



**Plano
Independent School District**

**Review of the
CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM**

**Conducted by Resources for Learning, LLC
for the Legislative Budget Board**

January 2009



LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

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January 30, 2009

Dr. Douglas W. Otto
Superintendent
Plano Independent School District

Dear Dr. Otto:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Plano Independent School District's (PISD) curriculum management system.

The report's recommendations will help Plano ISD improve its overall performance as it provides services to district students and staff. The report also highlights model practices and programs being provided by PISD's curriculum management system.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged Resources for Learning, LLC, to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JOHN O'BRIEN".

John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Lloyd "Skip" Jenkins
Mr. Brad Shanklin
Mr. Missy Bender
Ms. Mary Beth King
Mr. John Muns
Ms. Melody Timinsky
Mr. Duncan Webb

PLANO ISD

A. SITE HISTORY

This section provides contextual information about the district, including recent trends in student demographics and performance and a general comparison of property wealth with the state. This information is based on Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports and interview data. Historical information about curriculum use in the district and the impetus and processes for adopting the current curriculum were gathered through interviews, focus groups, and a review of relevant documents.

1. STARTING POINTS

Plano Independent School District (PISD) is located in a suburban area 20 miles north of Dallas. The district comprises 68 campuses, including 43 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, eight high schools, and five special program or preschool campuses. Enrollment has fluctuated and increased from 51,573 students in 2003–04 to 53,683 students in 2007–08. Fluctuation was also apparent in the percent of students identified

as economically disadvantaged. This number was 15.5 percent in 2003–04; reached a high of 20.5 percent in 2005–06, and dropped back to 15.9 percent by 2007–08. This fluctuation was due to students moving to the district from Louisiana as a result of Hurricane Katrina. African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and limited English proficient (LEP) student groups increased in population over this time period, and the proportion of White students in the district decreased. **Exhibit 1** provides PISD enrollment and demographic data for the period from 2003–04 through 2007–08.

This report uses district performance indicators under the federal and state accountability systems. Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), accountability provisions that formerly applied only to districts and campuses receiving Title I, Part A, funds now apply to all districts and campuses. All public school districts, campuses, and the state are evaluated annually for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In terms of federal accountability

**EXHIBIT 1
PISD ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE
2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL STUDENTS	STUDENT GROUPS†						
		AA	H	W	NA	A/PI	ED	LEP
2007–08	53,683	11.0%	17.0%	53.0%	0.4%	19.0%	15.9%	12.0%
2006–07	52,753	10.3%	16.2%	54.7%	0.4%	18.4%	18.7%	12.0%
2005–06	53,007	10.7%	14.9%	56.8%	0.3%	17.2%	20.5%	11.5%
2004–05	52,113	9.3%	14.1%	59.7%	0.3%	16.6%	16.6%	11.5%
2003–04	51,573	8.8%	13.0%	62.2%	0.3%	15.7%	15.5%	10.6%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) District Reports, 2003–04 through 2006–07; Texas Education Agency, Student Enrollment and Standard Reports and Core Products, 2007–08.

standards, 61 PISD campuses *Met AYP* in 2007. The remaining seven campuses were *Not Rated*.

Under the Texas Accountability Rating System, PISD was rated *Academically Acceptable* in 2006–07, *Recognized* in 2005–06, *Academically Acceptable* in 2004–05, and *Recognized* in 2003–04. In 2006–07, of the nonalternative campuses in PISD, 24 campuses were rated *Exemplary*, 18 campuses were rated *Recognized*, and 20 campuses were rated *Academically Acceptable*.

The performance indicators of particular interest for this report are results on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). TAKS performance data are reported in AEIS by grade, by subject, and by all grades tested and are disaggregated by student groups: ethnicity, gender, special education, economically disadvantaged status, LEP status, and at-risk status.

Exhibits 2 through 5 provide data on state and PISD student performance on TAKS from 2004–05 through 2006–07. PISD refers to these performance numbers internally as passing rates.

