivity and reduce staff turnover.

- **Recommendation 41: Develop a compensation plan that rewards desired qualities and periodically review the plan for effectiveness and market consistency.** Working with the superintendent, the director of Personnel and Operations should develop competitive salary schedules for all district positions. Schedules should align with district compensation goals and reflect strategies that address operational needs. Written compensation guidelines will make review and adjustment processes more efficient, reduce the risk of internal salary inequities, and increase the effectiveness of compensation as a recruitment and retention tool.

- **Recommendation 42: Develop written descriptions with task expectations and implement a continuing review and improvement process for all additional compensation programs.** Descriptions for stipends should clearly distinguish the extra tasks that earn the extra pay. Allowances should also have clear definition. The district should review additional pay programs annually as part of the budget process to determine if they should be continued, modified, or abandoned. Clear descriptions for all pay mechanisms increases accountability and can reduce the risk of non-compliance with federal regulations governing compensation.

- **Recommendation 43: Develop tools and procedures for gathering information necessary for identifying trends, detecting problems, and evaluating the performance of resulting personnel programs and strategies.** The director of Business and Operations should develop these tools and procedures to do more than document performance. LMISD needs to know what causes employees to choose the district and what causes them to leave for other districts or other career

opportunities. The director of Personnel and Operations should measure success or failure of developed strategies with enough evaluative data to make improvements to increase the effectiveness of personnel programs.

- **Recommendation 44: Train staff on use of available software applications, encourage staff to develop more efficient processes using technology, and communicate those processes to co-workers and district employees.** The director of Personnel and Operations should work with the Information Technology Department to assess proficiency and identify appropriate training programs. While personnel staff has received some training, the level of proficiency does not allow for much more than basic data entry and printing of information. The age of the current financial software has created challenges to efficiency, but the district has an opportunity to streamline its processes as it implements the new software upgrade. With training, staff can develop technology solutions to manual processes reducing processing time, increasing productivity, and freeing staff resources for other tasks.

- **Recommendation 45: Regularly review and update job descriptions to reflect changes to assignments, skills, education, and performance standards.** Because the job description is the district's evaluation tool and since evaluations are an annual process, LMISD should use the annual evaluation as an opportunity to have the employee and supervisor review the description to ensure tasks or expectations have not changed and make any necessary corrections before the next review period. Changes to the descriptions should be reported to the director of Personnel and Operations for classification review and update of the adopted job description. When accurately maintained, job descriptions provide guidance to applicants, set expectations for employees, and assist in maintaining compliance with federal and state employment laws.

- **Recommendation 46: Draft and implement procedures for investigating and resolving all employee complaints, documenting the investigation and conclusion, and maintaining files in a secured location.** The director of Personnel and Operations should draft procedures that identify which steps in the complaint process should be documented and maintained. Documentation should include a written statement by the complainant and the final resolution. A strong complaint resolution process

increases public and staff confidence in an organization and provides documentation should a complaint require legal resolution.

- **Recommendation 47: Apply the district performance evaluation procedure to all positions annually.** The director of Personnel and Operations should ensure appraisals are performed and documentation maintained in an easily locatable manner. Timely and appropriate appraisals should also be a performance measure for supervisors and administrators. The Personnel office should track evaluations and report the success or failure to meet this requirement to the superintendent and the board. Regularly evaluating and documenting employee performance provides employees with written guides for improvement, and for some positions, ensures compliance with the law.

- **Recommendation 48: Assign to the director of Business and Operations the responsibility to periodically search state and federal websites for changes to pertinent regulations to ensure the district maintains compliance.** Personnel-specific websites discuss changes in federal regulations and provide opportunities to contact other human resource professionals with questions, providing another information source. The requirement for periodically researching regulatory changes should be added to the director's job description to ensure performance of the task is routinely evaluated. Periodic research will assist the district in maintaining compliance with changing employment laws by filling in any gaps in information obtained from professional organizations or through seminars.

DETAILED FINDINGS

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (REC. 40)

The director of Personnel and Operations has not structured human resource services to support changing district needs, resulting in a failure to achieve district staffing goals. The director is new to the personnel field, which has contributed to the lack of leadership in creating needed changes.

As stated in the director's job description, the goal of the position is to assist the superintendent "substantially and effectively in the task of providing leadership in the area of general administrative operations of the district." The district expects the director position to administer a centralized

personnel operation that ensures quality staffing, sound personnel management, and the correct interpretation and administration of board policies and personnel regulations for the district.

The director is assisted by two clerical positions. One position is considered a leave specialist, the other a certification specialist. The two positions perform tasks beyond leave and certification services. These positions process the majority of district personnel actions, performing tasks such as maintaining paper files, updating computer files, and preparing routine correspondence or forms. The clerical staff also provides substantial customer services, as they answer employee assistance calls related to district policies or processes.

The director is the primary recruiter for the district. The director attends recruitment fairs at area colleges such as Sam Houston State University, Louisiana State University, and Prairie View A & M University. The director talks with fair attendees, collects applications for the district's applicant pool, and corresponds with prospective applicants. The director has the authority to make offers of employment for top candidates at recruitment fairs, but generally interviewing and the recommendation for employment offers are tasks that principals perform.

The director also has responsibility for assisting administrators with employee discipline issues and investigation of complaints and advises the superintendent on the resolution of employee grievances. When employees terminate, the director performs the exit interview to determine why the employee is leaving the district.

The director and department staff develop compensation recommendations although the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations develops the compensation scale.

The core functions of a personnel operation are recruiting qualified applicants, hiring staff, assisting operations with legal compliance, developing equitable and effective compensation plans, and managing employee relations. Within the core functions are a range of services that organizations balance between the human resource department and operational departments. **Exhibit 6-1** shows a sample of personnel services and which LMISD department performs the service.

As seen in **Exhibit 6-1**, personnel processes are distributed throughout the organization. The support services provided by the Personnel Department to district departments are mainly paperwork-processing services.

EXHIBIT 6-1
LMISD PERSONNEL-RELATED TASK ASSIGNMENTS BY DEPARTMENT
2005–06

DESCRIPTION	PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT	CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION	BUSINESS OPERATIONS OFFICE
Attends Recruitment Fairs	√	Occasionally	
Screens Applications	Initial Review	√	
Arranges Interviews	Some	√	
Makes offer of employment	√		
Maintains application files	√		
Hires substitute pool	√		
Locates substitutes for dates needed		√	
Approves leave	√	√	
Maintains leave balances	√	Compensatory Time	√
Administers benefits			√
Administers payroll			√
Maintains school employee roster	√		
Enters time records	√		Substitute time cards
Investigates allegations of misconduct	√	√	
Investigates employee grievances	√	√	
Validates teaching certifications	√		
Develops compensation plan			√
Maintains job descriptions		√	
Administers evaluations		√	
Maintains evaluations	√		
Updates changes to employee status	√	√	√
Updates compensation status	√		√
Orientation of new staff	√	√	√

SOURCE: Interviews with LMISD staff, September 2005, and Tracking Sheet responses, December 2005.

The Personnel Department does not routinely provide management reports, develop personnel strategies, analyze performance of recruitment strategies such as signing bonuses, or perform other strategic management support. The director of Personnel and Operations does gather some management information; however, the director does not analyze or report the information in a format that allows district management to recognize trends, adopt strategies, or appropriately assign resources to address changing needs.

In interviews, administrators said personnel services were adequate, but they would appreciate additional services. For example, when a campus vacancy occurs, the Personnel Department sends a list of available applicants. The principal reviews the applications at the Personnel Department and determines which applicants to interview. The campus secretary calls applicants to arrange interview times. There is no pre-screening of the applicants by the Personnel Department, and the list of applicants may have 30 or more available names.

Many personnel departments screen applications before sending them to the operational department for review. Prescreening can identify applicants with stronger skills or experience, determine if the applicant is still interested in a position or has taken other work, and allow administrators to focus only on the best applicants in the pool. Services provided by the Personnel Department also affect district productivity. For example, when principals must make a trip to central administration to screen applications, they are not on their campus assisting teachers with student discipline or other problems.

The employee turnover rate provides another example of the service gap. LMISD has a high employee turnover rate. The district recognized the problem and set as the number one goal in its 2003–04 strategic plan that the district will maintain highly qualified staff that upholds the integrity of their profession. The performance measure for the goal was to reduce turnover from 24 percent to 15 percent. Full service personnel departments take an active role in helping district management achieve personnel goals. In interviews, the director did not know the district teacher turnover rate. The director estimated the district turnover rate at 10 percent. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) published turnover rate for LMISD in 2003–04 was 22.4 percent. The published rate for 2004–05 shows teacher turnover at 28.6 percent.

The second part of the staffing goal identified integrity as a targeted employee characteristic. There are no specific LMISD strategies for fostering integrity. Many districts promote the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators by including them in the employee handbook. LMISD does not have an employee handbook or an identified ethical standard for its employees.

Service and performance provide measures of the difference in value between a department that processes paperwork and one that provides strategic support. Without tactical support from the Personnel Department, the district does not have an assurance that personnel strategies work or that they provide a value that is at least equivalent to the cost. For example, without documenting and analyzing turnover the district does not know if stipends draw applicants to the district, or if base pay keeps applicants from choosing the district. The director of Personnel and Operations said that the high number of employees leaving LMISD has been discussed with the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations to determine what the district needed to do to reduce turnover. However, the director was unable to provide any documentation that analyzed the reasons behind district turnover or showed district performance in any of the standard personnel measures such as start of school vacancies.

A human resource department should serve as an internal business consultant to the managers responsible for daily operations. It has clear departmental goals for helping the organization achieve its mission. It develops and maintains systems for providing managers with data and analysis that support strategic planning and informed decision-making. Staff has the knowledge to examine processes, identify changes that create efficiencies, and implement the necessary

services that help operating departments achieve the organization's mission.

The director of Personnel and Operations has a master's degree in education as well as substantial practical experience as a teacher and coach, but only recently obtained an administrator's certificate. The director's knowledge of district operations is extensive, but this position is the director's first one in a human resources capacity. The director has continued his education with numerous seminars related to human resources, such as a conference on law for school administrators and a workshop for new personnel directors. The school administrator's certification training also includes personnel topics. The director has not had any intensive training in human resources management, similar to the training that is required to obtain a professional certification in the field of human resources. While certification is not required to be a human resource manager, the certification training process provides the information that a human resource professional is expected to know. For example, the strategic management training module includes the strategic role of human resources in an organization, the planning process for human resources, recognizing external factors influencing human resource decisions, and measuring human resource performance. LMISD has not fully implemented these strategic personnel functions.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management's report *Strategic Human Resources Management: Aligning with the Mission*, published in 1999, reviewed the relationship of human resources in achieving the mission of government agencies. The report states that while some human resource departments still focus on internal department processes, others have begun focusing on organizational activities that help agencies make effective decisions. The report not only advises human resources departments to seek internal efficiencies but also focus on the broader issues facing the organization.

The state of Texas (State Auditor's Office) advises its human resource professionals to bring personnel initiatives into alignment with overall business objectives. A senior human resources specialist for the state is expected to:

- plan and conduct studies and surveys to ensure the adequacy of personnel programs and recommend solutions to problems;

- develop methods and procedures for gathering, compiling, and analyzing statistical data;

- counsel staff on issues, rules, and regulations relating to human resource management;

- monitor and determine the effectiveness of human resource and administrative management programs;

- plan programs for human resources activities; and

- participate in the determination of quantitative and qualitative human resource requirements, develop operating programs to meet those requirements, and advise management on the formulation and administration of operating plans and policies for human resources activities.

LMISD should provide additional, intensive human resource training to the director of Personnel and Operations to increase the knowledge base necessary for development and management of the support programs needed by the district. With additional personnel-specific training, the director should be capable of improving current processes, developing needed support services, and leading the district to develop successful strategies for recruitment and retention of staff. Properly applied, this knowledge should increase productivity and reduce staff turnover.

There are a number of training programs, certification programs, and degrees for human resource professionals. The human resource industry has a recognized professional certification program. Certification training programs last several weeks and are frequently offered at local universities. Topics covered include strategic human resource management; labor markets, recruiting and retention; legal issues and compliance; compensation, benefits, and training; performance management and appraisal; employee relations, rights, and discipline; and health, safety, and security issues. The financial impact of attending a training program for certification of senior human resource professionals is a one-time cost of $1,095.

SALARY PLANS (REC. 41)

LMISD does not have a well-defined, written compensation plan for all employees in the district. Without a comprehensive plan, salary imbalances may occur, performance may go unrewarded, and unhappy employees may leave the district.

Each year the district adopts a compensation plan as part of the budget process. The 2005–06 compensation plan has two salary scales. One scale defines salaries for teachers, counselors, librarians, and nurses. The other scale describes salary ranges for clerical and paraprofessional support staff.

LMISD's teacher pay scale is based on years of service. A service-based schedule increases pay for each additional year

of experience. It provides annual salary increases to all teachers regardless of performance, difficulty of assignment, or workload factors. Service-based scales are common to many professions. By state law, the years of service scale is the baseline compensation methodology for Texas school districts.

Salary schedules in Texas districts vary in the number of years on their scale as well as the percentage increase between each step. The variations allow districts to express different strategies for attracting and retaining teaching staff. **Exhibit 6-2** compares teacher salary schedules of small- to medium-sized districts near La Marque ISD. Districts in the area are used because they share the same job market and applicant pool and compete with LMISD for attracting and retaining staff. Of the area districts used for comparison, Hitchcock ISD is the smallest district with a 2004–05 student population of 1,223, and Dickinson ISD is the largest with a 2004–05 student population of 7,010.

As **Exhibit 6-2** shows, the area districts have similar schedules, although they vary slightly in starting salaries and amount of increase between service steps. At the start of the scale, LMISD pays $800 less than Dickinson ISD and Santa Fe ISD, and $1,800 less than Friendswood ISD. LMISD pays $3,200 more than Hitchcock ISD. At the five year mark, LMISD exceeds Santa Fe ISD by $400, Dickinson ISD by $200, and Hitchcock ISD by $2,788. LMISD is $562 less than Friendswood ISD at five years of service.

At end of the LMISD scale, the district is $85 less than Santa Fe ISD, $1,500 less than Dickinson ISD, $2,198 less than Friendswood ISD, and $1,921 greater than Hitchcock ISD. The LMISD scale ends at 26 years of service, while Santa Fe ISD and Hitchcock ISD end at 30 years, Friendswood ISD ends at 38 years, and Dickinson ISD ends at 40 years of service. By comparison, the state minimum pay scale reaches its top salary at 20 years of experience.

To attract applicants, districts also distinguish themselves by rewarding qualities that are of value to the district. For example, LMISD invested significant resources in the beginning years of its pay scale by increasing pay at the entry levels of its scale to attract new teachers to the district. LMISD also pays an additional sum to new teachers either as a signing bonus or a relocation bonus. The bonus amount is $1,000 for most teaching positions, but critical shortage positions such as special education or math receive $2,000.

EXHIBIT 6-2
COMPARISON OF AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPENSATION SCHEDULES
2004–05

YEARS OF SERVICE	LA MARQUE ISD	SANTA FE ISD	DICKINSON ISD	HITCHCOCK ISD	FRIENDSWOOD ISD	STATE MINIMUM SALARY
0	$35,200	$36,000	$36,000	$32,000	$37,000	$24,240
1	35,600	36,200	36,200	32,266	37,100	24,810
2	36,000	36,400	36,400	32,536	37,200	25,390
3	36,400	36,500	36,600	33,032	37,300	25,960
4	36,800	36,600	36,800	33,622	37,500	27,170
5	37,200	36,800	37,000	34,412	37,762	28,380
6	37,400	37,000	37,500	35,027	37,976	29,590
7	37,600	37,200	38,000	35,799	38,190	30,720
8	37,800	37,400	38,500	36,689	38,404	31,780
9	38,000	37,600	39,000	37,783	38,619	32,790
10	38,200	37,971	39,500	38,539	39,426	33,730
11	38,400	38,584	40,100	39,243	40,609	34,640
12	38,600	39,197	40,700	40,004	40,315	35,490
13	38,800	39,810	41,300	40,230	40,452	36,280
14	39,000	40,431	41,900	41,070	41,250	37,050
15	39,800	40,431	42,500	41,897	42,257	37,760
16	40,800	41,047	43,200	42,603	42,775	38,440
17	41,500	41,952	43,900	43,336	43,709	39,080
18	42,500	42,905	44,600	43,998	44,576	39,680
19	43,300	44,069	45,300	44,628	45,421	40,260
20	44,100	44,355	46,000	45,267	46,201	40,800
21	45,000	41,059	46,600	45,729	46,948	
22	45,800	45,742	47,200	45,779	41,650	
23	46,400	46,376	47,800	45,869	48,309	
24	47,200	46,979	48,400	45,939	48,968	
25	48,000	47,552	49,000	46,009	49,605	
26	48,000	48,085	49,500	46,079	50,198	
27		48,085	50,000	46,149	50,509	
28		48,085	50,500	46,219	50,623	
29		48,085	51,000	46,289	50,736	
30		48,729	51,500	46,359	50,849	
31			52,000		50,962	
32			52,500		51,169	
33			53,000		51,828	
34			53,500		52,336	
35				54,000		52,650
36			54,500		52,947	
37			55,000		53,120	
38			55,500		53,721	
39			56,000			
40			56,500			

NOTE: The LMISD teacher pay scale is also the pay scale for counselors, librarians, and nurses in LMISD.
SOURCE: Adopted pay scales for area districts taken from district websites, 2005.

As another example, many districts provide additional salary for additional education. Texas City Independent School District offers a graduated range starting at $1,000 in additional pay for a master's degree. LMISD offers a similar, graduated scale for a master's degree.

The LMISD compensation plan also includes a pay schedule for paraprofessional positions. Prior to 2005–06, paraprofessionals were paid based only on years of experience in the district. In 2005–06, the district adopted a salary range for paraprofessionals. The new schedule groups positions according to levels; each level has a low, middle, and high salary. The new schedule does not have any standards or guidelines for deciding if the combination of skills, education, and experience should place a candidate at the bottom, middle, or top of the range. Without clear direction for placement, starting salaries for new employees may outpace existing salaries for seasoned employees, creating morale problems among staff.

While LMISD has schedules for two categories of staff, it also has positions with no identified compensation philosophy or scheme. For example, the district has no schedule for police positions. It pays the chief of police consistent with the position and the size of the department. The average annual pay of the remaining officers is $26,406. With the exception of one officer with shift leader responsibilities, all officers receive the same salary. In LMISD, the salary of an officer with experience is the same as the salary of an officer with no experience. In comparison, the City of Galveston has a two-tier salary schedule for its police officers. A starting officer with no experience earns $29,426, and a certified officer completing the department's training program and having one or more years of experience makes $35,178.

The district does not have an administrator's pay scale. Salaries are determined individually as positions are created or filled. There are no identified salary guidelines, ranges, or schedules to keep administrative salaries consistently within the area market. **Exhibit 6-3** compares the average salary of LMISD administrators to those of area districts that compete with LMISD for quality staff in the same job market. For purposes of comparison, administrators include principals, assistant principals, central administrators, and the superintendent.

Exhibit 6-3 shows that with the exception of Friendswood ISD, La Marque ISD's administrative salaries are, on average, higher than competitive districts in its geographic area, region, and statewide averages. The average salaries include those amounts provided to TEA for inclusion in its public information system and may not reflect other pay practices of Texas school districts such as bonuses or allowances. In addition, salaries may reflect the education and experience of incumbent administrators. For example, the LMISD directors have an average of 23.8 years of experience. The district's superintendent and the two assistant superintendents have an average of 30 years experience and hold doctoral degrees.

In 2004–05, the district increased its administrator pay to stay competitive with the area market. This amount reflects compensation for the loss of a $1,000 insurance supplement previously paid by the state, as well as a lack of salary increase in 2003–04. In most Texas school districts, administrators are not on a pay scale that guarantees a salary increase for each year of service. Administrators may go without a salary increase for one or more years depending on the financial position of the district.

EXHIBIT 6-3
AVERAGE SALARIES FOR ADMINISTRATORS
LMISD VERSUS AREA DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE AVERAGES
2002–03 THROUGH 2004–05

DISTRICT	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	PERCENT INCREASE 2002–03 TO 2004–05
Santa Fe	$63,873	$64,980	$65,132	2.0%
Friendswood	70,185	71,325	73,088	4.1%
LA MARQUE	69,369	67,063	73,071	5.3%
Texas City	65,367	66,854	70,610	8.0%
Dickinson	63,418	66,281	68,885	8.6%
Hitchcock	58,044	62,007	66,675	14.9%
REGION 4 AVERAGE	68,158	69,670	71,051	4.2%
STATE AVERAGE	64,259	65,550	66,697	3.8%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2002–03 through 2004–05.

In 2004–05, LMISD teachers received a three percent pay raise. This amount reflects an increase above that required by the state's teacher salary scale. In contrast to administrator and support staff salaries, state law requires a minimum increase to teacher salaries every year. Texas districts may adopt a salary schedule that pays more than the state scale, but districts cannot pay less than scale. **Exhibit 6-4** compares the average salary of LMISD teachers to average salaries of similarly sized area districts.

As **Exhibit 6-4** shows, LMISD pays teachers less on average when compared to competitive area district counterparts as well as region and state averages. The lower average reflects the district's salary scale, which is generally lower than area districts. Averaging the salaries of the teaching staff also reflects the balance between the number of new staff at lower salaries and the number of experienced staff at higher salaries.

Without thoughtfully crafted salary schedules for both administrator and staff positions, controlling the salary differential between staff and administrators is more difficult. When the gap is too large, it may send the message that workers are not valued. When the gap compresses, promotion may become less attractive to qualified staff. When increased responsibility is not equivalent to a corresponding increase in pay, administrators may leave for more equitable compensation with other employers.

Without a defined compensation system extra effort is needed to ensure all positions remain competitive with area markets. **Exhibit 6-5** shows employee perceptions of the district's competitiveness with similar positions in the job market.

As **Exhibit 6-5** demonstrates, a majority of principals, teachers, and support staff generally perceived district salaries as below average to poor. Administrators were a little more evenly divided on the issue, but still only 20 percent felt district salaries were good.

Some organizations include compensation programs that reinforce desired skills, performance, or other qualities. LMISD does not have salary mechanisms that pay for performance, compensate district longevity, provide incentives for perfect attendance, or reward the skills and values the district would like in its employees.

The district has a written goal of hiring highly qualified staff. In interviews with the review team, LMISD staff expressed another less formal goal of hiring staff that is dedicated to the district for the long term. These goals have not been integrated into the district's compensation scheme. The review team surveyed LMISD staff to determine how well district compensation programs are performing. **Exhibit 6-6** shows how district staff responded when asked to consider the effectiveness of district programs in rewarding competence and excellent performance.

Exhibit 6-6 indicates that district staff perceived the district's job of rewarding performance as less than average. While 15 percent of administrators and 20 percent of principals thought LMISD did a good job of rewarding performance, 35 percent of administrators and 33.3 percent of principals, respectively, believed it to be below average, and 38.6 percent of responding teachers and 53.1 percent of support staff ranked the district's effectiveness in rewarding performance below average or poor.

EXHIBIT 6-4
AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES
LMISD VERSUS SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED AREA DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE AVERAGES
2002–03 THROUGH 2004–05

DISTRICT	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	PERCENT INCREASE 2002–03 TO 2004–05
Texas City	$42,893	$42,614	$43,389	1.2%
Dickinson	$39,909	$40,810	$40,988	2.7%
LA MARQUE	$38,058	$39,005	$39,221	3.1%
Santa Fe	$38,990	$39,630	$40,189	3.1%
Friendswood	$42,095	$42,706	$43,498	3.3%
Hitchcock	$39,291	$39,922	$41,513	5.7%
REGION 4 AVERAGE	$41,964	$42,531	$43,106	2.7%
STATE AVERAGE	$39,972	$40,476	$41,009	2.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2002–03 through 2004–05.

EXHIBIT 6-5
LMISD HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE COMPETITIVENESS OF DISTRICT SALARIES WITH SIMILAR POSITIONS IN THE JOB MARKET.						
Administrator	5.0%	35.0%	25.0%	20.0%	0.0%	15.0%
Principal	6.7%	46.7%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	25.0%	42.2%	18.8%	7.8%	0.0%	6.3%
Teacher	14.0%	41.2%	34.2%	7.9%	0.9%	1.8%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

EXHIBIT 6-6
LMISD HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN IDENTIFYING AND REWARDING COMPETENCE AND EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE.						
Administrator	5.0%	35.0%	30.0%	15.0%	0.0%	15.0%
Principal	0.0%	33.3%	46.7%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	23.4%	29.7%	32.8%	6.3%	1.6%	6.3%
Teacher	14.9%	23.7%	43.9%	11.4%	2.6%	3.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

An organization's compensation philosophy considers how salaries should compare to similar positions in the market and to each other. Defined principles help ensure that pay decisions do not inadvertently discriminate between classes of employees. To stay competitive, salaries are periodically reviewed to ensure compensation decisions consistently apply the organization's compensation philosophy.

Many organizations develop and monitor salary schedules based on adopted compensation principles so that pay mechanisms reflect the organization's goals and values. For example, Dickinson ISD pays an additional premium for years of service with the district. The premium increases as time in the district increases. The Austin Independent School District recently rewarded commitment by providing a bonus to teachers for completing the school year.

The state of Texas has well developed compensation programs. The state offers a variety of compensation programs that include both monetary and non-monetary compensation. The state has three salary schedules: one for support, technical, and paraprofessional positions; one for professional and managerial positions; and one for law enforcement positions. In addition, depending on the position

the state may offer shift differential pay, on-call pay, retention bonuses, incentive bonuses, recognition awards, and enhanced compensation awards.

LMISD should develop a compensation plan that rewards desired qualities and periodically review the plan for effectiveness and market consistency. Working with the superintendent, the director of Personnel and Operations should develop competitive salary schedules for all district positions. Schedules should align with district compensation goals and reflect strategies that address operational needs. Written compensation guidelines will make review and adjustment processes more efficient, reduce the risk of internal salary inequities, and increase the effectiveness of compensation as a recruitment and retention tool.

Positions that have a salary range rather than a years-of-service plan should have written guidelines for salary placement that considers education and experience. For example, an entry-level clerical position may require a high school diploma and zero to two years of experience. The midrange for this position may require five to seven years of experience, and a four-year degree may substitute for four work years. The district should periodically review salaries to ensure employees

that are not on a scale with automatic yearly increases receive pay consistent with their increasing experience and value to the district.

The compensation plan should reward desired qualities. For example, if the district values commitment to the district, the compensation plan may include a commitment bonus at various service milestones. If the district values the sharing of experience, it might provide a stipend for master teachers who are willing to lead campus training opportunities. If the district values integrity, it may award a bonus to teachers that exemplify the professional educator's code of conduct. If the district values performance, it may reward teachers who meet measurable goals, work successfully with more challenging student populations, or meet other creditable standards.

In order to reach its compensation goals, the board should adjust its pay structure and any affected positions over time. An implementation schedule will help prioritize aspects of the compensation scheme while ensuring consistent application of each scheduled milestone. The schedule will also provide a blueprint for continuing the review process and allowing the district to adjust as markets, district values, and operational needs change.

PERFORMANCE DEFINITIONS FOR EXTRA COMPENSATION (REC. 42)

LMISD has additional compensation programs such as stipends or allowances that do not have defined standards and are not regularly reviewed for continued effectiveness. As performance is determined in part by a job's description, a lack of definition for compensation programs can result in miscommunication and missed expectations. Employees may believe they qualify for additional compensation when they do not. Employees who are removed from additionally compensated duties may believe they performed adequately, when they did not meet district expectations.

LMISD has a number of pay mechanisms that do not have defined criteria. The primary mechanism for earning extra pay in LMISD is the stipend. Stipends are a standard way for Texas school districts to reward teaching staff for time spent on extra-curricular activities. The district has stipends for extra-curricular academic programs, fine arts programs, and athletic programs.

In reviewing stipends, the review team noted a variation in the description and supporting documentation explaining the stipend. Certain athletic stipends are not defined in writing, but are understood from their titles which identify pay for extra days worked in certain months. Other athletic stipends are not connected to clearly defined tasks. For example, there are no written standards for the $6,000 head football coach stipend or for the assistant football coach at the same stipend amount. The head trainer receives an additional $7,000 with no written expectations for education, certifications, or duties to be performed.

Certain academic positions do have position descriptions associated with the additional pay. For example, teachers may be selected to coordinate programs at a particular grade level. There is a written task list defining the duties of a grade-level chair. The description defines the length of assignment and expectations for performance. A similar description exists for department chair stipends. However, other positions receive additional pay without written guidelines. The superintendent's liaison position for elementary schools earns an additional $2,000 stipend with no associated task list. The district has a $5,000 assistant principal stipend in addition to the salary for the position. The speech therapist has a job description with associated salary. The district also has a speech therapist stipend with no explanation that distinguishes its purpose from the regular job and base pay of a speech therapist.

LMISD does not routinely review stipends to determine if they continue to serve as an effective method of compensation. The director of Personnel and Operations said that the stipends for 2005–06 are essentially the same stipends that the district paid when the director took the personnel position. The district does periodically increase its stipends, but individual schools make requests through the budget process rather than through a central personnel review process. Without a central process that links duty expectations and salary increases, changes in additional pay may inadvertently create internal inequities or conflict with district goals. For example, LMISD has an expressed goal of maintaining a highly qualified teaching staff. In support of the goal, mentor teachers are paid a stipend of either $200 or $350, depending on experience. The weight room supervisor for the power lifting athletic program receives a stipend of $1,500, although there is no specific goal or strategy associated with that position.

Besides stipends, the district also uses allowances as a compensation mechanism. Like the stipends, many of the allowances are not well defined. For example, the district provides automobile allowances to a few positions. The allowances range from $150 to the $12,000 allowance for the superintendent. Some positions with automobile allowances

also have access to district vehicles for travel. Other positions with allowances have access to district-paid rental cars. The district provides an expense allowance to one position but also reimburses the position for travel expenses. In 2000–01, expenditures for allowances totaled $18,600. By 2004–05, the district spent $39,977 for allowances, a substantial increase. Without clear definition, tracking and analyzing total expenditures for travel or other expenses is more difficult. Unclear definitions also affects the district's ability for determining the appropriate employee tax consequence since the Internal Revenue Code establishes different rules for taxing different types of compensation.

Without guidelines, it is difficult for LMISD to determine if additional pay is at the appropriate level or if it should continue from year to year. Employees that would like to earn a stipend or other allowance may not understand the qualifications needed to be eligible for a stipend or how the district assigns them, which could lead to complaints. Salary information provided pursuant to open government requests may not provide an accurate picture, leading to misunderstandings and concern from the community.

LMISD should develop written descriptions with task expectations and implement a continuing review and improvement process for all additional compensation programs. Descriptions for stipends should clearly distinguish the extra tasks that earn the extra pay. Allowances should also have clear definition. The district should review additional pay programs annually as part of the budget process to determine if they should be continued, modified, or abandoned. Clear descriptions for all pay mechanisms increases accountability and can reduce the risk of non-compliance with federal regulations governing compensation.

When LMISD develops strategies for recruitment or retention, it should analyze the use of additional pay mechanisms to determine if they can assist the district in meeting operational goals. By defining the standards for additional pay and allowances, LMISD can improve internal controls over supplemental compensation mechanisms.

DATA MANAGEMENT (REC. 43)

The Personnel Department does not gather or evaluate data to ensure recruitment and retention strategies are effective, which may result in misplaced resources and an inability to reach organizational goals. While some information is captured, it is not developed for use in measuring performance toward district personnel goals.

When attending recruitment fairs, the director of Personnel and Operations asks interested students to provide their name and contact information on a sign-in sheet. While there is no formal analysis of each fair and how effective it is, the director said he reviews the list and will not continue to attend fairs where LMISD does not attract candidates. However, there is no documented analysis of the district's decision to no longer attend certain fairs, and LMISD does not gather data that would provide feedback on why the fair's attendees may not be interested in the district.

The district developed a strategic plan in 2003–04, and the number one district strategic goal was to maintain highly qualified staff that uphold the integrity of their profession. The needs assessment developed for the strategic plan showed that in 2003–04, eight of the 257 teachers had no degrees and 20 were working on a permit basis rather than with a full teaching certificate. In 2005–06, LMISD had 41 teachers in an alternative certification program.

The strategic plan also identified as one measure of success the reduction in the teacher turnover rate, which was 24.6 percent in 2002–03. To reach the turnover reduction goal, the district developed four strategic objectives. **Exhibit 6-7** shows the adopted objectives.

A sampling of strategies developed for the retention objective listed in **Exhibit 6-7** included:
- Increase salaries to level of surrounding districts;

- Develop perfect attendance incentive plan for employees;

- Develop an incentive pay program for teachers that perform extra duties, for example, grant writing, professional development, etc.; and

- Increase pay for professionals.

The plan also included non-salary-related strategies such as employee picnics, wellness classes, and generous use of the new district theme, "La Marque–the Ultimate Educational Choice." The district implemented strategies that resulted in a turnover rate reduction of just 2.2 percent in the following school year.

District processes do capture some information important to assessing performance of district personnel strategies. The district maintains a spreadsheet for each year that shows resignations, retirements, and transfers. In addition to the spreadsheet, the board's agendas show employees who are leaving, their years of experience, and their years in district.

EXHIBIT 6-7
LMISD STRATEGIC PLAN
2003–04

OBJECTIVE	SUMMATIVE EVALUATION	FORMATIVE EVALUATION
95 percent of certified staff will meet or exceed requirements for highly qualified professional staff by 2005.	Staff development will be provided so that 95 percent of the certified staff will meet or exceed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements for highly qualified professional staff.	Documentation of staff development; agenda and sign in sheets.
Instructional aides will meet or exceed requirements for highly qualified paraprofessional staff by 2005.	Professional development will be offered to instructional aides so that all will meet or exceed NCLB requirements for highly qualified paraprofessional staff.	Agenda of professional development and sign-in sheets of those attending.
All clerical staff will possess the knowledge and skills for their assigned duties by 2005.	All clerical staff will attend in-service throughout the year to provide them with the knowledge and skills for the assigned duties.	Agenda of professional development and sign-in sheet of those attending.
LMISD will retain 85% of all highly qualified staff by the year 2005.	Personnel records will show that 85% of our highly qualified staff remained in LMISD.	Documentation of activities offered or of attendance at activities.

SOURCE: LMISD Strategic Plan, 2003–04.

However, the information is in the form of lists and provides no analysis for the board.

LMISD has a process that asks terminating employees their reasons for leaving. The process is based on an exit form that includes an area for the exiting employee to make comments. A review of termination files revealed that exiting employees gave only brief explanations, with very few providing additional comments on their LMISD experience. The district does not analyze or report to the board information provided on the exit form, or use it to determine if targeted retention strategies are effective.

In the 2003–04 strategic plan, the district adopted several strategies relating to compensation, particularly as it related to teaching staff. LMISD compensation increased from 2003–04 to 2005–06; however, none of the information gathered by the district indicates how the implementation of the different compensation strategies affected teacher turnover.

In 2003–04, 55 employees terminated their employment with LMISD. Forty-eight of the exiting employees were teachers. In 2002–03, 61 teachers terminated employment with the district, out of a total of 74 employee exits. The other terminations included administrators and support positions such as nurses and counselors.

Because it contracts for most of its auxiliary services such as transportation and food services, LMISD consists mostly of professional staff. In 2004–05, teachers were 59 percent of

LMISD staff, compared to the Region 4 and state averages of 50 percent. Auxiliary staff is only 13 percent of district staff, compared to the 2004–05 region average of 29 percent and the state average of 28 percent. As a result, turnover in auxiliary staff has been minimal, compared to that of professional staff. From 2002–03 through 2004–05, more than 80 percent of employee exits have been in teaching positions.

In 2004–05, LMISD lost 79 employees to resignation, retirement, or termination. Sixty-nine vacated positions were teachers. A review of 30 personnel files of former professional employees revealed 33 percent took jobs with other school districts, 10 percent had health issues, 10 percent left the public school system, and 13 percent gave other reasons such as family or seeking better job. The reason that another 27 percent left the district was unknown, although the director of Personnel and Operations noted that several employees retired in 2004–05 to take advantage of a social security program that would become unavailable.

The director of Personnel and Operations said he personally interviews exiting employees to see what the district could improve, but the information is not documented. The exit information that is documented does not provide enough detail to develop an effective, targeted strategy to reduce turnover. The district does not capture or analyze data to determine which strategies are working well, which ones work but need improvement, or which ones are not working at all.

The district has adopted two evaluation methods to measure the success of adopted strategies: the summative and the formative evaluation. A summative evaluation is a measure of whether or not the strategy did what it was supposed to do. It is usually a quantitative measure, which is a measurement that can be expressed in terms of a specific number. A quantitative measure would have a numerical target, such as reducing turnover by 10 percent.

A formative evaluation looks at smaller, more targeted groups of data to guide improvement. It is usually conducted multiple times during the development or adjustment of a program. The formative measures listed in LMISD's strategic plan document that the step was implemented but do not evaluate if the step was helpful or effective.

In determining if the turnover reduction objective has been met, **Exhibit 6-8** compares turnover information for area districts in competition with LMISD for quality staff.

Some districts made substantial strides in reducing turnover in 2003–04. **Exhibit 6-8** shows that LMISD reduced its turnover rate from 24.6 percent in 2002–03 to 22.4 percent in 2003–04, but turnover increased in 2004–05 to 28.6 percent. Turnover across the state and region grew in 2004–05. Among local area districts, Santa Fe ISD and La Marque ISD experienced the greatest percentage increase between 2003–04 and 2004–05.

Turnover is a measure of organizational health. While turnover can bring new ideas and new knowledge into an organization, high turnover can be an indication of discontent within the organization. Without adequate and accurate information, districts cannot identify problems, which can result in a district not developing effective strategies or solutions to address the root cause of high turnover or other personnel challenges that it faces.

Many organizations develop surveys to capture meaningful data to help determine retention issues. Exit surveys may ask how much more money the employee is making in the new position, or what the district could have done to keep the employee. Galena Park Independent School District surveys new employees at the end of their first year to determine what attracted them as an applicant and if the district is performing to their expectations.

The state of Texas is a proponent of measuring human resource activities. It suggests that government organizations assess their data management needs by asking the following questions:

- What information is already tracked on a continuing basis?

- Is the organization currently using metrics?

- Are there critical areas that need focus?

- What metrics would be useful to human resources and to the organization?

- Are there costs that the organization is trying to contain?

- What does the organization wish it could track?

The district should develop tools and procedures for gathering information necessary for identifying trends, detecting problems, and evaluating the performance of resulting

EXHIBIT 6-8
COMPARISON OF TEACHER TURNOVER
SMALL TO MID SIZED AREA DISTRICTS
2002–03 THROUGH 2004–05

DISTRICT	TURNOVER RATES			PERCENT INCREASE 2002–03 TO 2004–05
	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	
Texas City ISD	14.6%	9.6%	15.4%	0.8%
LA MARQUE ISD	24.6%	22.4%	28.6%	4.0%
Santa Fe ISD	18.4%	15.2%	22.6%	4.2%
Friendswood ISD	12.2%	8.1%	10.7%	(1.5%)
Dickinson ISD	20.3%	15.1%	18.5%	(1.8%)
Hitchcock ISD	36.7%	19.9%	27.8%	(8.9%)
REGION 4	15.6%	14.2%	16.3%	0.7%
STATE OF TEXAS	15.6%	14.3%	16.1%	0.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05.

personnel programs and strategies. The director of Business and Operations should develop these tools and procedures to do more than document performance. LMISD needs to know what causes employees to choose the district and what causes them to leave for other districts or other career opportunities. The director of Personnel and Operations should measure success or failure of developed strategies with enough evaluative data to make improvements to increase the effectiveness of personnel programs.

The district needs to measure performance of adopted strategies for recruitment and retention. LMISD should develop an assortment of collection methods based on identification of needed data. For example, if one objective is to attend only those recruitment fairs that provide the best value, the district must define value. If it measures value on cost as well as results, it must capture the cost of each recruitment effort. The district could measure success by the number of contacts with qualified applicants, as well as by the number of applicants hired. The district could also measure which of its benefits, salary programs, or other attractions are most appealing to applicants.

TECHNOLOGY USE (REC. 44)

LMISD does not fully use available technology to increase productivity, decrease paperwork, or provide central oversight to personnel processes, resulting in redundant and inefficient activities. Personnel processes include several levels of forms that frequently include the same information. Redundant information is stored in multiple locations.

A review of personnel processes revealed a number of manual, paper-intensive procedures. Examples of five processes include:

UPDATES TO COMPENSATION CHANGES

Each year as LMISD adopts its budget, it must confirm salaries for the new school year and update any changes in the computer system. **Exhibit 6-9** displays the process of updating employee compensation.

As shown in **Exhibit 6-9**, the district maintains copies of the salary notice in three separate locations. An electronic copy is maintained in the computer, and a paper copy is maintained in a binder as well as in the employee personnel file. The compensation binders are periodically used to locate information or answer questions, but the binders consume several cabinet shelves.

MAINTENANCE OF TEACHER CERTIFICATIONS

State law requires teachers to meet certain minimum standards. Qualifications are documented through a state certification process that requires districts to continuously verify certifications for new teachers and renewals for existing teaching staff to ensure they are up-to-date and accurate.

The Personnel Department uses a manual tracking system to ensure certifications remain current. It starts with printing a copy of problem certifications and putting them in a tickler file. The tickler file is kept in the certification specialist's desk area and periodically reviewed. Teachers with certifications that are approaching expiration receive a reminder letter several months in advance of expiration. As the tickler file continues to be reviewed, additional actions are taken to ensure requirements for issuance or renewal of certifications occur. After completing certification activity, the paper copy is removed from the tickler file and the information in the computer updated. The tickler file may remain at the certification specialist's desk for months.

LMISD's computer system captures certification information for both teachers with regular teaching certificates and those teachers that are in an alternative certification program that allows them to teach while they train and test for a regular teaching certificate. The information kept in the manual tickler file also resides in the computer. LMISD has not used the computerized data to develop an electronic reminder system.

HOURS WORKED

The Personnel Department tracks compensatory time information and its use manually rather than electronically. When certain categories of employees work more than 40 hours in a work week, federal law mandates that they receive extra compensation, either in the form of overtime or compensatory time off. LMISD usually awards compensatory time or comp time in lieu of overtime.

Although the district's payroll system could electronically capture, calculate, and track comp hours, comp hours earned are not considered part of the LMISD leave or payroll processes. Instead, comp hours are calculated and tracked separately by schools and district departments using a series of manual forms. Comp time information is sent to the Personnel Department on a manual form as part of the overtime approval process, but each department maintains balances and utilization of compensatory time-off rather than in a central database that links to the accounting and payroll process.