District performance was consistently above the state passing rate and also showed improved performance from 2004–05 through 2006–07

in mathematics. In a comparison of state and district passing rates among student groups, all PISD student groups performed consistently above their state peers for each of the three years. (See **Exhibit 2**)

In science, overall district performance improved and was above the state passing rate from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district passing rates among student groups, all PISD student groups performed consistently above their state peers for each of the three years. (See **Exhibit 3**)

Overall, district performance in English language arts and reading (ELA/reading) has been stable and consistently higher than the state passing rate from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district passing rates among student groups, all PISD student groups performed consistently above their state peers for each of the three years. (See **Exhibit 4**)

In social studies, district performance was stable and higher than the state passing rate from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district passing rates among student groups, all PISD student groups performed consistently above their state peers for each of the three years. (See **Exhibit 5**)

**EXHIBIT 2
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—MATHEMATICS
STATE AND PISD PASSING RATES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT PASSING RATES													
	STATE	DISTRICT	AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
			S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	77%	92%	64%	76%	71%	79%	87%	95%	79%	92%	93%	98%	69%	76%	62%	72%
2005–06	75%	91%	61%	75%	68%	76%	86%	94%	79%	86%	92%	97%	66%	75%	58%	69%
2004–05	72%	90%	57%	74%	64%	73%	84%	93%	76%	83%	90%	97%	62%	71%	54%	65%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 3
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SCIENCE
STATE AND PISD PASSING RATES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT PASSING RATES													
	STATE	DISTRICT	AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
			S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	71%	90%	56%	74%	61%	68%	85%	95%	77%	94%	88%	95%	60%	67%	39%	49%
2005–06	70%	89%	54%	73%	59%	68%	85%	94%	79%	91%	86%	94%	58%	66%	35%	48%
2004–05	66%	86%	49%	66%	53%	63%	81%	90%	73%	79%	83%	93%	51%	61%	28%	47%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 4
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/READING
STATE AND PISD PASSING RATES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT PASSING RATES													
	STATE	DISTRICT	AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
			S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	89%	96%	84%	91%	84%	89%	95%	98%	91%	98%	95%	98%	83%	88%	67%	78%
2005–06	87%	96%	82%	90%	82%	87%	94%	97%	90%	98%	94%	98%	81%	86%	63%	74%
2004–05	83%	94%	76%	87%	77%	82%	91%	96%	87%	89%	92%	97%	76%	81%	58%	69%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 5
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SOCIAL STUDIES
STATE AND PISD PASSING RATES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT PASSING RATES													
	STATE	DISTRICT	AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
			S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	89%	97%	84%	94%	84%	89%	95%	99%	93%	>99%	96%	99%	83%	89%	53%	77%
2005–06	87%	97%	81%	93%	80%	89%	94%	99%	91%	97%	95%	99%	79%	88%	49%	76%
2004–05	88%	97%	82%	92%	82%	89%	94%	99%	92%	88%	95%	99%	80%	89%	52%	79%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

Across the four core subject areas, district performance was consistently above the state passing rate. In a comparison of state and district passing rates among student groups, all student groups performed at or above their state peers over the three-year period and exhibited stable or improved performance.

To provide a measure of school district property value, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (Comptroller) conducts a study each year that uniformly evaluates the property values within school district boundaries. Locally assessed values may vary from the Comptroller's study values. The values certified by the Comptroller's Property Tax Division are standardized in that they are deemed to be comparable across the state. Note that the values shown are final for tax year 2006. This is not the property value used for school funding calculations. Using the *Value per Student* measure from AEIS reports provides one definition of "wealth." This calculation refers to school district property value, or Standardized Local Tax Base, *divided by* the total number of students. At the state level, the per-pupil amount is created by dividing by the total number of students in districts with property value. Some districts do not have property value; their students are not included. For PISD, the standardized local tax base per-pupil value is \$581,313 compared to the state per-pupil value of \$305,208.

2. CURRICULUM HISTORY

PISD has a long history of curriculum initiatives. Some teachers reported that early in their careers in the district, textbooks drove the curriculum but also said that there had always been curriculum guides and professional development to support the guides. Staff also reported consistently having been involved in curriculum development processes. In the early 1990s, before the Internet became a viable

mode for accessing curriculum, Edunetics/Steck-Vaughn partnered with PISD to develop software for social studies, science, and health curricular use.

The district's elementary centralized curriculum has been in place since 1994–95, and secondary curricular efforts began in 1998. The Curriculum Planner, which is the district's curriculum management system, was moved to an online format in 2002 for secondary schools and 2003 for elementary schools.

3. IMPETUS FOR CHANGE/DATA-DRIVEN ADOPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Three circumstances drove the development of the current curriculum management system in PISD – The Curriculum Planner. From 1993 through 1998, science, health, and social studies were combined as an integrated curriculum at the elementary level, which prompted a review of the entire science, health, and social studies curriculum. Also in the early 1990s, a large bond election was held and passed to increase technology in the elementary schools. Deliberation about how to tie technology to the curriculum led the district to develop a plan for technology integration to meet the identified needs of the curriculum in 1993. Further, district concerns about the ways in which the curriculum was taught and inconsistency in campus and classroom access to technology were factors. Finally, district staff were concerned about learning gaps for students moving between schools in the district. These circumstances eventually led the district to pursue an entirely new curriculum system.