**EXHIBIT 6-9
PERSONNEL PROCESS
ANNUAL CHANGES TO PROFESSIONAL SALARIES
2005–06**

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Print hard copy of  │
│ previous year's salary │
│ notice from computer. │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Write changes to    │
│ compensation on hard │
│ copy. Files corrected │
│ copy.               │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Make salary changes │─────▶│ Print clean copy and │
│ to notice screen in │      │ send to employee for │
│ computer.           │      │ review and approval. │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
                                        │
                                        ▼
                             ┌─────────────────────┐
                             │ Employee makes      │
                             │ corrections and     │
                             │ returns, or signs   │
                             │ approval and returns to │
                             │ Personnel.          │
                             └─────────────────────┘
                                        │
                                        ▼
┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Copy with employees │◀──│ Employee corrections │──▶│ Print clean copy and │──▶│ Payroll reviews, makes │
│ corrections filed in │   │ entered into computer. │  │ send to payroll for │   │ corrections, and     │
│ personnel folder.   │   └─────────────────────┘   │ review.             │   │ returns to Personnel. │
└─────────────────────┘            │                └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▼
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Print clean copy and │
                        │ place in binder.    │
                        │ Binders maintained on │
                        │ shelf for 10 years. │
                        └─────────────────────┘
```

SOURCE: Interviews with LMISD Personnel staff, September 2005.

The Payroll Department receives comp time balance information only when an employee leaves the district. When that occurs, the school or department sends information on any unused comp time to the Personnel Department for inclusion in the calculation of the final paycheck. At termination, the Personnel Department calculates unused comp time, unused leave, and other factors and sends the calculation to the Payroll Department. The payroll staff used to maintain a spreadsheet with compensatory time information but discontinued the practice on the advice of the Business Office. There is no central accounting record of earned compensatory time-off.

While the district's computer application is capable of allowing entry at the campus or department level of hours worked by employees, the district has not authorized this process due to concerns that the secretary or other department staff might make unauthorized entries. However, the same staff is allowed to manage the comp time accruals, so long as it is on paper and not in the computer.

LEAVE TAKEN

LMISD provides paid leave to full-time employees. Staff receives paid sick leave benefits as well as personal leave benefits. The state guarantees a minimum number of personal leave days, although districts can provide additional paid leave referred to as local leave. LMISD provides local leave in addition to state leave. Certain leave balances carry over from year to year, while others must be used in the year granted or they will be lost.

The Personnel Department maintains leave manually. The district pays most employees a set salary for hours worked, and they do not complete time sheets. Salaried employees fill out leave requests, which are entered into the computer and used to produce employee paychecks. The employees complete a leave request, which is sent to the Personnel Department. The leave specialist rewrites the date and reason for the absence onto a tracking form that goes in the employee's personnel file. The leave specialist also enters the absence information into the computer system. The original leave request is retained in a separate location from the leave tracking form in the personnel file.

In addition to the leave requests sent in by employees, school secretaries notify the Personnel Department daily of employees who are absent. In return, the Personnel Department provides the school with a list of available substitutes. The principal locates a substitute willing to work and provides the name of the selected substitute to the Personnel Department in the daily absentee report.

The absence information entered into the personnel module by the Personnel Department is linked to the payroll module in the district financial system. Entering the absence information into the personnel application is equivalent to the entering of a time sheet. Because the district pays its professional employees on a salary basis, the computer automatically calculates the amount for each paycheck. If an employee is absent, adjustments are made to the paycheck based on the employee's leave accruals. The payroll module pulls the leave information from the personnel module to make the adjustments.

The leave specialist spends 4–5 hours per week tracking and entering leave. The leave specialist also uses approximately one week at the beginning of each year on start-up duties that organize the leave processes for new and returning employees. The leave specialist said the district considered investing in an electronic substitute finder application in the early 1990s. The electronic system would automatically notify substitutes of potential jobs and create a leave record that could be used to create payroll. The cost was approximately $25,000, but the district decided not to purchase the application.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN HUMAN RESOURCE FUNCTIONS

LMISD has an Internet website. Each department has staff trained to post items to the website. Personnel Department staff does not take the opportunity to enhance communications by posting information that would assist employees and possibly reduce time spent answering individual questions. For example, the district does not post frequently asked questions and answers. Also, the district does not have an employee handbook, and there are no handbook-type instructions posted on the website.

In interviews, staff said that the board is more likely to address problems by adding personnel than by providing additional technology. The district's personnel and payroll application is obsolete and is no longer supported by the vendor. New employees have difficulty finding adequate training on its features. For example, one employee in the Personnel Department said she would like to become more proficient on district computer applications but had difficulty locating training. The director of Personnel and Operations did not know how the personnel module operated.

Payroll staff confirmed that, at times, certain computer capabilities such as mass updating or extracting information from personnel databases were not fully utilized. Personnel Department staff relies upon tools and reports developed by payroll staff. Lists and other electronic information that could be easily analyzed in a spreadsheet application are maintained by personnel staff in redundant, word processing formats.

LMISD budgeted for an upgrade to the personnel and payroll application in 2005–06, which should have many productivity features not found in the current version. The current application relies on an old operating system that requires users to exit from one screen before opening another. The upgrade uses application windows that can open simultaneously, allowing users to move more productively among the screens.

LMISD does not have a schedule for purchasing and implementing the software upgrade. The district does not have an identified plan for reviewing personnel and payroll processes to determine if there are opportunities for improvement that it should consider during the implementation.

Many districts invest in technology to make processes more efficient and leverage staff time. Where districts can eliminate answering numerous individual calls by providing the information through a single electronic source, they can save time to add additional services. Where staff can extract electronic data and merge it into a variety forms and reports, they can use the time saved to develop additional timesaving procedures.

The state of Texas (State Auditor's Office) makes substantial use of technology in its personnel processes. For example, the exit interview process for the state allows terminating employees to complete the survey online with privacy. Job descriptions and salary schedules for all jobs are available through its website. Employee handbooks and personnel procedures are also available online.

Many Texas school districts ensure staff has the skills to make manual procedures more efficient by providing technology training opportunities to all staff. In some districts, training may be an investment in a few employees who develop the expertise to train other district employees. Other organizations may have ongoing training opportunities provided through their information technology department.

LMISD should train staff on use of available software applications, encourage staff to develop more efficient processes using technology, and communicate those processes to co-workers and district employees. The director of Personnel and Operations should work with the Information Technology Department to assess proficiency and identify appropriate training programs. While personnel staff has received some training, the level of proficiency does not allow for much more than basic data entry and printing of information. The age of the current financial software has created challenges to efficiency, but the district has an opportunity to streamline its processes as it implements the new software upgrade. With training, staff can develop technology solutions to manual processes, reducing processing time, increasing productivity, and freeing staff resources for other tasks.

While there are many types of training programs available, programs for commercial office productivity software can be purchased on disk or other reusable formats. Increasing knowledge of word processing, spreadsheet, and database applications will allow staff to develop templates and other productivity tools for greater efficiency in performing daily tasks. Purchasing a reusable training program would allow the district to provide the training as needed by new personnel or as a refresher for current employees.

Along with additional training on software applications in use by the district, LMISD should encourage staff to use what they have learned to make personnel processes and employee communications more efficient. **Exhibit 6-10** displays a sampling of district processes with a potential for increased efficiency and productivity.

As the new software upgrade to the personnel module is implemented, all leave and time processes should be evaluated for productivity improvement and incorporated into the new application. A work group with members of the Personnel Department and the Payroll Department should discuss current processes, identify areas needing improvement, and determine how they can implement the features in the upgrade to increase efficiency. As LMISD negotiates the upgrade purchase, it should include adequate training on the new features and productivity tools.

New software application upgrades should be periodically reviewed and recommended where efficiency and productivity gains provide value equivalent to the cost. Training should be ongoing and available to new employees and to refresh the skills of experienced employees as necessary.

The fiscal impact of purchasing training materials varies according to supplier. The district can purchase a perpetual network license for training staff on office productivity software with no limitations on number of users for about $1,800. Office productivity software includes word processing programs and spreadsheet applications.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 45)

LMISD does not regularly update job descriptions, which results in inaccurate descriptions of position expectations and evaluation standards that no longer apply. The district does not review and update job descriptions when organizational changes occur. It does not perform periodic job audits to determine if the task an employee actually performs has changed from the job's original description. A description with tasks that are no longer performed undermines the effectiveness of the district's evaluation process, which is based on the job description.

The district's job description provides position information such as job title, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) classification, the goal of the position, its reporting structure, qualifications, supervisory tasks, and evaluation factors. The job duties, referred to as performance criteria, follow this summary information. Some descriptions also list equipment that may be used and expected working conditions. Although the job description provides a place for the employee to agree with the tasks listed, there was no documentation that employees routinely reviewed and approved the tasks as the appropriate standards by which to evaluate their performance.

EXHIBIT 6-10
AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

PROCESS	POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT
Compensatory Timekeeping	Timesheets are entered at the campus or department level and audited by payroll staff. This places comp time accruals in the financial system for greater oversight and accurate reflection in district financial reports.
Leave Accrual and Utilization Tracking	Approved leave is entered at the department level and personnel staff audits it. The district could reduce forms to the employee request and the daily report to the leave specialist. Once confirmed as correct, reports would provide any additional documentation maintained in personnel files. This could reduce the number of forms that employees need to complete, reduce redundancy, and provide additional quality control over data entry.
Maintenance of Teacher Certification	Staff could download information relating to alternative certifications from the personnel module to a spreadsheet. Spreadsheet information could be merged into form correspondence and notices. The spreadsheet could be sorted in a manner that highlights important dates for monthly review, reducing the number of files manually reviewed each month.
Applicant Tracking	Staff could review and rank applications for professional positions according to qualifications. Basic information could be captured in a spreadsheet and provided to principals upon request. Principals identify applicants of interest, and personnel staff scans and returns the requested applications by email. Screening, ranking, and emailing applications can save time for campus staff.
Employee Forms	Staff could post forms for requesting overtime, filing complaints, reporting workplace injuries, requesting direct deposit, changing demographic information, and others on the district website. This could reduce the number of calls to the Personnel Department.
Communication with Employees	Frequently asked questions about district policies or procedures could be answered on the district website. A weekly broadcast email to employee groups could introduce new staff, as well as provide reminders, changes to procedures, or training tips.

SOURCE: School Review team, November 2005.

The review team examined district job descriptions and noted several issues. **Exhibit 6-11** displays a sample of job titles and noted deficiencies.

As shown in **Exhibit 6-11**, LMISD job descriptions are out of date, and some pre-date changes to anti-discrimination laws. Older descriptions are less effective in describing position requirements than newer descriptions, as the older ones lack position details such as equipment used or working conditions. Many of the descriptions do not give applicants and employees clear guidance on the essential duties of each position.

While few job descriptions are required by law, compliance programs benefit from documentation. A well-written job description documents the job's essential functions and the minimum qualifications needed to perform them, providing qualified disabled applicants and employees an idea of whether or not they will need an accommodation to perform the task. The job description also provides a basis for doctors to make necessary fitness for duty determinations under state workers' compensation laws and federal family leave laws.

While a job description cannot convey all possible tasks, it should provide employees with a reasonable understanding of the position's requirements and the district's performance expectations. The state of Texas provides online tools for its departments to assist them in reviewing positions and updating job descriptions.

Districts can periodically review positions and their associated job descriptions to determine the continued accuracy of the following:

- job title;

- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) classification;

- general description or purpose;

- qualifications;

- essential functions;

- other functions;

- equipment used on the job;

- working conditions;

EXHIBIT 6-11
PERSONNEL PROCESS
STATUS OF DISTRICT JOB DESCRIPTIONS
2005–06

JOB TITLE	DESCRIPTION DEFICIENCY
Elementary Grade Level Chairperson	Last update March 1993; references position titles no longer in use.
Associate Principal	Developed in 2003; does not include adequate detail relating to working conditions.
Principal	Last update in October 1990; references reporting structure that no longer exists.
Assistant Director of Finance	Last revision February 1998; references reporting structure that no longer exists.
Campus Peace Officer	No date of adoption or amendment; no position with supervisory or team leader responsibilities located.
Stadium Manager	No description located; job title not associated with position assignment.
Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations	No description located.

SOURCE: LMISD job descriptions, September 2005.

- mental and physical demands; and

- environmental factors.

Approved job descriptions should also include the date of approval. Dates of formal review and amendments should also be added as they occur.

Kerrville Independent School District (KISD) schedules periodic reviews of its positions to ensure job descriptions accurately reflect tasks performed and identify any changes that could affect the district salaries. KISD generally times the position reviews to coincide with market surveys that match salaries of district positions to area positions with similar duties. KISD annually reviews and updates its job descriptions as it prepares the budget.

LMISD should regularly review and update job descriptions to reflect changes to assignments, skills, education, and performance standards. Because the job description is the district's evaluation tool and since evaluations are an annual process, LMISD should use the annual evaluation as an opportunity to have the employee and supervisor review the description to ensure tasks or expectations have not changed, and make any necessary corrections before the next review period. Changes to the descriptions should be reported to the director of Personnel and Operations for classification review and update of the adopted job description. When accurately maintained, job descriptions provide guidance to applicants, set expectations for employees, and assist in maintaining compliance with federal and state employment laws.

COMPLAINT PROCESS (REC. 46)

LMISD does not adequately document, secure, or maintain complaints and investigations in a format convenient for tracking and analysis. Without properly documented processes, the district cannot identify patterns of inappropriate behavior or develop corrective actions.

The district board has adopted several policies that reference a complaint or investigation process. Employees may file grievances about wages, hours of work and conditions of work, illegal harassment, retaliation for reporting illegal activity or exercise of legally protected rights, dismissal, or termination of probationary contracts. Employees must file a written complaint on a district form within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the activity that is the basis of the complaint. Complaints of sexual harassment or other harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, or age must be reported immediately. The harassment policy does not require a written complaint or a written report. A complaint against a police officer, though, must be in writing, as required by law.

The complaint and investigation files are maintained in a cabinet in the Personnel Department separately from regular personnel files. The file cabinet holding the investigatory files is unlocked. Personnel offices are also unlocked and are occasionally unattended as personnel staff relieve the administrative receptionist, go to lunch, or make copies in the copy room.

The review team analyzed the complaint files located in the file cabinet. The analysis showed 78 complaints from various sources from 1991 to 2005. Before the review of the complaint files, the review team requested employee complaint or grievance documents for the years 2002–03 to 2005–06. The district provided three complaints. These three complaints were not located among the complaint files in the file cabinet during the on-site review.

During the review, the review team noted that some files had resolutions to the complaint, while others did not. There did not appear to be a standard reporting format for complainants. One file resolved through legal intervention included an envelope with instructions to keep the contents sealed. The outside of the envelope contained a series of entries from earlier administrations showing who had reviewed the contents and the date of resealing. At the time of the file review, the envelope was in the file, opened and not resealed.

From 1991 to 2001, complaint investigations averaged 6.6 per year. From 2002 through 2005, documented investigations averaged 2.0 per year. During interviews, two staff members referenced complaints that were not documented in the records of the Personnel Department. One of the complaints was an allegation of inappropriate conduct. The resolution for the undocumented investigation was reportedly a verbal warning to the accused that if it did happen, not to do it again.

When investigation and documentation is not detailed and consistent, it may create a perception that favoritism prevails over accountability. **Exhibit 6-12** displays employee perception of the fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.

As **Exhibit 6-12** shows, the majority of respondents believe the district grievance process to be average to good. Fifteen percent of administrators believe it to be excellent. More than half of the principals and teachers responding believe the grievance process to be average, with 18.4 percent of teachers, 13.3 percent of principals, and 28.2 percent of support staff finding it below average to poor.

The lack of a documented complaint resolution process can create a perception that employees are not accountable for their actions. **Exhibit 6-13** presents survey responses on the district's effectiveness in holding employees accountable for meeting conduct and performance standards.

Of the administrators responding, 65 percent believe the district's performance is below average to poor, although administrators are responsible for ensuring performance. In interviews and surveys, staff has commented that the board is unwilling to hold employees responsible for their actions and performance by terminating staff who do not meet standards.

The review team analyzed investigation files for performance-based complaints. The review file revealed 11 documented complaints relating to employee performance between 1991 and 2001. There have been no documented performance complaints since 2002. While no single reason for the drop in complaints could be confirmed, the lack of commitment to enforcement appears to be a contributing factor. The director of Personnel and Operations said that the drop in complaints may be the result of the district having no personnel performance problems needing investigation.

Without a timely, documented process for resolving complaints, employees may believe an organization does not truly support anti-harassment policies or behavior standards.

EXHIBIT 6-12
LMISD HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE FAIRNESS AND TIMELINESS OF THE DISTRICT'S GRIEVANCE PROCESS.						
Administrator	5.0%	15.0%	25.0%	20.0%	15.0%	20.0%
Principal	13.3%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	6.7%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	9.4%	18.8%	46.9%	15.6%	0.0%	9.4%
Teacher	6.1%	12.3%	53.5%	15.8%	4.4%	7.9%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

EXHIBIT 6-13
LMISD HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN DEALING APPROPRIATELY WITH EMPLOYEES WHO PERFORM BELOW THE STANDARD OF EXPECTATION (UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION).						
Administrator	25.0%	40.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Principal	6.7%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	23.4%	25.0%	34.4%	9.4%	1.6%	6.3%
Teacher	7.9%	30.7%	39.5%	17.5%	1.8%	2.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

Having a completed, appropriate investigation provides a strong foundation for the school district's attorney to assess the strength of a case when lawsuits are threatened. Prompt investigation and resolution can also help an organization to limit liability should someone file a lawsuit. Courts look to see that the employer has not tolerated the behavior, and the court will rely upon a timely investigation, appropriate resolution, and good documentation in making that determination.

Effective complaint resolution procedures identify documentation of the complaint that should be maintained, and include a written statement by the complainant that:

*   identifies the alleged offender;

*   identifies all potential witnesses, including all persons the complainant may have told about the incident;

*   specifically describes the behavior that was objectionable;

*   provides a history of any relationship between the complainant and alleged offender that may have a bearing on the incident; and

*   identifies the approximate dates and times the alleged conduct occurred.

Investigation and discipline processes can correct misbehavior as well as clear wrongfully accused employees. Many Texas school districts consider appropriate conduct as a key component of healthy employee relations, and they investigate and document complaints through a formal resolution process. Police organizations typically have strong, well-documented complaint resolution processes.

LMISD should draft and implement procedures for investigating and resolving all employee complaints,

documenting the investigation and resolution, and maintaining files in a secured location. The director of Personnel and Operations should draft procedures that identify which steps in the complaint process the department should document and maintain. Documentation should include a written statement by the complainant and the final resolution. A strong complaint resolution process increases public and staff confidence in an organization and provides documentation should a complaint require legal resolution.

The procedures should provide guidance on the types of incidents that can be managed at the department level and which should receive additional attention from the Personnel Department. The guidelines should be disseminated to employees and administrators. The board should also use the guidelines to refer complainants to the proper processes for resolving a complaint. Because the board is the final review point for any resulting recommendations, the board should remain detached from the investigation process.

Once the complaint process is initiated, the Personnel department should secure the files when not in use. Basic complaint information should also be captured in a database that allows for analysis and use in developing training or other corrective solutions.

ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE EVALUATION (REC. 47)

LMISD does not regularly document all administrator or employee performance through the district evaluation process, which can result in missed opportunities to improve employee performance, help employees identify career goals, and develop staff that meets performance expectations. Some administrative positions are not regularly evaluated, which sets the expectation that some supervisors need not follow district personnel procedures.

The appraisal process for teachers is rigorous, with standards defined by law. Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code requires an annual evaluation, although school districts may reach an agreement with teachers who have been ranked as proficient to evaluate less frequently. Under LMISD policy the appraisal calendar is developed each year. It includes classroom observation as well as written evaluation and conferences. Teachers receive annual training on the performance appraisal system, and teachers are annually evaluated.

The Texas Education Code requires Texas districts to adopt a policy providing for written evaluations for each superintendent, principal, supervisor, counselor, or other full-time, certified professional employee, and nurse at least annually. The statute further states that district funds may not be used to pay an administrator who has not received an evaluation in the preceding 15 months. LMISD has adopted a policy that states the district shall appraise each administrator annually.

The district policy also provides general guidance on all employee appraisals. The policy states that all employees shall be periodically appraised in the performance of their duties. Each employee will receive at least one conference annually to discuss the written evaluation. The district may place appraisal records and forms, reports, correspondence, and memoranda in the employee's file to document performance.

The district job descriptions are designed so that job tasks double as performance criteria. Task listings appear into two sections: personal effectiveness and performance effectiveness. When evaluations occur, the number on the evaluation score sheet corresponds with the job description task list. Evaluators rate performance of each task on a scale from one to five, or from "unsatisfactory" to "clearly outstanding."

A review of personnel files revealed an inconsistent application of the evaluation policy to central office administrators and other district employees. One employee file had four undated evaluations, two from the previous superintendent and two from the current superintendent. One supervisory file included evaluations for the years 1994–95 through 1996–97, but no current evaluations. Another supervisory position file included several evaluations from the previous administration but only two undated evaluations from the current administration. Another employee received evaluations regularly until 2001–02, when the employee transferred to a position with no approved title or job description.

The superintendent's evaluations could not be located for several days while the review team was on-site. Other administrator evaluations could not be located in the Personnel Office. One administrator position did not have an adopted job description, so any evaluation would not be in concert with local policy or state administrative law advising districts to use the local job description in developing the evaluation.

Appraisals are essential to providing employees with information about their performance. In appraisals, the parties can discuss expectations, note deficiencies, and plan corrective action. It is an opportunity to affirm those qualities and activities that an organization considers excellent. The legislative requirement to evaluate certain staff annually underscores the importance of the evaluation process. All districts should comply with the performance appraisal laws, as well as annually evaluate those employees that do not fall under state evaluation mandates.

San Antonio ISD has an annual appraisal process for all employees. Appraisals are returned to the Human Resources Department, which has assigned staff to monitor the process. Appraisals for staff under contract are verified before contracts can be renewed.

LMISD should apply the district performance evaluation procedure to all positions annually. The director of Personnel and Operations should ensure appraisals are performed and documentation maintained in an easily locatable manner. Timely and appropriate appraisals should also be a performance measure for supervisors and administrators. The Personnel office should track evaluations and report the success or failure to meet this requirement to the superintendent and the board. Regularly evaluating and documenting employee performance provides employees with written guides for improvement, and for some positions, ensures compliance with the law.

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGAL CHANGES (REC. 48)

LMISD does not perform an independent review of legal changes to ensure district compliance with current state or federal law, which has resulted in areas of procedural non-compliance. While the district has professional memberships that assist with legal updates and compliance tools, heavy reliance on the professional organizations to provide information has resulted in several areas where LMISD is not compliant.

The district subscribes to the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) policy service, which provides policy development assistance and a portal for online access to individual district policies. TASB regularly reviews changes to the law or administrative regulations that would affect school district policies and provides updated policy language at least annually.

TASB also provides seminars that discuss recent legal decisions affecting school districts. The director of Personnel and Operations periodically attends these seminars. TASB also posts legal alerts on its website. A legal alert is timely notification of a case or other legal opinion that may require district action.

A search of the TASB website revealed other services, such as the availability of employment law posters. Many areas of employment law require employers to post information on employee bulletin boards or at employee gathering sites. For example, employers are required to post information on the federal Family Medical Leave Act, federal minimum wage laws, and federal military leave regulations. State law requires posting of information on workers compensation. There are a number of other posting requirements that the law may require some, but not all employers, to follow. TASB provides access to required posters for school districts, helping schools remain compliant with state and federal law.

The review team did not see any of the newly required military leave posters in areas where LMISD posted employee notices. In one workroom, the workers compensation notice was posted, but no federal posters were visible.

Various government websites provide information relating to the latest changes in forms. For example, federal law requires employers to confirm legal status of employees within three days of hire. The I-9 form of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is part of the confirmation requirements. LMISD uses a 1991 version of the form. The form changed in 2005 to reflect organizational changes under the federal Homeland Security Act. The 2005 version of the form must be in use by December 31, 2005. The new form is available to employers, but is not yet in use by the district. Use of current forms supports compliance with current law should the federal government audit an organization.

Recent changes to state education law require districts to adopt procedures for posting employee transfer opportunities and to allow district employees who are married to select insurance coverage as an employee or as a dependent. The district has not developed written procedures for the required

personnel changes. In addition to the personnel-related changes, districts are now required to develop anti-bullying policies and provide notice to teachers of their students' misconduct. While not traditional personnel areas, the procedures relating to these new laws may have an indirect effect on the Personnel Department, which is responsible for annual teacher training and new employee orientation.

Many school district human resource departments periodically research the Internet and other sources for changes to law or procedures affecting their organization. TASB researches law and regulations and makes the results available to its members who periodically search the TASB website for information.

LMISD should assign to the director of Business and Operations the responsibility to periodically search state and federal websites for changes to pertinent regulations to ensure the district maintains compliance. Personnel-specific websites discuss changes in federal regulations and provide opportunities to contact other human resource professionals with questions, providing another information source. The requirement for periodically researching regulatory changes should be added to the director's job description to ensure performance of the task is routinely evaluated. Periodic research will assist the district in maintaining compliance with changing employment laws by filling in any gaps in information obtained from professional organizations or through seminars.

For background information on Human Resources Management, see page 237 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
40. Provide additional, intensive human resource training to the director of Personnel and Operations to increase the knowledge base necessary for development and management of support programs needed by the district.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($1,095)
41. Develop a compensation plan that rewards desired qualities and periodically review the plan for effectiveness and market consistency.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
42. Develop written descriptions with task expectations and implement a continuing review and improvement process for all additional compensation programs.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
43. Develop tools and procedures for gathering information necessary for identifying trends, detecting problems, and evaluating the performance of resulting personnel programs and strategies.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
44. Train staff on use of available software applications, encourage staff to develop more efficient processes using technology, and communicate those processes to co-workers and district employees.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($1,800)
45. Regularly review and update job descriptions to reflect changes to assignments, skills, education, and performance standards.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
46. Draft and implement procedures for investigating and resolving all employee complaints, documenting the investigation and conclusion, and maintaining files in a secured location.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
47. Apply the district performance evaluation procedure to all positions annually.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
48. Assign to the director of Business and Operations the responsibility to periodically search state and federal websites for changes to pertinent regulations to ensure the district maintains compliance.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS–CHAPTER 6	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($2,895)**
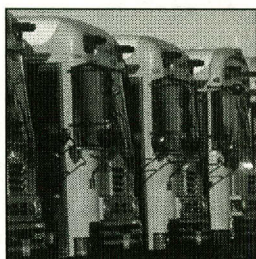
Chapter 7

Transportation

La Marque Independent School District

CHAPTER 7. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a support service that requires sound management in order to transport students safely to and from school and other school related activities with students spending minimal time on the bus. Transportation must be safe, reliable, and efficient, and comply with federal, state, and local regulations. Districts need to establish procedures that enhance operations by designing efficient routes, establishing sound maintenance procedures, and ensuring safety on the bus.

La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) contracts with Durham School Services for its student transportation operations. The district pays the contractor more than $900,000 annually. The contractor provides regular and special education transportation and transportation for extracurricular events. The district has 17 regular transportation route buses, five special needs route buses, and two alternative route buses that run on a daily basis. The initial transportation contract was signed in August 1990 for a term of one year with an option to renew for four additional years. The contract has been extended each year since the initial contract term.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for oversight of the district's contract with the transportation service provider. The contractor's terminal manager provides oversight of the day-to-day operations of the transportation service. The district-owned transportation facility provides workspaces for the terminal manager and staff. The contractor pays the district a monthly fee for the use of the facilities.

The contractor is responsible for maintaining the bus fleet, owned jointly by LMISD and the transportation contractor. The district owns eight of the 30 buses stationed at the transportation facility with the contractor owning the remainder. Prior to 2004–05, the district owned the entire fleet and was responsible for bus replacements. In 2004–05, the transportation contractor began providing some of the buses.

FINDINGS

- LMISD has not competitively procured transportation services since 1990.

- LMISD does not maintain the documentation necessary to support the district's claims for transportation funding from the state.

- LMISD does not formally evaluate the transportation service provider's performance.

- LMISD does not have a process for periodic reviews and updates of the routes for increased efficiencies and effectiveness in meeting district needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 49: Institute a request for proposals (RFP) process for student transportation services to comply with state purchasing laws and ensure the district is paying a fair price and receiving the best value for the services provided.** The RFP should require that the companies responding have at least five years experience, have provided transportation services to multiple Texas school districts, and have the financial capacity to provide services. In addition, the RFP should include a sample contract prepared by the district that it will use as the basis of the final contract.

- **Recommendation 50: Require the transportation contractor to ensure that all elements necessary to receive funding from the state are present in the district and to reimburse the district for any funds the district has to pay as the result of a Texas Education Agency (TEA) audit.** The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should review the route sheets annually to ensure that they are complete and require the contractor to provide the information necessary to claim funding from the state for transportation services. The district administration should also document the district's hazardous areas and' present the information to the board for approval. The board should ensure that any future contracts for transportation services include a requirement for the contractor to reimburse the district for any loss of funds due to a TEA audit of transportation.

- **Recommendation 51: Develop performance standards and associated benchmarks for student transportation services and negotiate with the vendor to include these standards in the transportation services contract.** The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should develop performance standards and associated benchmarks for student transportation services and

negotiate with the vendor to include the standards in the transportation services contract. The transportation services provider should provide monthly reports on performance standards to the district to enable the district to monitor the performance of its transportation services provider. The district should use this information to determine whether to renew the contract annually.

• **Recommendation 52: Implement a process to contract with an outside entity to perform periodic independent route evaluations.** The district should conduct route evaluations on a regular basis, such as every other year. The independent route evaluation and development will help ensure that the contractor uses efficiently designed routes to maximize state reimbursement rates and minimize costs and the time students must spend on buses.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT PROCUREMENT (REC. 49)

LMISD has not competitively procured transportation services since 1990. LMISD outsourced its transportation function in August 1990 and entered into a one-year contract with an option to renew the contract for four additional years. The district has extended the contract each year since the initial contract term without modifications except for annual

cost increases. The district pays the contractor transportation rates based on various factors such as type of route, type of trip, bus capacity, route mileage, and route time. The district receives a contract extension annually from the vendor that includes the consumer price index (CPI) increase and the rates for the next year after applying the CPI increase to existing rates.

Although CPI increases drive the contract rate increases, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is actively involved in the annual contract renewal. The transportation service provider proposed rate increases in excess of the CPI for 2005–06, and the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations was able to negotiate a lower rate increase. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations also negotiated an increase in the number of buses the transportation contractor provides for use in the district at no additional cost. The main tool that the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations used in negotiations was the district's ability to request proposals from other transportation service providers. After negotiating the contract renewal terms and rate changes with the vendor, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations recommends the proposed contract extension to the board.

Exhibit 7-1 presents cost comparisons of the basic rates contained in the contract for this academic year to those rates in 1990–91. The cost increases are comparable to increases in the CPI during the same period. From April 1990 to April

EXHIBIT 7-1
LMISD TRANSPORTATION COST COMPARISON
1990–91 AND 2005–06

TYPE	FACTOR	1990–91	2005–06	RATE INCREASE	PERCENT CHANGE
Regular	Rate Per Bus (4 Hours/60 Miles)	$132.00	$192.54	$60.54	45.9%
	Excess Rate Per Hour	$13.98	$20.40	$6.42	45.9%
	Excess Rate Per Mile	$0.29	$0.43	$0.14	48.3%
Special Needs	Rate Per Bus (4 Hours/60 Miles)	$132.00	$192.54	$60.54	45.9%
	Excess Rate Per Hour	$13.98	$20.40	$6.42	45.9%
	Excess Rate Per Mile	$0.29	$0.43	$0.14	48.3%
Other	Cost Per Mile	$0.29	$0.43	$0.14	48.3%
	Wait/Drive Time Per Hour	$13.98	$20.40	$6.42	45.9%
	Minimum Charge Within District	$40.00	$58.31	$18.31	45.8%
	Minimum Charge Outside District	$60.00	$86.36	$26.36	43.9%
Cost Index	CPI April 1990 and 2005	118.3	175.0	56.7	47.9%

SOURCE: LMISD, Durham's LMISD Transportation Agreement, August 1990; Durham's LMISD Transportation Agreement Addendum Number 14, September 2005; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index–All Urban Consumers for Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Texas.

2005, the CPI has increased by 47.9 percent, while most cost factors have increased by an average of 46 percent. The only cost factors that have increased by more than the CPI for this period are the mileage costs and excess rate per mile for regular and special needs routes at 48.3 percent.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said that the district did not competitively procure transportation services at the end of the initial contract term. He believed that LMISD did not need to competitively procure the contract since the district was contracting for professional management services only.

However, the district's contract with the transportation service provider is for more than professional management services. The contract also includes the provision of drivers, office staff, and non-professional management costs such as maintenance and operation of the district's fleet and the provision of buses. The contract fee charged includes fuel, tires, oil, lubricants, parts, supplies, and maintenance of the transportation facility.

The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) states, "If the district is contracting for professional management services only, no competitive procurement offers are required. However, if the district is contracting for services that will include purchase, lease, or lease with an option to purchase of school buses in excess of $20,000 in the aggregate over a twelve-month period from the contractor, a contract must be made in accordance with the Texas Education Code purchasing law. Although competitive purchasing is not required for contracts for professional management services only, districts should award such contracts on a competitive basis (competitive proposals) whenever practical, in accordance with sound business discretion."

The district received an opinion from its external auditor that from an audit perspective they did not consider this contract to be non-compliant with state purchasing law, based on the management services provided. After receiving the external auditor's letter, the review team requested clarification from TEA as to what a professional management services contract included. TEA stated, "A professional management services contract is when the contractor provides terminal management and the district provides drivers, mechanics, parts, supplies, gasoline, and all items needed to provide student transportation."

Subchapter B of Chapter 44 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) governs procurement by school districts for contracts exceeding $25,000. Section 44.031 (a) states, "Except as provided by this subchapter, all school district contracts, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at $25,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period shall be made by the method, of the following methods, that provides the best value for the district:

- competitive bidding;

- competitive sealed proposals;

- a request for proposals, for services other than construction services;

- a catalogue purchase as provided by Subchapter B, Chapter 2157, Government Code;

- an interlocal contract;

- a design/build contract;

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

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

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

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

Exhibit 7-2 presents the transportation budget for LMISD and peer districts for 2004–05. LMISD has the second highest budget for transportation both as a percentage of total budget and on a budget per student basis.

By failing to comply with state procurement laws, the district has placed its officers, employees, and agents at risk of penalties and contract termination. By not competitively procuring transportation services for the last 15 years, LMISD cannot be sure it is receiving the best value for the services received.

Many districts issue requests for proposals during the last year of a contract term to ensure compliance with state purchasing laws and ensure they are receiving the best value in the market. Districts also define requirements that assure that they can select qualified, experienced vendors. For example, Waco ISD requires that the companies responding have at least five years experience, have provided transportation services to multiple Texas school districts, and have the financial capacity to provide services.

EXHIBIT 7-2
LMISD AND PEERS TRANSPORTATION BUDGET
2004-05

DISTRICT	TRANSPORTATION BUDGET	TRANSPORTATION AS PERCENT OF TOTAL BUDGET	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	BUDGET PER STUDENT
Navasota	$1,113,000	6.0%	2,921	$381
LA MARQUE	$950,455	3.7%	3,730	$255
Texas City	$1,149,164	2.9%	5,699	$202
Palestine	$649,474	3.1%	3,329	$195
Lancaster	$527,770	1.8%	5,197	$102

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2004-05.

LMISD should institute a request for proposals (RFP) process for student transportation services to comply with state purchasing laws and ensure the district is paying a fair price and receiving the best value for the services provided. The RFP should require that the companies responding have at least five years experience, have provided transportation services to multiple Texas school districts, and have the financial capacity to provide services. In addition, the district should include in the RFP a sample contract serving as the basis of the final contract. Once the district selects the contractor, the parties should negotiate the final contract to include all terms and conditions agreed to by the contractor and district before they present it to the board for approval.

STATE FUNDING (REC. 50)

LMISD does not maintain the documentation necessary to support the district's claims for transportation funding from the state. The district was unable to provide the review team with the board-approved designation of the hazardous routes in LMISD. TEA requires a board-approved designation of hazardous routes documenting hazardous areas within the two-mile walk zone before the district can receive funding for student riders in the zone.

For the regular program, the state reimburses districts for qualifying transportation expenses based on linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily on standard routes to the number of route miles traveled daily for those standard routes. Standard route miles and riders do not include miles or riders for alternative, bilingual, desegregation, magnet, parenting, year-round, or hazardous area service, all of which are subprograms of the regular program.

Linear density is a measure of route efficiency. TEA uses the linear density ratio to assign each school district to one of seven linear density groups. Each group is eligible to receive a maximum per-mile allotment from the state. The legislature establishes the allotment per mile during each session. Exhibit 7-3 presents the linear density groups and the related allotment per mile.

Funding received by the district for regular program routes is calculated by multiplying the number of eligible miles driven times the allotment per mile assigned to the district based on linear density. For 2004–05, the allotment rate for LMISD was $1.11.

The TEA *Handbook on School Transportation Allotments* (Handbook) states, "An official, turn-by-turn, round trip description for each reported route, which documents eligible total daily mileage to serve eligible students to and from school, shall be accurately maintained by the district or its contractor. Route descriptions with corresponding accurate mileage figures shall reflect route service as routinely (typically

EXHIBIT 7-3
TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY LINEAR DENSITY
GROUPS AND ALLOTMENT PER MILE
2005-06 AND 2006-07

LINEAR DENSITY* GROUPING	ALLOTMENT PER MILE OF APPROVED ROUTE
2.40 or above	$1.43
1.65 to 2.40	$1.25
1.15 to 1.65	$1.11
0.90 to 1.15	$0.97
0.65 to 0.90	$0.88
0.40 to 0.65	$0.79
Up to 0.40	$0.68

* Linear density = number of regular program students / number of miles traveled daily on standard routes.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Handbook on School Transportation Allotments (Handbook), May 2005.

or consistently) provided on a daily basis, and shall be updated (modified or revised) accordingly as significant (major or substantial) operational changes occur to them." The district provided the review team with route sheets that met the above criteria.

The district's transportation contractor provides the district with hazardous route information for the district to review and submit to TEA for hazardous route funding. However, the district was unable to provide the review team with the hazardous route designation by the board. The Handbook defines a hazardous route student as one "that legally resides in a designated hazardous area within two miles of his/her assigned school of regular attendance that, as determined by the district's board, would subject him/her to hazardous traffic conditions if the student walked to and/or from school." The allotment for transporting students on hazardous routes may not exceed 10 percent of the total annual reimbursement for transporting only two-or-more-mile students. A two-or-more mile student is one that would have to walk or drive more than two miles to the student's school.

Exhibit 7-4 presents a summary of LMISD transportation funding for the regular program.

The Handbook states, "Each district initially requesting a transportation allotment for eligible hazardous-area students shall have its board of trustees officially adopt local policy that provides the definition of hazardous conditions applicable to the district, and identifies the specific hazardous areas for which mileage may be incurred due to transportation provided and that funding is requested for."

In July 2003, the board approved a change in the local transportation policy to require that students living two or more miles from the school they attend to be eligible to receive transportation services. This change brought local policy in line with the state definition of an eligible rider. A group of parents expressed concern about some areas without sidewalks that would no longer be eligible for transportation. Although the board has the option to designate routes as hazardous, it did not make a designation. The contractor considers the district's definition of hazardous routes and reports those miles to the district even though the district has not designated those route miles as hazardous.

Without the board's designation of hazardous routes required by the Handbook, LMISD is at risk of losing a portion of its transportation funding from TEA. If TEA were to audit the district's transportation funding for hazardous routes and found that the board had not declared the routes as hazardous, TEA could require the district to repay the funding received for hazardous routes. Contracting for student transportation services does not exempt the district from complying with all laws, rules, and regulations for student transportation services. TEA provides funding to the district and would look to the district, not the contractor, in the event of a reduction in funding due to an audit. The district's contract with the transportation service provider does not address responsibility for loss of funds due to a TEA audit of transportation.

Many school districts require their transportation contractor to ensure that all required elements for state funding are present in the district's records and, in event of loss of funding due to an audit, that the contractor will reimburse the district

EXHIBIT 7-4
LMISD TRANSPORTATION FUNDING
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

FUNDING ELEMENT	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
ROUTE MILEAGE					
Two-or-More Mile	156,793	144,473	143,604	129,294	153,144
Hazardous	1,800	5,940	5,094	3,888	13,554
Total	158,593	150,413	148,698	133,182	166,698
ROUTE FUNDING					
Allotment Rate	$1.25	$1.25	$1.11	$1.25	$1.11
Two-or-More Funding	$195,991	$180,591	$159,400	$161,618	$169,990
Hazardous Funding	$2,250	$7,425	$5,654	$4,860	$15,045
TOTAL FUNDING	**$198,241**	**$188,016**	**$165,055**	**$166,478**	**$185,035**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Transportation Route Services Regular Program Report, 2000–01 through 2004–05.

for lost revenues due to their errors. These districts ensure compliance with TEA requirements and protection from financial losses due to contractor negligence.

LMISD should require the transportation contractor to ensure that all elements necessary to receive funding from the state are present in the district and to reimburse the district for any funds the district has to pay TEA as the result of a TEA audit. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should review the route sheets annually to ensure that they are complete and require the contractor to provide the information necessary to claim funding from the state for transportation services.

The district administration should also document the district's hazardous areas and present the information to the board for approval as specific hazardous areas for which the district may incur transportation mileage and request transportation funding from TEA. If hazardous area designations require changes in future years, the administration should present those changes to the board for ratification and then submit approved changes to TEA for transportation funding approval.

The board should ensure that any future contracts for transportation services include a requirement for the contractor to reimburse the district for any loss of funds due to a TEA audit of transportation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA (REC. 51)

LMISD does not formally evaluate the transportation service provider's performance. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said that no formal method exists to evaluate the performance of the transportation contractor. The district does not use benchmarks to measure accomplishments or identify areas needing improvement. Increases in the cost of the transportation contract refer to the CPI and not the performance of the contractor.

Although the contract with the transportation service provider does not contain performance standards or benchmarks, the district does monitor the contract through the review of data submitted to the district and the contractor's invoices. The transportation service provider submits the information necessary to complete the TEA route services and operations reports to the district. The chief accountant reviews the data and submits the information to TEA. If the data appears inaccurate, the district requests additional information from the contractor's terminal manager. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said that the

contractor had made changes in its personnel as requested by the district due to persistent data problems in the past. The district receives billings from the contractor monthly. The accounts payable clerk reviews the contractor's invoices to ensure that the contractor bills for the authorized number of routes and monitors, charges the authorized rate, and that the district authorized and received all supplemental transportation.

The review team surveyed parents, students, teachers, principals, staff members, and administrators to assess their perception of the district's transportation services. The majority of respondents rated services average or better for all transportation categories surveyed. However, some respondents showed significant concerns in the areas of bus pick-up and drop-off safety, level of discipline on the bus, and on-time arrival and departure. A total of 20 percent of principal, 15 percent of administrator, and 24 percent of student respondents rated the level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools below average to poor. For the level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus, 17 percent of auxiliary/professional staff and 30 percent of student respondents gave ratings of below average to poor. Twenty percent of principal, 15 percent of administer, 26 percent of auxiliary/professional staff, and 38 percent of students rated on-time arrival and departure of buses below average to poor. **Exhibit 7-5** presents the responses to the survey.

By not formally evaluating the performance of the transportation service provider, the district is unable to justify its decision to extend the contract to the taxpayers and patrons of the district.

Collecting and analyzing performance measures allow districts to track service quality and request adjustments of the contractor when required. District administrators can document improvements in performance or departures from established performance measures. Performance measures assist management in making decisions concerning the continuation of the contracted service and the value of the contracted service. Performance measures usually associated with student transportation performance include:

- student loads (percent of capacity);

- on-time pickup and delivery of students;

- student discipline referrals;

- distance from school requirements for ridership;

EXHIBIT 7-5
LMISD TRANSPORTATION
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE LEVEL OF DISCIPLINE MAINTAINED BY THE BUS DRIVER ON THE BUS.						
Administrator	0.0%	5.0%	25.0%	30.0%	5.0%	35.0%
Parent	4.8%	6.0%	38.1%	23.8%	6.0%	21.4%
Principal	6.7%	0.0%	46.7%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	1.6%	15.6%	50.0%	18.8%	0.0%	14.1%
Student	24.6%	5.3%	45.6%	15.8%	3.5%	5.3%
Teacher	1.8%	5.3%	51.8%	19.3%	4.4%	17.5%
THE LEVEL OF SAFETY AT BUS PICK-UP STOPS AND DROP-OFF ZONES AT SCHOOLS.						
Administrator	0.0%	15.0%	10.0%	35.0%	10.0%	30.0%
Parent	4.8%	6.0%	28.6%	33.3%	7.1%	20.2%
Principal	0.0%	20.0%	26.7%	40.0%	13.3%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	1.6%	6.3%	48.4%	29.7%	1.6%	12.5%
Student	21.1%	3.5%	43.9%	22.8%	3.5%	5.3%
Teacher	1.8%	2.6%	45.6%	23.7%	7.0%	19.3%
THE ON-TIME ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF BUSES.						
Administrator	0.0%	15.0%	35.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Parent	3.6%	7.1%	34.5%	28.6%	7.1%	19.0%
Principal	6.7%	13.3%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	3.1%	23.4%	39.1%	26.6%	0.0%	7.8%
Student	26.3%	12.3%	42.1%	14.0%	1.8%	3.5%
Teacher	4.4%	7.0%	43.0%	31.6%	2.6%	11.4%
BUSES REGULARLY ARRIVE IN TIME FOR STUDENTS TO EAT BREAKFAST.						
Administrator	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	35.0%	10.0%	25.0%
Parent	2.4%	3.6%	36.9%	23.8%	10.7%	22.6%
Principal	0.0%	6.7%	26.7%	33.3%	26.7%	6.7%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	1.6%	4.7%	48.4%	35.9%	0.0%	9.4%
Student	15.8%	12.3%	38.6%	21.1%	7.0%	5.3%
Teacher	0.9%	2.6%	39.5%	31.6%	10.5%	14.9%
THE OVERALL CLEANLINESS AND MAINTENANCE OF BUSES.						
Administrator	5.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	35.0%
Parent	2.4%	6.0%	33.3%	29.8%	7.1%	21.4%
Principal	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%	6.7%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	0.0%	4.7%	60.9%	20.3%	1.6%	12.5%
Student	29.8%	7.0%	45.6%	10.5%	1.8%	5.3%
Teacher	0.0%	5.3%	40.4%	30.7%	6.1%	17.5%

SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

- student walk distance from bus stops;

- accidents per 100,000 miles;

- number of breakdowns;

- linear density;

- cost per mile;

- route efficiency; and

- parent, student, and staff satisfaction.

School districts throughout the United States often use performance measures to monitor outside contractors that provide pupil transportation services. These districts typically establish predetermined benchmarks and performance expectations during contract negotiations to include in the contract language. The contract managers in these districts receive reports from the transportation service providers and monitor performance based on the measures in the contract by determining if established benchmarks have been met and if reported performance is within the ranges established for each measure. In these districts, contract extensions and price increases over the term of the contract are dependent on how the contactor actually performs compared to the established measures.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should develop performance standards and associated benchmarks for student transportation services and negotiate with the vendor to include these standards in the transportation services contract. The transportation services provider should provide monthly reports on performance standards to the district to enable the district to monitor the performance of its transportation services provider. The district should use this information to determine whether to renew the contract annually.

ROUTING AND SCHEDULING (REC. 52)

LMISD does not have a process for periodic reviews and updates of the routes for increased efficiencies and effectiveness in meeting district needs. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations reviews and approves all routes proposed by the transportation service provider. Both the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations and the contractor said that they did not evaluate the bus routes periodically to reduce costs or to provide more effective service for the students. The area manager for the transportation service provider said the company has a software package they use in some districts to evaluate routes, but that LMISD would have to pay for a license to use the software to evaluate its routes. The area manager estimated the cost at approximately $20,000.

For 2005–06, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations directed the contractor to find operational efficiencies by consolidating bus routes where possible and recommended the contractor examine the feasibility of combining elementary and high school routes. Based on its analysis of these routes, the contractor reduced the number of routes run on a daily basis by combining the elementary and high school students on a single bus. The contractor also eliminated one special needs route and one Career and Technology Education (CTE) route. **Exhibit 7-6** compares the number of routes for 2003–04 through 2005–06.

For 2005–06, the buses that run the seven Pre-K/ Kindergarten routes also serve standard routes, buses that run the parenting route also serve one of the alternative routes, and buses that run the CTE route also serve one of the standard routes. The five special needs routes are run separately. The district has some buses run multiple routes to achieve efficiencies by reducing the number of buses and drivers needed to provide transportation services. The district

EXHIBIT 7-6
LMISD TRANSPORTATION ROUTES
2003–04 THROUGH 2005–06

PROGRAM TYPE	SUBPROGRAM TYPE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Regular	Standard	17	19	17
	Alternative	1	2	2
	Parenting	1	1	1
	Pre-K/Kindergarten	9	7	7
Special	Special Needs	5	6	5
Career and Technology Education (CTE)	CTE	1	2	1
TOTAL		34	37	33

SOURCE: LMISD, Route Services Reports and Roll Out Sheet, September 2005.

expects the reduction in the number of routes will improve the district's linear density for 2005–06 if ridership remains the same.

Linear density is a measure of route efficiency. Inefficient routes can reduce a school district's reimbursement from the state since TEA uses linear density to allocate state reimbursements on a per mile basis. **Exhibit 7-7** compares the standard regular riders, miles, linear densities and allotment rates for LMISD and selected peer districts for 2004–05. In 2004–05, LMISD has the second highest linear density among the peer districts and the second highest allotment per mile.

While LMISD has the second highest linear density of the peer districts, the linear density for LMISD has dropped over the past five years. **Exhibit 7-8** presents the linear density for LMISD for 2000–01 through 2004–05. During this time period, the number of standard regular riders has decreased by 19 percent, the number of standard regular miles has increased by 5.1 percent, and linear density has decreased by 22.7 percent.

LMISD has experienced a decline in enrollment from 2000–01 through 2004–05 of 331 students, or a loss of 8.1 percent of its students. Changes in enrollment have a major effect on transportation operations. A systematic review of transportation routes provides meaningful information for decision makers. By not reviewing and adjusting routes as

operations change, the district may not identify potential cost savings. The district may also continue to transport students on routes that do not provide the shortest ride time for the majority of the students.

Many school districts find they can reduce the costs of performing a systematic review of their routes by using outside agencies such as other school districts or local governments to perform the routing analysis using their software and skills. For example, the Round Rock ISD (RRISD) Transportation Department has the software and expertise and performs routing and scheduling for 25 districts in Texas and charges $100 per bus for the service. The RRISD Transportation director said he can usually find 5 percent savings in any district for which he provides routing and scheduling services. In one recent study, the routing analysis identified routes that would reduce the number of regular buses from 24 to 16, a 33 percent reduction.

The district should implement a process to contract with an outside entity to perform periodic independent route evaluations. The district should conduct route evaluations on a regular basis, such as every other year. The independent route evaluation and development will help ensure that the contractor uses efficiently designed routes to maximize state reimbursement rates and minimize costs and the time students must spend on buses.

EXHIBIT 7-7
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICT LINEAR DENSITY
2004–05

DISTRICT	STANDARD REGULAR RIDERS*	STANDARD REGULAR MILES	LINEAR DENSITY**	ALLOTMENT PER MILE 2004–05
Texas City	315,900	100,008	3.16	$1.43
LA MARQUE	**197,820**	**166,698**	**1.19**	**$1.11**
Palestine	288,180	296,489	0.97	$0.88
Navasota	243,720	324,180	0.75	$0.79

NOTE: Information for Lancaster ISD is not available because it does not file service reports with the Texas Education Agency.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Transportation Route Services Report, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT 7-8
LMISD LINEAR DENSITY
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

DESCRIPTION	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Standard Regular Riders	244,080	213,300	227,520	205,740	197,820
Standard Regular Miles	158,593	150,413	148,698	133,182	166,698
Linear Density	1.54	1.42	1.53	1.54	1.19

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000–01 through 2004–05.

The fiscal impact is based on a reduction in the number of route buses that LMISD will have to run. The district runs 33 routes with some buses having double or multiple routes, leaving a total of 24 route buses operating on a daily basis. A five percent reduction in the 24 route buses will reduce route buses by one (24 route buses x 5 percent = 1 route bus) and provide a reduction in annual cost by a minimum of $34,657

(1 route bus x $192.54 daily route cost x 180 days = $34,657). This reduction in costs is offset in the first, third, and fifth year by the cost of the route evaluation of $2,400 (24 route buses x $100 = $2,400).

For background information on Transportation, see page 241 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
49. Institute a request for proposals (RFP) process for student transportation services to comply with state purchasing laws and ensure the district is paying a fair price and receiving the best value for the services provided.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
50. Require the transportation contractor to ensure that all elements necessary to receive funding from the state are present in the district and to reimburse the district for any funds the district has to pay as the result of a Texas Education Agency (TEA) audit.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
51. Develop performance standards and associated benchmarks for student transportation services and negotiate with the vendor to include these standards in the transportation services contract.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
52. Implement a process to contract with an outside entity to perform periodic independent route evaluations.	$32,257	$34,657	$32,257	$34,657	$32,257	$166,085	$0
TOTALS–CHAPTER 7	**$32,257**	**$34,657**	**$32,257**	**$34,657**	**$32,257**	**$166,085**	**$0**

Chapter 8

Food Services

La Marque Independent School District
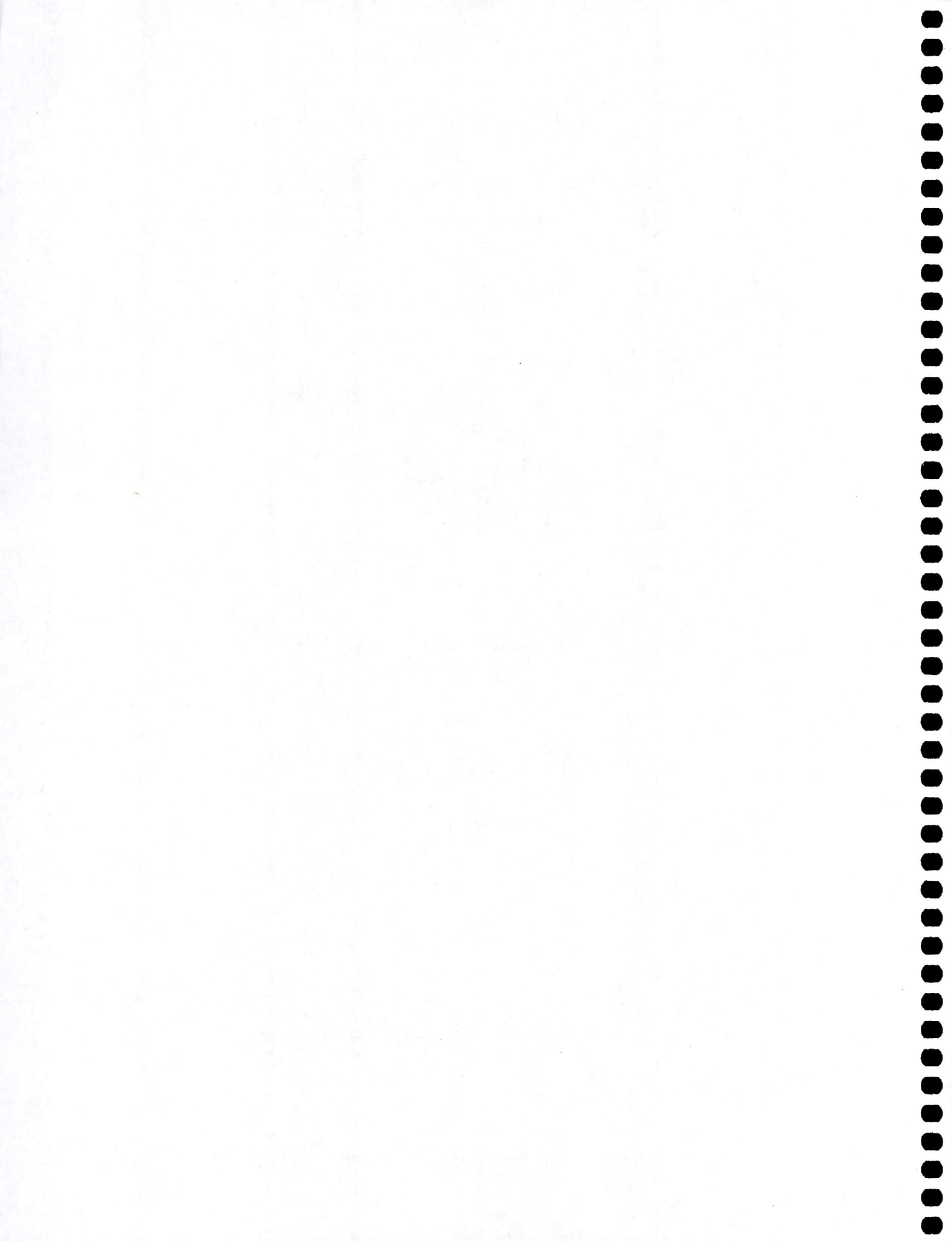
CHAPTER 8. FOOD SERVICES

The goal of an effective school food service program is to provide students with nutritionally-balanced, appealing, and reasonably-priced meals served in a safe, clean, and accessible environment. Districts also expect food service operations to be self-supporting. When this does not occur, a district must subsidize the operations from the general operating fund, which diverts funding from instructional activities.

The La Marque ISD (LMISD) has outsourced its food service function since 1981. It is a turn-key operation performed by a food service management company, Aramark Food Service Company. The district renewed Aramark's contract in May 2005 for a one-year period, with four additional one-year renewal terms available. In contracting with an outside food services management company, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), the agency that oversees the State's school food service program, requires the district to follow certain guidelines. LMISD submitted the proposed contract renewal, which TDA reviewed and approved.

Under the terms of the contract, LMISD must pay for labor and direct costs; provide the food service space and equipment to prepare and serve meals; and provide office space to house vendor administrative personnel. In addition, the district must also pay the vendor a general and administrative fee and a management fee for the services provided. However, LMISD retains the responsibility for purchasing the food and related supplies required for the operation of the contracted food service.

The vendor uses a combination of central office and cafeteria staff to operate the food services program. The Food Service director heads the program, which has a total of 54 staff. There are six central office employees including the Food Service director; three clerks who perform payroll, student eligibility, and nutrition functions; a driver; and an operations supervisor. Ten cafeteria managers and assistant managers supervise 38 full- and part-time cafeteria staff, which prepares and serves meals in one early childhood center, four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and an alternative education program located at the Lake Road Education Center.

The vendor's general and administrative fee is $0.058 and the management fee is $0.031 per meal served for 2005–06. The contract calculation for meals served is the actual count of meals served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), after school snack, and summer feeding programs plus calculated meal equivalents. The vendor converts cash sales from a la carte, catering, and vending sales to meal equivalents by dividing the total cash sales by an equivalency factor, which for 2005–06 is $2.4125. The district negotiated the equivalency factor in the contract renewal based on guidance from the TDA, which manages the state's child nutrition program. The $2.4125 equivalency factor, which the vendor will use throughout the five-year contract period, represents the 2003–04 lunch reimbursement rate of $2.24 for free meals plus the commodities contribution of $0.1725 per lunch.

The vendor bases any increases in fees in future contract renewals on changes in the national Consumer Price Index. The vendor deposits all revenues in the district's Food Service account and then invoices the district monthly for all reimbursable items such as food, labor, and direct costs incurred plus the general and administrative fee and management fee.

According to district financial audits from 1999–2000 through 2003–04, the food service operation has not been self-supporting in three of the last five years but has been making progress to break even. Declining enrollments of more than 150 students contributed to large deficits recorded in 2000–01 and 2001–02. In those two years, the district subsidized the food service program with transfers of more than $132,000. In the most recent two years, 2002–03 and 2003–04, the program had a slight surplus ($501) and a slight deficit ($7,177). An unplanned food services van replacement was the primary cause of the 2003–04 deficit. Meal price increases in 2002–03 aided deficit reduction efforts. The district raised lunch prices from $1.45 to $1.50 for elementary and from $1.60 to $1.75 for secondary schools, but prices have remained the same since that time.

The district uses a Systems Design point-of-sale (POS) computer system to track student eligibility and meal participation. Specialized computer software helps the district meet nutritional guidelines. The district receives United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities at a centralized warehouse.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- The district instituted free breakfast programs for all students to increase student breakfast participation.

FINDINGS

- The district does not perform food service cost analysis to support annual contract renewals, resulting in terms favoring the vendor instead of the district and less funding to cover the total food service costs.

- The district's food services management contract does not contain clauses that clearly hold the vendor accountable and minimize the district's risk for any vendor negligence in the performance of its food services duties.

- The district is not maximizing its state compensatory revenues because LMISD's application process does not include incentives to help ensure that it identifies all students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and that they complete and return the applications.

- The food service operation has not implemented initiatives to address negative student perceptions and stimulate high school student lunch participation to increase healthier nutrition choices for students as well as provide increased revenues.

- The food service system does not integrate with the district's student management system, negatively affecting LMISD's ability to quickly and accurately identify and report student eligibility and status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 53: Perform ongoing food service cost analysis, renegotiate the vendor's contract to adjust management and overhead fees, and allocate additional district costs such as utilities and waste removal to the contract calculations.** The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should assign the responsibility for food service cost analysis to the chief accountant. The chief accountant should use monthly operating reports submitted by the vendor to analyze the realism of costs proposed in the annual contract renewal. The chief accountant should also request documentation to support cost assumptions used by the vendor in developing the proposed budget. As a basis for comparison, the chief accountant should also request food service contracts from other districts

that use outsourced vendors to research their financial arrangements. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should use the cost analysis as the basis for renegotiating financial clauses to more accurately reflect actual effort and costs. Using food service cost analysis to support contract negotiations will allow the district to reduce costs and fees charged by the vendor. Lower expenditures and fees will allow the district to recoup utilities and waste removal costs currently paid for by the General Fund instead of the food service fund. This practice will provide additional funding for instructional use and other district priorities.

- **Recommendation 54: Revise the existing food services management contract to include vendor performance and accountability measures that clarify responsibilities and provide financial remedies for non-performance.** By revising the contract, the district can add provisions that strengthen vendor accountability. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should work with the district's legal counsel to review the existing contract and draft revised contract provisions. The revised provisions would specify clear roles and assign responsibility in the event of negligence as well as identify expected program performance measures. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should use program performance measures to monitor and document vendor performance for annual renewals.

- **Recommendation 55: Expand initiatives to identify eligible students and increase applications for free and reduced-price meals to increase compensatory education revenue.** The Food Services director should develop initiatives that increase awareness of the program such as articles in the district newsletter and initiatives that encourage participation and return of applications through incentives and competitions. These initiatives will result in increased registration of eligible students and increased compensatory education revenue to the district.

- **Recommendation 56: Develop and implement strategies to increase high school student lunch participation.** The Food Services director should first survey or conduct focus groups with high school students and parents to gather information to develop strategies to continually upgrade food quality and address negative perceptions. Cafeteria managers should also talk with staff and students on an ongoing basis to

informally receive feedback. Strategies should focus on concerns expressed by students in the school review survey such as food quality and length of time to eat. Strategies should also address barriers to participation such as the negative stigma attached to identification as a free or reduced-price meal eligible student. By implementing strategies to increase high school student participation, the district will increase revenues to support the food services operation and expand healthy menu options for students.

- **Recommendation 57: Implement a process that provides the Food Service director with student management system access and training to view and generate reports to obtain student information necessary for accurate student eligibility identification and reporting.** The Food Service director can use the process to update student management system data into the POS system daily to ensure that the district uses accurate data for reporting student status and eligibility. The POS system already has a management routine that can upload data, compare it for exceptions, and then release it to the POS system if approved. The Food Services director and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) specialist should work with the POS and student management system vendors to define the necessary data elements and file format to upload the data.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The district instituted free breakfast programs for all students to increase student breakfast participation. The district serves breakfast in the classroom at its early childhood learning center, elementary schools, and middle school. Food service staff prepares the meals in the cafeteria and delivers them in thermal bags to each classroom. Students select from the offered items and teachers mark their participation on a roster. At the high school, food service staff prepares and serves breakfast in the cafeteria, which is free to all students that come to the cafeteria to eat.

The district piloted the initial breakfast in the classroom program at Highlands Elementary in spring 2001. With this approach, the cafeteria prepares breakfasts and sends them to the classroom, rather than students coming to the cafeteria. The Food Service director obtained a $1,000 grant and worked with the principal to implement the program with the assistance of the grant. They used grant funds to purchase equipment such as portable warmers and milk crates to serve the food in the classroom.

The program expanded three times. During the fall 2001, it expanded to Westlawn, Simms, and Inter-City Elementary Schools and the early childhood learning center based on positive feedback from the Highlands Elementary principal and staff. The Highlands Elementary principal and staff noted that the breakfast in the classroom program reduced the number of students that visited the nurse's office who were not feeling well because they were hungry. It also allowed teachers to start class sooner because students went straight to the classroom instead of the cafeteria.

In fall 2002, the Lake Road Education Center and middle school added breakfast in the classroom. The Food Service director contacted the principals at both sites to gauge interest and to coordinate the program. The Food Service director applied for and received $2,000 in grants from a dairy vendor to expand the program. The high school first offered free breakfast in the cafeteria in the fall 2003.

A key program component has been obtaining feedback by talking with participants such as principals and teachers and incorporating their feedback to improve the program. For example, initially the cafeteria distributed the food to the classroom in portable warmers and milk crates. Initially it served students, instead of offering them a choice of selecting items. This practice resulted in a lot of returned milk. In 2003, the district purchased milk coolers for the elementary schools to deliver milk. The coolers made it easier to transport the milk to the classroom. In addition, LMISD implemented audit forms at all schools in fall 2003 to ensure accurate counting and claiming of meals.

Changes in 2004–05 included discontinuing the practice of having middle school students from each class come to the cafeteria to pick up the food for their classroom. Instead, the food service program purchased thermal bags and coolers and food service staff delivers food directly to the class. The food service staff also met with teachers involved with the breakfast in the classroom program during in-service training or at the start of school to train them on appropriate counting and claiming of meals. Counting and claiming is the process where the teacher checks the names of students on a roster to indicate or count the number of student meals that were eligible for the district to claim the meal to receive reimbursement from the School Breakfast Program. The use of class audits and audit forms also continued to reinforce proper counting and claiming. In 2005–06, the food service

program purchased additional thermal bags and carts to deliver the breakfasts for all of the elementary classes.

In addition to operating changes, the Food Service director said that the menu has continued to change. For example, because of feedback from nurses, elementary schools served items such as eggs and donuts less frequently or eliminated them. They discontinued menu items that students frequently returned in the thermal bags. The Food Services program also instituted offer versus serve, which allowed students to choose and take a minimum of two of the three offered items, rather than having to take what was served.

According to the Food Service director, many principals feel the free breakfast programs have helped student performance. Delivering the breakfasts directly to the classrooms instead of requiring students to come to the cafeteria to eat has also benefited the schools. Students that previously arrived on late buses and did not have time to eat in the cafeteria before school started are now able to eat in the classroom. In addition, the schools do not need to move students to and from the cafeteria or provide monitors in the cafeteria. The teachers can also start class activities quicker because students come directly to the classroom.

A nutritional benefit of the program is the increased calcium intake by students. The Food Service director said that with breakfast in the classroom, most students were receiving the recommended calcium levels because they were receiving two half-pint servings each day.

The breakfast programs have also financially benefited the food service program. According to the Food Service director, the free breakfast programs provided additional program revenue despite declining enrollments. Since the breakfasts were free, more students participated and the number of breakfasts increased. The additional revenue came from serving more breakfasts and receiving reimbursement for these breakfasts from the federal School Breakfast Program. The breakfast reimbursement rates in 2004–05 were $1.23 for students identified as eligible for free meals, $0.93 for students identified as eligible for reduced-price meals, and $0.23 for students identified as paid. Since the district did not increase staff, there were no additional labor costs, and staff productivity increased because they were serving more meals. The additional revenues covered the increased incremental costs of the food.

As a result of these programs, LMISD has achieved a high breakfast participation rate. In 2004–05 LMISD's breakfast participation rate, calculated as the number of average daily meals divided by the average daily attendance, was 67 percent. By comparison, the breakfast participation rates for peer districts selected for this review ranged from 22 to 54 percent.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CONTRACT COST ANALYSIS (REC. 53)

The district does not perform food service cost analysis to support annual contract renewals, resulting in terms favoring the vendor instead of the district and less funding to cover the total food service costs.

Before the five-year food service contract lapsed on August 31, 2005, the district advertised its intent to examine alternatives to its food service program and issued a request for vendors to submit proposals. The district received two proposals, one of which was the current food service vendor. The district evaluated the proposals and found the current food service vendor to have the most favorable proposal overall. The district recommended to the board that the contract be awarded to the current vendor for 2005–06. The board awarded the contract to the current vendor in May 2005.

The district annually renews its contract for food services. As part of the renewal, the vendor develops a mutually agreed upon budget that projects revenues, expenditures, and any surplus or shortfall. The budget includes general, administrative, and management fees based on the number of meal equivalents served. The vendor's general and administrative fee and management fee per meal equivalent served for 2005–06 are $0.058 and $0.031, respectively.

Under the contract terms, one lunch, breakfast, or snack equals one meal equivalent. In addition, the sum of cash sales from a la carte, vending, and catering divided by the equivalency factor of $2.4125 equals one meal equivalent.

The budget forms the basis for the guaranteed funding amount for the vendor to return to the district. This amount is important because the contract allows the vendor's general and administrative fee and management fee to be adjusted if the vendor fails to break even and provide the guaranteed return. In 2005–06, the vendor projected a break-even budget.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for contract monitoring and negotiating the annual renewal. The assistant superintendent said that he conveyed the district's expectation to the vendor that the program should break even during the renewal process, but acknowledged that there is no district process or staff assigned

to analyze the proposed budget to ensure that the proposed budget is based on realistic costs and that it breaks even. The district does not request documentation to verify the vendor's budget assumptions to ensure that proposed expenditures are realistic. There is also no analysis of the effect of proposed fiscal calculations on management and overhead fees charged.

The review team analyzed the proposed budget used in the 2005–06 contract renewal and operating reports from 2004–05 and noted several items that increased projected expenditures and management and overhead fees including:

- The vendor charges management and overhead fees on a per meal basis using meal equivalencies that do not follow standard industry definitions and are not based on the effort provided for an activity, as shown in **Exhibit 8-1.**

- Fringe benefits (excluding payroll taxes) in the 2005–06 vendor budget for salaried employees represent approximately 33 percent of salaries. The vendor operating reports from 2004–05 indicated that overall actual other payroll costs were approximately 13 percent.

In addition, the proposed budget does not identify district expenses such as utilities or waste removal as direct expenses, although these costs are directly attributable to food service operations. The General Fund currently funds these items. The 2005–06 vendor budget identified proposed expenditures of $20,700 for items such as postage, copier rental/maintenance, health permits, general supplies, computers/printer/software, and repairs and maintenance.

Higher estimates of fringe benefit costs financially affect the district. Since fringe benefit costs are part of the calculation of the break-even budget, it reduces the amount of district indirect costs such as utilities and waste removal that can be charged as part of the break-even budget, or that the vendor must pay for out of management fees if it does not meet the break-even guarantee. This means that the General Fund,

not the food service fund, is covering these costs. Applying a fringe benefit factor of 20 percent instead of almost 33 percent to the 2005–06 proposed budgeted salaries for salaried employees of $68,090 would have resulted in a difference of $8,666, as shown in **Exhibit 8-2.**

Without cost analysis to support contract negotiations, the district is unable to ensure that costs proposed are realistic and may pay more fees than are necessary. This situation limits the district's ability to recoup utilities and waste removal costs that it charges the General Fund instead of the food service fund, which reduces funding for instructional use and other district priorities.

Contract negotiations rely on a thorough understanding and analysis of a vendor's proposal to determine realistic costs. A thorough cost analysis provides a strong negotiating position for districts during contract renewals. Hays Consolidated ISD (Hays CISD) analyzed its contracts and noted that the proposed fringe benefits were not realistic. By conducting contract cost analysis, Hays CISD negotiated a 20 percent cap on fringe benefits.

The district should perform ongoing food service cost analysis, renegotiate the vendor's contract to adjust management and overhead fees, and allocate additional district costs such as utilities and waste removal to the contract calculations. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should assign the responsibility for food service cost analysis to the chief accountant. The chief accountant should use monthly operating reports submitted by the vendor to analyze the realism of costs proposed in the annual contract renewal. The chief accountant should also request documentation to support cost assumptions used by the vendor in developing the proposed budget. As a basis for comparison, the chief accountant should also request food service contracts from other districts that use outsourced vendors to research their financial arrangements. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should use the

EXHIBIT 8-1
COMPARISON OF MEAL EQUIVALENCY CALCULATIONS
LMISD FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT VS. INDUSTRY STANDARDS

CATEGORY	INDUSTRY EQUIVALENCY	LMISD CONTRACT EQUIVALENCY
Lunch	1 Lunch = 1 meal equivalent	1 lunch = 1 meal equivalent
Breakfast	3 Breakfasts = 1 meal equivalent	1 breakfast = 1 meal equivalent
A la Carte Sales	$3 in sales = 1 meal equivalent	$2.4125 = 1 meal equivalent

SOURCE: School Foodservice Management for the 21st Century, 5th edition, 1999; and LMISD vendor contract, 2005–06.

EXHIBIT 8-2
FINANCIAL EFFECT OF CURRENT CONTRACT FINANCIAL CLAUSES
LMISD FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS
2005–06

COMPUTATION CATEGORY	LMISD FOOD SERVICE PROPOSED BUDGET 2005–06	LMISD FOOD SERVICE BUDGET 2005–06 USING 20 PERCENT FRINGE BENEFIT RATE	SAVINGS DIFFERENCE
Base Gross Salary (Salaried Employees)	$61,900	$61,900	$0
Bonus (Salaried Employees)	$6,190	$6,190	$0
Total Salary (Salaried Employees)	$68,090	$68,090	$0
Fringe Benefits	$22,284	$13,618	$8,666
Fringe Benefits as Percent of Total Salary	32.7%	20.0%	

SOURCE: LMISD vendor contract, 2005–06.

cost analysis as the basis for re-negotiating financial clauses to more accurately reflect actual effort and costs.

Using food service cost analysis to support contract negotiations will allow the district to reduce costs and fees charged by the vendor. Lower expenditures and fees will allow the district to recoup utilities and waste removal costs currently paid for by the General Fund instead of the food service fund. This practice will provide additional funding for instructional use and other district priorities.

The fiscal impact assumes that the district will be able to re-negotiate the vendor's contract to reduce benefits for salaried employees from 32.7 percent to 20 percent for an annual savings of $8,666 ($22,284 vendor proposed fringes at 32.7 percent rate – $13,618 fringes at 20 percent rate). The total five-year savings is $43,330. The fringe benefit savings are based on the calculations outlined in Exhibit 8-2. Although these savings accrue to the food service fund, the review team assumes that the district will apply those savings to the annual food service budget to reimburse General Fund expenditures for utilities and waste removal currently not covered by the food service fund.

CONTRACT ACCOUNTABILITY CLAUSES (REC. 54)

The district's food services management contract does not contain clauses that clearly hold the vendor accountable and minimize the district's risk for any vendor negligence in the performance of its food services duties. The district renewed its food services management contract in May 2005. In the renewal, the district followed the process required by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), which included TDA review and approval of the current contract.

In its review of the current contract, the review team noted that certain clauses did not fully clarify the vendor's role or specify accountability to protect the district's interests in the event of negligence. Exhibit 8-3 outlines the clauses and their impacts.

In addition to the impacts noted in Exhibit 8-3, the contract does not include provisions that would strengthen program evaluation. There are no clauses that provide measures for the district to evaluate performance such as customer surveys, success in meeting financial obligations, and compliance with the contract and other statutory requirements.

The district currently does not have a contract monitoring process to ensure accountability. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said that he informally monitors vendor performance by receiving status reports from the vendor and responding to issues raised by district staff as they occur. The review team did not note specific contractor performance issues during the visit to the district; however, the informal system does not allow for adequate documentation of issue resolution as it occurs.

While informal monitoring may address immediate issues, the current contract contains no provisions that specify contractor responsibility that would allow the district to recoup damages in the event of negligence. In addition, there are no contractual financial penalties assessed for negligence or non-performance. The contract does allow for contract termination for breach of contract, with a 30-day period for the breaching party to cure the default.

Strong contract monitoring relies on clearly defined contract responsibilities and the means to hold a vendor accountable.

EXHIBIT 8-3
LMISD FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT CLAUSES AND IMPACTS

CONTRACT SECTION	CONTRACT LANGUAGE	DEFICIENCY/IMPACT TO DISTRICT
3 I	District shall be responsible for ensuring resolution of the Program review and audit findings.	There is no assignment of responsibility in case of loss of funding due to an audit when vendor is at fault.
6 B	District shall furnish building maintenance services for the Food Service Facilities, shall promptly make all equipment repairs and replacements, and shall be responsible for compliance with all Federal, State, and local safety and health laws and regulations with respect to the Food Service Facilities.	There is no protection to the district if damages are a result of negligence by the vendor or its employees.
9 B2	Aramark shall maintain accurate, timely, and detailed records of personnel and other payroll costs for employees assigned to the Food Service Program, and shall grant Aramark.	Incomplete clause that does not fully describe vendor responsibilities with respect to personnel, which may increase the district's liability in the event of personnel actions.
13 A	Any federally donated foods received by District and made available to Aramark shall be utilized solely for the purpose of providing benefits for the District's Food Service Program. Such donated commodities shall be kept separate and apart from the purchased inventory of food and supplies. Title to USDA donated commodities must remain with District. To the maximum extent feasible, Aramark shall use in the preparation of the meals and other food served to the children, usable food donated by USDA for the use of the District. Aramark shall maintain adequate storage practices, and inventory and control of such donated foods to ensure that its use is in conformance with District's agreement with the State Distributing Agency. Aramark shall give District, USDA, and appropriate State representatives access to the donated commodities storage areas.	There is no requirement for written procedures to ensure proper and full utilization of donated foods that would assist district in monitoring compliance.
13 D	The liability for the proper use of these commodities will be the responsibility of Aramark... District is responsible for obtaining restitution from Aramark in connection with any claim for improper distribution, use or loss of, or damage to donated foods.	There is no requirement for vendor to assist district in connection with third party claims for restitution.

SOURCE: Aramark Food Services Management Agreement, LMISD 2005-06.

According to the State of Texas Contract Management Guide, "the purpose of any written contract is as a reference document that records the terms of an agreement to prevent misunderstanding and conflict as to those terms at a later date, and creates a legal, binding, and enforceable obligation."

Hays Consolidated Independent School District (Hays CISD) has a contract for outsourced food services management that contains program performance evaluation measures as well as provisions that clarify contract management roles and responsibilities and provide protection to the district in the event of negligence, as outlined in **Exhibit 8-4**.

The district should revise the existing food services management contract to include vendor performance and accountability measures that clarify responsibilities and provide financial remedies for non-performance. The district should review its existing contract to identify provisions that would strengthen vendor accountability. It should revise the existing agreement to specify clear roles and assign responsibility in the event of negligence as well as identify expected program performance measures such as those identified in **Exhibit 8-4**. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should collect and review similar contracts from other districts that outsource food services

EXHIBIT 8-4
EXAMPLE FOOD SERVICES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT CLAUSES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY
HAYS CISD

CONTRACT SECTION	CONTRACT LANGUAGE
6.1	The district shall furnish all building maintenance, make repairs to the food service areas, and replace, repair and maintain its equipment, **except when damages result from the negligence by Contractor or its employees.**
11.1B	Contractor shall establish and maintain appropriate ordering, delivery, storage, and utilization procedures to ensure proper and full utilization of donated foods in district's food service program. **Such procedures shall be reduced in writing within sixty (60) days after the effective date of this agreement and provided to district for review.**
11.1E	Contractor acknowledges that district is required to take action to obtain restitution in connection with claims for improper use, loss, or damage to USDA donated foods. **Contractor agrees to exercise reasonable commercial efforts to assist District in pursuing such claims against any third party,** including, but not limited to, full or partial assignment of such rights as Contractor or Contractor's insurers may have against a third party and that may facilitate District's action for restitution.
13.1 A	District shall...evaluate the Contractor based on the following measures:
(items 1–5)	1. **District-administered Surveys.** District may, in collaboration with its food service Advisory Board, develop surveys to gauge overall satisfaction with the operation of the food service program. Surveys may be administered to parents, students, teachers, and campus administrators. Surveys will include itemized progress measures from any prior year for each criterion and will provide for comments by survey participants.
	2. **Contractor success in meeting its financial obligations.**
	3. **Contractor compliance with the terms of the agreement.**
	4. **Contractor and contractor employee compliance with applicable district policies.**
	5. **Contractor's establishment of and implementation of a communication plan with parents including, but not limited to, billing, student accounts, and pricing.**
13.11	The District shall be responsible for ensuring resolution of program review and audit findings...**If for reasons not attributable to District, District's food service program fails a Texas Education Agency (TEA) audit causing TEA to withhold reimbursement for free and reduced meals, the Contractor shall reimburse the District the management fee and the withheld reimbursement amount for every month TEA withholds funds due to the failed audit.** If District successfully appeals the withholding of any reimbursement by TEA, District will return the withheld management fee and contested reimbursement amount, less the costs of pursuing the appeal and interest. In the event District receives a portion of withheld reimbursements, District shall return the withheld management fee and reimbursement to Contractor on a pro rata basis.

SOURCE: Hays CISD vendor contract, 2003 base agreement.

to identify potential terms and conditions that LMISD could adapt for its use. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should propose revised terms and conditions and submit them to the district's legal counsel for review. After reviewing them, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should work with the vendor during the annual contract renewal to incorporate the revised terms and conditions into the contract.

After revising the contract, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should provide formalized ongoing monitoring to ensure that the vendor complies with the revised terms and conditions. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should also monitor contractor performance against established performance measures. The monitoring process should include policies and procedures that identify specific roles and responsibilities for the individual monitoring contracts.

The cost of implementing this recommendation is $1,060. The fiscal impact assumes that the district will require a one-time review by legal counsel of proposed terms and conditions. The review is estimated to require 4 hours at an hourly rate of $265 (4 hours x $265 per hour = $1,060).

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION (REC. 55)

The district is not maximizing its state compensatory revenues because LMISD's application process does not include incentives to help ensure that it identifies all students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and that they complete and return the applications.

The district's existing application process includes several activities. The Food Service director does a media release to initially publicize the meal application process. The director faxed the 2005–06 release to the local newspaper on June 13, 2005. It stated that the district would make applications

available at schools and at the Food Services office. The district also sent letters to high school parents to encourage them to complete applications. The Food Services Department also receives a list of direct certified eligible students and families from the state, which it uploads into the point-of-sale (POS) system. These students receive pre-approval for the new year.

At the beginning of the school year, the Food Services Department sends eligibility forms, including a multi-child family application, to the schools to send home with students. Students who were eligible the previous year are eligible for a 30-day period, but must return applications to update their eligibility. Food Services Department central office clerical staff enters information from applications into the POS system, which calculates eligibility. Two weeks before the end of the 30-day grace period, the Food Services Department staff does a follow-up letter and mail-out to individuals who have not returned applications. During the year, new students that register receive a form in their registration packet.

In its publication, Food For Thought: Ideas for Improving School Food Service, the Texas School Performance Review describes several initiatives to increase the identification of eligible students. LMISD's current process includes several of the initiatives such as the use of multi-child application forms, direct certification, and parental assistance. However, it does not use other initiatives. The current process does not provide incentives for returning applications so that LMISD can determine a student's eligibility. It also does not

provide focused communication to help educate parents and the community about the importance and effect of not returning applications. For example, the district emails its newsletter, Champion's Circle, to 1,000 individuals and community leaders. There were no articles in the newsletter to publicize the program, explain its benefits, or encourage participation.

Because middle and high school students do not return applications as frequently, identification and eligibility rates for these students are typically much lower than for other student groups. **Exhibit 8-5** shows the percentage of students identified by campus as of November 1, 2005. As shown in **Exhibit 8-5**, the number of eligible students as a percent of enrolled students is much lower for the middle and high school than for the elementary schools.

By not identifying all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, LMISD is not maximizing available compensatory education funds. The funding allocation for compensatory education is based on averaging the best six-month average of free and reduced-price meal eligible students from October of the previous year to September of the current year. The funding level for 2005–06 is $585 per student. The district receives this funding based on student eligibility, not participation. In addition, this affects students economically because they may be paying for meals that they could obtain at a free or reduced price.

Successful identification programs to ensure all eligible families enroll in free and reduced-price meal programs

EXHIBIT 8-5
NUMBER OF STUDENTS REGISTERED FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS
NOVEMBER 2005

CAFETERIA	ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL	TOTAL STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS	ELIGIBLE STUDENTS FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS AS A PERCENT OF ENROLLMENT
La Marque High School*	1,134	500	44%
La Marque Middle School	851	568	67%
Highlands Elementary	345	260	75%
Inter-City Elementary	371	332	89%
Simms Elementary	372	294	79%
Westlawn Elementary	317	202	64%
Early Childhood Learning Center	502	423	84%
TOTALS	**3,892**	**2,579**	**66%**

*La Marque High School totals include JJAEP enrollment and Lake Road Education Center applications (alternative education program center).
Source: LMISD Food Services Department, November 2005; Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Enrollment Report dated November 1, 2005.

include multiple strategies. Donna ISD's Student Nutrition Services Department used a multi-pronged approach in identifying students. Besides mail-outs and direct certifications, the director of Food Services contacted principals, explaining the importance of the application process, and set up an informational booth at schools during registration. To get applications returned, the Student Nutrition Services Department sponsored a competition in which the first five schools that turned in 100 percent of their applications would receive free ice cream. Because of the competition, seven schools had 100 percent return of applications and received the ice cream. Because of the initiatives, the district identified and certified 9,679 students out of 10,215, or 94.8 percent of students enrolled during the process.

In another example, Houston ISD (HISD) used incentives to encourage students to return applications. HISD placed all of the applicants' names in a hat and drew for prizes, with the top prize being a television. Local businesses donated some of the prizes, and HISD used the food services budget to purchase some of them as well.

The district should expand initiatives to identify eligible students and increase applications for free and reduced-price meals to increase compensatory education revenue. The Food Services director should develop initiatives that will assist in identifying and increasing applications for free and reduced-price meals. The Food Services director should work with the district communications officer to develop a media campaign to provide information to students and parents explaining the program, the benefit to the students, and the additional revenue potential for the district. District staff should emphasize that they will keep program enrollment confidential.

The Food Services director should also work with principals and the communications officer to develop incentives and competitions to reduce the stigma attached to the program and to encourage students to return applications. The incentives and competitions should focus particularly on middle and high school student groups that have the lowest percentages of identified eligible students. The incentives program should include community support by providing donated prizes. The Food Services director should track which initiatives are successful so they can repeat them in subsequent years and discontinue those that are not successful.

Identifying and increasing applications from eligible students by 5 percent for middle and high school students would increase compensatory education funds to LMISD by approximately $58,000 annually. This is estimated by increasing the number of students that receive free or reduced-price meals by 5 percent or 99 (1,985 middle and high school students enrolled as of November 2005 x 0.05 = 99). The additional 99 applications would increase compensatory funds to the district at a cost to the state treasury of $57,915 (99 additional applications x $585 per student = $57,915).

Because compensatory education enrollment is based on the prior-year six-month average of eligible students, LMISD would not receive compensatory funding for additional eligible students identified in 2006–07 until 2007–08.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LUNCH PARTICIPATION (REC. 56)

The food service operation has not implemented initiatives to address negative student perceptions and stimulate high school student lunch participation to increase healthier nutrition choices for students as well as provide increased revenues. For 2004–05, the high school lunch program participation rate of 22 percent was much lower than the middle school participation rate of 41 percent.

La Marque High School has five serving lines to serve approximately 1,100 students in two 30-minute lunch periods. The serving lines are at the end of an open courtyard area known as the commons. One line offers the reimbursable meal required for participation in the National School Lunch Program, which predominantly serves students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. It features a Type A meal, a required combination of meat, grains, vegetables, and fruits, designed to meet one-third to one-half of the minimum daily nutritional requirements of a child 10 to 12 years of age. Type A meals qualify for federal reimbursement. The food service operation formulated the high school menus using an age-based analysis of Type A requirements for children 14 to 17 years old.

The high school offers six to seven entrees daily as selections on the reimbursable meal line. Students pay for the meals on this line by cash or by using a keypad to enter their identification number into the POS system. The identification number accesses their account for payment or identifies them for a free or reduced-price meal.

The remaining four meal serving lines offer specialty a la carte foods, which are cash only. One snack bar, known as "Reality Check" or "The Store," features items that students can self-serve such as hot dogs, sandwiches, or salads. Its design is similar to that of a convenience store. The Grill is a walk-up snack bar that serves items such as burgers and grilled sandwiches. It features a meal deal for $1 that includes fries or fruit cup and a drink in addition to the price of the sandwich. Students may also purchase fries or onion rings as a separate a la carte item. The sub line is another type of serving line that offers made-to-order sandwiches. The Cougar Café's design mirrors a restaurant offering of a full meal. The meal at this line consists of an entrée, three sides, and a canned drink for $3.50. The menu varies and ranges from brisket to shrimp. Payments at these serving lines are by cash only.

School Foodservice Management for the 21st Century (SFM) identifies several factors that influence student participation in food programs at school. For example, according to SFM, the menu is the single most important factor. LMISD's food service program has tried different strategies to positively affect student participation. LMISD has tried to offer variety and offers six to seven entrees in its reimbursable line as well as a multitude of snack bar offerings. In addition, the Food Services director and the production clerk who plans menus both indicated that they constantly monitor and revise menus to serve items that are popular more frequently.

Price is another key factor. School review student survey comments indicated that students felt prices were too high for the items served. LMISD has not increased student meal

prices for a reimbursable lunch since 2002–03. They were the same at $1.75 with Texas City and were the lowest among peer districts selected for this review.

A third key factor is the image of the food service program held by students. Principals and food service staff both indicated that there was a stigma associated with participating in the program, particularly for students that qualify for free and reduced-price meals and who predominantly use the Type A reimbursable line. The production clerk said that the Food Services Department had converted one of the snack bar lines into a reimbursable meal line at the middle school, which increased participation. However, when the high school tried it, the result was decreased participation.

Despite the strategies that it has tried, LMISD's high school participation rate continues to be affected by negative student perceptions related to long lines, insufficient time to eat, the quality of the food, and cafeteria environment. Although LMISD has a closed campus policy, the lunch participation rate at La Marque High School in 2004–05 was just 22 percent for Type A reimbursable meals. The review team surveyed high school students and asked questions about food quality, service, and environment to determine perceptions about the LMISD food service program. **Exhibit 8-6** displays the survey results.

As shown in **Exhibit 8-6**, student respondents rated cafeteria food presentation and taste negatively, with almost 60 percent of students rating it as poor. A large percentage of student respondents, 82.4 percent, strongly felt that they did not have sufficient time to eat. More than 56 percent of students surveyed rated discipline and order as poor or below average.

EXHIBIT 8-6
LMISD FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS FOR STUDENTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

SURVEY STATEMENT	STUDENTS					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	59.6%	14.0%	21.1%	0.0%	1.8%	3.5%
The amount of time students have to eat.	68.4%	14.0%	8.8%	1.8%	3.5%	3.5%
Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	38.6%	17.5%	24.6%	10.5%	5.3%	3.5%
The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	14.0%	10.5%	35.1%	17.5%	19.3%	3.5%
The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	22.8%	22.8%	35.1%	10.5%	5.3%	3.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

More than 45 percent of student respondents also rated cafeteria cleanliness negatively as poor or below average. Students rated cafeteria staff helpfulness and friendliness the most positively. Almost 37 percent of students rated it as good or excellent.

At the school review community Open House held in the district to obtain community input, and through surveys and focus groups of parents and staff, the review team received comments about the food service program. Many comments related to the food temperature, quality, and length of time to eat. Examples of comments received included:

- Students aren't given enough time to eat.

- So many of the children do not like the food. Hamburgers are cold from the day before. Not a good selection.

- I've received comments from my grandkids of not liking the foods that are served cold at times.

- The high school has two lunch periods, 30 minutes each, to feed over 1,300 students. This is not enough time.

- The numbers of lunch periods were reduced at the high school and there are not enough lines.

The student survey comments were particularly critical of the time to eat, the quality of food, and the prices.

According to the Food Services director, the high school cafeteria uses batch cooking, a cooking method for periodically preparing food in smaller batches to minimize the length of time food sits under the warmers, and it monitors temperature to keep food warm. In addition, three Food Services Department staff, with assistance from high school assistant principals, monitors and controls student lines to maintain orderly flow of the food serving lines.

With low participation rates, LMISD is missing opportunities for increased federal reimbursement and revenues. In addition, students may not always be making healthier choices. Although the cafeteria offers salads and fruit plates a la carte or as part of a la carte plate meals, there is no requirement for students to select these items when purchasing a la carte like they must do under Type A reimbursable meals.

Successful school food service operations increase their participation rates by using a variety of strategies. The first step however, is to understand what the customer wants through surveys and by having ongoing discussions with students, teachers, and administrators to identify their preferences and perceptions as well as explaining nutrition requirements. After identifying these, the food service staff often develop strategies and programs that improve the customer's perception of dining in the cafeteria, such as offering more menu choices that students like, implementing more serving lines to reduce time spent in line, redesigning the cafeteria to look more like a food court or restaurant, and introducing brand name menu items to supplement traditional menus.

Peer districts selected for this review, as well as Texas districts that have received national recognition for excellence in their food service operations, use a variety of strategies to target and increase student lunch participation at the secondary levels. A common strategy is to survey students to understand their preferences. Three of the peer districts—Navasota, Palestine, and Texas City—use surveys to see what students like and do not like to eat.

Districts with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students like LMISD with 62.6 percent economically disadvantaged in 2004–05 have food program participation challenges to overcome. Such districts like Navasota ISD (NISD) have developed strategies that reduce the stigma in participating in the food program and eliminate the possibility that students can be identified based on their ability to pay, Approximately 50 percent of NISD's high school students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. NISD converted its snack bar items to a reimbursable meal so that these students could participate and enjoy items that the cafeteria previously sold only as a la carte. NISD also requires pre-payment of accounts and the use of student identification cards on its lunch lines. It takes little if any cash during the lunch period, so students cannot be differentiated by their ability to pay. This practice also speeds service through the lunch line.

Montgomery ISD (MISD), designated as a "District of Excellence in Child Nutrition" by the School Nutrition Association, also has converted many items viewed as a la carte items into reimbursable meals. For example, MISD has two lines, a submarine sandwich line featuring fresh baked bread and a deli line with a cold turkey/cheese wrap and yogurt, that qualify as reimbursable meals. The deli meal is pre-packaged to speed service. In addition, MISD obtains feedback every day informally to identify the menu items that students like and do not like. Managers work the service lines and talk with students as they go through the lines. MISD also has limited branding—using manufacturer's brand-name

products in its menus. For example, MISD advertises Red Barron pizza in its menu.

Grapevine-Colleyville ISD (GCISD) added interest to its menu by asking a local chef to share recipes with cafeteria staff. GCISD pilot-tested two recipes from a local chef, stacked enchiladas and jalapeno meat loaf, at its high school. The new menu items were so popular that other schools in the district wanted these items on their menus.

The district should develop and implement strategies to increase high school student lunch participation. To develop the strategies, the Food Services director should first survey or conduct focus groups with high school students and parents to gather information. Cafeteria managers should also talk with staff and students on an ongoing basis to informally receive feedback.

Based on the feedback, the Food Services director and the cafeteria managers should develop strategies that promote increased student interest and participation in the food program. In particular, the strategies should focus on addressing concerns expressed by students in the school review survey such as food quality and length of time to eat. The process to gain student input should also identify barriers to participation such as the negative stigma attached to identification as a free or reduced-price eligible student so that the Food Services director and staff can develop strategies to address the barriers.

To reduce the length of time in line, LMISD should consider using portable carts and kiosks in the commons areas to provide more service lines. The carts could sell pre-packaged reimbursable meals so that all students could access them. The carts could also be designated "cash free," requiring students to use their POS system identification number for payment.

LMISD should also consider strategies regarding its menus. One strategy would be to implement limited "branding" of items. The Food Services director should survey students and add popular brand name items to the menu on a limited basis. Food Services would need to carefully analyze the items offered and integrate them with the current menus to comply with nutritional requirements. Food Services can market items on the menu or advertise them as special days, for example (Brand Name) Taco Day. Another strategy to improve the perception about the quality of food would be to feature popular local restaurant menu items. The Food Services director should contact popular local restaurants and request

recipes that they can share for cafeteria use. The local restaurant could be featured in the menu or promotion and the event publicized.

To address the stigma issue, which creates a barrier to participation, LMISD should consider converting more of its snack bar items to reimbursable meals similar to the strategy successfully implemented at the middle school. The district should also consider implementing a pre-payment policy. Converting snack bar items to reimbursable meals increases access for students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Implementing a pre-payment policy would require all students to use their student identification numbers and key them in, rather than paying the cashier. This procedure would speed the service line as well as reduce the ability to differentiate students based on their ability to pay.

The Food Services director should continuously monitor participation rates and correlate the results to the various implementation strategies. The Food Services director should seek student and staff input regarding the different strategies and adjust the strategies based on the feedback. The director should analyze strategies that are ineffective to determine the reasons that they did not work, modify them if possible, or discontinue them.

Increasing student participation will result in increased revenues and provide healthier nutritional choices for students. The fiscal estimate of increased net revenue of $1,599 annually is based on the district increasing food program participation by 5 percent a year. With a 5 percent participation rate increase each year, the district will increase the number of meals served incrementally each year by 1,795 based on total high school lunches served in 2004–05 of 35,900. Additional annual reimbursement is based on the 2005–06 projected average reimbursement of $2.13 per lunch times the increased number of annual meals served. The average reimbursement is calculated based on the federal and local revenue per meal times the percent of students classified as free, reduced-price, and paid. Total new incremental revenue is estimated as $3,823 each year (1,795 meals x $2.13 average reimbursement per meal = $3,823).

Additional expenditures consist of two categories: food, direct costs, and minimal additional labor costs and contractual administrative and management fees. According to the vendor's annual report, the food/labor/direct costs are estimated as 54 percent of additional revenue based on 2004–05 expenditure rates, and each year these costs would

be $2,064. Administrative and management fees total $0.89 per meal and are based on 2005–06 rates of $0.058 and $0.031 per meal respectively ($0.058 + $0.031=$0.089). The additional administrative and management fees would be $160 each year (1,795 meals x $0.089 = $160).

The additional expenditures are subtracted from the additional reimbursement to determine net annual increased revenues, which total $1,599 ($3,823 new incremental revenue—$2,064 additional food/labor/direct costs—$160 additional administrative/management fees).

The estimated number of lunches served each year increases by 1,795 meals from the previous year based on the 5 percent increase using the first year student population count, resulting in a net annual increase in revenues by $1,599. Note that these revenues accrue to the food service fund, not the General Fund, and the district can only use these funds for food service-related expenditures.

DATA INTEGRATION (REC. 57)

The food service system does not integrate with the district's student management system, negatively affecting LMISD's ability to quickly and accurately identify and report student eligibility and status. The district uses its student management and attendance reporting system to collect student demographic information such as name, age, gender, and ethnicity. It also collects status and enrollment data such as whether the child is migrant or economically disadvantaged or enrolled in bilingual, special education, gifted and talented, or other programs. In addition, the student management system tracks attendance by the campus to which the student is assigned.

The food service operation uses a point-of-sale system (POS) to track student information, particularly student eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. The POS assigns students by campus to help track participation, and the food service operation uses the system to process free and reduced-price meal applications. It also uses the POS to track meal receipts and student participation in order to file for reimbursement from the federal and state governments.

Exhibit 8-7 shows the data elements shared between the separate district and food operation systems. The two systems are not integrated and share data manually through file downloads and reports. Reports from the POS system go to the PEIMS specialist and to the director of Student Services to track and update student eligibility. Student management system reports containing information related to new student enrollments, transfers, or withdrawals go to the Food Services office to update the student lists.

The Food Services Department uses the enrollment data from the student management system at the beginning of the school year to validate that the students in the POS system that qualified for free and reduced-price meals based on the direct certification list downloaded from the state are still enrolled in LMISD. Food Services also uses it to produce an updated list for the rollover process, a process that allows students that qualified for free and reduced-price meals the previous year to continue at that status for a 30-day grace period at the start of the year, until they receive and process new applications. Student data comes from a file that the Food Services Department uploads into the POS system. A software routine generates this file by comparing the POS

EXHIBIT 8-7
DATA SHARING BETWEEN LMISD STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
AND FOOD SERVICES POINT-OF-SALE SYSTEM
OCTOBER 2005
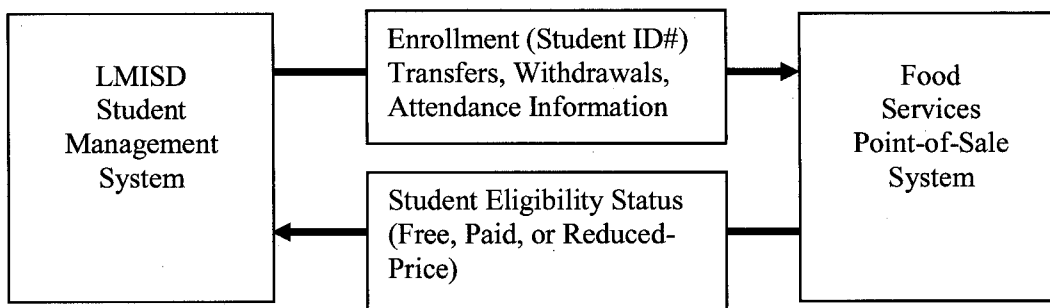
SOURCE: LMISD Food Services director, October 2005.

system data to the student management system data and identifying differences in demographics.

To update the POS system during the year with student status changes, the Food Services director must rely on the PEIMS specialist or individual campus PEIMS clerks to generate student status updates from the student management system. The Food Services director and staff do not have system access to view or query data to obtain status updates on their own. They use this data to correctly reflect students that the district has added, transferred, or withdrawn and to ensure that the student counts are accurate for the meal claim reimbursements that the district files.

The PEIMS specialist generates a monthly report reflecting any student status changes and emails the report to the Food Services staff. The report is a cumulative query of all status changes since the beginning of the year, not a download of the status changes for the particular month. Campus PEIMS clerks can also run attendance reports for their individual campus as requested by cafeteria managers. They deliver these reports to the Food Services central office for update.

Because the district student management system and Food Services POS system are not integrated and are independently and continuously updated, their student demographic information may not match. There are three types of mismatches that may occur. **Exhibit 8-8** shows the types of mismatches that may occur and the reason for the mismatch.

As a result, data and reporting based on student counts and status may not be accurate. For example, at the beginning of the year, the POS system may contain names of students directly certified but have since withdrawn from LMISD. Without an accurate, up-to-date list from the student management system to compare names, the POS system may reflect inflated free and reduced-price numbers of students.

This updating problem affects compensatory education funding and may cause overpayments with the district having to return overpayments. According to the Food Services director, this situation occurred two years ago. This year, the Food Services director submitted estimates based on May enrollment data, rather than using possibly inflated numbers.

In another example, Texas school food service operations are legally required to report the total number of children enrolled and the counts of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals on the last school day in October to the Texas Department of Agriculture. If a district does not complete updates when it submits its November claim, the state will withhold the November claim and all future claims until the district satisfies the requirement. The information system utilized to claim reimbursement contains a control to ensure that this reporting occurs, or it withholds payment.

Accurate enrollment and attendance data also affect required daily, monthly, and annual reports that the food services operation must complete as part of the requirements for participation in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. For example, the programs require district food service operations to complete and maintain daily records of participation and income as well as perform the "accuclaim" edit check—an audit to ensure that the numbers of free and reduced-price meals provided do not exceed the numbers of students approved for such benefits. The calculations are based on the number of students in attendance, or attendance factor.

Many districts integrate their student management and POS systems and perform daily updates to minimize the chance for errors and inaccurate reporting. The district designates one of the systems as the "primary" system that is the repository for the updated information. Data from the other

EXHIBIT 8-8
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA MISMATCHES

SITUATION	REASON FOR MISMATCH
Student has identification (ID) number in POS system but not in student management system.	Food Services received an application and issued a dummy ID number, but district has not updated student management system to reflect a new student that has enrolled.