The district thus began a multipronged approach to addressing the need for an online curriculum and curriculum management system. The process of moving to an online system began with an

assessment of the classroom environment and the decision to provide seven student computers and one teacher computer for all grade K–4 classrooms and eight student computers and one teacher computer for all grade five classrooms. Computer labs were removed from the elementary campuses, and computers were distributed to classrooms using the ratios stated previously. At the same time, the Elementary Curriculum Department, along with 30 teachers, began a study of brain research as it relates to student learning. Best practices in curriculum and instruction were also considered in developing a new elementary integrated curriculum. The same team along with the Curriculum and Technology Departments investigated third party software. None of the then-available packages met the needs of the district, in that they did not support the wide variety of digital formats PISD used for instructional resources, did not provide for federated searching of resources, and were proprietary in their use of publisher content based on the provider. Further, ongoing licensing fees were considered to be higher than if the district was to contract for their own tools. Based on these factors, the decision was made for PISD to create their own district software applications.

In addition to heavy teacher involvement in curriculum development, senior staff including the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Directors for Elementary and Secondary Curriculum and Instructional Technology, and Curriculum Coordinators for each content area were active in the process. It should be noted that titles for these staff members have changed since that time, and may not be directly linked to the current district organization chart.

The development of the elementary curriculum was a multiyear process involving one teacher from

each PISD elementary campus. To facilitate such a high level of involvement, the district funded co-teachers for participants. A classroom teacher taught in the morning, and in the afternoon, the co-teacher took over the class so that the teacher could travel to the district office and participate in the curriculum development process. This process was active from 1993–1998 with low turnover in the curriculum development team.

The elementary curriculum was developed one unit at a time at each grade level, ultimately comprising six units at each of the six grade levels, K–5. The teachers who were involved in curriculum writing piloted the units in their own classrooms. The next year, the district implemented the units across the entire grade level districtwide through a traditional, hard copy system. Elementary teachers discussed the value of working with horizontal team members when sorting through the myriad of activities created.

In 1998, the students who had been taught using the new elementary curriculum were approaching middle school age. Around this same time, the Dr. Pepper Company moved to Plano, and the deputy superintendent was able to negotiate a \$10 million grant from the company payable to PISD at \$1 million per year. The stipulation on the grant money was that it must be used to fund instructional initiatives. This was the primary source of funding for the middle school curriculum revisions for five years, prior to renegotiation of the grant terms in 2006.

Initially, a cadre of approximately 20 to 25 teachers from grades 6–8 served as the middle school curriculum writers. The cadre had representation from every campus and every grade level. The district learned from the elementary school curriculum writing efforts that teachers should

stay in the classroom at least part time to keep new development grounded in practice and also to facilitate piloting of the new curriculum. Teachers taught in the morning and worked on curriculum development in the afternoon, and campuses were provided additional staffing to cover for teachers in the afternoons. There were also bimonthly meetings with the middle school principals to update them on the project.

When the middle school curriculum was written, skills were aligned horizontally so that team members from different content areas could work together to address the five skill domains in their respective content areas. In year one of the middle school development, the focus was on professional development, especially in the first semester, including topics such as curriculum mapping, brain-based (learning) research, and strategies for creating a macro-model curriculum framework that prioritized skills and content. In year two, the model was refined, a project overview created, and grade 6 curriculum was developed. In year three, the district implemented the grade 6 curriculum and developed grade 7 curriculum. In year four, the grade 7 curriculum was implemented, and grade 8 was developed. The grade 8 curriculum was implemented in year five.

In 2003, when the middle school curriculum was completed, development began on the high school curriculum. Some staff members who had been involved in the middle school development were included as writers in order to maintain vertical articulation of concepts and skills, similar lesson formatting, and vocabulary. Courses which included end-of-course exams or that were tested on TAKS were addressed first. This work was all completed during the summers, and staff reported that each course required at least two

summers to complete. At the high school level, some teachers reported that there were inequities among team members in the amount of work they were performing during the development process. Updates and adjustments to the high school curriculum continue to take place as appropriate.

Online curriculum became a reality with creation of the secondary curriculum in the late 1990s. That process began with an online curriculum planning tool which became available to teachers in 2002. The elementary curriculum created between 1993 and 1998 was made available online in 2003.

Exhibit 6 presents a general timeline of curriculum development and implementation in PISD from 1993 through 2008.

B. DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM

This section describes the curriculum and curriculum management system implemented in the district, the implementation plan and process, and staff reactions to implementation. Costs, technical assistance, and additional resources used in the district are also described. Data was collected from district documents, a review of curriculum documents and product documentation available through websites, interviews, and focus groups.

1. DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM AND/OR CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PRODUCT

The Curriculum Planner is PISD's curriculum management system. The system is online and available to teachers and students at every level, with online access for parents scheduled for 2008–09. The overall management system has separate components for the elementary and secondary levels.

**EXHIBIT 6
PISD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
1993 THROUGH 2008**

YEAR	ACTIVITY
1993–98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of elementary integrated curriculum (social studies, science, and health)
1998–99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive staff development and creation of the skills matrix and curriculum macro-model for middle school
1999–2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the sixth grade core curriculum Teacher-led staff development at individual middle school campuses
2000–01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and revision of the sixth grade core curriculum Development of the seventh grade core curriculum
2001–02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and revision of the seventh grade core curriculum Development of the eighth grade core curriculum
2002–03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four core members of the curriculum development team continue revisions and edits of the eighth grade curriculum on a regular basis and begin working with high school curriculum writers Secondary curriculum goes online
2003–08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary curriculum goes online High school curriculum writing teams meet regularly during the school year and throughout the summer Subject-area coordinators direct the selection of the teacher-authors and determine the focus of secondary course creation Development and revision of 180 electronically delivered courses is ongoing

SOURCE: PISD staff interviews, April 2008; The Curriculum Planner.

The elementary system provides teachers in each content area (language arts, mathematics, and integrated curriculum) with lesson plans including TEKS objectives, materials, suggested resources, vocabulary, procedures, strategies, and formative and summative assessments. Each discipline provides for differentiation including lesson plans for students at risk, special education students, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, and gifted/advanced students. Elementary teachers have access to curriculum for all grade levels in order to provide appropriate levels of content for students needing scaffolded instruction. The system contains a scope and sequence, vertically aligned curriculum documents, and assessments. Elementary campus administrators are the academic leaders of their campus and as such are responsible for the implementation of the district curriculum.

At the secondary level, the system is called a “Content Through Skills” model. There is an overarching matrix of five skills that transcends the integrated science-social studies-health curriculum. The skills are information literacy, inter/intrapersonal, technology, thinking and reasoning, and communication. These skills are integrated through horizontal repetition, which involves reinforcement of the skills across subject areas, and vertical articulation, which focuses on a logical sequence and progression of skills across grade levels and subjects. As new curricular units are developed, they are piloted at target schools. Adjustments based on teacher feedback are made before the new units are fully rolled out for districtwide use. This piloting process relies on the expertise of the teachers who have been involved in the development process; as they understand the

units fully, they are able to provide support to other teachers on their campuses piloting the materials.

Teachers are provided vertical team planning days and subject area or horizontal team planning times weekly. The secondary curriculum is organized around units of instruction which vary in length from a few weeks to a semester, depending on the course. There are 180 secondary courses on The Curriculum Planner that cover the four core subject areas as well as Languages Other than English (LOTE), fine arts, and elective courses. Curriculum documents for some courses are completed, while others are still in the development process. At the middle school level, content and skills are assessed across the district for each unit through a Culminating Assessment Performance (CAP). CAPs consist of authentic assessments such as performance-based assessments that ask students to apply and transfer their learning to a new situation. Often, CAPs include a great deal of student writing.

One of the goals of the district is to ensure that a student leaving one school and entering the same grade level at another school will be at approximately the same place in the curriculum at the new school.

2. DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION

The district met with resistance from staff and the community in the early stages of implementation of the current curriculum system. Updates to the curriculum and the switch to a technology-based system challenged tradition, and the board and administrators held meetings for the public in addition to professional development for teachers to address concerns. However, this incremental implementation of the curriculum management system has overall been a well-supported process.

Some teachers reported that new teachers want to work in the district because of the curriculum.

The curriculum is a living document and is edited on a continuing basis with corrections, replacements, and additions. The Curriculum Planner includes an opportunity for teachers to provide input and feedback as they use the curriculum management system.

The district provides substantial training to support curriculum implementation. At the elementary schools, teachers receive training in modules and are given time to talk about differentiating new sections of curriculum and scaffolding. This process is being initiated at the secondary level as well, with the difference that teachers will be trained by subject area rather than grade level.

Formative assessments are built into the curriculum system. The district diagnostic test is the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) published by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), which is administered two to three times each year per grade level. The MAP is a computerized adaptive assessment which measures reading, mathematics, science, and language usage on a common scale so that student progress can be monitored from grade to grade. The MAP is designed to be administered up to four times per year to provide diagnostic information on student academic growth over time.