Student ID numbers in the student management system and POS system do not match.	District has corrected student ID number but has not notified Food Services to make change.
Student has ID number in the student management system but not in POS system.	The student management system contains data for enrolled student, but Food Services has not received notification to ensure it sends an application to qualify student's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

SOURCE: LMISD Food Services director, October 2005.

system is transferred to the primary system, which compares it with existing data to identify exceptions. The system analyzes the exceptions to determine if it should upload data. If approved, it uploads the new data and updates the primary system.

The district should implement a process that provides the Food Service director with student management system access and training to view and generate reports to obtain student information necessary for accurate student eligibility identification and reporting. The Food Service director can use the process for daily updates into the POS system using student management system data to ensure that the district uses accurate data for reporting student status and eligibility. The POS system already has a management routine that can upload data, compare it for exceptions, and then release it to the POS system if approved. The Food Services director and the PEIMS specialist should work with the POS and student management system vendors to define the necessary data elements and file format to upload the data.

The PEIMS specialist should provide the Food Services director and designated Food Services staff with security access to view student management system data and generate attendance reports. In addition, the district should fund the

student management system vendor to develop an automated software routine that runs each night. The software routine extracts the information into a file format and places the file in a location where the POS system can access it for upload.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is a one-time cost of $3,550. The fiscal impact assumes that the district will fund the student management system vendor to develop a software updating routine. The cost is estimated as $1,300, the vendor's one-day rate for specialized technical support. In addition, there is a one-time cost for the POS system vendor to implement a custom setup and interface. The hourly rate for this service is $150. The cost of setup is estimated as 15 hours of custom programming training at $150 per hour, or $2,250 (15 hours x $150 hourly rate). The total cost is $3,550 ($1,300 student management system vendor + $2,250 POS custom set-up).

For background information on Food Services, see page 244 in the General Information section of the appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
53. Perform ongoing food service cost analysis, renegotiate the vendor's contract to adjust management and overhead fees, and allocate additional district costs such as utilities and waste removal to the contract calculations.	$8,666	$8,666	$8,666	$8,666	$8,666	$43,330	$0
54. Revise the existing food services management contract to include vendor performance and accountability measures that clarify responsibilities and provide financial remedies for non-performance.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($1,060)
55. Expand initiatives to identify eligible students and increase applications for free and reduced-price meals to increase compensatory education revenue.	$0	$57,915	$57,915	$57,915	$57,915	$231,660	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
56. Develop and implement strategies to increase high school student lunch participation.	$1,599	$3,198	$4,797	$6,396	$7,995	$23,985	$0
57. Implement a process that provides the Food Service director with student management system access and training to view and generate reports to obtain student information necessary for accurate student eligibility identification and reporting.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($3,550)
TOTALS–CHAPTER 8	$10,265	$69,779	$71,378	$72,977	$74,576	$298,975	($4,610)

Chapter 9

Financial Management
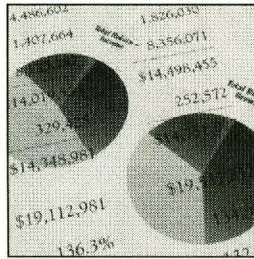
La Marque Independent School District
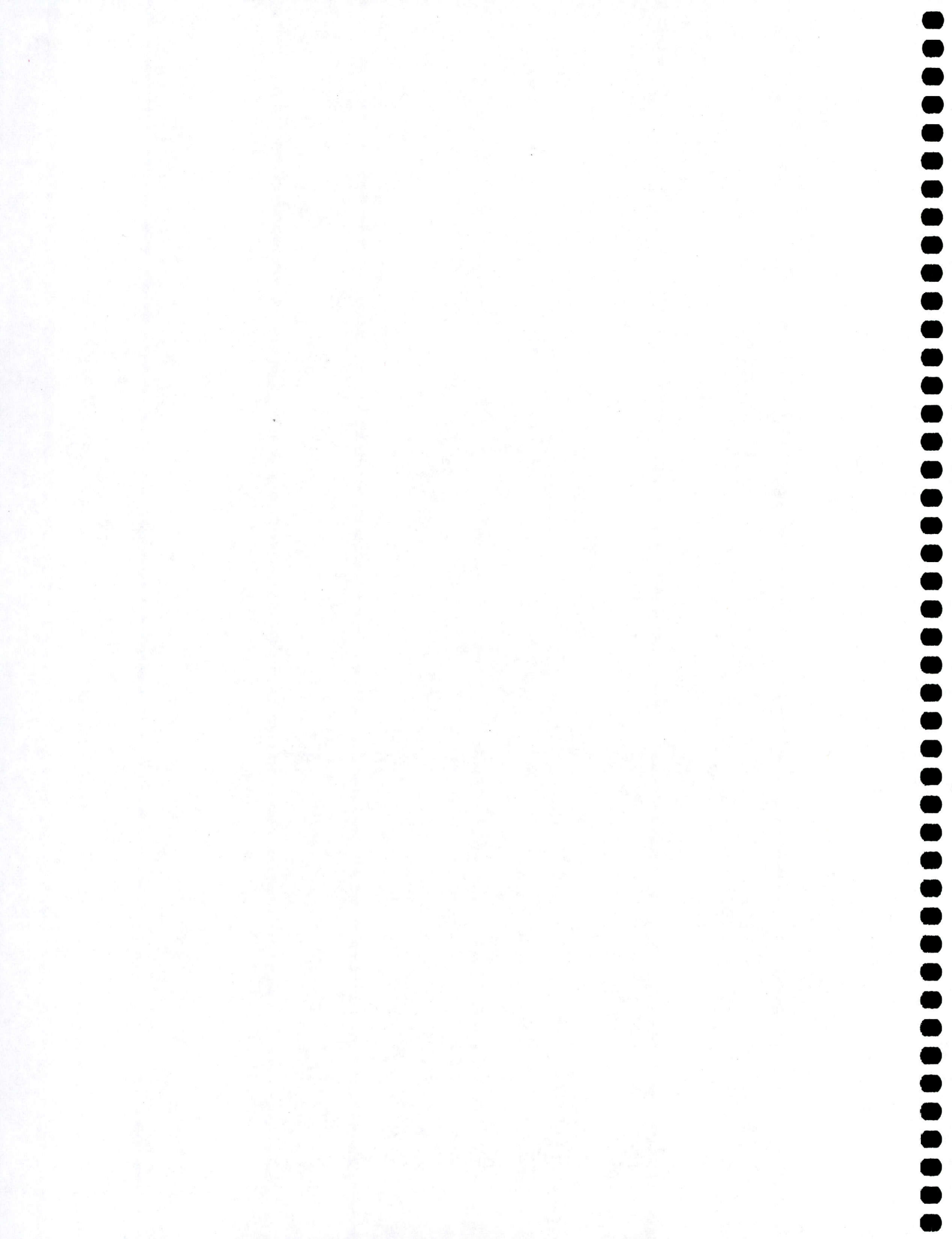
CHAPTER 9. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Effective financial, asset, and risk management in school districts requires thoughtful planning and decision-making to obtain the best possible financial performance. Financial managers must ensure that a school district receives all available revenue from local, state, and federal government sources and that the district spends these resources in accordance with law, statute, regulation, and policy to accomplish the district's established priorities and goals. Asset management involves managing the district's cash resources and physical assets in a cost-effective and efficient manner. Risk management includes the identification, analysis, and reduction of risk to the district's assets and employees through insurance and safety programs.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for the financial, asset, risk, and purchasing management of LMISD. The assistant superintendent receives support from a chief accountant, accountant, accounts payable clerk, payroll and benefits supervisor, payroll assistant, and secretary.

LMISD received a superior achievement rating on the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) for 2003–04. The district's 2003–04 General Fund balance of $4.3 million is equivalent to 18.8 percent of actual expenditures. Fund balance for the General Fund has grown from $3.3 million in 1999–2000.

LMISD outsourced tax collections to Galveston County in 2001. The district collected 96.6 percent of the 2004 levy and 99.8 percent of the current levy considering delinquent taxes. The district pays a fee of $0.55 per parcel to the county in return for the service.

LMISD invests excess funds with its depository bank and two investment pools; insures itself against loss for real and personal property, liability, school professional legal liability, and vehicle loss or damage; self-insures itself for workers' compensation claims; provides health and life insurance for its employees; provides student accident insurance for its students; maintains inventories of the district's fixed assets; and has three outstanding bond issues.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is the district's designated investment officer, and the chief accountant handles day-to-day cash operations. The payroll supervisor is responsible for administering the district's employee benefit plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LMISD uses the six weeks' state funding template provided by Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) that allows the district to monitor state funding based on actual attendance during the course of the year.

- The district has obtained a depository contract that provides interest rates above market.

- LMISD eliminated its self-insured health plan when premiums were the same as the state plan and eliminated the risk of loss from self-insurance while minimizing the impact on district employees.

FINDINGS

- LMISD adopted deficit budgets each year since 1999–2000 and does not have an effective budget process that ensures budgeted funds are aligned with district priorities.

- LMISD does not have an effective contract management process that ensures the district is receiving the best value for the price paid.

- LMISD does not have adequate inventory controls that reduce the risk of loss of district assets.

- LMISD does not provide the board and public with easy-to-read summary financial reports and analyses that clearly present LMISD's financial operations.

- LMISD does not use a cash flow forecast to monitor its cash position and ensure that adequate funds are available to meet the district's cash requirements.

- LMISD does not have a method to ensure that the depository bank only cashes checks issued and authorized by the district.

- LMISD does not have a policy for the periodic competitive procurement of external audit services.

- LMISD does not provide training opportunities for the support staff in Business and Operations to stay current in school business practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 58: Modify the budget process to include model practices in each component of the process—development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring.** The superintendent should develop the budget calendar with model process components, and the board should approve it so that all participants understand the budget development process and their role in it. The budget process should include development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring phases.

- **Recommendation 59: Revise the contract management process to include elements necessary to ensure the district is receiving the best value for the price paid.** The district should revise the contract management process to include key elements such as regularly assessing the competitiveness of the contractor's fee, determining whether the district should continue to outsource the service, providing the contractor and board with a formal evaluation based on performance measures established for each contract, documenting regular communication between the district and contractor, and linking some or all of contractor fee increases to performance.

- **Recommendation 60: Establish an inventory process for items costing less than $5,000 and perform physical inventories annually.** The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should establish the process to inventory the items and ensure the staff regularly maintains the inventory. The district should determine a dollar limit, such as $500, or a type of item, such as video equipment, that would create the lower end of the value range for the inventory listing. This will help the district ensure it has adequate insurance coverage and the information necessary to file a claim if a loss occurs.

- **Recommendation 61: Prepare summary financial reports for all budgeted funds for board approval and post them to the district's website monthly.** These reports will provide useful and accessible information for the board to understand and aid them in making sound financial decisions and evaluating performance. Posting the financial statements to the website will allow the district to inform the public about its financial operations.

- **Recommendation 62: Establish a cash flow forecasting process and conduct monthly updates to the forecast with actual data.** The forecast should be for at least six to twelve months from the current month. This will allow the district to monitor its cash position and ensure adequate funds are available to meet the district's future cash requirements.

- **Recommendation 63: Implement the positive pay system offered by the depository bank.** The chief accountant should contact the depository bank for the bank's specific agreement and procedures to implement the positive pay system. After completing the agreement and necessary steps to implement positive pay, the chief accountant should submit the district's data file to the depository bank each time the district issues checks. Implementing the positive pay system offered by the depository bank will reduce the risk of losses due to check fraud.

- **Recommendation 64: Establish a process to issue a request for proposal for external audit services every five years to ensure audit fees are competitive.** This process will provide continuity of audit services and allow the audit firms to spread the start-up costs associated with audits over the five-year period. This policy will also provide the district with assurance that the fees charged are competitive. LMISD should send the request to audit firms used by other school districts in Region 4 to expand the number of qualified firms. If the current auditor's performance is satisfactory, the district should include the current auditors in the RFP process.

- **Recommendation 65: Implement a training program and establish a training policy for all staff members in Business and Operations.** The business office should tailor the training for each individual and should include courses for each staff member's specific area of endeavor. The training program and policy will help to ensure the district complies with laws, rules, and regulations by providing current, relevant information to district employees.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MONITORING STATE FUNDING

LMISD uses the six weeks' state funding template provided by Regional Education Service Center XII (Region 12) that allows the district to monitor state funding based on actual

attendance during the course of the year. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations inputs actual attendance data into the template after each six weeks. The template calculates average daily attendance (ADA), special education and vocational full-time equivalents, and ADA for other student populations for which the district receives weighted funding. The template uses this information to calculate state funding based on actual attendance and compares the result to the legislative planning estimate (LPE) on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) summary of finance for LMISD.

The LPE is the state's estimate of the revenue the district will earn and is the basis for payments from the state to the school district. If the state has projected a higher ADA than the district actually attains, the district will receive more in payments from the state than it earns and will have to repay the state after the end of the fiscal year. By comparing the funding earned to the amount the state will pay the district each six weeks, the district is able to determine early on in the year whether it will owe money to the state after the end of the year.

LMISD also compares the state revenue generated by the template to the amount budgeted. If the revenue based on actual ADA for each six weeks is less than the amount budgeted, the district knows it must reduce planned expenditures to eliminate the impact of reduced revenue. Monitoring state revenue throughout the year at regular intervals provides LMISD critical information for decision-making and provides time to adjust planned expenditures.

DEPOSITORY AGREEMENT

The district has obtained a depository contract that provides interest rates above market. The district bid its depository contract as required by the Texas Education Code (TEC) Subchapter G in 2003. The TEC requires school districts to bid their depository contract at least once every two bienna. Districts may renew the depository contract for one biennium

if the terms and conditions of the contract and the services provided by the depository bank are satisfactory to them. The district elected to renew the depository contract in 2005. The depository bank pledges collateral of more than $20 million with the Federal Reserve Bank.

The district compares interest rates paid by the pools to those paid by the depository bank to ensure the district is receiving the highest rate of return on its idle cash. The district bids the depository contract at least every four years and awards the contract to the bank that provides the best value to the district.

The district receives an interest rate 14 to 18 basis points above the pools for demand deposits and 11 basis points more than the three-month Treasury bill yielded at August 26, 2005. **Exhibit 9-1** presents a comparison of the depository's interest rate paid to the district and other market rates.

The depository agreement provides services at no cost if the district maintains a compensating balance in the accounts. The compensating balance changes from month to month as interest rates increase and decrease. The depository charges an interest debit in the bank's account analysis that reduces the actual interest earnings under the agreement. Based on the balances in the depository bank on August 31, 2005, of $6.3 million, the difference in interest rates yields more than $2,400 annually after the bank charges.

By analyzing interest rates and obtaining and renewing a depository contract that provides interest rates above market on demand deposits, the district receives more revenue and ensures that all cash is producing maximum revenue.

HEALTH INSURANCE

LMISD eliminated its self-insured health plan when premiums were the same as the state plan and eliminated the risk of loss from self-insurance while minimizing the impact on district employees. The district was self-insured for health

EXHIBIT 9-1
LMISD INTEREST RATES
AUGUST 2005

INVESTMENT TYPE	COMPARATIVE INTEREST RATE	DEPOSITORY BANK RATE	DIFFERENCE
Lone Star Investment Pool	3.39%	3.57%	0.18%
TexSTAR Investment Pool	3.43%	3.57%	0.14%
Three-month Treasury Bill	3.46%	3.57%	0.11%

SOURCE: LMISD, Investment Report, August 2005; Federal Reserve Bank, Statistical Release, August 2005.

insurance through 2003–04. During 2003–04, the district made the decision to terminate the self-insurance fund and obtain coverage with TRS Active Care, the state health insurance plan for school districts. The district made the decision by comparing the coverage available under the district's self-insurance and the coverage available from TRS Active Care. The district found the coverage provided by the state plan to be equal or better and at no cost increase to employees. The district's analysis showed that it would have to increase the premiums charged to employees if it remained with the self-insurance plan.

The district contributes $225 a month for each employee with the employee responsible for the remaining cost. To reduce the losses the district was incurring with the self-insurance fund, the district raised the premiums to the same level as the state plan in 2003–04. **Exhibit 9-2** presents a summary of the district's self-insured health plan.

During this four-year period, the district lost more than $245,000. In 2002–03 and 2003–04, the district lost more than $719,000 because claims exceeded premiums. At the end of 2003–04, the district funded all outstanding claims against the self-insurance fund with a transfer from the General Fund. The district reports that the run-off claims against the self-insurance fund have been less than the amount the district funded in 2003–04. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said the run-off claims were less than anticipated, and the district received additional funds from the stop loss policy in 2004–05 that will reduce the district's loss.

By discontinuing the self-insured health plan when premiums were the same as the state plan, the district eliminated the risk of loss from self-insurance and minimized the impact on district employees.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BUDGET PROCESS (REC. 58)

LMISD adopted deficit budgets each year since 1999–2000 and does not have an effective budget process that ensures that budgeted funds are aligned with district priorities. A school district's budget represents the planned expenditures for the year and is the basis for determining the tax rate. The budget process is methodical and includes phases for development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring.

The budget process in LMISD began in May 2005 for the 2005–06 budget. The district estimated revenue based on enrollment projections, student attendance, and tax collections. Schools develop their budgets based on allocations provided by the administration with input of the site-based decision-making committee, and departments develop budgets based on prior year budgets and demonstrated needs. The schools and departments enter their proposed budgets into the district's budget module of the accounting software, and the accountant prints the compiled budget for administrative review. The administration presented the proposed budget to public and board for discussion, consideration, and approval on August 29, 2005. Prior to this presentation, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations made an oral presentation to the board regarding the budget at the June 9, 2005, meeting. **Exhibit 9-3** presents a comparison of the LMISD 2005–06 budget process with a model budget process.

The process used by LMISD lacks key elements for effectiveness. The district did not provide sufficient time for the board, public, administrators, program managers, and teachers to have input in the budget process. The lack of adequate time to plan the budget has caused some program budgets not to reflect the program at the school. For example,

EXHIBIT 9-2
LMISD HEALTH SELF-INSURANCE FUND
2000-01 THROUGH 2003-04

FINANCIAL COMPONENT	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Operating Revenues	$1,631,876	$1,730,118	$1,624,622	$1,433,838
Operating Expenses	$1,615,174	$1,272,599	$2,125,106	$1,653,079
Operating Income (Loss)	$16,702	$457,519	($500,484)	($219,241)
Non-operating Revenues (Expenses)	$1,433	$5,019	$4,508	$460,268
Change in Net Assets	$18,135	$462,538	($495,976)	$241,027
Net Assets - Beginning	($225,724)	($207,589)	$254,949	($241,027)
NET ASSETS - ENDING	**($207,589)**	**$254,949**	**($241,027)**	**$0**

SOURCE: LMISD, Audit Report, 2000–01 through 2003–04.

EXHIBIT 9-3
COMPARISON OF MODEL TO LMISD BUDGET PROCESS

MODEL BUDGET PROCESS		LMISD BUDGET PROCESS
ACTION	WHEN	ACTION
Board evaluates previous year's financial performance.	December	Audit report reviewed in January.
Board reviews and revises district goals.	January	Not done
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations establishes and disseminate budget calendar.	January	No budget calendar
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations estimates revenue based on enrollment projections, student attendance, and tax collections.	February	May
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations establishes staffing ratios and student allocations.	February	No staffing ratios. Allocations in May.
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations presents preliminary budget to board.	March	August 29
Principals develop budgets based on allocations with input of site-based decision-making committees.	March to April	May 10 to May 24
Department managers develop budgets based on prior year and demonstrated needs.	March to April	May 10 to May 24
Superintendent and management review of the budget.	May	June
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations presents preliminary budget to public and board.	June	August 29
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations receives certified appraised values and revises budget as necessary.	July	July
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations presents the proposed budget at workshops.	August	August 29
The board holds a public hearing on the budget.	August	August 29
The board adopts the budget.	August	August 29
The board adopts a tax rate to support the budget.	September	August 29
The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations monitors the budget to ensure expenditures are reflective of the plan.	September to August	Quarterly reports prepared listing accounts exceeding budget.
The board amends the budget as necessary.	September to August	Although board approves budget amendments, some funds routinely exceed the budgeted expenditures.

SOURCE: Review team, November 2005; LMISD, budget documents, September 2005.

the budget for the gifted and talented (G/T) program does not align with the schools that have the program, and the amount budgeted exceeds the true program costs. The district reported a budget for G/T of more than $1 million in 2005–06 and expects to receive less than $60,000 from the state based on 168 students participating in the program. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said the 2005–06 budget was not correct due to the inappropriate coding of some teachers' salaries to the program when the teachers did not spend all their time working with the program.

The board adopted a deficit budget for 2005–06 with two board members voting against it. The board has adopted a

deficit budget each year since 1999–2000. The district's budget planning mode is to operate in a deficit position even though the district rarely ends the year in a deficit position.

One reason that the district does not end up in a deficit position by the end of the year is that it does not expend the budget completely during the year. For example, the district did not expend almost $719,000 or 5.8 percent of the General Fund budget intended for instruction in 2003–04. The district expended 50.85 percent of operating expenditures on instruction and did not meet the TEA standard of at least 54 percent of operating expenditures for instruction. In addition to its failure to meet the standard for instructional costs, the district's administrative cost ratio of 0.1427 also exceeded

the TEA standard administrative cost ratio of 0.1401 based on the size of the district. Administrative costs, which include general administration costs such as expenditures for the superintendent, board, business office, and data processing, are too high as demonstrated by the ratios. Failing to meet the TEA standards is another result of the district's budget not being aligned with the district's priorities.

The Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) states, "Responsibility for preparation of district budget guidelines and the budget calendar lies primarily with district administrators and the superintendent. Because these guidelines and the calendar create a framework for the entire budget development process, their careful design is critical to an efficient and effective process." LMISD does not use a budget calendar as recommended by the FASRG.

The review team surveyed students, parents, teachers, and staff to obtain input on district operations. Survey

respondents rated the district's operations based on survey statements for all functional areas of the district. **Exhibit 9-4** presents the respondents views of the district's budget process. The respondents rated the process as poor to average in most cases. Approximately two-thirds or more of respondents from all groups rated the ability of the public to provide sufficient input in the budget process as poor to average. More than two-thirds of responding parents, support staff, students, and teachers rated the ability of the superintendent and administrators to manage effectively the district's budget as poor to average; however, 50 percent or more of administrators and principals rate this statement as good to excellent. Fifty-five percent or more of respondents from all groups rated the effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process as poor to average.

By not having a more effective budget process, the district has misreported program expenditures, routinely adopted a

EXHIBIT 9-4
LMISD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE ABILITY OF THE PUBLIC TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INPUT DURING THE BUDGET PROCESS.						
Administrator	15.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Parent	19.0%	33.3%	22.6%	7.1%	3.6%	14.3%
Principal	0.0%	33.3%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%	13.3%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	23.4%	25.0%	37.5%	4.7%	0.0%	9.4%
Student	36.8%	26.3%	29.8%	3.5%	1.8%	1.8%
Teacher	9.6%	21.9%	43.9%	8.8%	0.9%	14.9%
THE ABILITY OF THE SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATORS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE DISTRICT'S BUDGET.						
Administrator	15.0%	25.0%	5.0%	35.0%	15.0%	5.0%
Parent	20.2%	25.0%	29.8%	9.5%	2.4%	13.1%
Principal	0.0%	6.7%	26.7%	46.7%	13.3%	6.7%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	18.8%	28.1%	31.3%	12.5%	1.6%	7.8%
Student	36.8%	19.3%	31.6%	7.0%	3.5%	1.8%
Teacher	13.2%	20.2%	36.0%	13.2%	4.4%	13.2%
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SITE-BASED BUDGETING IN INVOLVING PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS IN THE BUDGET PROCESS.						
Administrator	15.0%	15.0%	25.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Parent	13.1%	11.9%	45.2%	8.3%	2.4%	19.0%
Principal	0.0%	26.7%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	6.7%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	17.2%	21.9%	45.3%	10.9%	0.0%	4.7%
Student	36.8%	21.1%	35.1%	1.8%	3.5%	1.8%
Teacher	7.0%	28.9%	38.6%	12.3%	2.6%	10.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

deficit budget, and failed to meet state standards for administrative costs and percent of budget expended on instruction.

Many school districts use a budget process that contains four components—development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring. Some school districts use budget calendars to outline these parts of the budget process. For example, Navasota ISD uses a budget calendar to communicate to the board and staff key dates and events included in the process.

The development stage begins after the board evaluates the previous year's financial performance to determine the district's financial health and reviews district goals to ensure they reflect the priorities of the district for inclusion in the budget. The development stage involves members of the administration and may take several months from the time they generate revenue estimates, provide allocations to schools and departments, the schools and departments submit budgets, and they compile the budget into a format for presentation.

The presentation phase includes presentation of the preliminary budget to the board in public meetings, refinement of the budget based on input from the board, presentation of the proposed budget in the public hearing on the budget, and presentation to the board for consideration and adoption.

After adoption, the final component is monitoring. The administration monitors expenditures to ensure the budget accounts for them and prepares amendments for board approval as necessary.

The district should modify the budget process to include model practices in each component of the process— development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring. The superintendent should develop the budget calendar with process components and the board should approve it so that all participants understand the budget development process and their role in it. This should include the role of the administration, schools, and departments in the process. The board members are the elected representatives of the public, and the administration must inform them about the district's budgetary priorities and constraints. Allowing sufficient time for the board and public to review the budget information before budget approval will help to build public trust concerning the financial affairs of the district. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should monitor the budget monthly, ensure that expenditures do not exceed

budgets, and prepare necessary budget amendments for the board's approval.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 59)

LMISD does not have an effective contract management process that ensures the district is receiving the best value for the price paid. The district contracts with three different companies for its maintenance, food service, and transportation functions. In 2003–04 the district recorded more than $4.4 million in expenditures for miscellaneous contracted services. This amount includes contracts for transportation, food service, and maintenance and represents almost 10 percent of district expenditures in all budgeted funds—General Fund, debt service fund, food service fund, and capital projects fund.

Contract management is the responsibility of the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. Two of the three contracted services were in place before the district employed the current assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. Contract management in the district does not include conducting cost-benefit studies, formal evaluations, or establishing performance measures for each of the services. Exhibit 9-5 presents information about each of the contracted services. The transportation, food service, and facilities chapters of this report present details concerning each of these contracts.

Recurring bids for the contracted services help to ensure a district is receiving a competitive price for the services purchased. Conducting a cost-benefit analysis is a fundamental step in initially outsourcing a function and in continuing to outsource the function. The cost-benefit analysis identifies whether the district should continue outsourcing the function or whether it would be better off returning the function to a district-operated one.

A formal evaluation process is essential to contract management and documents achievements, areas for improvement, and failures. An evaluation process must have established performance measures, benchmarks, milestones, and reporting requirements to be effective. Regular communication with the contractor is necessary to focus efforts, solve problems, provide feedback, and monitor progress.

Contractors perform better when their performance affects the contract price. Contracts that increase prices without consideration of performance do not provide the contractor with an incentive to produce more or gain efficiencies for

the district. If the only option available to a district is to give the increase based on an index or terminate the contract, the district will generally grant the increase due to the costs associated with contract termination. For example, the maintenance contract has a number of duties and responsibilities such as implementing the preventive maintenance system and reviewing energy use enumerated for the contractor that have not been met or accomplished. LMISD continues to pay for the services, has renewed the contract, has increased the contract payments, and has not documented the failure of the contractor to perform in these areas.

By not including the elements presented in **Exhibit 9-5** in the district's contract management process, LMISD cannot be sure it is receiving the best value for the price paid. The district is also unable to prove the contractors did not provide the services the district purchased in case of a dispute, demonstrate that contracting for the service is the best value for the district, and adjust the price paid based on the contractor's performance.

Many districts have strict contract management and compliance procedures to ensure that contracting processes are efficient and effective. Contract managers in these districts know the terms and conditions of the contract, understand the workings of the operation contracted out, ensure through observation that the contractor properly provides services, and review all data submitted by the contractor to ensure it is reasonable and meets contract terms. These contract managers also conduct formal evaluations to document performance, communicate performance to the contractor, and determine contract renewal. These contract managers also monitor the contract extensions and renewals to ensure the district has complied with applicable procurement laws. Hays CISD contracts food service to a vendor and has assigned contract management duties to the district's Chief Financial Officer (CFO). As part of the formal evaluation of the contracted services, the CFO surveys students, teachers, and administrators annually to determine customer satisfaction.

The district should revise the contract management process to include elements necessary to ensure the district is receiving value for the price paid. These elements include assessing the competitiveness of the contractor's fee, determining whether the district should continue to outsource the service, providing the contractor and board with a formal evaluation based on performance measures established for each contract, documenting regular communication between the district and contractor, and linking some or all of contractor fee increases to performance.

EXHIBIT 9-5
LMISD CONTRACTED SERVICES
SEPTEMBER 2005

ELEMENTS	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT	TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT
Last time the contracted service was bid.	2003	2005	1990
Cost-benefit study conducted since service initially outsourced?	No	No	No
Formal evaluation process for the contracted service?	No	No	No
Performance measures in contract?	No, but includes listing of contractor's duties	No	No
Frequent interaction with the contractor's management?	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally
Regular reports from the contractors?	No	Monthly Newsletter	No
Increases in contract price tied to contractor performance?	No	No	No
How are annual contract increases established?	Greater of 3% or CPI*	CPI*	CPI*

* The district automatically adds the change in the consumer price index (CPI) to the contract price each year.
SOURCE: LMISD, interview with assistant superintendent of Business and Operations, September 2005; LMISD, contract documents, September 2005.

ASSET CONTROLS (REC. 60)

LMISD does not have adequate inventory controls that reduce the risk of loss of district assets. The district does not maintain a central list of property costing less than $5,000. The district uses $5,000 as the capitalization threshold for fixed assets and maintains an inventory listing of fixed assets in the business office that the accountant updates annually. The fixed assets include buildings, vehicles, equipment, and land. The list of fixed assets agrees to the information in the financial statements.

TEA defines fixed assets as purchased or donated items that are tangible with a unit cost of greater than $5,000 and a useful life of more than one year. Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 34 requires districts to depreciate fixed assets, increasing the importance of the fixed asset management system. Planning and control of fixed asset transactions are crucial to the long-range financial plan of the district due to the costs associated with additions and replacement of fixed assets. **Exhibit 9-6** presents information on the district's fixed assets.

LMISD expenses computers, peripherals, cameras, televisions, video players, and other items costing less than $5,000 when purchased. Vendors and the district warehouse staff deliver items to the department or school that purchased them. The district leaves any controls over these assets to the individual school or department.

The review team received a spreadsheet containing an inventory of computers in the district from the district's technology specialist. The total number of computers listed was 953, with 746 systems on the network and 207 systems not on the network or not in service. The inventory did not contain serial numbers, date of purchase, purchase price, model number, location, or other information used to provide controls over fixed assets. The listing is an automated audit

of the machines attached to the district's network and a physical inventory of the machines not on the network. The list contains the machine's location, operating system, CPU performance, CPU type, and assigned printer.

The district is placing itself at risk of loss of property and equipment by not requiring the maintenance of complete and regular inventories and the taking of physical inventories for items less than $5,000. Since an inventory does not exist, the district cannot hold anyone responsible for items costing less than $5,000. The lack of control of items under $5,000 makes it impossible for the district to file an accurate insurance claim in a catastrophic loss or if a major theft occurs and puts the district at risk of not purchasing the appropriate amount of insurance coverage. The district does not know what equipment it has due to the lack of physical inventories. By not knowing what equipment the district owns, it may purchase the same asset for different locations when the locations could have shared the asset. This action would reduce the amount of funds available for other necessary purchases, such as purchasing additional computers for instructional purposes.

The FASRG states, "Certain capital assets, such as furniture and equipment, should be inventoried on a periodic basis. Annual inventories taken at the end of the school term before the staff members leave are recommended. Discrepancies between the capital asset/inventory list and what is on hand should be settled. Missing items should be listed and written off in accordance with established policy."

Many districts maintain a separate inventory list of property costing less than $5,000 but more than a set amount and perform physical inventories annually to ensure the district has an internal control mechanism for reducing the risk of loss. These districts also ensure they have adequate insurance coverage and the information necessary to file a claim if a

EXHIBIT 9-6
LMISD FIXED ASSETS
AUGUST 31, 2005

CATEGORY	BEGINNING BALANCE	ADDITIONS	DELETIONS	TRANSFERS	ENDING BALANCE
Land	$655,736				$655,736
Buildings & Improvements	$58,583,729			$15,593,661	$74,177,390
Furniture & Equipment	$3,207,130	$16,300	$395,175		$2,828,255
Construction in Progress	$7,297,184	$15,610,702		$(15,593,661)	$7,314,225
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	**$69,743,779**	**$15,627,002**	**$395,175**	**$0**	**$84,975,606**

Source: LMISD, Business Office, September 2005.

loss occurs. For example, Austwell-Tivoli ISD maintains a comprehensive listing of all its fixed assets. One list contains all fixed assets such as buildings, buses, land, food service equipment, vehicles, and other equipment costing $5,000 or more. Another listing includes items not defined as fixed assets, such as video cameras, digital stopwatches, computers and peripherals, and desks and chairs. District employees inventory all assets annually. The district uses a local optional expenditure code to ensure that it captures the value of purchases on the inventory through a reconciliation process.

The district should establish an inventory process for items costing less than $5,000 and perform physical inventories annually. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations should establish the process to inventory the items and ensure the staff regularly maintains the inventory. The district should determine a dollar limit, such as $500, or a type of item, such as video equipment, that would create the lower end of the value range for the inventory listing. This will help the district ensure it has adequate insurance coverage and the information necessary to file a claim if a loss occurs.

The listing should include item description, purchase date, cost, location, serial number, model number, and other information necessary to identify the items. The initial listing may not include all information the district decides to maintain, such as cost, since it purchased some items previously and the information may not be available for these items. The business office can record future purchases of items included in the list to a local optional expenditure code to ensure it captures the value of purchases on the inventory through a reconciliation process.

FINANCIAL REPORTS (REC. 61)

LMISD does not provide the board and public with easy-to-read summary financial reports and analyses that clearly present the district's financial operations. The financial reports presented to the board and public are for the General Fund. The reports do not present information for the other funds with board-adopted budgets—food service fund, capital projects fund, or debt service fund. The only time the board and public receive any information on the food service fund, capital projects fund, or debt service fund is in the annual financial and compliance report issued after the end of the fiscal year. The administration presents this report to the board in a public meeting for its consideration and approval.

The reports are a financial system printout at the fund, function, and detailed object level showing budget, period expenditures, encumbrances, year-to-date encumbrances and expenditures, budget remaining, and percent of budget spent. While these financial statements present a large amount of information, this type of information is generally readable by accountants or school administrators, not by the board or general public.

The accountant prepares the financial reports that the district presents to the board as part of the consent agenda. Although the board routinely pulls the reports from the agenda for action in the following month, the minutes do not indicate any discussion on the reports pulled and accepted as financial information. During the review team's interviews with board members, they raised few concerns about the overall financial information they receive in monthly meetings.

The review team surveyed students, parents, teachers, and staff to obtain input on district operations. Respondents rated the district's operations based on survey statements for all functional areas of the district. **Exhibit 9-7** presents the respondents views of the availability and understandability of the districts financial statements. While 40 percent of administrators and 33.3 percent of principal respondents think the district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read and rated them as good to excellent, more than 70 percent of all other groups think they are poor to average. More than 35 percent of all parents, support staff, and students that responded rated the financial reports as poor to below average.

By not providing financial information monthly in a more understandable format, the board and public do not have adequate information that they can use in decision-making or evaluating performance. The board and public are unable to determine easily whether the district is complying with the budget, whether expenditures are occurring at the same pace as the prior year, and the status of the district's other budgeted funds.

The objective of financial reporting is to provide accurate and useful information that is useful in decision-making. Users of accounting information include personnel within the school district, government agencies, the legislature, creditors, and the general public. The FASRG states, "The basic objectives for accounting and financial reporting for public school districts are to provide information useful for evaluating managerial and organizational performance and communicate relevant information in a manner which best facilitates its use." To monitor the district's financial position, the board and public need the information presented in the reports summarized at the function level such as instruction,

EXHIBIT 9-7
LMISD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE DISTRICT'S FINANCIAL REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND READ.						
Administrator	5.0%	20.0%	30.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Parent	14.3%	22.6%	33.3%	7.1%	4.8%	17.9%
Principal	6.7%	26.7%	20.0%	33.3%	0.0%	13.3%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	12.5%	23.4%	48.4%	9.4%	0.0%	6.3%
Student	31.6%	19.3%	36.8%	8.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Teacher	8.8%	10.5%	55.3%	10.5%	1.8%	13.2%

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent because of rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

central administration, and transportation. Information summarized at the function level is easier to read and understand, documents that the district is meeting the legal requirements for budgetary compliance, and uses only one page rather than 25 to 30 pages.

Many districts provide summary monthly financial reports and other pertinent information to the board and the public. This information may include an analysis of expenditures for the period to date with the same period to date from the previous year. This type of analysis provides explanations for significant differences between the two periods and alerts the board and public to changes in expenditure patterns. For example, Navasota ISD presents monthly financial reports to board that it summarizes at the function level such as library and food service. **Exhibit 9-8** presents Navasota's General Fund financial report for September 2005. In addition, some districts such as Bastrop ISD (www.bastrop.isd.tenet.edu) post their financial statements to their website to provide the public and other interested parties with current financial information.

The district should prepare summary financial reports for all budgeted funds for board approval and post them to the district's website monthly. These reports will provide useful and accessible information for the board to understand and aid it in making sound financial decisions and evaluating performance. Posting the financial statements to the website will allow the district to inform the public better about the financial operations of the district.

CASH FLOW FORECAST (REC. 62)

LMISD does not use a cash flow forecast to monitor its cash position and ensure that adequate funds are available to meet

the district's cash requirements. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said he knows how much cash the district has available and what the monthly expenditures are, and he would know whether the district needed additional cash. He also said the district has prepared reports showing monthly expenditures for a three-year period and reviewed its revenue stream; however, it does not follow this practice on a formal or regular basis. While the district has not had to borrow funds to meet its monthly obligations, LMISD is dependent on local property taxes for more than 78 percent of its revenue in 2005–06.

The county does not levy local property taxes until October, and most districts do not begin to receive significant amounts of tax collections until December. The district receives the majority of its state funding in September and October of each year with its final payment in September of the following year. This is due to the legislature moving the August payment to September. As expenditures continue to increase, the district requires additional cash each month. The district's payroll and contracted services require the majority of the district's cash and do not fluctuate significantly during the course of the year. In addition, there are no seasonal cash requirements.

The district budgeted expenditures of $25,994,500 and revenues of $24,700,000 with a projected beginning fund balance of $2,600,000 for 2005–06. **Exhibit 9-9** shows the cash flow deficit for the first two months of 2005–06, based on expenditures being made equally over the year, state revenues being received as scheduled, and all other revenues, except current property taxes, being received equally over the year.

EXHIBIT 9-8
NAVASOTA ISD MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2005

FUNCTION	BUDGET WITH AMENDMENTS	EXPENDITURES TO DATE	BALANCE REMAINING	PERCENT EXPENDED
11 - Instruction	$9,670,854	$831,447	$8,839,407	8.60%
12 - Library	$272,170	$22,057	$250,113	8.10%
13 - Staff Development	$45,900	$2,172	$43,728	4.73%
21 - Instructional Leadership	$428,321	$38,449	$389,872	8.98%
23 - School Leadership	$994,245	$91,082	$903,163	9.16%
31 - Guidance/Counseling	$449,783	$37,047	$412,736	8.24%
33 - Health Services	$183,838	$12,626	$171,212	6.87%
34 - Transportation	$1,120,000	$0	$1,120,000	0.00%
35 - Food Service	$2,154	$720	$1,434	33.43%
36 - Co-Curricular	$725,600	$46,207	$679,393	6.37%
41 - Administration	$1,026,992	$56,406	$970,586	5.49%
51 - Maintenance	$2,414,600	$100,902	$2,313,698	4.18%
52 - Security	$57,000	$2,338	$54,663	4.10%
53 - Data Processing	$548,197	$17,953	$530,244	3.27%
93 - Shared Services	$226,000	$0	$226,000	0.00%
TOTAL	**$18,165,654**	**$1,259,404**	**$16,906,250**	**6.93%**

SOURCE: Navasota Independent School District, board report, September 2005.

EXHIBIT 9-9
LMISD CASH FLOW DEFICIT
2005–06

SOURCE (USE) OF CASH	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	CUMULATIVE
Current Tax Revenue	$0	$0	$0
Local Revenue	$257,807	$257,807	$515,614
State Revenue	$1,345,690	$1,103,169	$2,448,859
Total Revenue	$1,603,497	$1,360,976	$2,964,473
Expenditures	($2,166,208)	($2,166,208)	($4,332,416)
CASH SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	**($562,711)**	**($805,232)**	**($1,367,943)**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Division of State Funding Payment Schedule for 2005–06; LMISD Revenue Calculation report, 2005–06.

If the district did not have adequate cash on hand at the beginning of the year for the General Fund, the district would have needed to borrow cash to cover the monthly outflows and incurred an additional cost in the form of interest paid on the money borrowed. The district's 2005–06 budget forecasts a fund balance of $1,305,500 at the end of 2005–06. If all of the projected fund balance represents readily available cash and a cash deficit exists as represented in **Exhibit 9-9**, the district will need to borrow cash to cover expenditures in October 2006.

The process for a district to borrow funds for cash shortfalls requires the district to project cash needs for the next 12 months to demonstrate the need. The board must authorize the administration to issue tax revenue anticipation notes (TRAN) or borrow funds from a bank to cover shortfalls.

By not having current cash flow forecasts, the district may need cash before it has time to receive board authorization and complete the borrowing process. The district would be unable to meet its financial obligations until a bank approved loaning the money and the board approved borrowing the money. Short-term bank loans generally have a higher rate of interest than a TRAN, and a TRAN takes longer to complete. The additional interest costs would reduce the amount of funds available to support the district's teaching and learning process.

Many school districts use cash flow forecasts to monitor their cash position and ensure adequate funds are available to meet cash requirements. For example, Austwell–Tivoli ISD (ATISD) uses a cash flow template obtained from TEA and updates the spreadsheet with actual data monthly to provide a more accurate projection of the district's cash position. The bookkeeper for ATISD is responsible for maintaining the template, monitoring the updated information, and alerting the superintendent if the district's cash position is projected to near a deficit. **Exhibit 9-10** presents an excerpt from the ATISD 2004–05 cash flow forecast.

The district should establish a cash flow forecasting process and conduct monthly updates to the forecast with actual data. The forecast should be for at least six to twelve months from the current month. This practice will allow the district to monitor its cash position and ensure adequate funds are available to meet its future cash requirements.

The district should use information such as historical tax collections for each month and the TEA payment schedule to determine the inflows of budgeted revenue. It should use historical expenditure patterns to determine the outflows of

EXHIBIT 9-10
AUSTWELL-TIVOLI ISD CASH FLOW FORECAST
2004-05

	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Beginning Cash Balance	$507,438	$205,697	$264,880	$421,869
RECEIPTS				
Transfers From CDs	$0	$150,000	$0	$0
Tax Collections - Current	$0	$28,000	$3,646,349	$81,871
Tax Collections - Delinquent	$3,955	$3,323	$1,903	$1,131
Penalties & Interest	$0	$725	$757	$564
Other Local Revenue	$2,221	$7,118	$4,298	$4,484
State Revenue - Available School Fund	$2,466	$7,399	$5,590	$6,412
State Revenue - Foundation	$14,131	$10,991	$0	$0
Other State Revenue	$2,911	$2,750	$1,250	$1,250
Federal Indirect	$5,254	$367	$6,426	$62,195
Total Revenue	$30,938	$210,673	$3,666,573	$157,907
DISBURSEMENTS				
Payroll Net Checks	$70,915	$64,667	$63,452	$63,341
TRS Deposit	$19,869	$19,853	$20,658	$20,687
IRS Deposit	$13,694	$12,293	$11,161	$11,168
Deduction Checks	$17,762	$16,852	$17,041	$17,260
Total Payroll	$122,240	$113,665	$112,312	$112,456
Transfers to CDs	$0	$0	$3,300,000	$0
Cash to TEA	$147,443	$0	$0	$0
Expenditures Other Than Payroll	$62,996	$37,826	$97,271	$101,943
Total Expenditures	$332,679	$151,491	$3,509,583	$214,399
Net Change in Cash	($301,741)	$59,182	$156,990	($56,492)
Ending Cash Balance	$205,697	$264,879	$421,870	$365,377
CDS				
Beginning Cash Balance	$300,000	$300,000	$150,000	$3,450,000
Cashed Out CDs	$0	($150,000)	$0	$0
Purchased CDs	$0	$0	$3,300,000	$0
Ending Balance	$300,000	$150,000	$3,450,000	$3,450,000
TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENTS	**$505,697**	**$414,879**	**$3,871,870**	**$3,815,377**

SOURCE: Austwell–Tivoli Independent School District bookkeeper, May 2005.

budgeted expenditures. Inputting actual data on a monthly basis and updating the forecasted inflows and outflows to include the remainder of the budgeted revenue and expenditures should maintain the cash flow forecast.

FRAUD CONTROL (REC. 63)

LMISD does not have a method to ensure that the depository bank only cashes checks issued and authorized by the district. Section 3-406 of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) governs negligence contributing to forged or altered checks. The UCC states, "A person whose failure to exercise ordinary care substantially contributes to an alteration of an instrument or to the making of a forged signature on an instrument is precluded from asserting the alteration or the forgery against a person who, in good faith, pays the instrument or takes it for value or for collection." The law would consider the failure to use anti-fraud systems provided by the bank to help deter fraud to be a failure on the customer's part to exercise ordinary care that may shift the liability for fraudulent checks to the customer.

The district reconciles all bank accounts on a monthly basis to ensure that the bank balance and the book balance in the cash accounts agree after including the effect of outstanding checks and deposits. The reconciliation process will detect whether the bank cashed fraudulent checks. However, simply detecting the fraudulent activity may not be enough to protect the district from a loss of cash, given the shift in responsibility.

The district's depository bank offers a positive pay system, but the district does not use the system. Positive pay is a daily reconciliation of the district's data file of checks issued to the bank's data file of checks actually paid. The district's data file of checks is an electronic list of checks issued including the amount of the check submitted to the bank. The bank rejects any checks that do not match the district's data file of checks and notifies the district on a daily basis of the checks rejected. The depository bank agreement lists the cost of using the positive pay service as $50 each month plus an additional $2.50 for each exception report.

By not having a method to ensure that the depository bank only cashes checks issued and authorized by the district, LMISD is at risk of loss due to check fraud. The positive pay system offered by the depository bank is one process that reduces the risk of losses due to fraud. By using positive pay, the burden of protecting against check fraud shifts from the district to the bank.

Many school districts use positive pay to ensure that the bank processes only authorized checks. For example, South San Antonio ISD uses the positive pay system through its depository bank to ensure the school district is protected against check fraud. One of the district's bookkeepers transmits the data file of the district's checks to the depository bank each time the district issues a check run. The bookkeeper transmits the data file electronically, and the bank provides the district with confirmation that it received the file. If the depository bank rejects any checks, it notifies the bookkeeper who researches the check to confirm the bank should reject it.

The district should implement the positive pay system offered by the depository bank. The chief accountant should contact the depository bank for the bank's specific agreement and procedures to implement the positive pay system. After completing the agreement and necessary steps to implement positive pay, the chief accountant should submit the district's data file to the depository bank each time the district issues checks. Implementing the positive pay system offered by the depository bank will reduce the risk of losses due to check fraud.

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is $730 annually based on the depository agreement's monthly charge and receiving one exception report each week (($50 monthly charge x 12 months= $600) + ($2.50 exception report cost x 52 weeks = $130) = $730).

EXTERNAL AUDIT (REC. 64)

LMISD does not have a policy for the periodic competitive procurement of external audit services. The district has used the same audit firm since 1996, almost 10 years, and has not issued a request for proposal (RFP) since the current firm was engaged. The district engages the audit firm for three-year periods and, at the end of each period, the administration has recommended re-engaging the audit firm for an additional three years. At the July 10, 2003, meeting, the board approved an administrative recommendation to contract with the same external audit firm for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2003, and the two subsequent years. The current engagement ends with the audit of the August 31, 2005, year.

As shown in **Exhibit 9-11**, LMISD had the second highest increase in external audit fees from 1999–2000 through 2003–04 when compared to peer districts. The fees paid in each year are for the audit of the preceding year. Fees were significantly higher for all districts in 2002–03 due to the implementation of new auditing and reporting standards and the TEA requirement for the dropout and state compensatory

EXHIBIT 9-11
LMISD AND PEERS AUDIT COSTS
1999-2000 THROUGH 2003-04

DISTRICT	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	PERCENT CHANGE 1999-2000 TO 2003-04
Lancaster	$12,900	$20,707	$23,843	$25,175	$76,385	492.1%
LA MARQUE	$14,000	$18,600	$20,775	$42,550	$26,250	87.5%
Navasota	$13,650	$13,750	$15,350	$30,900	$21,000	53.8%
Texas City	$28,354	$22,600	$33,900	$58,350	$41,239	45.4%
Palestine	$20,360	$17,080	$16,000	$23,825	$16,800	(17.5%)

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 1999-2000 through 2003-04.

education audits. The district has not taken any measures to determine the reasonableness of the fees during this period.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that governmental entities use a competitive process for the selection of independent auditors on a periodic basis and that the process actively seek all qualified firms available to perform the annual audit. Although not required by law, the FASRG states, "A request for a proposal from independent audit firms can enhance the effectiveness of the audit procurement process."

The GFOA also recommends multiyear agreements of at least five years in duration when obtaining the services of independent auditors. The GFOA states, "Such agreements allow for greater continuity and help to minimize the potential for disruption in connection with the independent audit. Multiyear agreements can also help to reduce audit costs by allowing auditors to recover certain "startup" costs over several years, rather than over a single year." The FASRG concurs that an annual RFP is not appropriate and states, "Expenses for administering and preparing the request for qualifications can be substantial."

By not issuing an RFP for external audit services, the district cannot be sure that the fees it is paying are competitive.

Many school districts have established policies for the periodic use of a competitive process for the procurement of external audit services. Some of these school districts use the example RFP available in the FASRG and some include the cost of the service as one of the evaluation criteria. These school districts issue the RFP after the external auditor has issued the last audit report for the current engagement cycle. For example, San Benito Consolidated ISD (SBCISD) has a policy of seeking proposals every five years. Its policy does not exclude the possibility of re-engaging the same audit firm when it evaluates proposals. The external audit firm for

SBCISD has performed the annual audit for more than six years. SBCISD has continuity in the audit process with assurance that the fees are competitive.

The district should establish a process to issue a request for proposal for external audit services every five years to ensure audit fees are competitive. This process will provide continuity of audit services and allow the audit firms to spread the start-up costs associated with audits over the five-year period. This process will also provide the district with assurance that the fees charged are competitive. LMISD should send the request to audit firms used by other school districts in Region 4 to expand the number of qualified firms. If the current auditor's performance is satisfactory, the district should include the current auditors in the RFP process.

STAFF TRAINING (REC. 65)

LMISD does not provide training opportunities for the support staff in Business and Operations to stay current in school business practices. The administration cross-trains staff for all functions in the business office, and the district has a comprehensive business operations manual.

While staff members did confirm that the district provided the necessary training for the implementation of the software changes several years ago, it has not provided adequate training related to the day-to-day operations of the business office. One example of the lack of training is the staff's belief that the current transportation contract is for management services only and does not need to be re-bid. Another example is the staff belief that comparing a price from one vendor to a purchasing cooperative vendor complies with the purchasing laws and allows the district to purchase from the lowest-priced vendor.

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations said that he was able to participate in a number of training sessions that included those required for the district's investment

officer in December 2004. The payroll and benefits supervisor has been to training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The payroll and benefits supervisor is the district's HIPAA privacy officer, whom the law requires to attend various training related to the act.

The review team requested information on all training provided to business office staff and on the amount of funds budgeted for training. For 2005–06, the budget includes $52,950 for staff training in the Business and Operations budget. The budget designates some of these funds for staff training for the conversion to the new version of the accounting software, and the remainder is available to provide other training for staff members. **Exhibit 9-12** presents a summary of the training hours reported for each position for 2004–05. The training received includes all training reported for each position including training provided by LMISD staff members. The training programs included a variety of topics including CPR, health insurance, payroll, purchasing, account codes, legal issues for school administrators, and professional organization meetings. In addition to the training received, several staff members reported teaching training sessions for LMISD personnel and training other employees.

EXHIBIT 9-12
LMISD BUSINESS OFFICE TRAINING
2004–05

POSITION	TRAINING HOURS RECEIVED
Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations	78.0
Chief Accountant	10.0
Accountant	11.0
Accounts Payable Clerk	7.0
Payroll and Benefits Supervisor	5.0
Payroll Assistant	6.0
Secretary/Purchasing	4.5

SOURCE: LMISD, Business and Operations, September and December 2005.

Without regular training, the support staff may not be aware of changes in various laws, rules, and regulations that affect its day-to-day activities. The lack of training can result in the district inadvertently violating laws, rules, or regulations and exposing the district and its employees to possible criminal and civil penalties.

Adequate training helps ensure the district remains in compliance with the FASRG, purchasing laws, and other rules and regulations. The Regional Education Service Centers (Regions), Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO), and other organizations provide numerous training opportunities for all facets of business and operations at reasonable costs. Some of the training is part of a curriculum that leads to certifications in school business, such as certified school business official or certified school business specialist.

School districts provide training opportunities to the business office staff members to ensure they have comprehensive, current knowledge of their area of endeavor. Some school districts establish a training policy for the business and operations staff that sets a minimum number of training hours that each staff member must receive annually. Some of these districts use a curriculum established by professional organizations in addition to the staff members' specific area of work to determine the courses employees attend. For example, Navasota ISD provides an average of 30 hours training for all business office staff. It provides the training through the Regions and professional organizations. In addition, the district encourages business office staff to obtain professional certifications by paying for the training required to obtain and maintain the certification.

LMISD should implement a training program and establish a training policy for all Business and Operations staff. The business office should tailor the training for each individual and should include courses for each staff member's specific area of endeavor. The training will help to ensure the district complies with laws, rules, and regulations by providing current, relevant information to district employees.

If each of the seven staff members receives 30 hours of training annually, the cost of the training is $200 for eight hours, and if the district does not incur travel costs, the training program would cost $5,250 annually (7 staff x (30 hours / 8 hours) x $200 per 8 hours of training = $5,250), or less than 10 percent of the amount budgeted for training in 2005–06. If the staff members travel to Houston to receive training on four separate days during the year, travel costs for mileage would be $32 (72 miles x $0.445 per mile) and $30 for meals, for a total of $62 per day. Total travel costs would be $1,736 ($62 x 4 days x 7 staff members). Total costs for training including travel would be $6,986 ($5,250 + $1,736).

LMISD can implement this recommendation by expending existing budgeted resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
58. Modify the budget process to include model practices in each component of the process--development, presentation, adoption, and monitoring.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
59. Revise the contract management process to include elements necessary to ensure the district is receiving the best value for the price paid.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
60. Establish an inventory process for items costing less than $5,000 and perform physical inventories annually.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
61. Prepare summary financial reports for all budgeted funds for board approval and post them to the district's website monthly.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
62. Establish a cash flow forecasting process and conduct monthly updates to the forecast with actual data.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
63. Implement the positive pay system offered by the depository bank.	($730)	($730)	($730)	($730)	($730)	($3,650)	$0
64. Establish a process to issue a request for proposal for external audit services every five years to ensure audit fees are competitive.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
65. Implement a training program and establish a training policy for all staff members in Business and Operations.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTALS-CHAPTER 9	($730)	($730)	($730)	($730)	($730)	($3,650)	$0
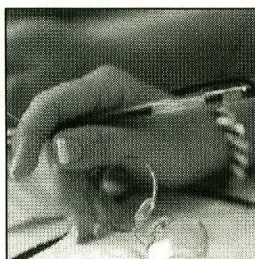
Appendices

La Marque Independent School District
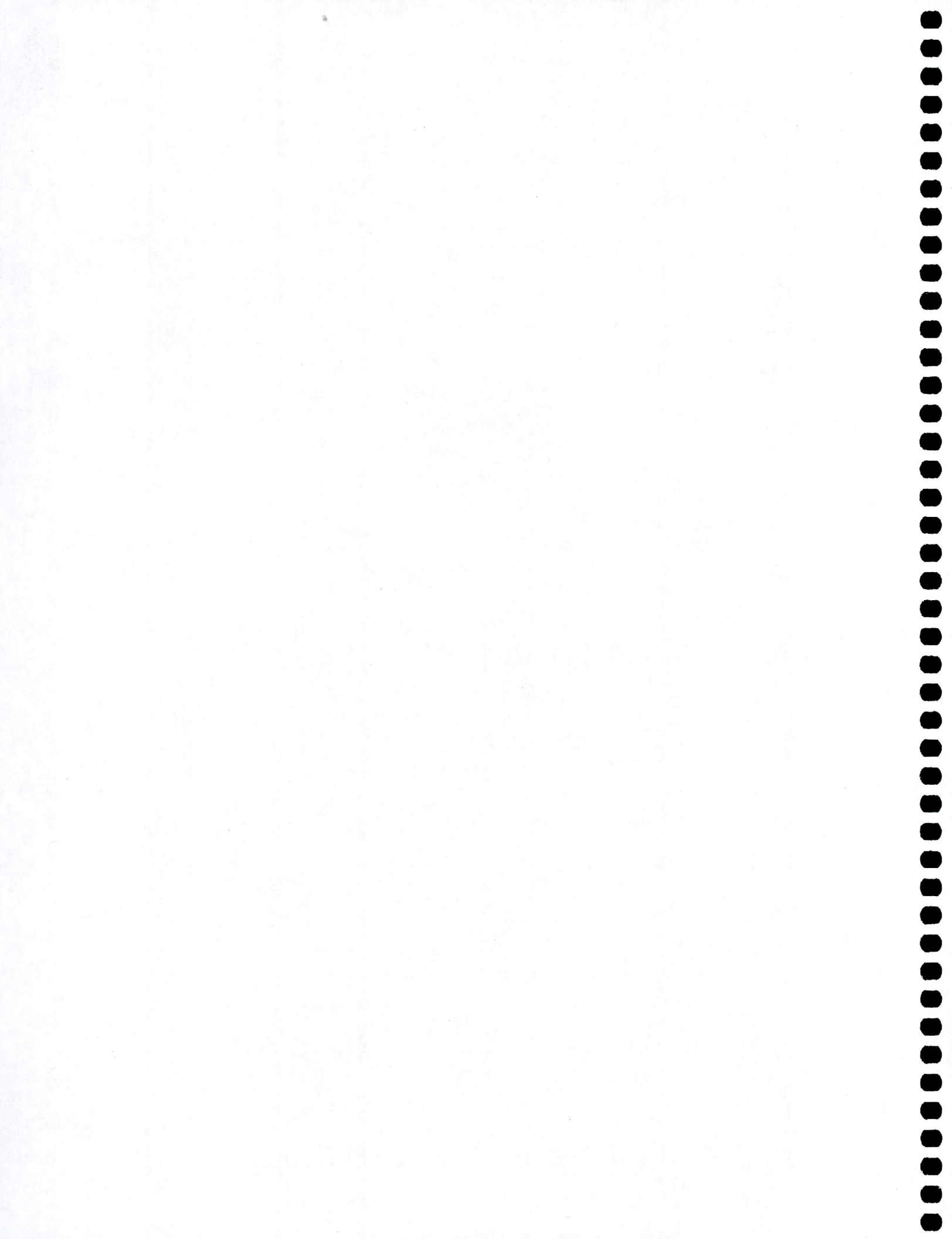
GENERAL INFORMATION

CHAPTER 1
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

ORGANIZATION, STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS, AND STAFFING

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides information on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), student demographics, staffing, and financial data to school districts and the public through the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). This chapter uses data from both systems.

Exhibit A-1 presents the district's organization for educational service delivery in 2004–05. An assistant superintendent heads the Curriculum and Instruction Department.

With input from the La Marque Independent School District (LMISD), the review team selected four Texas school districts to serve as "peer districts" for comparison purposes: Lancaster, Navasota, Palestine, and Texas City. LMISD had the second highest percentage of African American students, the lowest percentage of Hispanic students, and the second lowest percentage of Anglo students. LMISD occupied the middle position or third highest in the percentage of

EXHIBIT A-1
LMISD INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION
2004–05
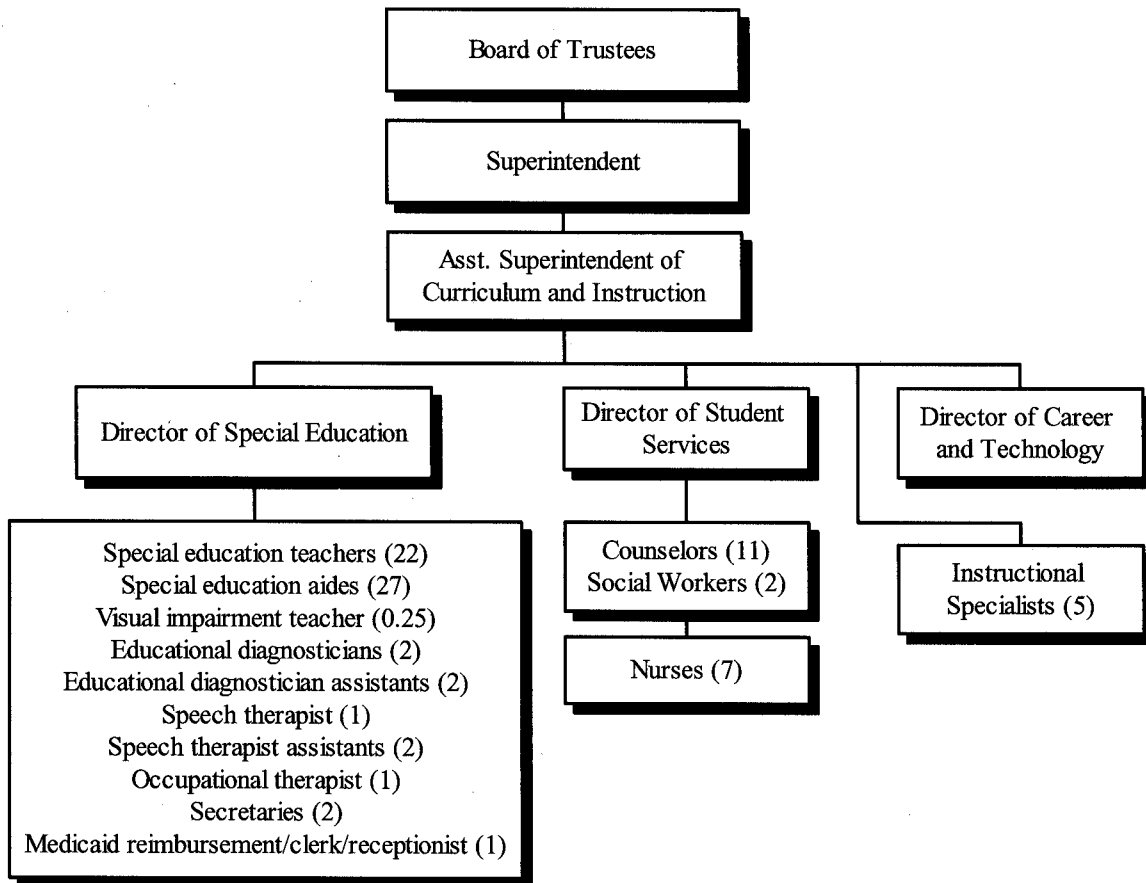
NOTE: The Special Education box does not include contract staff; it lists special education teachers and aides although these report to the principals.
SOURCE: LMISD Instructional Services Department, September 2005. Updated January 2006.

economically disadvantaged students among its peers (**Exhibit A-2**).

During 2004–05, LMISD employed 413.9 full-time equivalent personnel of whom 245.2 or 59.2 percent were teachers. The percentage of teachers, professional support, campus administration, and central administration in LMISD was higher than the percentage statewide. LMISD's percentage of auxiliary staff was less than one-half the state average (**Exhibit A-3**). LMISD had nearly six times the percentage of African American teachers than the state average.

The percentage of beginning teachers in LMISD was higher than the regional and state averages and the second highest among peer districts (**Exhibit A-4**). Its percentage of teachers with one to five years of experience was also second highest among its peers. More than 50 percent of LMISD teachers had five or fewer years of experience. LMISD had the second lowest percentages of teachers with six to twenty years of experience, below regional and state averages. LMISD occupied the middle position among its peers in the percentage of teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

EXHIBIT A-2
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004–05

DISTRICT	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	RACIAL/ETHNIC PERCENT				PERCENT ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
		AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ANGLO	OTHER	
Texas City	5,699	19.0%	33.1%	47.0%	0.9%	55.2%
Lancaster	5,197	75.7%	17.6%	6.4%	0.4%	60.1%
LA MARQUE	3,730	68.6%	16.2%	14.7%	0.5%	62.2%
Palestine	3,329	30.3%	28.7%	39.8%	1.1%	65.8%
Navasota	2,921	29.1%	32.6%	37.9%	0.5%	64.4%
REGION 4	962,286	21.3%	41.6%	31.4%	5.7%	53.5%
STATE	4,383,871	14.2%	44.7%	37.7%	3.3%	54.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-3
STAFF INFORMATION
LMISD AND STATE
2004–05

CATEGORY	DISTRICT TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL DISTRICT STAFF	STATE TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL STATE STAFF
Teachers	245.2	59.2%	294,258.3	50.4%
Professional Support	50.4	12.2%	46,785.3	8.0%
Campus Administration	12.8	3.1%	16,219.2	2.8%
Central Administration	7.6	1.8%	5,704.3	1.0%
Educational Aides	42.7	10.3%	59,539.7	10.2%
Auxiliary Staff	55.2	13.3%	161,253.0	27.6%
TOTAL	413.9	100.0%	583,759.8	100.0%
RACE/ETHNICITY OF TEACHERS:				
African American	119.6	48.8%	26,241.8	8.9%
Hispanic	14.5	5.9%	57,396.1	19.5%
Anglo	107.1	43.7%	206,776.9	70.3%
Other	4.0	1.6%	3,843.4	1.3%
TOTAL*	245.2	100.0%	294,258.2	100.0%

*Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-4
PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004–05

DISTRICT	BEGINNING	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
Lancaster	29.9%	33.0%	13.9%	16.9%	6.3%
LA MARQUE	20.2%	30.2%	14.5%	17.7%	17.4%
Palestine	12.2%	21.3%	17.1%	25.7%	23.8%
Navasota	7.6%	24.9%	21.3%	29.6%	16.6%
Texas City	3.8%	21.2%	20.7%	29.0%	25.3%
REGION 4	8.5%	31.3%	18.8%	22.6%	18.8%
STATE	7.7%	28.7%	19.4%	24.5%	19.7%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

Its percentage of teachers with more than 20 years of experience was slightly lower than the regional and state rates.

LMISD's share of teachers without a degree in 2004–05 was similar to the regional and state averages. LMISD had the highest percentage among its peers of teachers with master's degrees, although this percentage was lower than the regional and state averages (**Exhibit A-5**).

PEIMS provides information on the percentage of students enrolled in and the percentage of teachers assigned to various program areas. In 2004–05, LMISD had the second lowest percentage of students in Gifted and Talented (G/T) and the lowest percentage of students in bilingual/ESL programs. LMISD's percentages of students in G/T and bilingual/ESL education were below the regional and state averages (**Exhibit A-6**). It had the highest percentage of students and teachers in career and technology education (CTE). It also had the highest percentage of students in special education, but the

lowest percentage of special education teachers. LMISD's percentages of students in CTE and special education were above the state and Region 4 averages.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Student performance on the statewide assessment test is one of the primary factors in determining a district's accountability ratings. In 2002–03, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) replaced the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). TAKS, administered in grades 3 through 11, is more rigorous than the TAAS. The state ensured that TAKS adheres to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates for student performance by creating a panel of 350 educators and citizens who completed all necessary research and subsequently recommended TAKS passing standards for adoption by the State Board of Education (SBOE). In addition, the SBOE agreed to a transition plan to phase in the panel's recommended passing

EXHIBIT A-5
DEGREE STATUS OF TEACHERS
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004–05

DISTRICT	PERCENT OF TEACHERS WITH DEGREE				
	NO DEGREE	BACHELORS	MASTERS	DOCTORATE	TOTAL*
Lancaster	3.7%	81.6%	13.8%	0.9%	100.0%
Palestine	1.6%	82.1%	16.3%	0.0%	100.0%
LA MARQUE	1.2%	79.2%	19.2%	0.4%	100.0%
Texas City	0.5%	80.4%	18.8%	0.3%	100.0%
Navasota	0.0%	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	100.0%
REGION 4	1.3%	74.9%	23.0%	0.8%	100.0%
STATE	1.1%	77.1%	21.3%	0.5%	100.0%

*Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-6
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND TEACHERS BY PROGRAM
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004–05

DISTRICT	BILINGUAL/ ESL	CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SPECIAL EDUCATION	REGULAR EDUCATION
LA MARQUE					
STUDENTS	2.3%	30.4%	3.6%	13.0%	*
TEACHERS	0.5%	5.5%	3.3%	9.2%	76.2%
LANCASTER					
Students	6.0%	19.5%	4.7%	10.2%	*
Teachers	0.7%	5.1%	0.0%	11.9%	79.3%
NAVASOTA					
Students	7.6%	21.8%	3.4%	10.1%	*
Teachers	4.9%	5.4%	3.9%	11.2%	68.0%
PALESTINE					
Students	8.7%	20.4%	3.8%	10.7%	*
Teachers	3.7%	5.0%	0.2%	10.5%	64.7%
TEXAS CITY					
Students	6.8%	15.1%	6.2%	10.2%	*
Teachers	0.7%	3.6%	0.9%	10.1%	80.5%
REGION 4					
Students	17.0%	18.8%	7.4%	10.1%	*
Teachers	9.5%	3.2%	3.0%	10.1%	69.2%
STATE					
Students	14.4%	20.3%	7.7%	11.6%	*
Teachers	8.6%	4.0%	2.2%	10.3%	69.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

standard over a three-year period. For 2002–03, the standard set was two standard errors of measurements (SEMs) below the panel recommendation. In 2003–04, the passing standard for grades 3 through 10 was one SEM below the panel recommendation with full implementation of the passing standards in 2005. There is a one-year delayed phase-in for the grade 11 exit-level TAKS with full implementation of panel passing recommendations in 2005–06.

Under the TAKS, grades 3 through 11 receive math assessments. Reading assessments occur in grades 3 through 9 and English language arts in grades 10 and 11. Writing is assessed in grades 4 and 7; social studies in grades 8, 10 and 11; and science in grades 5, 10 and 11. The exit-level examination takes place at grade 11. Students must pass the exit-level statewide assessment test in grade 11 in order to graduate from high school.

The state also transitioned to a new accountability system in spring 2004. The previous accountability rating system used a combination of TAAS results and annual dropout rates, whereas the new system uses a combination of TAKS results and longitudinal high school completion rates. Prior to 2003–04, the annual dropout rate included the percent of students in grades 7 through 12 who leave school during a school year for reasons other than graduation, receipt of a general equivalency diploma (GED), death, or continuance of an education elsewhere. In 2003–04, the annual dropout rate represented only grades 7 and 8 dropouts. The longitudinal completion rate is the percentage of students entering grade 9 who, four years later, graduated, earned a GED, or are still in school at the time the class graduates. AEIS provides data for districts on both the annual dropout rate and the longitudinal completion rate.

The State Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA), introduced in 2001, assesses special education students in

grades 3 through 8 who receive instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) but for whom the statewide assessment test is not an appropriate measure of academic performance. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills is the state curriculum that specifies the courses that districts must offer and the knowledge and skills requirements for each grade level and subject area. The SDAA test assesses special education students in reading, writing, and math in their appropriate instructional levels as determined by their admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees. The ARD committee is a committee that determines the individual education plan for every student in special education.

For 1999–2000 through 2001–02, LMISD had a Recognized rating. During that three-year period, the district increased its number of Recognized and Exemplary schools from five in 1999–2000 to seven in 2001–02. In 1999–2000, one LMISD school received an Exemplary rating; in 2001–02 four schools were rated Exemplary (**Exhibit A-7**). In 2001–02, all LMISD were either Recognized or Exemplary. In 2002–03, 2003–04, and 2004-05, the district and all its schools received ratings of Academically Acceptable.

LMISD's high school graduation rate was above the state and Region 4 rates for the classes of 2000, 2001, and 2002. It was above the Region 4 rate but below the state rate for the class of 2003. It was below the Region 4 and state rates for the class of 2004 (**Exhibit A-8**). A larger percentage of LMISD high school students in the class of 2002, 2003, and 2004 stayed in high school than the state and Region 4

percentages. LMISD had a lower longitudinal dropout rate than Region 4 and the state for all these years. LMISD's dropout rate decreased from 3.5 percent for the class of 2000 to 0.8 percent for the class of 2002 and 2003 but increased to 2.7 percent for the class of 2004.

LMISD had the lowest percentage of graduates for the class of 2003 and 2004 among its peers. It had the third lowest percentage of graduates for the class of 2002 and 2001. LMISD had the lowest percentage of dropouts for the class of 2003 and 2002 compared with peer districts, the second highest for the class of 2004 and 2001 (**Exhibit A-9**).

Mathematics is the only content area tested in all nine grades. The passing rates of LMISD students in mathematics in 2004–05 ranged from a high of 66 percent in grade 3 to a low of 27 percent in grade 9. Seven grades receive testing in reading, and the passing rates ranged from a high of 79 in grade 3 to a low of 56 percent in grade 4. Schools test science and social studies in three grades, with the highest passing rates for both subjects in grade 11. The lowest pass rate in science was in grade 10 at 31 percent. The lowest pass rate in social studies was in grade 8 at 65 percent. The highest pass rate for all tests combined was 58 percent in grade 3, and the lowest pass rate, 14 percent, was in grade 10 (**Exhibit A-10**).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

The district's guidance and counseling program is decentralized. Counselors and social workers report to the principal on their campus. The director of Student Services

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EXHIBIT A-7
LA MARQUE ISD ACOUNTABILITY RATINGS
1999–2000 THROUGH 2004-05

YEAR	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
DISTRICT RATING	RECOGNIZED	RECOGNIZED	RECOGNIZED	ACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE
La Marque High School	Acceptable	Acceptable	Exemplary	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
La Marque Middle School	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Highlands Elementary	Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Inter-City Elementary	Recognized	Acceptable	Exemplary	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Lake Road Elementary	Recognized	Exemplary	Recognized	Closed	Closed	Closed
Simms Elementary	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Westlawn Elementary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Early Childhood Learning Center	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated
Galveston JJAEP	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency District Accountability Summary Reports for 1999–2000 through 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-8
PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN THE CLASS OF 2001
THROUGH CLASS OF 2004
WHO GRADUATED, RECEIVED A GED,
CONTINUED HIGH SCHOOL, OR DROPPED OUT
FOR STATE, REGION 4, AND LMISD

GRADUATING CLASS	STATE	REGION 4	LMISD
CLASS OF 2004			
Graduated	84.6%	82.8%	77.5%
Received GED	4.2%	4.3%	7.3%
Continued HS	7.3%	8.4%	12.6%
Dropped Out	3.9%	4.5%	2.7%
CLASS OF 2003			
Graduated	84.2%	81.6%	82.4%
Received GED	3.3%	3.3%	2.5%
Continued HS	7.9%	9.4%	14.2%
Dropped Out	4.5%	5.7%	0.8%
CLASS OF 2002			
Graduated	82.8%	81.4%	88.0%
Received GED	4.1%	4.3%	0.8%
Continued HS	8.0%	9.4%	10.4%
Dropped Out	5.0%	5.0%	0.8%
CLASS OF 2001			
Graduated	81.1%	79.7%	82.0%
Received GED	4.8%	5.1%	4.1%
Continued HS	7.9%	9.1%	9.0%
Dropped Out	6.2%	6.1%	4.9%
CLASS OF 2000			
Graduated	80.7%	79.3%	84.8%
Received GED	4.8%	5.2%	3.5%
Continued HS	7.3%	8.2%	8.1%
Dropped Out	7.2%	7.3%	3.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2001–02 through 2004–05.

provides districtwide coordination, primarily through day-long monthly meetings. This position does not supervise the counselors or evaluate them.

Each school has at least one counselor. There are two social workers based at the secondary schools who work districtwide. In addition, a retired counselor works 20 hours per week at the Lake Road Education Center to address the needs of students in the Power alternative education program and the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). LMISD added a third counselor at La Marque High School in the fall of 2005 to help address student performance issues.

Each counselor or social worker meets the education and certification requirements for their position as set out in the position's job description. There has been significant turnover of counseling staff, especially at the high school, which has replaced two counselors in the last two years.

Exhibit A-11 describes the guidance staffing, counselors, and social workers at each school and compares each campus staffing to standards established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). SACS is one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States that promote school improvement. LMISD guidance staffing meets or exceeds the SACS standards on every campus.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION/
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Texas Education Code Chapter 29 requires that schools provide every Texas student identified as limited English proficient a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) program. Limited English proficiency (LEP) students are those whose primary language is different from English and whose English language proficiency limits their participation in an English-language academic environment.

The state requires all school districts with 20 or more limited proficiency students in the same grade level to offer bilingual/ESL or an alternative language program. Schools must provide bilingual education in pre-kindergarten 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.

The law requires school districts to identify limited English proficiency students and provide bilingual or ESL programs as an integral part of their regular educational programs. They must hire certified teaching personnel to ensure that these students have full educational opportunities.

LMISD does not have a bilingual program because it had fewer than 20 limited English proficiency (LEP) students at each elementary grade level until 2005–06. LMISD serves LEP students in grades K–12 through an English as a second language (ESL) program. A teacher administers the ESL program and reports to the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

In 2004–05, LMISD had 97 LEP students that represented 2.6 percent of its student population. Of that number, ESL

EXHIBIT A-9
PERCENT OF STUDENTS GRADUATING AND DROPPING OUT
CLASSES OF 2001, 2002, 2003, AND 2004
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4 AND STATE

| | CLASS OF 2004 | | CLASS OF 2003 | | CLASS OF 2002 | | CLASS OF 2001 | |
DISTRICT	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)	PERCENT GRADUATES	PERCENT DROP OUTS (4-YEAR)
Lancaster	92.9%	1.7%	92.3%	1.5%	91.1%	2.2%	89.2%	2.3%
Palestine	85.9%	2.4%	92.0%	3.0%	90.1%	2.8%	91.4%	1.4%
Texas City	81.0%	3.7%	82.8%	3.8%	77.0%	2.8%	81.6%	3.2%
Navasota	80.5%	0.5%	89.0%	2.1%	85.3%	3.6%	74.9%	6.8%
LA MARQUE	77.5%	2.7%	82.4%	0.8%	88.0%	0.8%	82.0%	4.9%
·REGION 4	82.8%	4.5%	81.6%	5.7%	81.4%	5.0%	79.7%	6.1%
STATE	84.6%	3.9%	84.2%	4.5%	82.8%	5.0%	81.1%	6.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2001–02 through 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-10
PERCENTAGE OF LMISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED (IN ENGLISH)
MEETING TAKS STANDARD BY SUB-TEST AND GRADE
2004–05

| | | PERCENT OF LMISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD | | | | | | |
GRADE	LMISD/ STATE	READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Grade 3*	LMISD	79%	66%					58%
	State	89%	82%					76%
Grade 4	LMISD	56%	60%	86%				44%
	State	80%	82%	91%				70%
Grade 5*	LMISD	57%	51%			39%		30%
	State	75%	80%			64%		55%
Grade 6	LMISD	72%	50%					47%
	State	86%	73%					69%
Grade 7	LMISD	64%	35%	79%				32%
	State	81%	65%	89%				60%
Grade 8	LMISD	73%	39%				65%	34%
	State	84%	62%				85%	58%
Grade 9	LMISD	66%	27%					28%
	State	83%	58%					56%
Grade 10	LMISD		30%		58%	31%	78%	14%
	State		59%		68%	55%	85%	40%
Grade 11*	LMISD		62%		80%	61%	87%	46%
	State		81%		88%	81%	95%	69%

*First administration only.
NOTE: Blank cells indicate that test not given at that grade level.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05.

programs had 87, or 89.7 percent, enrolled. The other 10 students, whose parents refused ESL services, were in the regular education program. LMISD was the only district among its peers that did not have a bilingual program. LMISD had the lowest percentage of ESL students among its peers, lower than Region 4 and the state (**Exhibit A-12**). LMISD's percentages of ESL budget and per student expenditures were the lowest among its peers and lower than the state percentage.

In 2004–05, LMISD had the lowest percentage of bilingual/ESL teachers among its peers: 0.5 percent (**Exhibit A-13**). LMISD's percentage of bilingual/ESL teachers was also lower than Region 4 and the state averages of 9.5 and 8.4 percent,

EXHIBIT A-11
COMPARISON OF LMISD GUIDANCE STAFFING TO STANDARDS

SCHOOL	2005–06 ENROLLMENT	LMISD GUIDANCE STAFFING	SACS STANDARDS	DIFFERENCE
Early Childhood Learning Center	502	1.0	1.0	0.0
Highlands Elementary	345	1.0	0.5	0.5
Inter City Elementary	371	1.0	0.5	0.5
Simms Elementary	372	1.0	0.5	0.5
Westlawn Elementary	317	1.0	0.5	0.5
La Marque Middle	851	3.0	2.0	1.0
La Marque High	1,131	5.0	2.5	2.5
TOTAL	3,889*	13.0	7.5	5.5

*Enrollment does not include students enrolled in the Galveston County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP).
SOURCE: LMISD PEIMS enrollment data, November 1, 2005, 2005–06 Staffing Roster, and SACS Public School Standards, 2005.

EXHIBIT A-12
BILINGUAL/ESL PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4 AND STATE
2004–05

DISTRICT	STUDENTS ENROLLED IN BILINGUAL/ESL	PERCENT OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT	BUDGETED EXPENDITURES	PERCENT OF BUDGETED EXPENDITURES	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURES
Texas City	388	6.8%	$1,186,409	4.3%	$3,058
Lancaster	313	6.0%	$169,798	0.8%	$542
Palestine	290	8.7%	$734,413	4.9%	$2,532
Navasota	222	7.6%	$123,253	1.0%	$555
LA MARQUE	87	2.3%	$46,789	0.3%	$538
REGION 4	163,459	17.0%	*	*	*
STATE	631,534	14.4%	$958,029,942	4.5%	$1,517

*Information not available.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS and PEIMS (budget), 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-13
BILINGUAL/ESL TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIO
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004–05

DISTRICT	STUDENTS ENROLLED IN BILINGUAL ESL	BILINGUAL ESL TEACHERS	PERCENT OF BILINGUAL/ESL TEACHERS TO TOTAL TEACHERS	STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIO
Texas City	388	2.7	0.7%	143.7:1
Lancaster	313	2.2	0.7%	142.3:1
Palestine	290	8.5	3.4%	34.1:1
Navasota	222	9.4	4.9%	23.6:1
LA MARQUE	87	1.1	0.5%	79.1:1
REGION 4	163,459	5,727.3	9.5%	28.5:1
STATE	631,534	24,790.4	8.4%	25.5:1

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05.

respectively. LMISD's bilingual/ESL student-to-teacher ratio of 79.1 to 1 was more than twice as high as the regional ratio of 28.5 to 1 and the statewide ratio of 25.5 to 1.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION/ ADVANCED ACADEMICS

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

Exhibit A-14 shows G/T students, teachers, and expenditures for LMISD, peer districts, Region 4, and the state in 2004–05. LMISD had the second lowest percentages among its peers of G/T students; it had the second highest percentage of G/T teachers. LMISD also had the highest percentage of G/T budget and the highest per student expenditures among its peers and the state.

The LMISD G/T budget for 2005–06 is $1,074,778. The LMISD budget for 2004–05 was $1,172,249, up from $713,985 in 2003–04 and $783,484 in 2002–03. LMISD had the highest percentage of G/T budget among its peers from 2000–01 through 2004–05 (**Exhibit A-15**). The percentage of G/T budget was also above Region 4 and state rates.

Each school has a G/T campus identification committee. The committee consists of a campus administrator, G/T teacher, and the campus counselor. The committee reviews the nomination and assessment data to determine what students qualify for the G/T program.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), districts must provide appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of their severity. The Act requires districts to provide educational services in the "least restrictive environment" and to include students with disabilities in state and district assessment programs. The law also requires districts to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each of these students with input from general education teachers. The IEP has to provide special education students with curricula that are similar to those of students in general education classrooms, but are appropriate for the special education student's academic level.

Exhibit A-16 provides LMISD's special education enrollment and budgeted expenditures in 2004–05. LMISD had the highest percentage of students in special education among its peers. The percentage of LMISD students in special education was also above Region 4 and state averages. LMISD's special education budget as a percent of total expenditures was third highest among its peers but below the state percentage.

EXHIBIT A-14
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS AND TEACHERS
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4 AND THE STATE
2004–05

| DISTRICT | G/T STUDENT ENROLLMENT | | G/T TEACHERS | | EXPENDITURES FOR G/T | |
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER*	PERCENT	AMOUNT PER STUDENT	PERCENT
Texas City	351	6.2%	3.4	0.9%	$2,886	3.7%
Lancaster	245	4.7%	0.0	0.0%	$8	0.0%
LA MARQUE	134	3.6%	8.2	3.3%	$9,602	7.4%
Palestine	127	3.8%	0.5	0.2%	$479	0.4%
Navasota	99	3.4%	7.5	3.9%	$1,170	0.9%
REGION 4	71,442	7.4%	1,793.8	3.0%	**	**
STATE	337,650	7.7%	6,452.8	2.2%	$1,099	1.8%

*Expressed in Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs).
**Data not available.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, and PEIMS (budget), 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-15
PERCENTAGE G/T PARTICIPATION AND BUDGET
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND THE STATE
2000-01 THROUGH 2004-05

| | 2000-01 | | 2001-02 | | 2002-03 | |
DISTRICT	PERCENT G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT G/T BUDGET	PERCENT G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT G/T BUDGET	PERCENT G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT G/T BUDGET
Lancaster	6.1%	1.1%	7.0%	1.0%	5.6%	0.4%
LA MARQUE	5.8%	10.2%	5.4%	8.4%	4.5%	6.2%
Texas City	5.7%	5.5%	5.7%	5.0%	5.6%	5.6%
Palestine	5.0%	0.4%	4.1%	0.4%	4.3%	0.4%
Navasota	2.7%	1.0%	3.4%	1.1%	2.9%	0.7%
REGION 4	8.2%	1.8%	7.4%	2.0%	7.2%	2.0%
STATE	8.4%	1.8%	8.2%	1.8%	7.8%	1.8%

| | 2003-04 | | 2004-05 | |
DISTRICT	PERCENT G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT G/T BUDGET	PERCENT G/T STUDENTS	PERCENT G/T BUDGET
Lancaster	5.4%	0.3%	4.7%	0.0%
LA MARQUE	3.6%	5.1%	3.6%	7.4%
Texas City	5.8%	4.7%	6.2%	3.7%
Palestine	4.5%	0.4%	3.8%	0.4%
Navasota	3.2%	1.1%	3.4%	0.9%
REGION 4	7.3%	1.7%	7.4%	*
STATE	7.8%	1.7%	7.7%	1.8%

*Data not available.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2000-01 through 2004-05, and PEIMS 2004-05.

EXHIBIT A-16
BUDGETED SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES
LMISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 4, AND STATE
2004-05

CATEGORY	TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	PERCENT OF TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	BUDGETED SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURES	PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES
Texas City	585	10.3%	$4,466,955	16.3%
Lancaster	530	10.2%	$1,947,363	9.4%
LA MARQUE	485	13.0%	$2,375,609	13.6%
Palestine	356	10.7%	$2,359,111	15.8%
Navasota	294	10.1%	$1,701,173	13.2%
REGION 4	96,946	10.1%	*	*
STATE	506,391	11.6%	$3,092,765,030	14.6%

*Data not available.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2004-05, and PEIMS, 2004-05 (budget).

Exhibit A-17 shows the percentage of LMISD students by disability in 2004–05. Of the 485 special education students served, 46.2 percent have learning disabilities, 16.9 percent have speech impairments, and 14.8 percent have other health impairments.

LMISD participates in the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program and receives reimbursement for services. The state amended its Medicaid program in September 1992, allowing school districts to enroll as Medicaid providers and apply for Medicaid reimbursement for services they are providing to students with disabilities. SHARS provides

EXHIBIT A-17
LMISD STUDENTS ENROLLED
SPECIAL EDUCATION
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS
BY PRIMARY DISABILITY
2004-05

DISABILITY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
Learning Disability	224	46.2%
Speech Impairment	82	16.9%
Mental Retardation	52	10.7%
Other Health Impairment	72	14.8%
Orthopedic Impairment	*	*
Autism	11	2.3%
Emotional Disturbance	25	5.1%
Auditory Impairment	5	1.0%
Visual Impairment	5	1.0%
Other	5	1.0%
TOTAL	*	*

*Totals and 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: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD, Special Education Department, September 2005.

reimbursement for services determined to be medically necessary and reasonable to ensure that a child with disability under the age of 21 receives the benefits of a free and appropriate public education. Services include assessment, audiology, counseling, medical services, school health services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, physiological services, and associated transportation. LMISD received SHARS reimbursements totaling $80,395 between 2002–03 and 2004–05 (**Exhibit A-18**). The Texas Association of School Boards assists LMISD with the submission and collection of SHARS funds. According to the LMISD special education director, SHARS amounts vary because what districts can bill changes annually and depends on the children qualifying for Medicaid reimbursement.

EXHIBIT A-18
LMISD SHARS FUNDS
2002-03 THROUGH 2004-05

YEAR	SHARS FUNDS
2002-03	$24,646
2003-04	$38,864
2004-05	$16,885
TOTAL	**$80,395**

SOURCE: LMISD, Special Education Department, September 2005.

Students coming into the district who may qualify do not always have the appropriate Medicaid paperwork and the district cannot receive reimbursement for services rendered to them.

LIBRARY AND MEDIA SERVICES

In May 1997, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) adopted the School Library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards. The state evaluated the guidelines in 2002 with revisions adopted in March 2004. Their purpose is to ensure that students and staff become effective users of ideas and information, enabling them to be literate, lifelong learners. To accomplish this task, the state expects school library programs to provide instruction in information gathering and the evaluation of resources, individual guidance, and access to materials in multiple formats. The guidelines offer criteria that identify library programs as Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, or Below Standard in the areas of the library learning environment, curriculum integration, resources, library program management, and facilities. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, Subpart 4 – Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, emphasizes the importance of libraries. NCLB considers libraries as resources for improving literacy skills and academic achievement of students by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials, a well equipped, technologically advanced school library media center, and well trained, professionally certified school library media specialists.

In addition to the school libraries, the Reading First grant has funded classroom libraries in all K–3 classrooms and elementary special education classrooms. The Early Childhood Learning Center and each elementary school also have a literacy library with leveled student books for small group instruction and professional texts for teacher use.

DUAL CREDIT

Students have the opportunity to enroll in dual credit courses at La Marque High School through the College of the Mainland. Students can graduate with up to 30 hours of dual credit. **Exhibit A-19** lists the courses offered and the class enrollments for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

**EXHIBIT A-19
LA MARQUE ISD
DUAL CREDIT COURSES
2004–05 AND FALL 2005–06**

COURSE OFFERED	CLASS ROSTERS (NUMBER OF STUDENTS)	
	2004–05	2005–06 FALL SEMESTER
JUNIOR YEAR		
United States History*	18	16
Psychology	18	15
Sociology	19	16
SENIOR YEAR		
English*	20	20
Government	20	19
Economics	19	21
Humanities	**	19

*United States History and English are year long courses.
**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: LMISD Student Services Department, December 2005.

CHAPTER 2
DISTRICT MANAGEMENT
AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

Board meetings occur monthly on the second Thursday of each month. Regular meetings are held at 7 PM in the boardroom of the LMISD Administration Building, located at 1727 Bayou Road in La Marque, Texas. The public is welcome to attend all meetings, and citizens wishing to address the board about specific agenda items or other issues are encouraged to register on the day of the regular board meeting before the meeting begins. Each member of the public may speak for five minutes on specific agenda items during the Public Participation section of the agenda. The board will not deliberate, discuss, or make decisions on public comments during Public Participation. Citizens cannot comment on individuals by name or position in public session.

The superintendent develops the agenda for board meetings with input from the board president. Board members, the superintendent, and members of the superintendent's cabinet may offer items for inclusion on the agenda. Board packets are distributed to board members on the Friday or Monday before the board meeting.

The superintendent's secretary prepares the official minutes of all open meetings. The board secretary, along with other board members, reviews the official minutes of all meetings for accuracy and completeness before approval. LMISD makes audiotapes of open meetings and keeps them on file for up to a year. The Communications officer prepares a newsletter called Board Notes immediately following the regular meetings, posts it on the website, and sends it by email to approximately 1,000 recipients.

The superintendent meets with the cabinet on most Mondays and with principals on a monthly basis. The cabinet includes the two assistant superintendents; the directors of Student Services, Career and Technology Education and Testing, Special Education, and Personnel and Operations; and the Communications Officer. Cabinet meetings typically last two to three hours and include status reports by administrators on operations, extensive discussions of issues that face the district, new reporting requirements or other mandates, and planning for monthly board meetings.

OPEN MEETINGS AND INFORMATION REQUESTS

The district has policies in place to address the requirements of the Open Meetings Act and requests for information under the Public Information Act. It posts all meetings of the board, including regular and special meetings, as required by law.

In most cases, the Communications officer processes information requests. The exceptions are requests deemed sensitive. The Communications officer maintains a log of all requests, a copy of the request, and the specific information provided. The superintendent's secretary processes requests deemed especially sensitive, such as those requiring legal advice. The information is then given to the Communications officer to place in the log.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS FUNCTION

The Communications officer is the position in the district with the primary responsibility for internal and external communications. This position is the designated contact point with the media, processes requests under the Texas Public Information Act, and is responsible for conducting communications training for both professionals and paraprofessionals. The Communications officer is not currently responsible for the district's website but does publish the weekly newsletter and other information on the website.

In October 2004, the district established an education foundation focused on raising additional funds to support innovative instructional programs that the district's budget cannot fund. Community and business partnerships occurred in a limited manner in the past and were based at the campus

level. One of the stated goals of the foundation is to serve as the district conduit for most district donations and to foster districtwide community and business partnerships. The Communications officer functions as the executive director. The foundation plans to pay a portion of the Communications officer's salary, but this practice has not occurred yet.

Parent and volunteer activities are focused at the campus level except for two districtwide events, the Educational Summit and the Evening of Shining Stars. The district holds the Educational Summit in February on a Saturday, usually from 9 AM to 2 PM. It is a collaboration of schools and community members for students and parents. Students and parents can attend a variety of workshops or visit booths sponsored by community businesses, schools, and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs). The Evening of Shining Stars has been a high point of the school year for decades in LMISD. The district holds a banquet to honor the top high school students of the district. In 2005, the event was expanded to two nights with an elementary student banquet held on the second night.

Elementary schools rely on PTOs that have substantial support in some of the elementary schools and function districtwide when needed. A recent example is the fundraising efforts by the elementary school PTOs to provide new playground equipment at each elementary school. Parent involvement efforts at the secondary schools are more limited and revolve around booster clubs, primarily athletic booster clubs. The district recently established a Parent Center at the Lake Road Education Center, but the facility had not yet begun operations at the time of the review.

In September 2005, the district began a public access television station. During the fall 2005 semester, programming has been limited to bulletin board type of notices including student honors, calendar of events, and names and pictures of students honored by school board or other activities. The first television program is scheduled for the spring 2006.

CHAPTER 3
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT
Exhibit A-20 shows the organization of LMISD's Facilities Department. The Facilities Department has a total staff of 60, including the director; two support personnel, 39 custodians and head custodians that report to the evening supervisor and custodial manager, and 16 trades and groundskeeping staff that report to the director.

FACILITIES AND USE
The LMISD Facilities Department supports seven schools and various support and sport facilities totaling 854,335 square feet (**Exhibit A-21**). District schools consist of four elementary schools, an early childhood learning center, a middle school, and a high school. There are no portable classroom or office facilities used in the district.

The district has approximately 50,000 square foot of space that it currently does not use (**Exhibit A-21**). The Lamar School was closed and is unusable. It comprises the majority of the unused space and would require extensive renovation to become usable.

The district allows public use of its facilities through its board policies GKD and GKD (Local). Individuals or groups wanting to rent district facilities complete an application and pay applicable user fees to cover operating, administrative, security, custodial, and food service-related costs.

LMISD's enrollment has been declining, as shown in **Exhibit A-22**. During the 10-year period from 1995–96 through 2004–05, enrollment decreased by 15.9 percent.

Exhibit A-23 presents capacity and utilization rates for LMISD schools. LMISD has an overall utilization rate of 80 percent. Simms Elementary School has the highest utilization rate at 96 percent, while La Marque Middle School has the lowest utilization rate at 66 percent.

BUDGETS AND EXPENDITURES
Exhibit A-24 compares budgeted maintenance expenditures for LMISD and the peer districts categorized in PEIMS reporting, function 51. LMISD has the highest budgeted cost per student at $986, slightly higher than Texas City at $974 per student. LMISD also has the highest budgeted maintenance cost as a percent of the district's total budget, at 14.3 percent.

Exhibit A-25 compares LMISD and peer maintenance spending trends for the time period from 2000–01 to 2003–04. When compared to its peers and the state, LMISD's actual maintenance expenditures have decreased 5.6 percent. The peers' and state's expenditures increased during the same time period. The increases ranged from 9.5 percent at Palestine ISD to 22.4 percent at Texas City. The statewide average increase was 14.1 percent.

CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS
An accepted industry standard for cleaning is between 18,000 and 22,000 square feet per custodian, depending on the

EXHIBIT A-20
LMISD FACILITIES DEPARTMENT
2005-06
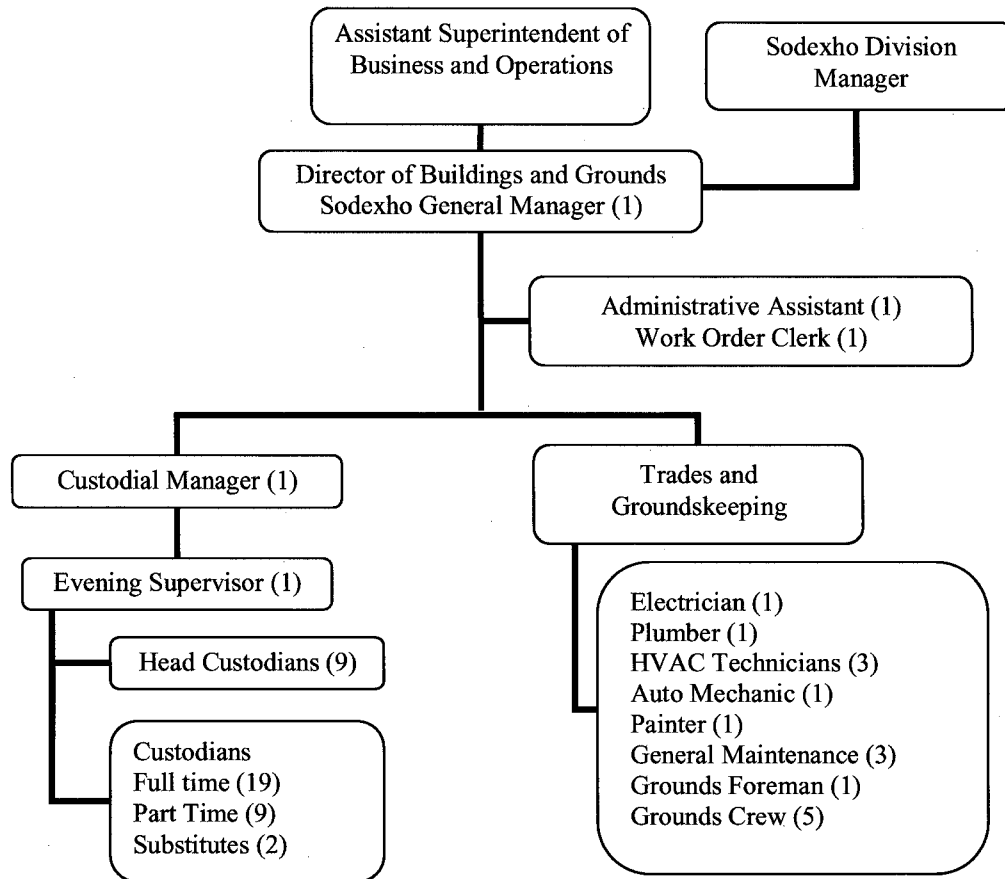
SOURCE: Sodexho General Manager, September 2005.

building's age and condition. LMISD's custodial staff cleans more square footage than the standard in all buildings. Custodial crews are also primarily assigned for night cleaning, another recommended practice.

The review team surveyed school officials, teachers, parents, and students to determine their level of satisfaction with the district's custodial function. As shown in **Exhibit A-26**, survey respondents rated the district's custodial function by responding to the statement, "The cleanliness of schools." With the exception of students, survey results were generally positive.

GROUNDSKEEPING OPERATIONS

The district has approximately 160 acres maintained by a grounds crew of six. The National Center for Education Statistics Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities

identifies an acceptable level for basic grounds care as a staff-to-acreage ratio of one staff to 20 acres. The current grounds staffing is one staff to 26.5 acres, which exceeds the standard.

CHAPTER 4
SAFETY AND SECURITY

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The 1998 U.S. Department of Justice report Security Concepts and Operational Issues observes that security operations often require a balance among effectiveness, affordability, and acceptability. The essential components a district needs to develop an effective security operation include determining whom or what needs protection, the type of security threat, and facility constraints.

To address safety and security concerns, La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) assigned various

EXHIBIT A-21
LMISD FACILITIES
2005–06

FACILITY	DATE CONSTRUCTED OR PURCHASED	DATES OF REMODELING OR RENOVATIONS	SQUARE FOOTAGE
SCHOOLS			
Early Childhood Learning Center	1951	1998, 2004	55,012
Inter-City Elementary School	1952	1954,1963,1993	46,287
Highlands Elementary School	1950	1952, 1993	51,474
Simms Elementary School	1961	1963, 1987, 1993	51,253
Westlawn Elementary School	1956	1959, 1964, 1966, 1993	51,679
La Marque Middle School	1956	1960, 1964	166,273
La Marque High School	1970	1990, 2003-04	247,444
SUBTOTAL SCHOOLS			**669,422**
SUPPORT FACILITIES			
Administration Building	1976		10,206
Lincoln Complex (Maintenance/Leased Space)	1949	1956, 1960, 1964, 1965	40,458
Woodland Campus (Storage)	1964		9,180
Old Administration Bldg (Leased Out)	1953		4,560
Transportation Facilities Complex	1950, 1960, 1963, 1976	1982, 1988	15,219
Lake Road Education Facility	1956	1957-58, 1964, 1993	49,514
Special Programs/Food Services	1949	1954, 1964	39,676
SUBTOTAL SUPPORT FACILITIES			**168,813**
SPORTS FACILITIES			
Etheredge Stadium/Facilities	1950	2004	15,000
LMHS Track/Field Facilities	1970	2005	1,100
TOTAL SPORTS FACILITIES			**16,100**
TOTAL ALL EXISTING FACILITIES			**854,335**
Vacant Facilities			
Lamar Elementary School	1936	1939, 1949, 1951, 1968	48,916
Old Administration Bldg (#018B)	1953		1,130
TOTAL VACANT FACILITIES			**50,046**
RAZED FACILITIES			
Police Department Building	1953	Razed in 2004	2,061
La Marque HS Building 001D	1950	1987, Razed in 2005	836
TOTAL RAZED FACILITIES			**2,897**

SOURCE: LMISD Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, October 2005.

EXHIBIT A-22
LMISD ENROLLMENT HISTORY
1995–96 TO 2004–05

YEAR	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER INCREASE (DECREASE)	PERCENT INCREASE (DECREASE)
1995–96	4,435	N/A	N/A
1996–97	4,431	(4)	(0.1%)
1997–98	4,312	(119)	(2.7%)
1998–99	4,255	(57)	(1.3%)
1999–2000	4,142	(113)	(2.7%)
2000–01	4,063	(79)	(1.9%)
2001–02	3,977	(86)	(2.1%)
2002–03	3,883	(94)	(2.4%)
2003–04	3,745	(138)	(3.6%)
2004–05	3,730	(15)	(0.4%)
TOTALS		**(705)**	**(15.9%)**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1995–96 through 2003–04, and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-23
COMPARISON OF CAPACITY TO ENROLLMENT
2005–06

SCHOOL	CAPACITY	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	ENROLLMENT AS A PERCENT OF CAPACITY
Early Childhood Learning Center	532	502	94%
Inter-City Elementary School	415	371	89%
Highlands Elementary School	396	345	87%
Simms Elementary School	387	372	96%
Westlawn Elementary School	387	317	82%
La Marque Middle School	1,296	851	66%
La Marque High School	1,466	1,131	77%
TOTALS	4,879	3,889*	80%

* Enrollment does not include students that are enrolled in the Galveston County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP).
SOURCE: LMISD District-Wide Facility Study, 2002; LMISD PEIMS enrollment data, November 1, 2005.

EXHIBIT A-24
BUDGETED OPERATING EXPENDITURES (ALL FUNDS)
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICTS FOR 2004–05

DISTRICT/MEASURE	STUDENTS	BUDGETED MAINTENANCE COST	COST PER STUDENT	MAINTENANCE COSTS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL BUDGET
LA MARQUE ISD	3,730	$3,679,519	$986	14.3%
Texas City ISD	5,699	$5,551,428	$974	14.1%
Lancaster ISD	5,197	$4,178,674	$804	14.0%
Navasota ISD	2,921	$2,271,452	$778	12.2%
Palestine ISD	3,329	$2,347,780	$705	11.3%
STATE OF TEXAS	4,383,871	$3,266,349,808	$745	11.4%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-25
MAINTENANCE FUNCTION OPERATING EXPENDITURE HISTORY
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2000–01 THROUGH 2003–04

DISTRICT	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	PERCENT CHANGE 2000–01 THROUGH 2003–04
LA MARQUE	$3,532,875	$3,570,811	$3,452,792	$3,334,104	(5.6%)
Palestine	$1,990,627	$2,084,549	$2,092,957	$2,179,464	9.5%
Navasota	$1,961,611	$1,954,588	$2,240,418	$2,166,423	10.4%
Lancaster	$3,276,661	$3,347,153	$3,647,612	$3,746,503	14.3%
Texas City	$4,977,889	$5,233,955	$5,545,820	$6,091,185	22.4%
STATE OF TEXAS	$2,790,135,861	$2,857,586,703	$3,082,842,449	$3,182,941,823	14.1%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2000–01 through 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A-26
LMISD FACILITY USE
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE CLEANLINESS OF SCHOOLS						
Administrator	10.0%	10.0%	15.0%	50.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Parent	8.3%	8.3%	31.0%	34.5%	11.9%	6.0%
Principal	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	0.0%	23.4%	34.4%	31.3%	9.4%	1.6%
Student	40.4%	15.8%	31.6%	1.8%	8.8%	1.8%
Teacher	1.8%	12.3%	42.1%	31.6%	5.3%	7.0%

SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

responsibilities to positions across the organization. **Exhibit A–27** shows the organization of district positions with safety and security duties or oversight.

The assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for education support to district schools. The Student Services Department provides oversight for student behavior management and intervention programs. The director of Student Services is also the hearings officer for disciplinary appeals.

Principals are responsible for the safety of staff, students, and visitors to their campus. They are also responsible for maintaining building and asset security for their school.

EXHIBIT A-27
LMISD SAFETY AND SECURITY ORGANIZATION
2005-06
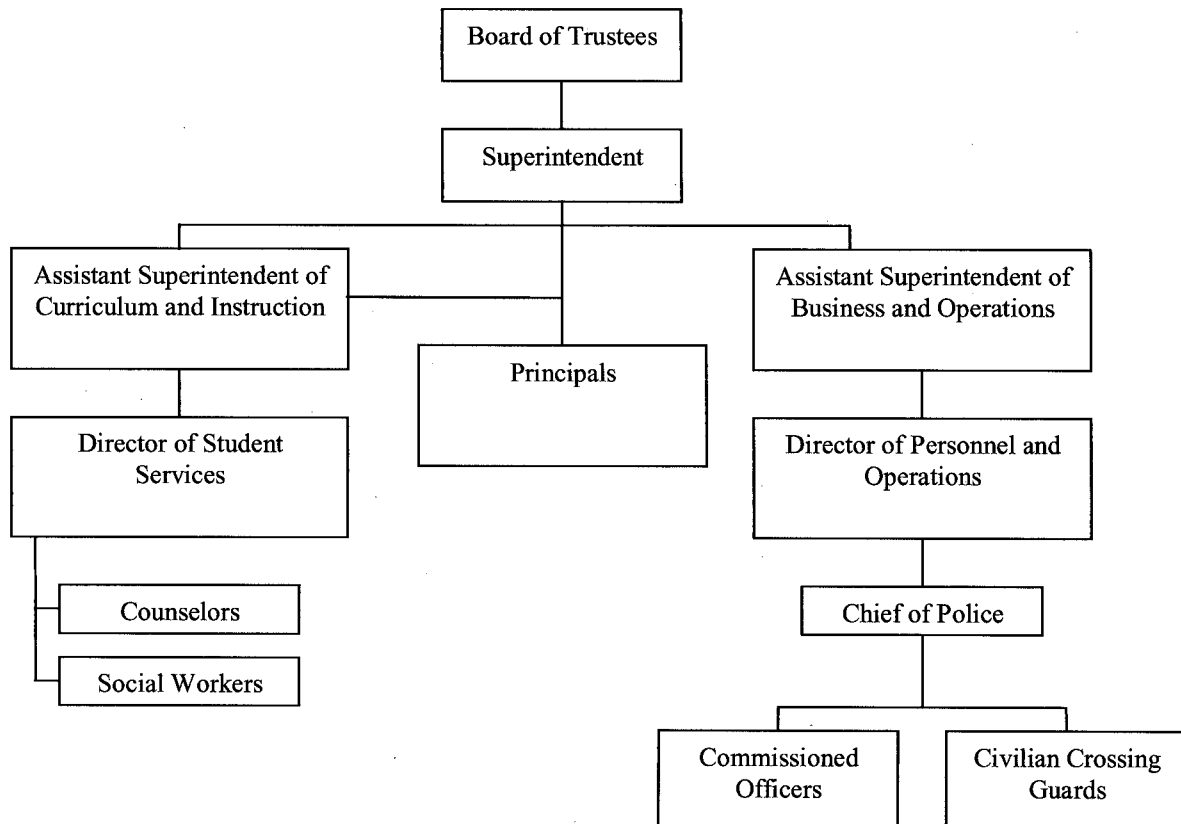
SOURCE: LMISD Organization Chart, June 3, 2004.

Principals work together with the Student Services Department to recognize, intervene, and correct potential behavior problems.

The district's Business and Operations Division is responsible for planning, budgeting, and delivery of law enforcement support to the district and its schools. The director of Personnel and Operations provides oversight to the district police department. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is responsible for ensuring needed programs

are properly budgeted and provides oversight to the committees responsible for safety planning and for emergency management.

To gauge district and community opinion on district safety and security, the school review team surveyed LMISD staff, parents, and students. **Exhibit A–28** shows how survey participants perceive LMISD safety and security efforts.

Exhibit A–28 shows a substantial percent of responding students' rate the district safety measures as poor, especially

EXHIBIT A-28
LMISD SAFETY AND SECURITY
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN ENSURING GANGS ARE NOT A PROBLEM IN THIS DISTRICT.						
Administrator	10.0%	10.0%	15.0%	50.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Teachers	4.4%	4.4%	44.7%	28.9%	7.9%	9.6%
Principals	0.0%	13.3%	20.0%	40.0%	26.7%	0.0%
Administrators	15.0%	5.0%	20.0%	25.0%	30.0%	5.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	4.7%	9.4%	40.6%	31.3%	9.4%	4.7%
Students	26.3%	17.5%	35.1%	10.5%	5.3%	5.3%
Parents	9.5%	8.3%	31.0%	29.8%	8.3%	13.1%
THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN ENSURING DRUGS ARE NOT A PROBLEM IN THIS DISTRICT.						
Teachers	7.0%	19.3%	31.6%	24.6%	7.0%	10.5%
Principals	0.0%	13.3%	40.0%	46.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Administrators	35.0%	10.0%	15.5%	30.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	9.4%	18.8%	42.2%	25.0%	3.1%	1.6%
Students	47.4%	8.8%	26.3%	8.8%	3.5%	5.3%
Parents	14.3%	15.5%	25.0%	21.4%	10.7%	13.1%
THE DISTRICT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN ENSURING VANDALISM IS NOT A PROBLEM IN THIS DISTRICT.						
Teachers	8.8%	13.2%	40.4%	22.8%	5.3%	9.6%
Principals	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	53.3%	0.0%	6.7%
Administrators	30.0%	5.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	10.9%	12.5%	42.2%	29.7%	0.0%	4.7%
Students	38.6%	15.8%	28.1%	7.0%	1.8%	8.8%
Parents	7.1%	16.7%	28.6%	26.2%	8.3%	13.1%
THE CONDITION OF SCHOOL GROUNDS (EXISTENCE OF SAFETY HAZARDS).						
Teachers	1.8%	4.4%	50.9%	30.7%	6.1%	6.1%
Principals	0.0%	6.7%	26.7%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Administrators	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	45.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	1.6%	7.8%	42.2%	34.4%	10.9%	3.1%
Students	21.1%	12.3%	42.1%	15.8%	1.8%	7.0%
Parents	2.4%	6.0%	33.3%	31.0%	11.9%	15.5%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

in the district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs and vandalism are not a problem in the district. A substantial percentage of responding principals believe the district's efforts are good. Teachers and auxiliary staff respondents generally rated the district's safety and security efforts as average.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

The LMISD Police Department is responsible for protecting the safety and welfare of any person in the jurisdiction of the peace officer, and protecting the property of the district. The Board of Trustees commissions officers to provide enforcement within the boundaries of the school district and on property it owns or is under its control if outside the boundaries.

The police chief is expected to advise central administration of all security matters; prepare drafts of security plans; evaluate the district's security program on a continuing basis and recommend necessary changes; work closely with principals in the coordination of security programs; and establish routines for regularly checking district facilities during times when the facilities are not in use.

District police officers meet state qualifications for certification. Annual training is funded by the district with additional training funds provided by the state. Officers meet annual firearm competency standards set by the state. While basic training is funded by the district, some officers also pay for additional training.

Exhibit A–29 shows arrest activity for district officers in 2004–05. As shown in **Exhibit A–29**, the majority of calls, 84 percent, were for class C misdemeanors. A class C misdemeanor is equivalent to a traffic ticket, and is issued for offenses such as disorderly conduct, minor criminal mischief, small thefts, and truancy.

With six officers and a police chief in the department, the arrests and charges equate to approximately 23 per officer. The district received 632 calls for service in 2004–05, which equates to approximately 90 calls per officer.

PLANNING AND BUDGET

LMISD's Police Department is responsible for enforcing the district policies and law. **Exhibit A–30** compares LMISD's per student safety and security expenditures to its peer districts.

As shown in **Exhibit A–30**, at $68 per student, LMISD is above the state average of $51 per student in security expenditures. The expenditure amounts among Texas school

EXHIBIT A–29
LMISD POLICE ARRESTS AND FILED CHARGES
2004–05

ARRESTS/CHARGES	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Felony Charges	9	6.0%
Class A Misdemeanor Charges	3	2.0%
Class B Misdemeanor Charges	14	9.0%
Class C Misdemeanor Charges	136	84.0%
TOTAL	162	100.0%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD Police Department Year End Report, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A–30
SAFETY AND SECURITY EXPENDITURES
LA MARQUE ISD COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

DISTRICT	BUDGETED EXPENDITURES	ENROLLMENT	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE
Texas City	$483,632	5,690	$85
LA MARQUE	$253,280	3,730	$68
Lancaster	$347,528	5,197	$67
Palestine	$113,070	3,325	$34
Navasota	$66,600	2,921	$23
STATE OF TEXAS	$222,924,019	4,383,871	$51

NOTE: Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2004–05.

districts can vary substantially, based on a number of factors. Not all Texas districts have their own police department. Some districts are located in areas with fewer safety or security risks. Texas City ISD, the closest peer to LMISD, does not have its own police force, but relies on an interlocal contract with the county sheriff's office. Lancaster ISD, which is also in a metropolitan area, has its own police department. Navasota ISD and Palestine ISD are in rural areas, and did not provide information on their security programs.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

LMISD actively participates in the Galveston County Cooperative Emergency Management group and is one of only a few area schools to do so. The countywide group is composed of health, government, and industry representatives. The cooperative meets monthly and discusses area emergency management issues.

The state of Texas offered to discuss hurricane management preparation, and LMISD is the only school district in the area to accept the offer. LMISD arranged to have the state present to a countywide superintendent meeting. The response to LMISD's leadership in this area was positive.

LMISD is represented in the city of La Marque's emergency command center and has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the city on emergency procedures and use of district property. The district also participates in the industry-based community activation emergency response committee. The committee has been working with the community on emergency alarms and appropriate response. For example, the committee develops communication links for emergency information, such as email or text-messaging notifications.

In addition to the emergency management relationship, area industry is supportive of the district and provides regular donations to the LMISD Education Foundation. Area industries have donated computers, microscopes, and funded the Distinguished Graduate trip to meet state officials in Austin. Industry partners have also purchased non-budgeted athletic equipment such as blinking scoreboards.

DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

The U.S. Department of Education's 1998 publication Early Warning, Timely Response, defines a well functioning school as one that fosters "learning, safety, and socially appropriate behaviors. Most prevention programs in effective schools address multiple factors and recognize that safety and order are related to children's social, emotional, and academic development."

The district has a staff of 22 that provides student health and social services. The high school has seven staff members that include a social worker, community liaison, at-risk counselor, and student counselors. The middle school has four staff that includes a social worker, a nurse, and counselors. Each elementary school has a nurse and a counselor, and the Early Childhood Learning Center has a nurse.

LMISD has several intervention programs. **Exhibit A–31** provides a sample of district programs.

The district receives funding from the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools program. Of the money it received in 2004–05, the district spent $5,639 on professional development for drug-use and violence prevention, $16,772 on the community liaison position, and $2,305 on security programs.

The district provides an alternative learning campus for its students needing a non-traditional educational environment. The program is called the Power School and has approximately 56 students. The district also has an alternative setting for students removed from traditional classes for misbehavior. The district can move students to either in-school suspension (ISS) or to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP). The DAEP can hold as many as 60 students. The facility has room for expansion.

DAEP population limitations are related to staff and not location. The DAEP has eight fulltime teaching positions, one part-time teaching position, and one lab facilitator. Staff provides a core subject curriculum in English, social studies, math, science, physical education, and health. In addition, the curriculum covers elective courses such as Spanish and business. The DAEP also has a special education teacher to meet the needs of students with special learning needs and a curriculum on behavior management.

These programs combine to address student behavior and maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. **Exhibit A–32** compares the LMISD to its peer districts in behavior incidents reported as performance measures for the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities program.

Exhibit A–32 compared district student population to number of reported behavior incidents. The resulting numbers is a general comparison and shows LMISD is similar to its peers in incidents reported for select categories of misbehavior.

EXHIBIT A-31
LMISD INTERVENTION PROGRAMS
2005

PROGRAM TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Peer Mediation	Helps students resolve conflicts by negotiated settlement of differences. Target population is students in grades 2-12.
Non-Violence Crisis Intervention	Helps disruptive students to reduce "acting out" behaviors. Target population is students enrolled in behavioral adjustment classes (BAC) and other students with similar behavior.
Increasing Your Causative Power	Students learn to set goals and identify strategies for achieving goals. Target population is disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) students.
Ladies and Gentlemen of Distinction	Character and self esteem program for elementary schools that emphasizes civility and manners.
Teen Health Clinic	Provides basic health services to students such as physical exams and immunizations. Clinic is a joint project with the University of Texas Medical Branch.
Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol (BACODA) Treatment Program	On-site treatment program provided by BACODA.
Sandstone Prevention Program	On-site drug prevention program.
Psychological Counseling	District psychologist for student counseling.
Career Counseling	Helps students with career choices. Target population is high school students.
Academic Counseling	Helps students needing academic advice.
Social Services	Helps connect students with social services to address basic needs that may be interfering with school.

SOURCE: LMISD response to information requests, 2005.

EXHIBIT A-32
COMPARISON OF PEER DISTRICTS
BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS PER STUDENT
2002-03 THROUGH 2004-05

DISTRICT	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Palestine	0.87	1.08	1.23
Texas City	0.98	1.03	0.98
Lancaster	0.83	0.83	0.71
LA MARQUE	0.80	0.50	0.78
Navasota	0.49	0.52	0.42

SOURCE: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, Local Education Agency Performance Indicators 2002-2005.

While all DAEPs are educational settings, they also reflect the behavior management philosophy of the district. For some districts, the alternative campus is a punishment that also functions to remove a disruptive student from the classroom. For other districts, the DAEP program is a place to determine why the student is misbehaving, instill a sense of responsibility in the student, and help the student return to the regular classroom. LMISD believes it is in the best interest of the student to try to correct behavior first at the home campus, and then if necessary, at the DAEP.

The Texas Education Code requires districts to assign students to the DAEP for certain behavior, which is considered a mandatory placement. Districts have assignment discretion over other types of misbehavior, which is considered a discretionary placement. **Exhibit A-33** shows the breakdown of assignments made by LMISD.

Exhibit A-33 shows 13 (8.2 percent) of 2003-04 and 11 (7.6 percent) of 2004-05 of DAEP assignments were transfers from other district disciplinary programs, and are not disciplinary decisions made by LMSID. The behavior management program of the district making the assignment determines the assignment to the disciplinary alternative program. A district with short term assignments such as 10 days may have more assignments or more repeat assignments than districts that assign students for a longer period of time,

EXHIBIT A-33
LMISD DAEP ASSIGNMENTS
2003-05

TYPE OF ASSIGNMENT	2003-04	2004-05
Discretionary Assignments	90	91
Mandatory Assignments	65	50
Assignment Type Not Identified*	2	3
TOTAL ASSIGNMENTS	157	144
TRANSFER STUDENTS	13	11

*Denotes assignment type not identified by review team in analysis of data.
SOURCE: LMISD DAEP Class Roster.

and for more serious misbehavior. LMISD first attempts to correct misbehavior through short term classroom suspensions at the home campus. LMISD usually assigns students to the DAEP for a minimum of 60 days, which provides a reasonable period for intervention programs to take effect.

CHAPTER 5
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY STAFFING AND BUDGETS

The LMISD computers and information technology function is performed internally by four staff dispersed throughout the district who report to three different administrators. Two technology specialist positions provide network administration and hardware and software support and report to the director of Personnel. A PEIMS specialist coordinates the district's PEIMS submission and reports to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations. A Career and Technology Education teacher functions as a campus technology coordinator and maintains the high schools network and hardware. This position reports to the high school principal.

Exhibit A-34 compares LMISD's staffing levels with those of the peer districts. When compared to peers, LMISD's technician staffing levels are comparable with Palestine and Texas City. Its PEIMS positions are comparable to Palestine and Navasota. Navasota ISD had the largest number of technology-related staff with 8.5 total staff. However, five of the staff are campus-based technology specialists.

Exhibit A-35 compares LMISD's per student technology expenditures to its peer districts. LMISD has the second lowest per student expenditure of the peer group, behind Palestine ISD. LMISD's per student expenditure of $28 is less than one-third that of the state average and two of the

peers, Lancaster and Navasota ISDs, and less than half of Texas City ISD's per student expenditures.

LMISD's technology budget has declined since 1999–2000. Expenditures per student decreased from $42 in 1999–2000 to $28 in 2003–04, a 33 percent decrease. Exhibit A-36 lists technology expenditures from 1999–2000 through 2003–04.

To assist it in obtaining and improving its technology and telecommunications infrastructure, LMISD has secured grants and E-Rate funding. Exhibit A-37 shows LMISD's grant and E-Rate funding for the period from 1999–2000 through 2003–04.

To evaluate its progress in implementing technology, LMISD uses the Texas School Technology and Readiness (STaR) chart. The STaR chart, an online resource tool for self-assessment of a school district's efforts to effectively integrate technology across the curriculum, was developed by the Texas Education Agency Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC). The STaR Chart is designed for use in technology planning, budgeting for resources, and evaluating progress in local technology projects.

The STaR Chart and the accompanying Campus Analysis of School Technology and Readiness form profile the district's status toward reaching the goals of the state Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996–2010 (LRPT). The profile indicators place the district at one of four levels of progress in each key area of the LRPT: Early Technology, Developing Technology, Advanced Technology, or Target Technology. The Key Area totals or score provided in the heading allows for interpretation of the results. Exhibit A-38 summarizes LMISD's STaR results for 2004–05. The district's self-evaluation is that LMISD is in the Developing Technology Stage of readiness for two areas: Teaching and Learning and Educator Preparation and Development, and in the Early

EXHIBIT A-34
LMISD PEER DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY STAFFING COMPARISONS
2005–06

DISTRICT	DIRECTOR	TECHNICIAN	PEIMS	CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY SPECIALISTS	INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALISTS	HELP DESK	STUDENT DATA ASSISTANT	TOTALS
Navasota	1	0.5	1	5	1	0	0	8.5
Texas City	1	2	2	0	0	0.5	0	5.5
LA MARQUE	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4.0
Palestine	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4.0
Lancaster	*Information not reported							

*Indicates district did not respond to peer district questionnaire.
SOURCE: LMISD Technology Specialist and Peer District Questionnaires, October 2005.

EXHIBIT A-35
TECHNOLOGY EXPENDITURES
LA MARQUE ISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2003-04

DISTRICT	EXPENDITURES	ENROLLMENT	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE
Palestine	$41,407	3,314	$12
LA MARQUE	$103,359	3,745	$28
Texas City	$382,937	5,641	$68
Navasota	$278,811	2,993	$93
Lancaster	$539,421	4,751	$114
STATE	$410,466,374	4,310,955	$95

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management Systems (PEIMS) Standard Reports (Actuals) 2003-04.

EXHIBIT A-36
TECHNOLOGY EXPENDITURES
1999-2000 THROUGH 2003-04

YEAR	EXPENDITURES	ENROLLMENT	PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE
2003-04	$103,359	3,745	$28
2002-03	$334,058	3,883	$86
2001-02	$275,829	3,977	$69
2000-01	$168,979	4,063	$42
1999-2000	$172,556	4,142	$42

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 1999-2000 through 2003-04.

EXHIBIT A-37
LMISD TECHNOLOGY GRANTS AND E-RATE FUNDING
1999-2000 THROUGH 2003-04

YEAR	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Technology Allotment	$110,980	$112,247	$115,634	$109,072	$102,052
Technology Infrastructure Fund (TIF)	$8,104	$133,442	$294,792	$157,897	$0
Title II, Part D (Enhancing Technology)	$0	$0	$0	$19,405	$31,248
E-Rate	$0	$0	$60,253	$0	$43,416
TOTALS	$119,084	$245,689	$470,679	$286,374	$176,716

SOURCE: The Universal Service Administrative Company, 1999-2000 through 2003-04 (www.sl.universalservice.org/funding) and LMISD Audited Financial Reports, 1999-2000 through 2003-04.

Technology stage of readiness for Administration and Support and Infrastructure for Technology Areas.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

In procuring technology, the law requires districts to comply with the purchasing requirements outlined in the Texas Education Code (TEC). LMISD complies with the TEC by purchasing computers through one of two approved methods: use of Catalog Information Systems Vendors (CISV) or The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN), a purchasing cooperative sponsored by Region 4.

LMISD uses specialized instructional and administrative software in its operations. **Exhibit A-39** identifies the software used by the district. To maintain compliance with software licensing agreements, LMISD locks down machines so that no one can load illegal software.

CHAPTER 6
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

LMISD provides its human resources support through its Personnel Department. The department has director and two clerical staff. **Exhibit A-40** shows the basic division of duties among the human resources staff.

EXHIBIT A-38
LMISD TEXAS STAR CHART RESULTS
2004–05

KEY AREA I: TEACHING AND LEARNING
RATING: DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 9-14)

TEACHER ROLE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING	PATTERNS OF TEACHER USE	FREQUENCY / DESIGN OF INSTRUCTION	CURRICULUM AREAS	TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION TEKS ASSESSMENT	PATTERNS OF STUDENT USE	SCORE
2	2	2	2	2	1	11

KEY AREA II: EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT
RATING: DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 9-14)

CONTENT OF TRAINING	CAPABILITIES OF EDUCATORS	LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS	MODELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	UNDERSTANDING AND PATTERNS OF USE	TECHNOLOGY BUDGET	SCORE
2	2	2	1	2	1	10

KEY AREA III: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT
RATING: EARLY TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 5-7)

VISION AND PLANNING	TECHNICAL SUPPORT	INSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING	BUDGET	FUNDING	SCORE
2	1	2	1	1	7

KEY AREA IV: INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY
RATING: EARLY TECHNOLOGY (TOTAL SCORE OF 5-7)

STUDENTS PER COMPUTER	INTERNET ACCESS CONNECTIVITY/ SPEED	DISTANCE LEARNING	LAN/WAN	OTHER TECHNOLOGIES	SCORE
1	2	1	2	1	7

SOURCE: LMISD Texas STaR Chart, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-39
LMISD SPECIALIZED SOFTWARE
2005–06

SOFTWARE NAME	TYPE	USE
Pentamation (DOS Version)	Administrative	Tracks financial, personnel and procurement information
SASI XP	Administrative	Student management system to track and report student demographic, attendance, discipline, and grade information for PEIMS reporting
Follett Library Management	Instructional	Manages library circulation and research
New Century	Instructional	Instructional support in core curriculum (elementary)
Waterford Labs	Instructional	Literacy skills (Early Childhood Learning Center)
Plato	Instructional	Credit recovery (high school) and content instruction (middle school)
Renaissance Learning	Instructional	Remedial mathematics (high school)
Accelerated Reader	Instructional	Reading instruction (elementary, middle school)
Rosetta Stone	Instructional	Bilingual/English as Second Language (ESL) (middle school)

SOURCE: LMISD Technology Plan 2005–2008, and LMISD technology specialist, September 2005.

EXHIBIT A-40
LMISD PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT
2005-06

```
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │     Assistant       │
                        │  Superintendent of  │
                        │  Business Operations│
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                   │
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Director of Personnel│
                        │   and Operations    │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                   │
              ┌────────────────────┴──────────────────────┐
    ┌─────────────────────┐                   ┌─────────────────────┐
    │ Personnel Department │                   │  Police Department  │
    └─────────────────────┘                   └─────────────────────┘
              │
    ┌─────────┴──────────┐
┌─────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│Leave Specialist│ │Certification Specialist│
└─────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
```

- Maintains employee leave requests and use.
- Manages auxiliary staff processes such as processing of new hires, maintaining personnel files, filing evaluations, updating compensation, providing assurance of continuing employment.

- Manages certification validation process for certified professions.
- Manages professional staff processes such as processing of new hires, maintaining personnel files, filing evaluations, updating compensation, contract management.

SOURCE: Interviews with LMISD staff, September 2005.

As shown in **Exhibit A-40**, the director's duties are split between Personnel Department oversight and Police Department oversight. In his role as human resources administrator, the director of Personnel and Operations guides the Personnel Department in the provision of basic recruitment, staffing, compensation, and employee relations services.

STAFFING

Each district also has a unique organizational culture that is reflected in the type and numbers of staff.

Exhibit A-41 compares LMISD's staffing to the state and the peer districts selected for this review: Lancaster, Navasota, Palestine, and Texas City Independent School Districts.

As shown in **Exhibit A-41**, LMISD is substantially lower than its peers in percent of auxiliary staff to total staff. Auxiliary staff consists of positions that service transportation, food service, maintenance, and custodial programs. While some districts contract with private companies to provide one or more of these services, LMISD contracts for all of these services, maintaining only minimal auxiliary positions as full time district employees.

Exhibit A-42 compares staffing of teachers to staffing of other employee categories for LMISD and its peers.

As shown by **Exhibit A-42**, La Marque ISD is close to the state ratio of support staff to teachers, and LMISD has the fewest number of teachers per central administrator when compared to the peer districts.

EXHIBIT A-41
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICT STAFF COMPARISON
PERCENTAGE OF STAFF TYPE TO TOTAL STAFF
2004–05

DISTRICT	CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL ADMINISTRATOR	TEACHERS	EDUCATIONAL AIDES	SUPPORT STAFF	AUXILIARY STAFF
Palestine	2%	1%	50%	13%	6%	27%
Texas City	3%	1%	44%	13%	7%	31%
Lancaster	3%	1%	53%	2%	8%	33%
Navasota	3%	1%	53%	17%	5%	21%
LA MARQUE	3%	2%	59%	10%	12%	13%
REGION 4	3%	1%	50%	8%	8%	29%
STATE	3%	1%	50%	10%	8%	28%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-42
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICT STAFF COMPARISON
2004–05

DISTRICT	RATIO OF SUPPORT STAFF TO TEACHERS	RATIO OF EDUCATIONAL AIDES TO TEACHERS	RATIO OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATORS TO TEACHERS	RATIO OF CAMPUS ADMINISTRATORS TO TEACHERS
LA MARQUE	1:5	1:6	1:31	1:19
Lancaster	1:7	1:30	1:81	1:16
Palestine	1:8	1:4	1:41	1:21
Navasota	1:11	1:3	1:64	1:16
Texas City	1:17	1:3	1:36	1:17
STATE	1:6	1:5	1:51	1:18

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05. Note: Ratios have been adjusted to the nearest whole number.

Exhibit A-43 shows the district's teacher turnover rate in 2004-05 compared to the peer districts and state.

As seen in **Exhibit A-43**, La Marque ISD has the second highest turnover rate for teachers at 28.6 percent when compared to the peer districts. Lancaster ISD has the highest teacher turnover rate at 46.8 percent and Texas City ISD,

EXHIBIT A-43
COMPARISON OF TEACHER TURNOVER AMONG PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

DISTRICT	TURNOVER RATE
Lancaster ISD	46.8%
LA MARQUE ISD	28.6%
Palestine ISD	26.0%
Navasota ISD	25.3%
Texas City ISD	15.4%
STATE OF TEXAS	16.1%

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

the geographically closest peer, has the lowest turnover rate at 15.4 percent.

Exhibit A-44 compares the payroll budgets for LMISD and its peers, as a percent of the total district budget.

As **Exhibit A-44** shows, LMISD has the lowest percentage of budgeted payroll costs among its selected peers. While this may be a reflection of lower salaries or a number of other variables, it is also a reflection of the smaller employee base due to the number of contracted staff.

COMPENSATION

Exhibit A-45 shows the average salaries in LMISD as compared to its peers. For purposes of comparison, support staff includes counselors, diagnosticians, librarians, nurses, therapists, psychologists, and similar support positions. Administrators include instructional officers, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and assistant superintendents.

EXHIBIT A-44
COMPARISON OF PAYROLL AS A PERCENT OF BUDGET
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

DISTRICT	TOTAL PAYROLL BUDGETED	AS PERCENT OF ALL FUNDS
LA MARQUE ISD	**$17,837,105**	**61.9%**
Lancaster ISD	$24,231,483	63.7%
Navasota ISD	$13,676,819	68.0%
Palestine ISD	$16,534,763	74.0%
Texas City ISD	$31,915,381	74.1%
STATE	$23,414,873,404	72.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-45
AVERAGE SALARIES
LMISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

DISTRICT	TEACHERS	AUXILIARY STAFF	SUPPORT STAFF	ADMINISTRATORS
Palestine ISD	$34,726	$17,451	$42,163	$61,451
Navasota ISD	$37,756	$18,584	$47,743	$66,144
LA MARQUE ISD	**$39,221**	**$21,198**	**$44,510**	**$73,071**
Lancaster ISD	$41,964	$19,710	$55,054	$69,265
Texas City ISD	$43,389	$18,556	$46,335	$70,610
Region 4	$43,106	$19,345	$51,466	$71,051
STATE AVERAGE	$41,009	$19,693	$48,839	$66,697

Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2004–05.

Exhibit A-45 indicates that La Marque ISD in the middle of its peers in average teacher salaries but has the highest average administrator salaries. La Marque is second lowest in average support staff salaries, and highest in auxiliary salaries. Since LMISD has outsourced the majority of its auxiliary positions, the remaining positions may not have as wide a range of salaries to average as its peers.

BENEFITS

LMISD has a full benefits package. It provides employees with health insurance with an option to purchase coverage for their dependents. The district has mandatory participation in the state-sponsored retirement system. Employees also have an option to purchase other insurance products such as cancer insurance, dental coverage, and vision coverage.

CHAPTER 7
TRANSPORTATION

The primary goal of every school student district transportation department is to transport students to and from school and approved extracurricular functions in a timely, safe, and efficient manner.

The Texas Education Code authorizes, but does not require, Texas school districts to provide transportation for students in the general population between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations, and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires a school district to provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to receive special education services.

Texas school districts are eligible for reimbursement from the state for transporting regular program, special program, and career and technology education (CATE) program students. The Texas Legislature sets funding rules and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers the program. TEA requires each school district eligible to receive state reimbursement to provide two annual school transportation reports, the Route Services Report and the Operations Report. The Route Services Report documents reimbursable miles traveled and number of riders by program and subprogram. The Operations Report assigns all costs and miles to either regular or special programs.

State funding for regular program transportation is limited to transportation for students living two or more miles from the school they attend. The state does not reimburse districts for transporting students living within two miles of the school they attend unless they face hazardous walking conditions on the way to school, such as the need to cross a four-lane roadway without a traffic signal or crossing guard. The state will reimburse districts for transporting students on hazardous routes within two miles of school; however, the reimbursement for transporting students on hazardous routes may not exceed 10 percent of the total annual reimbursement for transporting only two-or-more-mile students. A school district must use local funds to pay for transportation costs the state reimbursement does not cover.

For the regular program, the state reimburses districts for qualifying transportation expenses based on linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily on standard routes to the number of route miles traveled daily for those standard routes. Standard miles and riders do not include miles or riders for alternative, bilingual, desegregation, magnet, parenting, pre-kindergarten regular transportation, or hazardous area service. 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. Allotment rates are based on the previous year's linear density.

Eligible route miles are measured beginning and ending at the last school served for home-to-school route service or first school served for school-to-home route service. Route miles eligible for reimbursement do not include extracurricular miles, deadhead miles, hazardous route miles in excess of the 10 percent limit, or other miles reported to TEA.

Reimbursement for special program transportation is not based on linear density. The Texas Legislature sets the per mile allotment rate for a special program. All transportation for special program students, except certain extracurricular trips, is eligible for state reimbursement at $1.08 each route mile.

CONTRACTOR OPERATIONS
LMISD contracts its student transportation operation to Durham School Services. The contractor provides regular and special education transportation and transportation for extracurricular events. The parties signed the initial transportation contract in August 1990 for a term of one year with an option to renew for four additional years. They have extended the contract each year since the initial contract term. **Exhibit A-46** presents the organization of the contracted transportation services in the district.

EXHIBIT A-46
CONTRACTED TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION
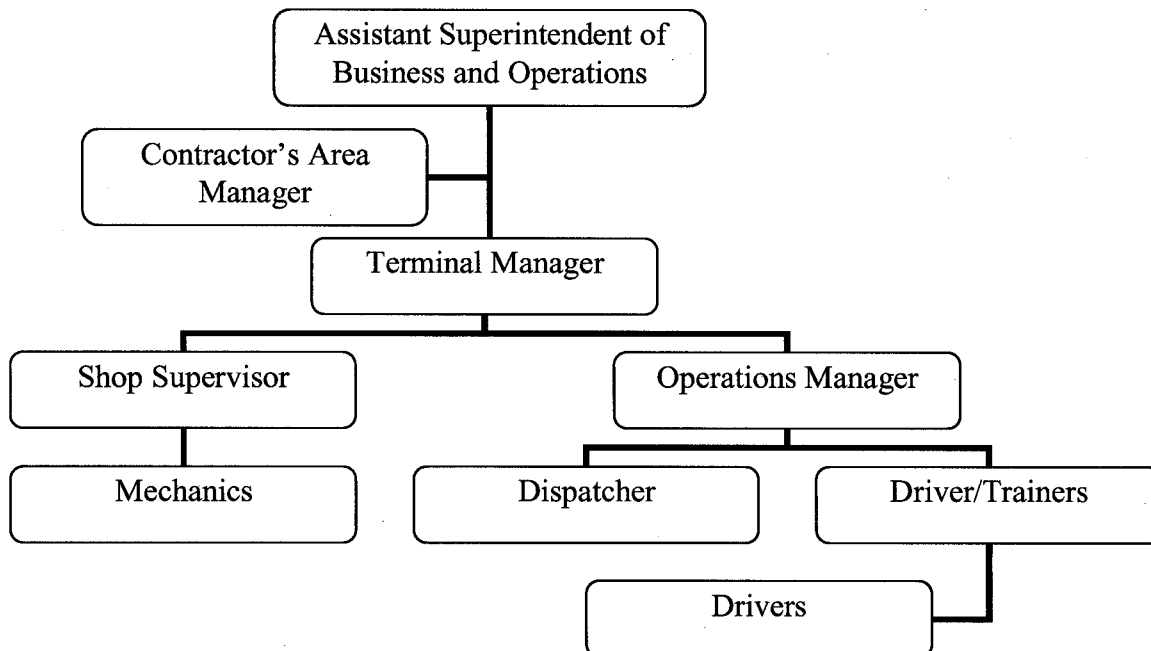
SOURCE: Transportation contractor, terminal manager, September 2005.

The contractor's terminal manager provides oversight of the day-to-day operations of the service. The district has 17 regular transportation routes, five special needs routes, and two alternative routes that run on a daily basis. The contractor is responsible for maintaining the bus fleet that LMISD and the transportation contractor both partially own. The contractor provides maintenance for both district and contractor buses and uses an effective preventive maintenance program. The district has opted to let the vendor supply buses as part of the service and, therefore, does not have a replacement plan.

The contractor requires all drivers to attend monthly safety meetings and new drivers attend 20 hours of classroom and eight to 24 hours of behind-the-wheel training in addition to state-mandated training. The classroom training covers a wide range of topics including student management, contractor policies, district policies, emergency procedures, employee safety, and general bus safety. The behind-the-wheel training includes all aspects of operating a bus, daily inspection requirements, emergency procedures, traffic laws, and defensive driving. The contractor provides retraining to all drivers involved in an accident regardless of fault.

COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Exhibit A-47 compares total miles for LMISD and the peer districts. It does not include information for Lancaster ISD since it does not file transportation reports with TEA. LMISD has the second highest cost per mile for regular routes and the second highest cost per mile for special routes.

Exhibit A-48 presents total miles and cost per mile for the regular and special programs. Cost per mile for the regular program has decreased by 10.7 percent, while total regular program miles has decreased 3 percent. However, the cost per mile for the special programs has increased by 18.2 percent, and total special program miles have increased 5 percent.

EXHIBIT A-47
LMISD AND PEER ROUTE MILES AND COST PER MILE
2003–04

DISTRICT	REGULAR		SPECIAL	
	MILES	COST PER MILE	MILES	COST PER MILE
Texas City	221,981	$4.11	88,420	$4.89
LA MARQUE	224,412	$3.09	60,213	$4.29
Palestine	370,934	$2.17	71,293	$1.19
Navasota	381,021	$2.13	104,727	$2.15

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Student Transportation Operations Report, 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A-48
LMISD TOTAL MILES AND COST PER MILE
1999–2000 THROUGH 2003–04

TYPE MILES	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	PERCENT CHANGE
REGULAR PROGRAM						
Route	175,000	164,650	187,321	179,021	162,221	(7.3%)
Extra/Co-curricular	51,487	42,993	52,963	58,028	59,835	16.2%
Other	4,936	0	0	2,859	2,356	(52.3%)
Total	231,423	207,643	240,284	239,908	224,412	(3.0%)
COST PER MILE	**$3.46**	**$3.94**	**$3.48**	**$3.14**	**$3.09**	**(10.7%)**
SPECIAL PROGRAM						
Route	56,469	58,618	60,164	58,028	58,918	4.3%
Extra/Co-curricular	519	0	232	1,014	1,109	113.7%
Other	363	0	0	186	186	(48.8%)
Total	57,351	58,618	60,396	59,228	60,213	5.0%
COST PER MILE	**$3.63**	**$3.16**	**$3.80**	**$5.08**	**$4.29**	**18.2%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Student Transportation Operations Report, 1999–2000 through 2003–04.

Exhibit A-49 compares transportation costs by object for LMISD and the peers. LMISD has the second lowest cost for transportation.

Exhibit A-50 presents transportation costs by object for LMISD from 1999–2000 through 2003–04. Total transportation costs have decreased by 12.6 percent.

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM

LMISD received a free 77-passenger bus worth more than $60,000 from the Houston-Galveston Area Adopt-A-School Bus Program as the result of the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations identifying a grant opportunity and filing a grant application with the program. The application process required the district to submit information about the district's fleet, including the number of buses operated in the district, the model year of the buses, and the type of fuel used in the buses. The district also had to submit the number of students transported and the socioeconomic status of the district.

The Adopt-A-School Bus Program is a cooperative partnership established to aid non-attainment and near-non-attainment area school districts replace or retrofit their aging diesel school buses with new "clean fuel" buses or technologies. The Education Foundation of Harris County

operates the program. The primary goal of the Adopt-A-School Bus Program is to:

*   reduce school children's exposure to both cancer-causing and smog-forming pollution;

*   reduce particulate matter and nitrogen oxides emissions by targeting the oldest diesel buses in a school's bus fleet for priority replacement; and

*   educate school districts and corporations about the benefits of replacing older diesel buses with lower emissions "clean fuel" buses.

The grant program required the district to agree to operate the bus until at least December 2007, to allow prominently placement of Program and corporate sponsor logos on the bus, to fuel the bus with only low-emission fuels, and to permanently remove from service the bus that the Adopt-A-School bus replaced.

CHAPTER 8
FOOD SERVICES

LMISD participates in the National School Lunch (NSLP), School Breakfast (SBP), After School Snack, and Summer Feeding programs. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers these federal programs for all Texas

EXHIBIT A-49
LMISD AND PEERS TRANSPORTATION COSTS BY BUDGET OBJECT
2003-04

OBJECT CODE	PALESTINE	TEXAS CITY	NAVASOTA	LA MARQUE	LANCASTER
6100 Payroll	$533,146	$1,141,059	$123	$577	$72,673
6200 Contracted Services	$25,390	$17,350	$1,072,643	$824,147	$262,319
6300 Supplies	$166,467	$111,369	$0	$0	$(14,634)
6400 Other	$(58,941)	$(192,584)	$0	$0	$(4,280)
6600 Capital Outlay	$533,295	$104,466	$0	$0	$44,028
TOTAL	$1,199,357	$1,181,660	$1,072,766	$824,724	$360,106

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A-50
LMISD TRANSPORTATION COSTS BY OBJECT
1999-2000 THROUGH 2003-04

OBJECT	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	PERCENT CHANGE
6100 Payroll	$0	$0	$0	$0	$577	*
6200 Contracted Services	$959,454	$922,666	$955,803	$932,034	$824,147	(14.1%)
6300 Supplies	$ (15,975)	$15,159	$6,094	$0	$0	(100.0%)
TOTAL	$943,479	$937,825	$961,897	$932,034	$824,724	(12.6%)

* Not applicable.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 1999–2000 through 2003–04.

schools. The district also has a catering program and has snack bars in its secondary schools.

To participate in NSLP and SBP, schools must offer free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches to eligible children based on family income. Free meals are available to children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level. Reduced-price meals are available to children from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level.

Schools that participate in the NSLP and SBP receive donated commodities and cash reimbursements for each reimbursable meal served. A reimbursable breakfast or lunch consists of meat, bread, milk, fruit, and vegetables in specified amounts. The meals served for reimbursement must meet federal nutrition requirements

Districts may qualify and apply for Severe Need Breakfast reimbursement in addition to the regular breakfast

reimbursement. To be eligible, at least 40 percent of each campus' total lunches served must have been free or reduced-price. The district must also complete a Severe Need Breakfast reimbursement application. LMISD qualified for this designation in 2005–06.

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

In LMISD, the Food Services Department has been outsourced since 1981 to Aramark. The Aramark manager serves as the Food Services director and manages and operates the district's food service program. The Food Services director reports to the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations.

Exhibit A-51 shows LMISD's Food Services Department's organization. The Food Services Department has a total staff of 54, including the director; four part- and full-time support personnel including a driver, an operations supervisor, seven cafeteria managers, three assistant cafeteria managers, and 38 full and part-time cafeteria workers.

EXHIBIT A-51
LMISD FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT
2005–06
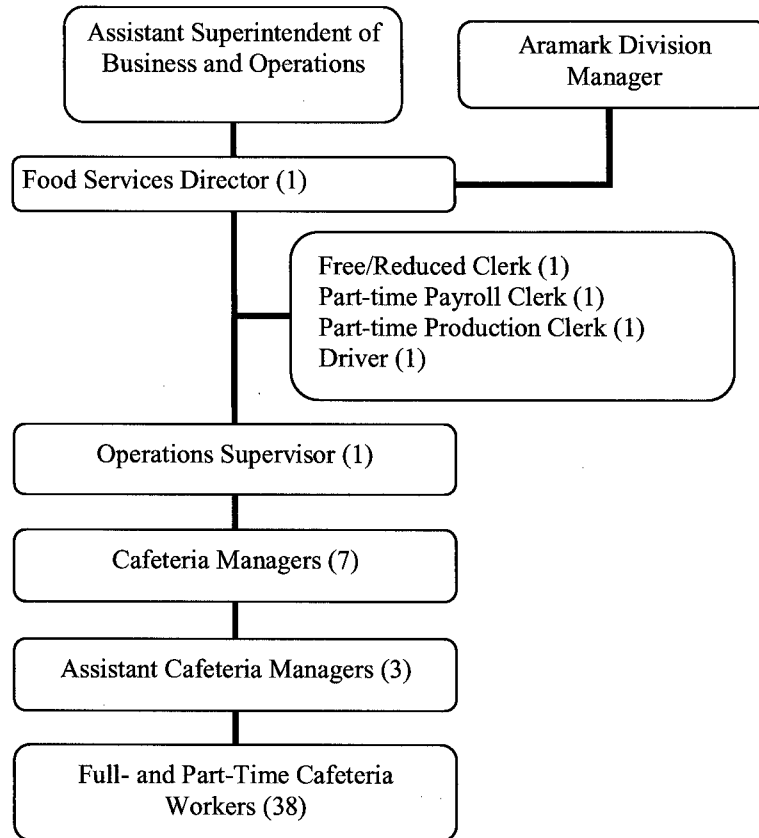
SOURCE: Aramark Food Services Director, September 2005.

In assigning staff, the Food Services director looks at employee productivity as measured by meals per labor hour (MPLH). MPLH is a standard used to measure the efficiency of school districts, hospitals, restaurants, and other food services operations. MPLH is the number of meal equivalents served in a given period divided by the total hours worked during that period. Meal equivalents are calculated by taking the number of lunches plus an equivalent number of breakfasts and a la carte sales. Because serving sizes are not as large for breakfasts and a la carte sales as they are for lunches, they must be converted to lunch equivalents in calculating MPLH.

Unlike other food service operations, LMISD's vendor uses an MPLH based on its contract equivalencies that equally count a breakfast and lunch as meals. The rate used to convert cash sales from vending, a la carte, and catering to meal equivalents is $2.4125. To control labor costs in scheduling staff, the vendor uses a combination of full- and part-time staff. The vendor schedules several staff members such as cashiers only when needed, which is more efficient.

The district has a closed campus policy, a policy prohibiting students from leaving school grounds for meals, for all schools. Food services prepares meals and serves them to students in four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. It prepares meals for the Early Childhood Learning Center off-site at the Lake Road alternative education program center and the driver delivers them to this location. The high school and middle school cafeterias have standard menu lines as well as a la carte lines. Elementary school cafeterias have standard menu lines.

LMISD uses the Systems Design™ point-of-sale (POS) system to track meal receipts at all schools. The cashiers at all schools use the system to count the reimbursable meals and to track snack sales. At the elementary schools, the district issues cards to students, and they swipe them through readers. At the middle and high schools, students enter their identification numbers on key pads.

To reduce waste, LMISD serves students using the "offer-versus-serve" method. Under "offer-versus-serve," cafeterias do not serve students all menu items. Instead, they offer students required menu items and the students must select a minimum number of the required items to count as a reimbursable meal under the NSLP and SBP. Elementary and secondary school menus are different and LMISD uses a cycle menu, a menu that repeats items during a cycle or period of time. The elementary schools have a six-week

breakfast and lunch cycle menu, while the secondary schools have a two-week breakfast and four-week lunch cycle menu. Menu adjustments may occur depending on the timing and amounts of donated commodities received.

The production clerk has an associate's degree in nutrition and is responsible for planning and performing nutritional analysis of LMISD menus. The clerk uses NutrikidsTM software to help facilitate menu planning and analysis. This helps to ensure that the menu items served to students meet the USDA dietary requirements under the NSLP and SBP. The district complies with the Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) policy by eliminating vending machines at the elementary school level. The vending machines located at the middle and high schools are properly placed and the review team did not note any restricted items.

LMISD uses a combination of conventional and convenience food preparation methods. The conventional method includes the preparation of some foods from raw ingredients on the premises, the use of some bakery bread and prepared pizza, and the washing of dishes. By contrast, the convenience method uses more pre-packaged items, disposable trays, and silverware, which require less labor.

The district has a food service warehouse located on the transportation facility complex, which it uses to temporarily store commodities. The Food Services Department has a delivery truck to deliver commodity items to individual schools. Vendors make weekly grocery deliveries to schools.

Food service operations are also subject to sanitation and safety inspections conducted by state, county, or city health departments. In 2005–06, a minimum of two inspections will be required. The Galveston County Health Department conducts health inspections for LMISD food operations, inspecting each cafeteria. All cafeterias passed their latest inspections, with few demerits noted.

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) monitors school food service programs through the Coordinated Review Effort (CRE). The CRE monitors meal counting, meals offered and served that meet the meal pattern requirements for items offered and portion sizes, the accuracy of processing free and reduced-price meal applications and the verification of eligibility, consolidation of claims involving two or more schools, procurement procedures and adherence to state and federal law, and other record keeping and documentation.

CREs take place on a five-year cycle. TDA performs follow-up reviews if violations exceed a specified level. Failure to

meet the CRE standards can result in loss of funds for meals already consumed. LMISD's latest CRE, conducted in 2001, had findings related to eligibility certification, meal counting and claiming procedures, the free and reduced-price process, verification of eligibility, and compliance with competitive food regulations. The district took corrective actions to address all of the findings. LMISD is scheduled for a CRE in 2005–06.

To support planning, the vendor has identified capital equipment replacement items. The vendor developed a list of equipment, its approximate age, and condition.

MEAL PARTICIPATION

Exhibit A-52 compares LMISD's meals served to its peer districts selected for this review for the three-year period from 2002–03 through 2004–05.

Three districts, La Marque, Navasota, and Palestine ISDs, had declining enrollments during the period. Despite declining enrollments, these three districts had modest increases in the number of lunches served. Lancaster ISD

had the highest increase of lunches served at 30.9 percent, but also recorded a 20.5 percent increase in enrollment.

In comparing breakfasts served, Texas City ISD had the largest percentage increase, 77.9 percent, followed by Lancaster ISD at 36.6 percent and Navasota ISD at 2 percent. By comparison, La Marque and Palestine ISD's breakfasts served declined. La Marque's decline was 5.6 percent, and Palestine ISD's decline was 2.9 percent. The Food Services director attributes part of the reductions to more accurate counting and claiming procedures that LMISD implemented. The Food Services director also attributes the lack of growth to the fact that the breakfast in the classroom program had already been implemented at LMISD by 2002–03, so there would be limited additional increases unless enrollment increased.

Exhibit A-53 compares lunch and breakfast participation rates for LMISD and its peers in 2004–05. Lunch participation rates range from a high of 70 percent at Lancaster ISD to a low of 56 percent at LMISD. Breakfast participation rates range from a high of 67 percent at LMISD to 22 percent at Lancaster ISD.

EXHIBIT A-52
MEAL STATISTICS PEER COMPARISONS
2002-03 THROUGH 2004-05

DISTRICT	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05*	PERCENT CHANGE 2002-03 TO 2004-05
LUNCH				
Lancaster	483,012	546,650	632,196	30.9%
Texas City	575,135	591,908	620,793	7.9%
LA MARQUE	**339,486**	**327,522**	**349,438**	**2.9%**
Palestine	399,377	409,575	406,584	1.8%
Navasota	392,171	391,170	395,913	1.0%
BREAKFAST				
Texas City	299,907	363,492	533,464	77.9%
Lancaster	145,543	165,807	198,774	36.6%
Navasota	181,818	181,093	185,394	2.0%
Palestine	201,048	214,279	195,159	(2.9%)
LA MARQUE	**445,919**	**420,217**	**420,940**	**(5.6%)**
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT				
Lancaster	4,318	4,754	5,203	20.5%
Texas City	5,842	5,804	5,860	0.3%
Palestine	3,385	3,316	3,334	(1.5%)
Navasota	3,024	3,003	2,926	(3.2%)
LA MARQUE	**3,883**	**3,750**	**3,737**	**(3.8%)**

* 2004-05 does not include June 2005 meal statistics.
SOURCES: Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), Student Nutrition Program District Profiles, 2002–03 through 2004–05; Texas Education Agency Standard Enrollment Reports, 2002–03 through 2004–05.

EXHIBIT A-53
FOOD SERVICE MEAL PARTICIPATION COMPARISONS —LMISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

DISTRICT	LUNCHES SERVED	LUNCH AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION (ADP)*	BREAKFASTS SERVED	BREAKFAST ADP
LA MARQUE ISD	349,438	56%	420,940	67%
Navasota ISD	395,913	81%	185,394	38%
Palestine ISD	406,584	69%	195,159	33%
Lancaster ISD	632,196	70%	198,774	22%
Texas City ISD	620,793	63%	533,464	54%

* ADP is calculated as the number of average daily meals served divided by the Average Daily Attendance.
SOURCE: TDA, Food Service Programs District Profiles, 2004–05.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Districts expect food service operations to be self-supporting. When this does not occur, the districts must subsidize operations from the general operating fund, which diverts funding from instructional activities. **Exhibit A-54** shows that LMISD's food service operations have not been self-supporting in three of the last five years. Transfers in were used to subsidize the food service operation in 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2003–04. According to the Food Services director, the vendor also returned funds to LMISD based on contract guarantee requirements. The vendor returned approximately $27,000 in 2000–01 and $20,000 in 2001–02.

The current Food Services director came to the district in January 2002. To address losses in food services operations, the director implemented deficit reduction strategies. Strategies that increased revenues in 2002–03 included higher lunch prices and implementing breakfast in the classroom

programs at Lake Road Elementary and the middle school. In addition, LMISD increased menu choices at the secondary level to increase student participation and revenues. According to the 2002–03 annual report presented to the board, high school participation increased by 70 percent by increasing daily entrees from three to eight.

The 2002–03 annual report also indicated that productivity increased as measured by meals per labor hour (MPLH) and labor hours and reduced costs. The breakfast in the classroom programs greatly helped to increase the MPLH. As a result of the implemented strategies, there was a slight net profit of $501.

In 2003–04, LMISD implemented additional strategies to increase revenues and reduce expenditures. It began serving free breakfast at the high school. It expanded lunch to include pre-kindergarten students at the early childhood learning center. To reduce expenditures, the Food Services

EXHIBIT A-54
LMISD FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
1999–2000 THROUGH 2003–04

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES	1999–2000 ACTUAL	2000–01 ACTUAL	2001–02 ACTUAL	2002–03 ACTUAL	2003–04 ACTUAL
Local	$731,757	$706,859	$625,825	$572,561	$542,762
State	$14,083	$13,067	$11,909	$11,174	$11,026
Federal	$809,886	$867,137	$913,320	$1,137,298	$1,111,411
TOTAL REVENUES	$1,555,726	$1,587,063	$1,551,054	$1,721,033	$1,665,199
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$1,542,424	$1,692,572	$1,593,542	$1,720,532	$1,672,376
NET PROFIT/LOSS	$13,302	($105,509)	($42,488)	$501	($7,177)
Transfers In (Other Financing)	$0	$90,327	$42,488	$0	$6,676
Net Change in Fund Balance	$13,302	($15,182)	$0	$501	($501)
Beginning Fund Balance	$1,880	$15,182	$0	$0	$501
Ending Fund Balance	$15,182	$0	$0	$501	$0

SOURCE: LMISD Audited Reports for 1999–2000 through 2003–04.

Department sought bonus USDA commodities that resulted in an additional $38,000 allocation, 70 percent above the normal allocation. The slight deficit recorded in 2003–04 occurred because of the unplanned replacement of the food services van.

LMISD's food services cost per student at $444 is the third highest among peer districts, behind Navasota at $453 and Texas City at $445 (**Exhibit A-55**). Food service costs at LMISD account for 3.8 percent of the district's expenditures, which is the lowest among the peers.

Funding sources for LMISD's food service operations include: adult meal payments, federal reimbursements, a la carte sales, and catering fees. **Exhibit A-56** compares revenue sources for LMISD and its peers. LMISD ranks second among the peers in federal revenue as a percent of total revenue behind Palestine ISD. LMISD has the second lowest level of local revenue as a percent of total revenue.

Meal prices are a factor that affects both meal participation and revenue. Meals prices should cover the cost of meals, yet be affordable. LMISD's meal prices have not changed since 2002–03. **Exhibit A-57** presents a comparison of meal prices charged to students, teachers, and adults by LMISD and its peers.

As shown in **Exhibit A-57**, overall, LMISD has the lowest student meal prices.

STUDENT NUTRITION

The Texas Education Code (TEC) sections 38.013 and 38.014 require school districts to develop and implement coordinated health programs for elementary school students. In addition, TEC section 28.004 requires each school district to establish a local school health advisory council (SHAC). A component of these programs is nutrition services.

EXHIBIT A-55
FOOD SERVICE COST COMPARISONS
2003–04

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	TOTAL FOOD SERVICE EXPENDITURES	FOOD SERVICE COST PER STUDENT	FOOD SERVICE EXPENDITURES AS PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES
Navasota	3,003	$22,424,460	$1,359,081	$453	6.1%
Texas City	5,804	$48,597,394	$2,580,923	$445	5.3%
LA MARQUE	**3,750**	**$43,647,275**	**$1,665,177**	**$444**	**3.8%**
Palestine	3,316	$25,274,472	$1,460,718	$441	5.8%
Lancaster	4,754	$34,921,129	$1,863,986	$392	5.3%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A-56
FOOD SERVICE REVENUE PEER DISTRICT COMPARISON
2003–04

DISTRICT	LOCAL	STATE	FEDERAL	TOTAL
Palestine	$365,377	$13,079	$1,048,423	$1,426,879
LA MARQUE	**$ 542,762**	**$11,026**	**$1,111,411**	**$1,665,199**
Navasota	472,635	$12,644	$921,862	$1,407,141
Lancaster	$724,526	$0	$1,084,938	$1,809,464
Texas City	1,057,548	$18,502	$1,521,725	$2,597,775
PERCENT OF TOTAL				
Palestine	25.6%	0.9%	73.5%	100.0%
LA MARQUE	**32.6%**	**0.7%**	**66.7%**	**100.0%**
Navasota	33.6%	0.9%	65.5%	100.0%
Lancaster	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Texas City	40.7%	0.7%	58.6%	100.0%

SOURCE: School District Financial Audits, 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A-57
MEAL PRICES PEER DISTRICT COMPARISONS
2005–06

MEAL	ELEMENTARY STUDENT	SECONDARY STUDENTS	TEACHERS	ADULTS
LUNCH				
LA MARQUE	**$1.50**	**$1.75**	**$2.35**	**$2.75***
Palestine	$1.50	$2.00	$2.25	$2.50
Navasota	$1.60	$1.85	$2.50	$2.75
Lancaster	$1.75	$2.00	$2.50	$2.50
Texas City	$1.50	$1.75	$2.50	$2.50
BREAKFAST				
LA MARQUE	FREE	FREE	**$1.10**	**$1.10***
Palestine	$0.85	$0.85	$0.95	$0.95
Navasota	$1.00	$1.00	$1.50	$1.50
Lancaster	$0.90	$0.90	$1.25	$1.25
Texas City	$0.70	$0.70	$1.00	$1.00

*LMISD adult price is also the visitor price for lunch and breakfast.
Sources: LMISD Food Services Director; Peer District Questionnaires, October 2005; Lancaster ISD website, www.lancasterisd.org.

The vendor provides several nutrition education programs and activities as part of its contract. At the elementary level, the vendor uses a mascot with a show that emphasizes nutrition. The vendor presents the program each year to half of the elementary schools. Another program, Apples, is available to schools and teachers to discuss nutrition. The vendor has also developed and used the FUEL program, a program designed to teach middle school students to make healthy choices. It presented the program three times in 2004–05. In addition, the vendor also develops a quarterly nutrition newsletter that it distributes to elementary and middle school students and makes available to high school students at the cafeteria.

The Food Service director is a member of the district's student health advisory council that meets to determine student health needs. The council consists of parents, principals, nurses, community members, and representatives from various government and health organizations and service providers such as the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, Galveston County Health Department, Mainland Hospital, the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), the Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol (BACODA), the Teen Health Center, the Mainland Children Partnership, the Teen Advisory Council, and the Cancer Society. The council meets quarterly and has been focused on three main student health issues for 2005–06: drugs, teen pregnancy, and nutrition and obesity. As part of the council's agenda, the council is developing a district wellness policy to comply with requirements to have

an implemented policy by July 1, 2006. The vendor has provided an implementation template for use.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

A key element in determining customer satisfaction with the district's food services program is through feedback. The vendor surveys students and staff to determine menu preferences and overall satisfaction twice a year. It performs individual class surveys when testing new menu items. The vendor also conducts a third party survey of the district superintendent on food service operations. According to the Food Services director, the vendor is planning to enhance and expand the survey to include additional individuals such as principals and board members.

The School Review team conducted surveys to determine staff, teacher, parent, and student perceptions related to the food service program. It asked participants to rate statements concerning food presentation, cafeteria cleanliness, discipline, and staff friendliness.

Exhibit A-58 presents the School Review survey results. The food service program was rated as average or positively by most respondent groups, except students. A number of students consistently rated all areas of the program as poor or below average.

EXHIBIT A-58
LMISD FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM
SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS
SEPTEMBER 2005

RESPONDENT	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
THE TEMPERATURE, APPEARANCE, AND TASTE OF THE CAFETERIA'S FOOD.						
Teachers	5.3%	14.9%	48.2%	14.0%	7.0%	10.5%
Principals	0.0%	6.7%	40.0%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%
Parents	6.0%	9.5%	41.7%	23.8%	2.4%	16.7%
Students	59.6%	14.0%	21.1%	0.0%	1.8%	3.5%
Administrators	10.0%	10.0%	25.0%	20.0%	15.0%	20.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	6.3%	12.5%	53.1%	21.9%	4.7%	1.6%
DISCIPLINE AND ORDER IN THE CAFETERIA.						
Teachers	6.1%	12.3%	45.6%	23.7%	5.3%	7.0%
Principals	0.0%	6.7%	40.0%	33.3%	20.0%	0.0%
Parents	9.5%	13.1%	34.5%	19.0%	7.1%	16.7%
Students	38.6%	17.5%	24.6%	10.5%	5.3%	3.5%
Administrators	15.0%	30.0%	20.0%	25.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	9.4%	15.6%	43.8%	20.3%	7.8%	3.1%
THE HELPFULNESS AND FRIENDLINESS OF CAFETERIA STAFF.						
Teachers	1.8%	6.1%	36.8%	30.7%	16.7%	7.9%
Principals	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	0.0%
Parents	4.8%	4.8%	34.5%	27.4%	14.3%	14.3%
Students	14.0%	10.5%	35.1%	17.5%	19.3%	3.5%
Administrators	0.0%	10.0%	15.0%	35.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	0.0%	4.7%	45.3%	29.7%	15.6%	4.7%
THE CLEANLINESS AND SANITARY CONDITION OF DISTRICT CAFETERIA FACILITIES.						
Teachers	0.9%	1.8%	41.2%	32.5%	17.5%	6.1%
Principals	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	0.0%
Parents	2.4%	3.6%	28.6%	35.7%	15.5%	14.3%
Students	22.8%	22.8%	35.1%	10.5%	5.3%	3.5%
Administrators	5.0%	5.0%	15.0%	40.0%	15.0%	20.0%
Auxiliary/Professional Support Staff	0.0%	1.6%	40.6%	35.9%	17.2%	4.7%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: LMISD School Review Surveys, September 2005.

CHAPTER 9
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT

The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations reports to the superintendent and is responsible for all business functions in LMISD. The assistant superintendent receives support from a chief accountant, accountant, accounts payable clerk, payroll and benefits supervisor, payroll assistant, and secretary. **Exhibit A-59** presents the organization of Business and Operations.

In addition to overseeing the business office, the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is the contract manager for the district's contracted services and is the liaison with the architect for new construction projects. The assistant superintendent of Business and Operations is also the investment officer for the district and ensures the district is in compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA). In addition, the district contracts with the county for tax collections and pays a minimal fee for the services. The county collected more than 96 percent of the 2004 levy.

EXHIBIT A-59
LMISD BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS ORGANIZATION

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                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │  Superintendent │
                          └────────┬────────┘
                          ┌────────┴────────────┐
                          │ Assistant Superintendent │
                          │ Business and Operations │
                          └────────┬────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────┐ │
              │ Secretary/Purchasing │─┤
              └──────────┬───────┘ │
    ┌─────────────┬──────┴──────┬───────────────┬──────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐ ┌──────────────────────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Accounts Payable Clerk│ │Payroll and Benefits Supervisor│ │Accountant│ │Chief Accountant│
└───────┬───────┘ └──────────┬───────────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────────┘
┌───────┴──────┐   ┌─────────┴────────┐
│Warehouse/Mail *│  │ Payroll Assistant │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
```
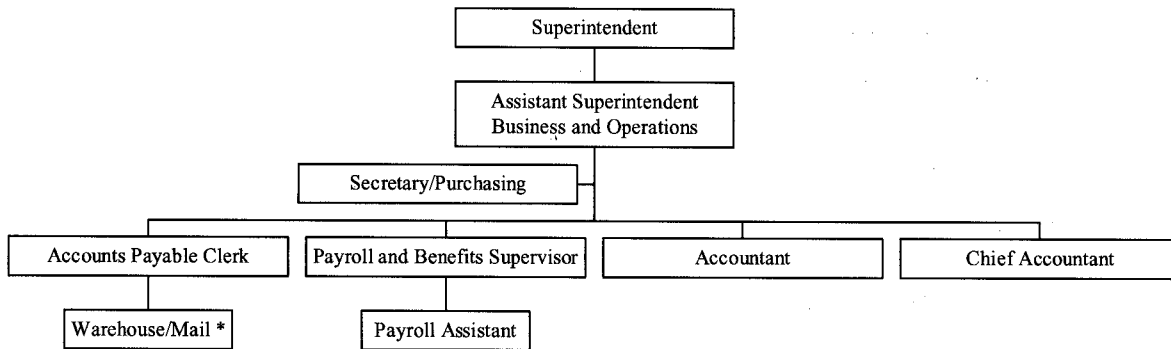
* Maintenance vendor employee.
SOURCE: LMISD, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, September 2005.

The assistant superintendent's secretary answers the telephones, performs daily reviews and runs purchase orders, maintains vendor files, and initiates purchase orders for Business and Operations. The secretary also maintains the district's business operations manuals and annually assists in training the district's clerical staff. In 2004–05, the district issued 2,565 purchase orders. The schools and departments input requisitions, the financial software immediately encumbers the budgeted funds, the budget manager approves the requisition electronically, and the secretary reviews the approved requisitions and converts them into purchase orders. The review team examined a sample of purchase orders to determine the length of time between budget manager approval and the printed purchase order. It found that the business office staff printed most purchase orders the next business day.

The accounts payable clerk receives all invoices, matches them to a purchase order and receiver, enters the invoices for payment, prints and mails the checks, and files the invoice and supporting documentation by vendor. The clerk prints checks each week and says the business office has rarely issued manual checks. The accounts payable clerk also reviews the invoices from the district's transportation provider, matches field trips with school's purchase orders, and processes the invoice for payment. The accounts payable clerk is also the backup for the warehouse. When the warehouse receives a shipment and is unstaffed, the accounts payable clerk goes to the warehouse to receive the shipment.

The payroll and benefits supervisor oversees the payroll for the district and supervises the payroll assistant. The supervisor schedules and executes the payroll activities, processes all tax payments, files all state and federal payroll reports, and serves as the contact person for district employee benefits.

The supervisor provides information to employees about the types of insurance that are available and the district's cafeteria plan. The supervisor also receives the workers' compensation first reports of injury and provides assistance to district employees with the third party administrator. The payroll for September 15, 2005, included 415 regular employees with 307 employees or 74 percent on direct deposit.

The payroll assistant collects time cards from hourly employees, enters the time in the payroll system, runs reports to prepare for the payroll, initiates the checks, assists in printing the checks, runs final payroll reports, puts the payroll checks in school mail, and assists the supervisor with employee benefits and other duties as needed. The district pays employees two times each month.

The accountant is responsible for budget preparation and monitoring, the district's centralized activity funds, accounting and reporting for federal and grant funds, fixed assets accounting, data accuracy for state reports, and other accounting activities. The accountant is also the district's financial software administrator and provides training to new employees. The district uses a comprehensive financial software system that provides all necessary information for the district to mange its financial condition. The district is converting to the Windows version of the software this year. The accountant generates a report for all federal and grant fund managers to facilitate their review of the financial status of their grants — how much they have expended and whether they require budget amendments.

The chief accountant prepares the investment reports, board reports, and bank reconciliations; monitors the district's cash and investments; is the liaison with the external auditors; inputs food service claims; writes bid specifications; and

performs general accounting duties. The district's accounting software provides budget managers with access to financial information online, and the chief accountant provides assistance to them when necessary. The chief accountant also monitors the securities pledged by the depository bank and transfers cash as needed.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

The district insures itself against losses through a variety of carriers. **Exhibit A-60** presents the coverage for property, computers, general liability, educators' legal liability, and automobile liability. The district carries a public official bond for the assistant superintendent of Business and Operations in the amount of $100,000.

The district also provides athletic/student accident insurance for students involved in University Interscholastic League (UIL) activities at a cost of $55,544 annually and a catastrophic coverage policy for all students enrolled for $3,025 annually. The district provides a contribution of $225 per month toward health insurance coverage for all employees, except part time employees, through TRS-Active Care, and employees may add dependents to the coverage at their cost. The district provides a $10,000 policy for each full-time employee. Cancer, dental, voluntary term life, and disability insurances are available to employees at their expense.

The district self-insures itself for workers' compensation claims and uses a third-party administrator to process the claims. In 2003–04, the district had 17 claims, and the average number of claims for the preceding 10 years was 25. The district had an outstanding liability for claims of $189,635 and a fund balance in the fund of $29,274.

BOND ISSUANCE AND INDEBTEDNESS

LMISD has a level debt structure and has refunded all but the bonds issued in 2003. **Exhibit A-61** presents the outstanding bonds for LMISD

TEXTBOOKS

The district uses an electronic system to maintain the district's inventory of textbooks. Each school conducts annual inventories, and the district's inventories its central textbook storage. The district maintains a small number of textbooks at the warehouse where it receives textbooks. It fills textbook orders based on requests from the schools. If textbooks are not available at the central warehouse, the district may place an order using the state textbook system. The district has placed four orders for textbooks for 2005–06. It placed the first order immediately after the release of the textbook funds in August and placed the most recent order in September.

EXHIBIT A-60
LMISD INSURANCE COVERAGE
2005–06

COVERAGE	LIMIT	DEDUCTIBLE	COST
Windstorm and Hail	$35,255,952	$75,000	$226,806
Buildings and Contents	$92,280,916	$100,000	$154,981
Flood Insurance, Per Building	Various	$500	$38,005
Equipment Breakdown	$100,000,000	$1,000	$6,174
General Liability	$1,000,000	$2,500	$3,808
Automobile Physical Damage	Actual Cash Value	$250	$511
Automobile Liability	$100/300/100	$250	$14,394
Educators' Legal Liability	$1,000,000	$5,000	$11,922
TOTAL			$456,601

SOURCE: LMISD, Coverage Documents, September 2005.

EXHIBIT A-61
LMISD OUTSTANDING BONDS
AUGUST 2005

DESCRIPTION	INTEREST RATE	ORIGINAL ISSUE AMOUNT	OUTSTANDING AS OF AUGUST 31, 2005	FINAL MATURITY
Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds 1997	3.95% to 5.00%	$9,974,104	$8,254,104	2011
Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds 1999	3.45% to 4.35%	4,267,394	1,785,000	2012
Unlimited Tax Schoolhouse Refunding Bonds 2003	4.375% to 5.375%	24,094,571	24,094,571	2025
TOTAL		$38,336,069	$34,133,675	

SOURCE: LMISD, annual audit report, 2003–04.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

As part of the review process, the review team held a community open house and focus groups to obtain input. During the community open house, parents, teachers, and community members participated by writing personal comments about the 12 major review areas and, in some cases, talking in person to review team members. Teachers, principals, community leaders, students, and parents participated in three small focus groups where the 12 areas under review were discussed.

Comments below illustrate community perceptions of LMISD and do not reflect the findings and opinions of the Legislative Budget Board or the review team. The following comments are organized by area of review.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- Instruction in classrooms – La Marque spends far below state average in this function.

- Staff development – We have an increase in number of people charged to instructional specialists over the last three years. Our test scores show no proven benefit.

- Instructional Leadership – It appears that job duties seem to have been shuffled or spread around in the area to accommodate the overstaffing.

- School leadership – We have more assistant principals and office personnel than ever. However, it doesn't seem to be very effective. People should be held more accountable for their job duties and work load. We seem to be in the habit of hiring more personnel.

- Co-curricular – We spend way too much money for our football program. Every other program is held to the state minimal spending level.

- In our district our size, there is a large number of highly paid, non-productive personnel.

- We are outsourcing maintenance and operations. It is proving to be a very expensive way to conduct business.

- We are lagging way behind the state average for spending in technology.

- We are very concerned about our school being taken over by the state.

- I would like the district to hire a dyslexia teacher that is certified in Orton Gillingham method as opposed to a reading specialist. Traditional teaching methods don't work.

- Notification is not done properly. Teachers were supposed to pass out letter to students concerning this meeting. My daughter never received it. She always brings home information. We need written mail out information addressed to the parents regularly. The principal normally hands out notices before school as parents drop off (that is if you drop off where he is).

- Parent make and take workshops are not well attended.

- Parents drop off students too early (7:00 am) using school as a babysitter.

- School does not have sufficient tutoring dollars to offer early arrivers, same thing in the pm. No security in the pm.

- An issue for 4 years – principals are not paid for late hours.

- Alternative Ed Principal sets up conference so that parent has to appear to pick up child.

- Would love a counselor at the ECC.

- Education services are better this year after operating at low level in prior years.

- Developed curriculum guides that teachers could not use.

- Need back up training for teachers.

- Principals know how to use tools but don't have access to them.

- Summer requirements for English were not addressed, even though it was told that the students would be given a test at the beginning of school.

- Counselors aren't working with the senior students regularly. A lot of students aren't informed of graduation requirements.

- I don't feel our children are getting what they need. The test scores say it all. We hear excuses. We want to see results.

- My area concern is that the special need students are not allowed to use the computers unless they are in a computer class. Why is there only one ink cartridge issued per year? Computers are always not working?

- Parents are not kept up-to-date about students' progress in a timely manner. Teachers are not friendly towards LD and ED students.

- Too much emphasis is placed on sports rather than academics.

- Special needs students need to be taught basic computer skills.

- The English department asked AP students to read a novel over the summer. Once school began no instruction or testing was done related to this novel.

- The delivery of education at LMHS concerns me. The teaching level is poor. The AP and college level classes are not organized. Teachers are not available. The area of math and science is below level.

- Poor computers and poor library materials are not effective for college-bound students.

- I'm really concerned about the quality of education LMHS is delivering. I don't feel as though the kids will be ready to go to the next level after completing their education here.

- I would like to know why children are being held accountable for TAKS. Where is accountability when the teachers are not utilizing their degrees? To teach the child and not teach at child. There are too many desk teachers and not enough hands-on teaching. Teachers need to learn to listen and not judge.

- Teachers have gotten better. A/P teachers actually got training. Improvement is coming slowly; have to fight to get good teachers.

- Parent liked the process where coaches make home visits to football players before school starts in the fall to go over the rules.

- Cougar Parent Night is well organized.

- Girls' athletics gets nothing. Soccer parent not aware of Cougar Parent Night.

- Favorite thing is Educational Summit – awesome.

- Need more feedback from teachers

- Have a problem hearing from counselors.

- Bright kids are not challenged. They hold back taking just enough to graduate, not enough to get into college or do well in college.

- Don't take the SAT/ACT early enough.

- One top 10 student didn't take ACT/SAT due to lack of money.

- Find out about lack of credits to graduate in May of the senior year.

- Students don't take AP tests due to lack of money for fees.

- Start time at middle school changed suddenly, no notice, no participation by parents in decision.

- Elementary schools have a take home Tuesday where each child brings home a folder of information. Falls apart at the middle school level.

- Gold shirts were added to the uniform but no one knew until after school started.

- Mail outs are outdated.

- Problems with changing dates and late notice.

- Programs are started and then nothing happens. Summer reading program is an example. Student read the book nothing happened.

- This fall progress reports went out this Friday (end of 4th week) – late because the computer broke down.

- Neither the middle school nor the high school has a newspaper. The high school year book is on a CD.

- Counselors turn over too much. A mixed bag, some are good but never see others.

- Don't know them very well.

- Hard to get information from counselors including schedules and class rankings needed for college application.

- Counselors won't let students change classes after school starts even though it is obvious that the class in not appropriate.

- Now in fifth week of the first six weeks – haven't been to lab yet in Physics, Chemistry or Biology. Told no materials.

- Use labs only when it is too cold in the classroom.

- Amount and quality of labs depends entirely on the energy of the teacher.

- Going overboard on TAKS, no sense. Everything is related back to TAKS.

- Told no pep rallies until test scores go up but the students who have poor scores are the kind who doesn't go anyway. Ban on pep rallies didn't stick.

- If we study the right things then we should do fine on the TAKS – too much time spent on benchmarks and testing, especially if you are a good student. Will hurt us later on.

- Six weeks tests are always bench marks which count as a major test.

- Class work stops in April after the TAKS tests in some classes.

- A lot of students don't care about the incentives and the school doesn't follow through.

- Students were promised a day off from school and trip to Astroworld if you passed TAKS but the timing was changed to June after school was out – who cares. Had to pay for your own ticket in either case.

- Most classes are good, but some are boring, repeating what was learned in middle school.

- Open enrollment in pre AP and AP classes works well.

- Too many inexperienced and young teachers. Need better and more experienced teachers.

- Need tutors.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT

- The school board meeting and process is of question. When speaking at the meeting on the agenda, the item is never addressed. The board and superintendent sit there and look at you as if they don't care. Issues are stated but never addressed.

- Poor leadership – when the head isn't right the body isn't going to be right. Things pushed aside instead of addressed.

- The district does not like for the community to speak out about their problems.

- The district leadership is very poor and dishonest. Don't have the students' best interest.

- Dishonest, under cover secrets from community.

- Poor management. There is a lack of organization and structure on the high school campus. The administration is very weak. This unfortunately trickles down and our students are suffering. How can we expect our students to adhere to rules and regulations when the administration is not effective? I have been a resident of this district for more than 20 years and this administration is the worst I have seen.

- A majority of the students at this school district are African American. I would like to see community committees built to address education issues that reflect our student population.

- Some central administrators don't know what is going on.

- Few are visible in the schools. Don't always work as a real team.

- Meetings stretch out.

- Administration pacifies parents but don't do anything about the problem.

- When you send letters to central office, often not acknowledged. Promises made but not action taken. Some have better luck.

- Lack of discipline at board meetings. People talk to board after public participation.

- Would like board to visit campuses more often to send message to community.

- Principals need to be more involved in salary decisions.

- Principals need to know how principals are paid, compared to others at similar positions in district.

- No set salary schedule.

- Salaries are not fair, not honest.

- Salaries are negotiated on individual basis

- Made less as assistant principal than as a teacher – loss stipend.

- Administration is building a salary structure.

- Teachers on 10 month contract and assistant principals and principals on 11 month contract.

- Collectively board votes together, not many split votes.

- Administration needs to be more visible on campuses on regular basis.

- See superintendent from time to time at high school.

- High school getting a lot of attention this year because of low performance.

- Principals are getting tools for grades 1-3 in math and reading but nothing for grades 4-5, source is outside grants – Reading First.

- Elementary teachers get staff development on a regular basis.

- AYP hurt middle school because they get all special education students in the district.

- Special education manpower shortage.

- At elementary school went to full inclusion with one week notice from Central Office and no training for teachers or additional assistance.

- Strategies not implemented systemically throughout district. CATE director organized, things get done. He's top performer in all Galveston Coop.

- Met superintendent while he was doing lunch duty at the high school, very knowledgeable about work force needs – tech prep.

- The district takes advantage of CATE opportunity/tech prep.

- Always room for a lot more discipline.

- People work hard to create opportunities for students.

- LMISD previous superintendent was in paper all the time, very visible. Previous superintendent was everywhere, hands on, kids knew who he was. Figure in the district that is looked up to.

- Don't know about campus administration. Believe that specific needs are met.

- Counselors at high school are burdened compared to others, discipline is an issue, see numbers of students roaming the halls during class, some teachers follow rules (tardy policy) some are lax.

- If students want to be there, service delivery is fine, if they don't want to be there, it's disruptive.

- No issues at the elementary level.

- Need for increased discipline and ability to follow through with it.

- Teachers have no rights – children know this. Teachers should be able to discipline or remove students from classrooms, punish them immediately.

- Supt and CATE director are visible in the schools.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Would like to see a sincere effort to reach out to parents, community organizations like churches and other civic organizations for volunteers, mentors and parental involvement.

- You all need to ask for more Christian involvement from different churches.

- Being that this school is situated in the heart of the community, and the amount of students that it holds, more society is needed in and around the grounds at all times. Activity being visible.

- LMISD - The district is very involved when it comes to football, in other areas the district has little involvement.

- There isn't enough community involvement. For the most part adequate notice isn't given in order to have community involvement. A prime example is this meeting tonight.

- Community is focused on Friday night and football.

- Emailing doesn't work about half the time. Teachers say that they don't check it because they are not a "computer person".

- Made two calls regarding my child's progress report. Took a call to the principal to get a response. Wanted to set up a weekly meeting to keep on top of the issue. Teacher wouldn't do it.

- Hard to get feedback.

- Should have more information on the website. Sites are always under construction.

- Lots of positive things happened but it doesn't get out.

- Want to be able to check child's homework on the website like in other districts.

- Access TV will be very good.

- Administration plays a major role in many community events such as Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Rotary and Kiwanis.

- Wish we had as good a turnout at the Evening of Shining Knights as we do at a Friday night game.

- Champion Circles provides good information but not enough about the individual schools.

- Clear Creek has a good website.

- Better job of communicating would affect many programs and areas of the district.

- District should have a master calendar to avoid conflicts.

- Lots of good stuff going on but word is not getting out.

- Maybe parents should get involved in promoting schools

- Academic booster club would be a good idea.

- No college night, any senior going to college is in an English class – could be reached that way.

- Need a counseling page on the web site.

- Communications are horrible.

- Parents have to come up to the school to get information. Telephoning does not work, no response, have to call and call.

- Website is not for everybody; no information except basic contact; everybody can't use it.

- Email is very good, but not all teachers use it.

- Marquee is not updated timely except for football games.

- Letters are sent out after the event has passed.

- High school doesn't do a good job of communicating with LMISD students at COM.

- Need one person at district level to be assigned to attendance.

- Attendance cases filed with JP are not pursued. Example cases filled in September not heard until the following June.

- Appointments with courts are cancelled.

- Courts have said that they are reluctant to pursue cases because of econ hardships of family

- Process with court needs to be negotiated to improve process.

- Get weekly email updates from Public Information Officer.

- Board Notes – it's informative, covers board meetings and campus highlights.

- Foundation is excellent – will have huge impact, will allow teachers to use imagination.

- Texas City has had one and it has been wonderful.

- Teachers will be more professional – they will be monitored to ensure that funds are spent as proposed.

- Parent involvement needs improvement – a lot of hostility from parents.

- Would like schools to be more sensitive and have open ear.

- School system is sports focused – not what kids need, sense of tension.

- Would like to see higher level school officials show concern. Seem distant and insensitive.

- Need attitude of "lets' work together".

- La Marque hasn't changed – in every city parents expect teachers to make sure our students have things to eat, supplies. Parents don't want to give up things for their children – it's owed to them. Parents are failing students, not teachers.

- Parents need to be educated on being parents.

- Parents don't support officials – example given of discipline incident where parents disagreed and fight punishment.

- Parents not involved – they work long hours. Parents can't be involved in a lot of activities.

- Went to PTA meeting – more teachers than parents.

- Two parents came to preschool open house even after notes, phone calls (out of 24-26 parents).

- Need state ad campaign for school district parent involvement – parent participations promote parents getting involve with children.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- The hiring and firing of employees is bad.

- Good teachers have left due to the fact they have no support from administrators.

- Teachers aren't paid enough. We need to pay teachers to attract more qualified teachers.

- No electronic access to employee applications.

- School has sufficient teacher staff.

- Difficult to hire teachers due to low salaries prior to alternative credit program, still have problems with retention.

- New teachers difficult to retain.

- No salary schedule available for administrators.

- Training/staff development is not coordinated systemically.

- High school is developing an unpaid mentoring program for new teachers.

- No mentoring program district wide.

- Teachers must arrive on campus fully trained because support system is inadequate.

- Elementary principals do not have time to mentor/support new teachers because they are the single administrators on the campus.

- District tried to set up classroom management training.

- Not getting support from HR for locating subs.

- Spending too many man-hours on HR issues, subs, at campus level.

- Need to know by February if planning to keep teachers and need to have evaluation done prior to have information.

- Can't use probation with new teachers.

- Could improve process by performing evaluations in October annually.

- Inadequate communication of HR announcement/requirements, sent to principals instead of directly to employees.

- High turnover rates with high school counselors, added a position, lost good ones along the way.

- Teachers are not paid adequately – extremely low against other districts. Could make $15,000 more by driving to north Houston.

- District is active in Alternative Certification program to attract teachers.

Facilities Construction, Use, and Management

- Something needs to be done about the rat problem.

- Look good, well maintained.

- Some areas are too hot and some are too cold.

- Bond program pretty successful.

- Mildew in building.

- Air conditioning did not work last summer during summer school.

- Broken glass panes are not repaired.

- Air conditioning needs to be restarted daily, installed in 1940.

- Science lab had to be moved due to lack of air-conditioning.

- Buildings are not cleaned. Floors are scuffed by shoes, desks chairs.

- Sometimes takes months to complete maintenance work orders.

- No survey of users regarding maintenance.

- Contract employees are disgruntled, due to no vacations/sick time; get no support, poor communications process between requestor and custodians.

- High school has been fairly well maintained since renovation, minor issues such as lack of toilet paper during the day.

- At elementary school fans were installed backward which contributed to air conditioning failure. Inadequate pest control – mosquitoes.

- Grass is mowed.

- Had no problems with outsourced staff.

- Redid Lake Road Elementary – not torn down.

- Pleased with maintenance department that works its tail off. Hates new management – don't know what they're doing, employees lost benefits, no vacations, etc. Other districts that have used Sodexho have gone back to in-house operations.

- Children don't respect facilities, can paint one day and then it is destroyed.

- Girls' bathrooms at the high school have big murals done by students. Good for morale.

- Gardens at campuses – nice but need to mow them at the end of the school year. Gardens are not kept up after school is out for summer.

- Bond program – renovations are sharp, pleasant and cheery.

- Air conditioning is a problem.

- No soap in the restrooms ever. Have to go to faculty restroom to use soap when washing hands.

- New labs are nice and the new bathrooms are also nice.

- Elementary schools and middle schools are OK.

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Don't have enough band instruments, band uniforms don't fit because 70% of the band students are middle school students (70% MS versus 30% HS). Benefits are very high, currently on state plan, is an issue in hiring/retention.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- ADA allotment is the basic budget campuses have to work with.

- No choice in deciding not to fill a position to use funds for other uses.

- Administration some times mandates use of campus budgets, i.e. purchase of radios in response to disaster.

- It appears that the district spends too much money on football and administration.

- Gate $ for football needs to be spread to other spots. In La Marque High School football is everything. Other sports suffer for lack of funds to run all-around program for all the sports.

PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

- Concerns about the shortage of textbooks. Makes learning very difficult.

- The football and sports can order all they want. The teachers have to wait on things they need to teach classes.

- Anatomy and physics books are 15 years old.

- Calculus books are falling apart.

- Some classes can't take books home; Spanish last year had no books, while others have class sets so children can leave their textbooks at home. Lots of reliance on workbooks and instruction sheets for homework.

- Excellent.

- Could not order colored paper for flashcards because it was not "instructional".

- Title budget is micromanaged. Local budget is handled OK.

- Desperately need desks, cafeteria tables and furniture in general.

- Items are coming out of instructional budget.

- Furniture at DAPE is designed for elementary students but the program limited to middle/high school students.

- Not enough desks/chairs for students at all levels. Estimated 1,100 additional desks needed.

- Looking at grants to fund furniture needs.

- Capital outlay spending has come to a halt; no capital budgets.

- Some furniture and materials were sold at auction even after principals had marked them for their schools.

- Textbooks are a problem, have enough books but some are old.

- Calculus textbooks have been used for generations! (dating back to 1997).

- Have new biology and French books and speech books are OK.

- No Spanish textbooks.

- Not enough calculators or desks, microscopes don't work right.

- Some desks are broken.

FOOD SERVICE

- Students aren't given enough time to eat.

- So many of the children do not like the food. Hamburgers are cold from the day before. Not a good selection.

- I've received comments from my grand kids, of not liking the foods that are served cold at times.

- Food services are well done and well served to us. But I think more food should be served in the regular and snack bar line for lower prices. The regular lines should serve good foods such as chicken baskets, egg rolls, curly fries, etc.

- The high school has two lunch periods, 30 minutes each, to feed over 1,300 students. This is not enough time.

- Need more variety at middle school versus high school.

- High school students' unwillingness to fill out free and reduced lunch forms has an impact on other programs.

- Children started out last year taking lunch but switched to cafeteria meals because they liked the food.

- Kids like it.

- Trying to vary menu.

- Even kids that do not have card can receive a peanut and jelly sandwich.

- Last year had insufficient staff, principal spoke with food service manager to improve situation.

- Invited food service staff to be on site during student registration to sign up students for free and reduced lunch.

- Breakfast not always good, little pancakes today were not good.

- Not always as nutritious as it should be.

- Not enough condiments or large enough portions.

- Need more choices for middle school students.

- Not enough time to eat breakfast.

- The numbers of lunch periods were reduced at the high school and there are not enough lines.

- Kids always complain.

- There won't ever be solutions – kids want what they want, not what they're given, its not McDonalds or Taco Bell.

- Snack bars are popular.

- Prices are too high.

- Not enough time, too crowded.

- Food is sometimes cold.

- Pasta and chicken fried steak are good.

TRANSPORTATION

- Something happened on the bus with two students, the police were called, and he never showed up.

- Something needs to be done about the number of students to a bus. My son has had to stand because of over crowding. There are bus drivers who do not wait until the students are seated before pulling off.

- A heart for kids. I have a student that is in a wheelchair. Where she lives she will be our last stop. One day she screamed and cried big crocodile tears. He mother told me that when she gets hot she does that. She now she is our first stop. They already have a disability and they have to put up with all of this. Durham has air conditioned buses but they don't work. All Durham sends to La Marque are their rejects from other centers.

- A G.M. with No Heart. One Friday a student came out to the bus with a soiled pamper and dirty clothes. I sent him back into his house to get cleaned up. I waited for him. I informed my G.M. what happened when I got in. Her reply was: "Don't do that again, just leave him." I told her he might not get any food for that day and the weekend. She replied: "That's the parent's problem!"

- A concern that could become a problem. The parents that drop off and pick up their children in the bus ramp need to wait until the buses have gone through. The

parent and students hold up the buses carrying on conversations. The concerned schools are: Early Childhood, Westlawn and La Marque High. A special route is needed for drop off and pick up for special needy children.

- Poor.

- Transportation split a bus (same campus may have students on different buses). Kid got lost and parents were upset.

- Principals don't have information on bus routes.

- Lack of communication with providers.

- Pick up elementary students too early.

- Bus reps did not come to registration to assist with bus assignments/routes/info

- For three weeks bus would deliver special education children to school but would not take them home. No explanation given by provided.

- If special education student is not met, bus will call principal; if principal is there will return to school, if not will take children home.

- Costs are too high, costs are incurred for idle time on extra curricular trips, now moving to flat trip costs.

- Drivers are good, generally work with principals

- Kids are on the bus too long ex pick up at 6:15 delivered to school at 7:15 am.

- Buses seem to be running – newer buses.

- LMISD transports students to College of the Mainland – not all districts do.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- There's too much horseplay when the kids should be in class. And at times security isn't available when leaving the school at night.

- Behavior isn't addressed consistently; therefore teachers are frustrated and feel helpless. Why would this district hire someone that has stolen?

- Teachers have no control of classes (50%), lack of discipline; hear it from both teachers and students.

- Teachers are not backed up by administration.

- Handbook states no strapless tops, no tongue or eyebrow rings, but it is not enforced.

- Parents are very concerned about sending their kids to the middle school. Lots of rumors out there that need to be addressed. If the school is not safe then that needs to be addressed. If it is an "image" issue then that needs to be addressed. The orientation for new middle school students and parents needs to be move up to the fall when many parents make the decision. April or May is too late.

- I have made "pop up" visits to the middle school – no problems.

- High school is giving "lip service" to discipline. Needs to be shaken up, Needs to be enforced. Six administrators on campus but can't enforce discipline.

- Parents are part of the problem too. Need to stay involved and on top of things.

- Other schools like the schools in Clear Creek have issues too. Are your kids better off staying here in your community where you can watch things or going to another district?

- High school administrators moved quickly to break ups fights.

- Have a truancy problem. There is supposed to be a calling system.

- Example of a parent who thought that her child had missed 8 days, found out that it was 89 days with no information being sent out.

- Police Dept should do something for truancy problem.

- We have cameras in the high school but no one knows who is breaking into the health office.

- When DAEP is full, punishment is delayed.

- Parents often don't support teachers.

- No idea what a couple of assistant principals do. Six administrators should be able to manage schools.

- Keep doors locked

- Security has improved.

- Cameras on each door, not monitored real time

- Cars vandalized in back parking lot.

- Concerned about being safe from the unexpected.

- Would like for security officers to have a visible presence at arrival/dismissal times at elementary schools.

- Need radios to communicate with security now have to page them and hope they respond timely.

- Officers do try to be helpful.

- Three officers and the chief at the high school drive their own personal vehicles.

- High school performed as security assessment during the renovation, some improved lighting as a result. Have drug dog sweep as deterrent.

- Radios mandated for campuses due to industrial explosion.

- Now have more police officers (8-9). Doesn't mean campuses are safe/secure.

- Police have a presence.

- In 1997, could walk in, no one stopped them, could walk in anywhere.

- Now have surveillance cameras at high school

- Likes tighter security. Several times at elementary – community member stopped and asked what they were doing there.

- Discipline was TERRIBLE last year. Now assistant principals are trying to keep kids in classes. Assistant principals are in each hall and visible between classes.

- Discipline is better this year. Zero tolerance for fighting. Lay a hand on a fellow student, regardless of fault; go immediately to the DAEP for 60 days.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Need technology program comparable to those in north Galveston County school districts. Our kids are not able to compete for better jobs.

- Need more working computers not only for teachers but for students too.

- La Marque ISD needs to have more technology available on campus in order to allow students to regain credit loss in other academic courses while moving on to other academic classes. Not the POWER Center, but an on campus credit recovery program. For example, if a

student has failed 9th grade English and they also need 10th grade English – take the 9th grade English in a credit recovery class.

- High school uses computers mostly for BCIS, sometimes not running.

- Teachers use to have disaggregated information provided to them. Now they have to do it themselves, don't have time or remember the training. Very time consuming.

- Not enough computers

- 22 PCs in lab at Early Childhood Education Center- not used due to a lack of electricity.

- No ability to access distance learning.

- Some websites blocked by technology staff (based on grant requirements).

- Some sites are blocked unnecessarily.

- Insufficient Technology staff – only one districtwide.

- Students do know how to use PCs as a tool.

- Wiring problems – middle school administrative offices have TV but not access to Channel 1 for monitoring purposes.

- High school has limited access to internet, can't perform online analysis of benchmark items.

- District does not buy latest equipment or technology.

- Fiber optics upgrade explored/researched by administration but no info available on implementation.

- Technology committee has not met this year.

- During the fall 2004 an outside group reviewed technology.

- Backbone – have been redone and upgraded, about to go with fiber, impressed with network.

- Not enough computers – When trying to file document on line community members had to go to 3-4 computers until they could find computers that could access the internet.

- Computers are slow, work stations are a few years behind the times.

- Satisfactory, not excellent – wish that LMISD at level of other districts.

- Technology education lacking.

- Tried to get Cisco networking with Friendswood, unsuccessful.

- Basic computer maintenance – don't have a lot of options.

- Need for better technology in classrooms, better access.

- Don't use them except for dual language classes.

- Have to use computers at home.

- Many of the existing computers are reserved for Plato uses (this may be last year).

PARENT SURVEY

N = 84

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

STATEMENT	CATEGORY		
	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. Gender (Optional)	1.2%	27.4%	71.4%

STATEMENT			CATEGORY			
	NO RESPONSE	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	7.1%	14.3%	76.2%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY			
	NO RESPONSE	0-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3. How long have you lived in La Marque ISD?	1.2%	14.3%	15.5%	69.0%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY
	GRADE LEVEL
4. What grade level(s) does your child(ren) attend?	
Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	14.3%
Elementary (Grades 1-5)	27.4%
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	25.0%
High School (Grades 9-12)	56.0%
Charter School	0.0%
Not Applicable (Administrators)	0.0%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	15.5%	15.5%	36.9%	20.2%	1.2%	10.7%
2. The school board's effectiveness in its role as a policy maker for the district.	20.2%	17.9%	31.0%	19.0%	1.2%	10.7%
3. The superintendent's effectiveness as an instructional leader and business manager.	20.2%	28.6%	23.8%	16.7%	2.4%	8.3%
4. The level of cooperation between the superintendent and the board in working together.	16.7%	16.7%	36.9%	16.7%	2.4%	10.7%

B.　EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
5.　The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	20.2%	26.2%	27.4%	16.7%	4.8%	4.8%
6.　The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	20.2%	13.1%	40.5%	13.1%	1.2%	11.9%
7.　The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	15.5%	34.5%	27.4%	14.3%	4.8%	3.6%
8.　The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	20.2%	23.8%	35.7%	13.1%	4.8%	2.4%
9.　The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	17.9%	19.0%	33.3%	14.3%	7.1%	8.3%
10.　The overall quality of district teachers.	6.0%	22.6%	36.9%	23.8%	8.3%	2.4%
11.　Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	2.4%	3.6%	44.0%	27.4%	15.5%	7.1%
12.　The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	19.0%	23.8%	31.0%	14.3%	7.1%	4.8%
13.　The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	10.7%	7.1%	41.7%	21.4%	11.9%	7.1%

14.　District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	22.6%	English or Language Arts	25.0%	Physical Education	14.3%
Writing	34.5%	Computer Instruction	23.8%	Business Education	21.4%
Mathematics	51.2%	Social Studies (history or geography)	19.0%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	16.7%
Science	41.7%	Fine Arts	20.2%	Foreign Language	36.9%

15.　District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	33.3%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	42.9%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	33.3%	Summer School Programs	33.3%
Special Education	15.5%	Alternative Education Programs	22.6%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	15.5%	English as a Second Language Programs	28.6%
Dyslexia	21.4%	Dropout Prevention Programs	46.4%
Student Mentoring	31.0%	Career Counseling Program	41.7%
Advanced Placement	25.0%	College Counseling Program	46.4%
Literacy	27.4%	Counseling Parents of Students	35.7%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
16.　The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents.	21.4%	26.2%	29.8%	13.1%	6.0%	3.6%
17.　The availability of district facilities for community use.	13.1%	21.4%	32.1%	22.6%	4.8%	6.0%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CONTINUED)

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
18. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	21.4%	25.0%	33.3%	9.5%	2.4%	8.3%
19. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	27.4%	25.0%	28.6%	11.9%	1.2%	6.0%

D. FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
20. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	19.0%	23.8%	34.5%	4.8%	6.0%	11.9%
21. The cleanliness of schools.	8.3%	8.3%	31.0%	34.5%	11.9%	6.0%
22. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	15.5%	13.1%	32.1%	26.2%	6.0%	7.1%

E. FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness of site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	13.1%	11.9%	45.2%	8.3%	2.4%	19.0%
24. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	19.0%	33.3%	22.6%	7.1%	3.6%	14.3%
25. The district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read.	14.3%	22.6%	33.3%	7.1%	4.8%	17.9%
26. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	20.2%	25.0%	29.8%	9.5%	2.4%	13.1%

F. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	10.7%	9.5%	45.2%	15.5%	3.6%	15.5%
28. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	16.7%	16.7%	38.1%	14.3%	4.8%	9.5%
29. The condition and age of textbooks.	16.7%	9.5%	39.3%	20.2%	2.4%	11.9%

G. FOOD SERVICES

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
22. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	15.5%	13.1%	32.1%	26.2%	6.0%	7.1%
30. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	6.0%	9.5%	41.7%	23.8%	2.4%	16.7%
31. The amount of time students have to eat.	15.5%	19.0%	32.1%	11.9%	4.8%	16.7%
32. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	9.5%	13.1%	34.5%	19.0%	7.1%	16.7%
33. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	4.8%	4.8%	34.5%	27.4%	14.3%	14.3%
34. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	2.4%	3.6%	28.6%	35.7%	15.5%	14.3%

H. TRANSPORTATION

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	2.4%	3.6%	28.6%	35.7%	15.5%	14.3%
35. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	4.8%	6.0%	38.1%	23.8%	6.0%	21.4%
36. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	4.8%	6.0%	28.6%	33.3%	7.1%	20.2%
37. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	3.6%	7.1%	34.5%	28.6%	7.1%	19.0%
38. Buses regularly arrive in time for students to eat breakfast.	2.4%	3.6%	36.9%	23.8%	10.7%	22.6%
39. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	2.4%	6.0%	33.3%	29.8%	7.1%	21.4%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
40. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	11.9%	6.0%	34.5%	25.0%	9.5%	13.1%
41. The district's effectiveness in ensuring gangs are not a problem in this district.	9.5%	8.3%	31.0%	29.8%	8.3%	13.1%
42. The district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs are not a problem in this district.	14.3%	15.5%	25.0%	21.4%	10.7%	13.1%
43. The district's effectiveness in ensuring vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.1%	16.7%	28.6%	26.2%	8.3%	13.1%
44. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	8.3%	13.1%	29.8%	20.2%	13.1%	15.5%
45. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	16.7%	25.0%	23.8%	16.7%	6.0%	11.9%
46. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	2.4%	6.0%	33.3%	31.0%	11.9%	15.5%

J. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	3.6%	13.1%	33.3%	23.8%	8.3%	17.9%
48. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	11.9%	16.7%	33.3%	14.3%	3.6%	20.2%
49. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	14.3%	14.3%	33.3%	11.9%	6.0%	20.2%
50. Easy student access to the Internet.	9.5%	13.1%	34.5%	11.9%	4.8%	26.2%

TEACHER SURVEY

N = 114

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

STATEMENT	CATEGORY		
	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. Gender (Optional)	0.9%	36.0%	63.2%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY				
	NO RESPONSE	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	0.9%	40.4%	46.5%	7.9%	0.9%	3.5%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY			
	NO RESPONSE	0-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3. How long have you lived/worked in La Marque ISD?	0.9%	53.5%	14.0%	31.6%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY
	GRADE LEVEL
4. What grade level(s) do you teach?	
	Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten) — 3.5%
	Elementary (Grades 1-5) — 34.2%
	Middle School (Grades 6-8) — 28.1%
	High School (Grades 9-12) — 34.2%
	Charter School — 0.0%
	Not Applicable (Administrators) — 0.9%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The ability of staff to quickly and easily purchase needed goods and services.	11.4%	39.5%	33.3%	8.8%	3.5%	3.5%
2. The competitiveness of district salaries with similar positions in the job market.	14.0%	41.2%	34.2%	7.9%	0.9%	1.8%
3. The effectiveness of the district's program to orient new employees.	7.0%	25.4%	43.9%	21.1%	0.9%	1.8%
4. The district's effectiveness in identifying and rewarding competence and excellent performance.	14.9%	23.7%	43.9%	11.4%	2.6%	3.5%
5. The district's effectiveness in dealing appropriately with employees who perform below the standard of expectation (up to and including termination)	7.9%	30.7%	39.5%	17.5%	1.8%	2.6%
6. The ability of the district's health insurance package to meet my needs.	12.3%	26.3%	42.1%	12.3%	4.4%	2.6%
7. The fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.	6.1%	12.3%	53.5%	15.8%	4.4%	7.9%

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

| | RATING | | | | | |
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
8. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	2.6%	8.8%	48.2%	27.2%	2.6%	10.5%
9. The effectiveness of the school board in its role as a policy maker for the district.	4.4%	20.2%	44.7%	21.1%	1.8%	7.9%
10. The superintendent's effectiveness as an instructional leader and business manager.	13.2%	16.7%	31.6%	17.5%	14.0%	7.0%
11. The level of cooperation between the superintendent and the board in working together.	0.9%	12.3%	47.4%	25.4%	5.3%	8.8%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

| | RATING | | | | | |
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	7.9%	19.3%	41.2%	22.8%	0.9%	7.9%
13. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	7.9%	12.3%	53.5%	18.4%	0.9%	7.0%
14. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	6.1%	21.9%	40.4%	22.8%	1.8%	7.0%
15. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	13.2%	14.9%	36.8%	27.2%	2.6%	5.3%
16. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	8.8%	16.7%	43.9%	19.3%	2.6%	8.8%
17. The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	9.6%	32.5%	43.0%	10.5%	4.4%
18. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0.9%	0.0%	28.9%	39.5%	26.3%	4.4%
19. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	20.2%	25.4%	33.3%	12.3%	3.5%	5.3%
20. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	7.9%	15.8%	36.8%	25.4%	8.8%	5.3%

21. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	43.0%	English or Language Arts	28.1%	Physical Education	11.4%
Writing	42.1%	Computer Instruction	42.1%	Business Education	15.8%
Mathematics	65.8%	Social Studies (history or geography)	18.4%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	21.1%
Science	44.7%	Fine Arts	24.6%	Foreign Language	17.5%

B.   EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

22.   District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	21.1%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	40.4%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	34.2%	Summer School Programs	24.6%
Special Education	36.8%	Alternative Education Programs	21.9%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	9.6%	English as a Second Language Programs	31.6%
Dyslexia	29.8%	Dropout Prevention Programs	34.2%
Student Mentoring	36.8%	Career Counseling Program	24.6%
Advanced Placement	19.3%	College Counseling Program	27.2%
Literacy	26.3%	Counseling Parents of Students	36.8%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

		RATING				
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents.	3.5%	17.5%	45.6%	21.1%	4.4%	7.9%
24. The availability of district facilities for community use.	4.4%	10.5%	44.7%	26.3%	3.5%	10.5%
25. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	14.9%	36.0%	28.9%	11.4%	2.6%	6.1%
26. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	17.5%	37.7%	22.8%	10.5%	2.6%	8.8%

D.   FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

		RATING				
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	14.0%	21.1%	35.1%	16.7%	1.8%	11.4%
28. The cleanliness of schools.	1.8%	12.3%	42.1%	31.6%	5.3%	7.0%
29. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	16.7%	28.9%	27.2%	15.8%	6.1%	5.3%

E.   FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

		RATING				
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The effectiveness of Site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	7.0%	28.9%	38.6%	12.3%	2.6%	10.5%
31. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	9.6%	21.9%	43.9%	8.8%	0.9%	14.9%
32. The district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read.	8.8%	10.5%	55.3%	10.5%	1.8%	13.2%
33. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	13.2%	20.2%	36.0%	13.2%	4.4%	13.2%

F. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	3.5%	12.3%	50.0%	21.1%	4.4%	8.8%
35. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	11.4%	18.4%	35.1%	23.7%	4.4%	7.0%
36. The condition and age of textbooks.	7.9%	11.4%	43.9%	25.4%	2.6%	8.8%

G. FOOD SERVICES

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
37. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	5.3%	14.9%	48.2%	14.0%	7.0%	10.5%
38. The amount of time students have to eat.	8.8%	21.9%	49.1%	12.3%	1.8%	6.1%
39. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	6.1%	12.3%	45.6%	23.7%	5.3%	7.0%
40. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	1.8%	6.1%	36.8%	30.7%	16.7%	7.9%
41. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	0.9%	1.8%	41.2%	32.5%	17.5%	6.1%

H. TRANSPORTATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
42. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	1.8%	5.3%	51.8%	19.3%	4.4%	17.5%
43. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	1.8%	2.6%	45.6%	23.7%	7.0%	19.3%
44. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	4.4%	7.0%	43.0%	31.6%	2.6%	11.4%
45. Buses regularly arrive in time for students to eat breakfast.	0.9%	2.6%	39.5%	31.6%	10.5%	14.9%
46. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	0.0%	5.3%	40.4%	30.7%	6.1%	17.5%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	3.5%	9.6%	38.6%	28.9%	11.4%	7.9%
48. The district's effectiveness in ensuring gangs are not a problem in this district.	4.4%	4.4%	44.7%	28.9%	7.9%	9.6%
49. The district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs are not a problem in this district.	7.0%	19.3%	31.6%	24.6%	7.0%	10.5%
50. The district's effectiveness in ensuring vandalism is not a problem in this district.	8.8%	13.2%	40.4%	22.8%	5.3%	9.6%
51. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	1.8%	9.6%	31.6%	32.5%	13.2%	11.4%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
52. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	16.7%	23.7%	28.9%	20.2%	2.6%	7.9%
53. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	1.8%	4.4%	50.9%	30.7%	6.1%	6.1%

J. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
54. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	5.3%	10.5%	43.9%	18.4%	7.9%	14.0%
55. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	14.0%	28.1%	29.8%	15.8%	0.9%	11.4%
56. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	18.4%	26.3%	28.1%	12.3%	3.5%	11.4%
57. Easy student access to the Internet.	11.4%	23.7%	33.3%	16.7%	2.6%	12.3%

PRINCIPAL SURVEY

N = 15

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

STATEMENT	CATEGORY		
	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. Gender (Optional)	0.0%	53.3%	46.7%

STATEMENT		CATEGORY			
	NO RESPONSE	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	0.0%	20.0%	73.3%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY		
	NO RESPONSE	0-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3. How long have you lived/worked in La Marque ISD?	0.0%	60.0%	13.3%	26.7%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY
	GRADE LEVEL
4. What grade level(s) do you supervise?	
Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	0.0%
Elementary (Grades 1-5)	26.7%
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	33.3%
High School (Grades 9-12)	46.7%
Charter School	0.0%
Not Applicable (Administrators)	0.9%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The ability of staff to quickly and easily purchase needed goods and services.	0.0%	6.7%	66.7%	20.0%	6.7%	0.0%
2. The competitiveness of district salaries with similar positions in the job market.	6.7%	46.7%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
3. The effectiveness of the district's program to orient new employees.	0.0%	6.7%	46.7%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%
4. The district's effectiveness in identifying and rewarding competence and excellent performance.	0.0%	33.3%	46.7%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5. The district's effectiveness in dealing appropriately with employees who perform below the standard of expectation (up to and including termination)	6.7%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6. The ability of the district's health insurance package to meet my needs.	6.7%	6.7%	60.0%	20.0%	6.7%	0.0%
7. The fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.	13.3%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	6.7%

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
8. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	0.0%	0.0%	46.7%	33.3%	6.7%	13.3%
9. The effectiveness of the school board in its role as a policy maker for the district.	0.0%	6.7%	46.7%	40.0%	0.0%	6.7%
10. The superintendent's effectiveness as an instructional leader and business manager.	0.0%	13.3%	13.3%	53.3%	13.3%	6.7%
11. The level of cooperation between the superintendent and the board in working together.	6.7%	0.0%	20.0%	53.3%	13.3%	6.7%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	0.0%	13.3%	53.3%	26.7%	0.0%	6.7%
13. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	0.0%	6.7%	73.3%	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%
14. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	0.0%	26.7%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	13.3%
15. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	0.0%	13.3%	40.0%	33.3%	6.7%	6.7%
16. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	20.0%	0.0%	6.7%
17. The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	6.7%	40.0%	40.0%	6.7%	6.7%
18. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	13.3%	13.3%
19. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	13.3%	20.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
20. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	26.7%	13.3%	0.0%

21. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	33.3%	English or Language Arts	40.0%	Physical Education	26.7%
Writing	33.3%	Computer Instruction	60.0%	Business Education	20.0%
Mathematics	86.7%	Social Studies (history or geography)	26.7%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	46.7%
Science	73.3%	Fine Arts	40.0%	Foreign Language	13.3%

B.   EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

22.   District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	53.3%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	46.7%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	73.3%	Summer School Programs	33.3%
Special Education	46.7%	Alternative Education Programs	20.0%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	13.3%	English as a Second Language Programs	66.7%
Dyslexia	40.0%	Dropout Prevention Programs	33.3%
Student Mentoring	46.7%	Career Counseling Program	33.3%
Advanced Placement	40.0%	College Counseling Program	40.0%
Literacy	26.7%	Counseling Parents of Students	33.3%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents	0.0%	0.0%	46.7%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%
24. The availability of district facilities for community use.	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
25. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	6.7%	46.7%	26.7%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
26. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%

D.   FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	6.7%	26.7%	40.0%	13.3%	6.7%	6.7%
28. The cleanliness of schools.	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
29. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	13.3%	6.7%	53.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%

E.   FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The effectiveness of Site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	0.0%	26.7%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	6.7%
31. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	0.0%	33.3%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%	13.3%
32. The district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read.	6.7%	26.7%	20.0%	33.3%	0.0%	13.3%
33. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	0.0%	6.7%	26.7%	46.7%	13.3%	6.7%

F. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	0.0%	13.3%	46.7%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
35. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	6.7%	0.0%	53.3%	33.3%	6.7%	0.0%
36. The condition and age of textbooks.	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

G. FOOD SERVICES

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
37. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	0.0%	6.7%	40.0%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%
38. The amount of time students have to eat.	0.0%	6.7%	60.0%	26.7%	6.7%	0.0%
39. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	0.0%	6.7%	40.0%	33.3%	20.0%	0.0%
40. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	0.0%
41. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	0.0%

H. TRANSPORTATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
42. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	6.7%	0.0%	46.7%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%
43. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	0.0%	20.0%	26.7%	40.0%	13.3%	0.0%
44. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	6.7%	13.3%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
45. Buses regularly arrive in time for students to eat breakfast.	0.0%	6.7%	26.7%	33.3%	26.7%	6.7%
46. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%	6.7%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	0.0%	13.3%	6.7%	66.7%	13.3%	0.0%
48. The district's effectiveness in ensuring gangs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	13.3%	20.0%	40.0%	26.7%	0.0%
49. The district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	13.3%	40.0%	46.7%	0.0%	0.0%
50. The district's effectiveness in ensuring vandalism is not a problem in this district.	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	53.3%	0.0%	6.7%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
51. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	6.7%	6.7%	33.3%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%
52. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	6.7%	0.0%
53. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	0.0%	6.7%	26.7%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%

J. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
54. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	6.7%	13.3%	46.7%	26.7%	0.0%	6.7%
55. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	6.7%	40.0%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
56. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	20.0%	20.0%	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
57. Easy student access to the Internet.	20.0%	26.7%	26.7%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%

ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

N = 20

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

STATEMENT	CATEGORY		
	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. Gender (Optional)	0.0%	55.0%	45.0%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY					
	NO RESPONSE	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	5.0%	55.0%	35.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY			
	NO RESPONSE	0-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3. How long have you lived/worked in La Marque ISD?	5.0%	40.0%	20.0%	35.0%

STATEMENT	CATEGORY
	GRADE LEVEL
4. What grade level(s) do you supervise?	
Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	5.0%
Elementary (Grades 1-5)	5.0%
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	5.0%
High School (Grades 9-12)	40.0%
Charter School	0.0%
Not Applicable (Administrators)	45.0%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The ability of staff to quickly and easily purchase needed goods and services.	10.0%	5.0%	40.0%	30.0%	0.0%	15.0%
2. The competitiveness of district salaries with similar positions in the job market.	5.0%	35.0%	25.0%	20.0%	0.0%	15.0%
3. The effectiveness of the district's program to orient new employees.	5.0%	15.0%	35.0%	30.0%	0.0%	15.0%
4. The district's effectiveness in identifying and rewarding competence and excellent performance.	5.0%	35.0%	30.0%	15.0%	0.0%	15.0%
5. The district's effectiveness in dealing appropriately with employees who perform below the standard of expectation (up to and including termination)	25.0%	40.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	20.0%
6. The ability of the district's health insurance package to meet my needs.	15.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%	15.0%	20.0%
7. The fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.	5.0%	15.0%	25.0%	20.0%	15.0%	20.0%

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
8. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	5.0%	10.0%	35.0%	25.0%	20.0%	5.0%
9. The effectiveness of the school board in its role as a policy maker for the district.	10.0%	20.0%	40.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0.0%
10. The superintendent's effectiveness as an instructional leader and business manager.	15.0%	20.0%	15.0%	35.0%	15.0%	0.0%
11. The level of cooperation between the superintendent and the board in working together.	5.0%	15.0%	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%	50.0%	5.0%	5.0%
13. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	5.0%	25.0%	10.0%	45.0%	10.0%	5.0%
14. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	15.0%	0.0%	40.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
15. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	40.0%	15.0%	5.0%
16. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	20.0%	15.0%	40.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%
17. The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	25.0%	30.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
18. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10.0%
19. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	5.0%	20.0%	35.0%	30.0%	5.0%	5.0%
20. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	5.0%	10.0%	40.0%	30.0%	10.0%	5.0%

21. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	50.0%	English or Language Arts	30.0%	Physical Education	5.0%
Writing	25.0%	Computer Instruction	50.0%	Business Education	10.0%
Mathematics	75.0%	Social Studies (history or geography)	15.0%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	5.0%
Science	60.0%	Fine Arts	15.0%	Foreign Language	25.0%

B.   EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

22.   District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	20.0%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	45.0%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	50.0%	Summer School Programs	20.0%
Special Education	35.0%	Alternative Education Programs	15.0%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	10.0%	English as a Second Language Programs	30.0%
Dyslexia	20.0%	Dropout Prevention Programs	35.0%
Student Mentoring	40.0%	Career Counseling Program	25.0%
Advanced Placement	40.0%	College Counseling Program	30.0%
Literacy	15.0%	Counseling Parents of Students	30.0%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents	5.0%	15.0%	35.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
24. The availability of district facilities for community use.	5.0%	10.0%	15.0%	35.0%	25.0%	10.0%
25. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	25.0%	30.0%	30.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
26. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	35.0%	15.0%	30.0%	15.0%	0.0%	5.0%

D. FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	10.0%	10.0%	40.0%	25.0%	10.0%	5.0%
28. The cleanliness of schools.	10.0%	10.0%	15.0%	50.0%	10.0%	5.0%
29. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	10.0%	25.0%	30.0%	25.0%	5.0%	5.0%

E.   FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The effectiveness of Site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	15.0%	15.0%	25.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
31. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	15.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	5.0%	10.0%
32. The district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read.	5.0%	20.0%	30.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%
33. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	15.0%	25.0%	5.0%	35.0%	15.0%	5.0%

F. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	40.0%	15.0%	5.0%
35. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	20.0%	10.0%	15.0%	35.0%	10.0%	10.0%
36. The condition and age of textbooks.	10.0%	15.0%	30.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%

G. FOOD SERVICES

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
37. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	10.0%	10.0%	25.0%	20.0%	15.0%	20.0%
38. The amount of time students have to eat.	15.0%	5.0%	30.0%	35.0%	0.0%	15.0%
39. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	15.0%	30.0%	20.0%	25.0%	0.0%	10.0%
40. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	0.0%	10.0%	15.0%	35.0%	20.0%	20.0%
41. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	5.0%	5.0%	15.0%	40.0%	15.0%	20.0%

H. TRANSPORTATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
42. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	0.0%	5.0%	25.0%	30.0%	5.0%	35.0%
43. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	0.0%	15.0%	10.0%	35.0%	10.0%	30.0%
44. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	0.0%	15.0%	35.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
45. Buses regularly arrive in time for students to eat breakfast.	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	35.0%	10.0%	25.0%
46. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	5.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	35.0%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%	35.0%	15.0%	5.0%
48. The district's effectiveness in ensuring gangs are not a problem in this district.	15.0%	5.0%	20.0%	25.0%	30.0%	5.0%
49. The district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs are not a problem in this district.	35.0%	10.0%	15.0%	30.0%	5.0%	5.0%
50. The district's effectiveness in ensuring vandalism is not a problem in this district.	30.0%	5.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%	5.0%

I.   SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
51. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	25.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	15.0%	10.0%
52. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	25.0%	15.0%	30.0%	20.0%	5.0%	5.0%
53. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	45.0%	10.0%	5.0%

J.   COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
54. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	0.0%	15.0%	30.0%	25.0%	10.0%	20.0%
55. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	25.0%	10.0%	40.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%
56. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	15.0%	15.0%	45.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%
57. Easy student access to the Internet.	15.0%	15.0%	35.0%	15.0%	15.0%	5.0%

AUXILIARY/PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

N = 64

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

	CATEGORY		
STATEMENT	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. Gender (Optional)	0.0%	9.4%	90.6%

			CATEGORY			
STATEMENT	NO RESPONSE	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	0.0%	43.8%	42.2%	9.4%	0.0%	4.7%

	CATEGORY			
STATEMENT	NO RESPONSE	0-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11 OR MORE YEARS
3. How long have you lived/worked in La Marque ISD?	0.0%	42.2%	21.9%	35.9%

	CATEGORY
STATEMENT	GRADE LEVEL
4. What grade level(s) do you supervise?	
Pre-Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten)	10.9%
Elementary (Grades 1-5)	37.5%
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	21.9%
High School (Grades 9-12)	25.0%
Charter School	0.0%
Not Applicable (Administrators) •	15.6%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The ability of staff to quickly and easily purchase needed goods and services.	10.9%	21.9%	32.8%	20.3%	6.3%	7.8%
2. The competitiveness of district salaries with similar positions in the job market.	25.0%	42.2%	18.8%	7.8%	0.0%	6.3%
3. The effectiveness of the district's program to orient new employees.	9.4%	15.6%	45.3%	21.9%	1.6%	6.3%
4. The district's effectiveness in identifying and rewarding competence and excellent performance.	23.4%	29.7%	32.8%	6.3%	1.6%	6.3%
5. The district's effectiveness in dealing appropriately with employees who perform below the standard of expectation (up to and including termination)	23.4%	25.0%	34.4%	9.4%	1.6%	6.3%
6. The ability of the district's health insurance package to meet my needs.	17.2%	21.9%	31.3%	18.8%	4.7%	6.3%
7. The fairness and timeliness of the district's grievance process.	9.4%	18.8%	46.9%	15.6%	0.0%	9.4%

A. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
8. The time allowed for public input at meetings by the school board.	4.7%	4.7%	56.3%	28.1%	0.0%	6.3%
9. The effectiveness of the school board in its role as a policy maker for the district.	12.5%	20.3%	37.5%	26.6%	1.6%	1.6%
10. The superintendent's effectiveness as an instructional leader and business manager.	18.8%	18.8%	28.1%	20.3%	12.5%	1.6%
11. The level of cooperation between the superintendent and the board in working together.	12.5%	9.4%	42.2%	28.1%	4.7%	3.1%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	7.8%	21.9%	37.5%	25.0%	3.1%	4.7%
13. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	6.3%	18.8%	43.8%	23.4%	0.0%	7.8%
14. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	7.8%	20.3%	50.0%	15.6%	4.7%	1.6%
15. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	12.5%	15.6%	40.6%	21.9%	4.7%	4.7%
16. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	20.3%	26.6%	34.4%	14.1%	0.0%	4.7%
17. The overall quality of district teachers.	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	31.3%	4.7%	1.6%
18. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	1.6%	3.1%	32.8%	42.2%	18.8%	1.6%
19. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	12.5%	31.3%	32.8%	20.3%	1.6%	1.6%
20. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	3.1%	15.6%	35.9%	34.4%	7.8%	3.1%

21. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	53.1%	English or Language Arts	40.6%	Physical Education	14.1%
Writing	46.9%	Computer Instruction	46.9%	Business Education	18.8%
Mathematics	70.3%	Social Studies (history or geography)	32.8%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	35.9%
Science	57.8%	Fine Arts	23.4%	Foreign Language	23.4%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

22. District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	21.9%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	51.6%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	40.6%	Summer School Programs	23.4%
Special Education	40.6%	Alternative Education Programs	21.9%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	10.9%	English as a Second Language Programs	32.8%
Dyslexia	42.2%	Dropout Prevention Programs	45.3%
Student Mentoring	48.4%	Career Counseling Program	42.2%
Advanced Placement	32.8%	College Counseling Program	42.2%
Literacy	28.1%	Counseling Parents of Students	48.4%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents	4.7%	23.4%	57.8%	9.4%	1.6%	3.1%
24. The availability of district facilities for community use.	7.8%	12.5%	46.9%	28.1%	1.6%	3.1%
25. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	21.9%	29.7%	35.9%	9.4%	0.0%	3.1%
26. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	18.8%	46.9%	29.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%

D. FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
27. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	18.8%	26.6%	42.2%	7.8%	0.0%	4.7%
28. The cleanliness of schools.	0.0%	23.4%	34.4%	31.3%	9.4%	1.6%
29. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	17.2%	32.8%	21.9%	25.0%	1.6%	1.6%

E. FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
30. The effectiveness of Site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	17.2%	21.9%	45.3%	10.9%	0.0%	4.7%
31. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	23.4%	25.0%	37.5%	4.7%	0.0%	9.4%
32. The district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read.	12.5%	23.4%	48.4%	9.4%	0.0%	6.3%
33. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	18.8%	28.1%	31.3%	12.5%	1.6%	7.8%

F. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
34. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	3.1%	12.5%	57.8%	20.3%	0.0%	6.3%
35. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	7.8%	15.6%	46.9%	21.9%	1.6%	6.3%
36. The condition and age of textbooks.	6.3%	10.9%	51.6%	21.9%	1.6%	7.8%

G. FOOD SERVICES

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
37. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	6.3%	12.5%	53.1%	21.9%	4.7%	1.6%
38. The amount of time students have to eat.	4.7%	10.9%	62.5%	17.2%	1.6%	3.1%
39. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	9.4%	15.6%	43.8%	20.3%	7.8%	3.1%
40. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	0.0%	4.7%	45.3%	29.7%	15.6%	4.7%
41. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	0.0%	1.6%	40.6%	35.9%	17.2%	4.7%

H. TRANSPORTATION

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
42. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	1.6%	15.6%	50.0%	18.8%	0.0%	14.1%
43. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	1.6%	6.3%	48.4%	29.7%	1.6%	12.5%
44. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	3.1%	23.4%	39.1%	26.6%	0.0%	7.8%
45. Buses regularly arrive in time for students to eat breakfast.	1.6%	4.7%	48.4%	35.9%	0.0%	9.4%
46. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	0.0%	4.7%	60.9%	20.3%	1.6%	12.5%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

	RATING					
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
47. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	7.8%	10.9%	32.8%	32.8%	12.5%	3.1%
48. The district's effectiveness in ensuring gangs are not a problem in this district.	4.7%	9.4%	40.6%	31.3%	9.4%	4.7%
49. The district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs are not a problem in this district.	9.4%	18.8%	42.2%	25.0%	3.1%	1.6%
50. The district's effectiveness in ensuring vandalism is not a problem in this district.	10.9%	12.5%	42.2%	29.7%	0.0%	4.7%
51. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	6.3%	12.5%	29.7%	34.4%	15.6%	1.6%

I.   SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
52. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	12.5%	25.0%	28.1%	26.6%	6.3%	1.6%
53. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	1.6%	7.8%	42.2%	34.4%	10.9%	3.1%

J.   COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
54. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	1.6%	12.5%	46.9%	28.1%	1.6%	9.4%
55. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	15.6%	26.6%	40.6%	10.9%	1.6%	4.7%
56. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	9.4%	17.2%	50.0%	14.1%	1.6%	7.8%
57. Easy student access to the Internet.	6.3%	18.8%	45.3%	17.2%	1.6%	10.9%

STUDENT SURVEY

N = 57

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

STATEMENT	CATEGORY		
	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
1. Gender (Optional)	0.0%	61.4%	38.6%

STATEMENT		CATEGORY				
	NO RESPONSE	ANGLO	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	0.0%	8.8%	66.7%	19.3%	3.5%	1.8%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
1. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the college-bound student.	15.8%	24.6%	47.4%	7.0%	3.5%	1.8%
2. The district's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the work-bound student.	14.0%	24.6%	45.6%	12.3%	1.8%	1.8%
3. The effectiveness of the district's educational programs in meeting the needs of the students.	17.5%	33.3%	38.6%	7.0%	3.5%	0.0%
4. The effectiveness of the district's special programs in meeting the needs of students.	8.8%	26.3%	40.4%	15.8%	7.0%	1.8%
5. The effectiveness of the district in immediately notifying a parent if a child is absent from school.	17.5%	7.0%	31.6%	24.6%	19.3%	0.0%
6. The overall quality of district teachers.	22.8%	17.5%	38.6%	15.8%	5.3%	0.0%
7. Students access, when needed, to a school nurse.	26.3%	22.8%	26.3%	14.0%	10.5%	0.0%
8. The equal access that all schools have to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes	26.3%	17.5%	38.6%	8.8%	5.3%	3.5%
9. The ability of the school library to meet student needs for books and other resources.	31.6%	15.8%	33.3%	15.8%	1.8%	1.8%

10. District educational programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Reading	33.3%	English or Language Arts	36.8%	Physical Education	21.1%
Writing	50.9%	Computer Instruction	35.1%	Business Education	31.6%
Mathematics	75.4%	Social Studies (history or geography)	28.1%	Vocational Education (Career & Technology Education)	24.6%
Science	61.4%	Fine Arts	29.8%	Foreign Language	54.4%

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

11. District special programs that need improvement to meet the students' needs:

Library Service	49.1%	Programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school	63.2%
Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	49.1%	Summer School Programs	49.1%
Special Education	22.8%	Alternative Education Programs	33.3%
Head Start and Even Start Programs	22.8%	English as a Second Language Programs	42.1%
Dyslexia	31.6%	Dropout Prevention Programs	68.4%
Student Mentoring	45.6%	Career Counseling Program	61.4%
Advanced Placement	36.8%	College Counseling Program	68.4%
Literacy	40.4%	Counseling Parents of Students	52.6%

B. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
12. The effectiveness and regularity of the district's communication with parents	26.3%	21.1%	36.8%	14.0%	1.8%	0.0%
13. The availability of district facilities for community use.	24.6%	28.1%	43.9%	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%
14. The availability of volunteers to help with students and school programs.	29.8%	21.1%	33.3%	10.5%	5.3%	0.0%
15. The effectiveness of the district's parent involvement programs.	29.8%	22.8%	33.3%	7.0%	7.0%	0.0%

C. FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION, USE AND MANAGEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
16. The ability for parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board to participate and provide input into facility planning.	24.6%	24.6%	36.8%	8.8%	3.5%	1.8%
17. The cleanliness of schools.	40.4%	15.8%	31.6%	1.8%	8.8%	1.8%
18. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	31.6%	22.8%	33.3%	5.3%	5.3%	1.8%

D. FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

			RATING			
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
19. The effectiveness of Site-based budgeting in involving principals and teachers in the budget process.	36.8%	21.1%	35.1%	1.8%	3.5%	1.8%
20. The ability of the public to provide sufficient input during the budget process.	36.8%	26.3%	29.8%	3.5%	1.8%	1.8%

D. FINANCIAL/ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
21. The district's financial reports are available and easy to understand and read.	31.6%	19.3%	36.8%	8.8%	1.8%	1.8%
22. The ability of the superintendent and administrators to effectively manage the district's budget.	36.8%	19.3%	31.6%	7.0%	3.5%	1.8%

E. PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
23. The quality of the goods and services purchased by the district.	33.3%	26.3%	31.6%	3.5%	1.8%	3.5%
24. Student access to textbooks in a timely manner.	31.6%	15.8%	31.6%	14.0%	1.8%	5.3%
25. The condition and age of textbooks.	45.6%	24.6%	22.8%	1.8%	1.8%	3.5%

F. FOOD SERVICES

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
26. The temperature, appearance, and taste of the cafeteria's food.	59.6%	14.0%	21.1%	0.0%	1.8%	3.5%
27. The amount of time students have to eat.	68.4%	14.0%	8.8%	1.8%	3.5%	3.5%
28. Discipline and order in the cafeteria.	38.6%	17.5%	24.6%	10.5%	5.3%	3.5%
29. The helpfulness and friendliness of cafeteria staff.	14.0%	10.5%	35.1%	17.5%	19.3%	3.5%
30. The cleanliness and sanitary condition of district cafeteria facilities.	22.8%	22.8%	35.1%	10.5%	5.3%	3.5%

G. TRANSPORTATION

CATEGORY FOR RATING	RATING					
	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
31. The level of discipline maintained by the bus driver on the bus.	24.6%	5.3%	45.6%	15.8%	3.5%	5.3%
32. The level of safety at bus pick-up stops and drop-off zones at schools.	21.1%	3.5%	43.9%	22.8%	3.5%	5.3%
33. The on-time arrival and departure of buses.	26.3%	12.3%	42.1%	14.0%	1.8%	3.5%
34. Buses regularly arrive in time for students to eat breakfast.	15.8%	12.3%	38.6%	21.1%	7.0%	5.3%
35. The overall cleanliness and maintenance of buses.	29.8%	7.0%	45.6%	10.5%	1.8%	5.3%

H. SAFETY AND SECURITY

		RATING				
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
36. Your perception of the student's level of safety and security at school.	24.6%	21.1%	36.8%	10.5%	1.8%	5.3%
37. The district's effectiveness in ensuring gangs are not a problem in this district.	26.3%	17.5%	35.1%	10.5%	5.3%	5.3%
38. The district's effectiveness in ensuring drugs are not a problem in this district.	47.4%	8.8%	26.3%	8.8%	3.5%	5.3%
39. The district's effectiveness in ensuring vandalism is not a problem in this district.	38.6%	15.8%	28.1%	7.0%	1.8%	8.8%
40. The working relationship that security personnel has with principals, teachers, staff and students.	29.8%	10.5%	35.1%	17.5%	1.8%	5.3%
41. The equity, consistency, and fairness of discipline students receive for misconduct.	29.8%	21.1%	26.3%	10.5%	3.5%	8.8%
42. The condition of school grounds (existence of safety hazards).	21.1%	12.3%	42.1%	15.8%	1.8%	7.0%

I. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

		RATING				
CATEGORY FOR RATING	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NO RESPONSE
43. The ability and knowledge of teachers to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	17.5%	14.0%	38.6%	17.5%	8.8%	3.5%
44. The age and condition of computers and their usefulness in applying new technology.	33.3%	10.5%	35.1%	10.5%	7.0%	3.5%
45. Student access to sufficient computers for students to learn and apply technology.	29.8%	17.5%	31.6%	12.3%	5.3%	3.5%
46. Easy student access to the Internet.	33.3%	19.3%	31.6%	5.3%	7.0%	3.5%