The district's Curriculum Coordinators assist with curriculum implementation through campus or classroom visits for modeling, co-teaching, or providing feedback based on observation. The coordinators stated during interviews that it is their responsibility to see that the curriculum is functioning as planned. At the elementary level, they assist new teachers trying to learn to work with the curriculum and meet with subject or

horizontal and content area vertical team leaders twice per year. At the secondary level, Curriculum Coordinators meet four to six times per year with campus staff. The coordinators report that they are not evaluators; they are in a supporting role only, which results in a collaborative relationship with the campuses and classroom teachers.

Curriculum Specialists and Coordinators review the curriculum often and monitor changes and edits to The Curriculum Planner throughout the year. If major curriculum rewrites are required, teams of teachers are assembled over the summer and paid for their time. In summer 2008, for instance, the curriculum writers worked on updating elementary mathematics. The team consisted of five teachers from every grade level, including three regular and two bilingual education teachers. Updates were provided to teachers at professional development sessions held before school started in fall 2008.

Staff indicated that campuses have discretion over how closely district lesson plans must be followed. However, staff also reported the inconsistency across campuses regarding lesson plans resulted in confusion about district expectations. Some campuses view lesson plans solely as a guide, while other campuses permit little deviation. Some staff expressed concern with the assumed rigidity in the pacing of the curriculum and stated it allowed insufficient time for differentiating instruction to address individual student needs. Additionally, staff reported that the lack of consistent implementation of the curriculum with regard to how closely lesson plans should be followed created an atmosphere of mistrust on some campuses.

Exhibit 7 summarizes the status of PISD’s curriculum components. For the purposes of this review, only specific elements of curriculum support in the four core subject areas for grades 2, 4, 7, and 11 were analyzed. Analyses indicated that a curriculum system, scope and sequence,

**EXHIBIT 7
STATUS OF PISD INTERNALLY DEVELOPED CURRICULUM COMPONENTS
APRIL 2008**

CURRICULUM SUPPORTS	IN PLACE	TEKS ALIGNED	TAKS ALIGNED	GRADE LEVELS	SUBJECT AREA*	UPDATE
Curriculum System (The Curriculum Planner)	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ 2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓ Yes No
	No	No	No	✓ 4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	{ongoing}
				✓ HS	✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
Scope & Sequence	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ 2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓ Yes No
	No	No	No	✓ 4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	{ongoing}
				✓ HS	✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
Lesson Plans	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ 2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓ Yes No
	No	No	No	✓ 4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	{ongoing}
				✓ HS	✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	

*M=Mathematics, R=Reading, E=English Language Arts, S=Science, SS=Social Studies
SOURCE: PISD Curriculum Documents, April 2008.

and lesson plans are available. These components, which address all grade levels and subject areas reviewed for this report, are aligned with the TEKS and TAKS, and are regularly updated.

3. COSTS INCURRED IN OBTAINING CURRICULUM GUIDES/SERVICES

PISD's curriculum development and management system is well developed and has a long history. As such, the costs associated with the system are well integrated into the district's overall instructional budget.

The district's commitment to the curriculum development process has been reflected in the district's budget priorities. During the early 1990s, when development began, the district had fewer limitations on its budget. In more recent years, the board has continued to fund curriculum development by redirecting resources from other areas such as extracurricular activities to ensure that development and implementation goals are met.

During the curriculum development and update process, district resources have been consistently committed to providing co-teachers or substitutes for teachers so that they could meet collaboratively during the school year, as well as providing stipends and training during the summer for curriculum writing and the creation and refinement of the online management system.

Though the district continues to support the curriculum, some accommodations to their process have been required. While teachers have always been involved in the development and piloting of curriculum, more work is now being done in the classroom rather than hiring substitute teachers to enable teachers to meet outside of the classroom to work on curriculum development. The impact of

this change on the process has been minimized by the use of electronic communication.

Exhibit 8 summarizes PISD's annual internal curriculum development expenditures, broken down into elementary and secondary curriculum categories, from 1993–94 through 2007–08.

In addition to the costs included for the ongoing development and maintenance of the curriculum system, teachers annually participate in four days of professional development devoted to curriculum. There is no additional cost for these days as they are included in teacher contracts.

While the majority of the curriculum-related development in PISD occurs internally, the district has contracted for curriculum-related services with several different vendors since development efforts began in 1993–94. In 1995–96, the PISD school board hired University Research Associates, Inc., at a cost of \$11,871, to perform a curriculum audit. Several years later, two companies were hired to create The Curriculum Planner, and these companies continue to provide system updates. Cognitive Systems, Inc. created the online secondary system at a cost of \$100,000 in 1998–99 with refinements in 2002–03 and 2005–06 costing \$50,000 each. M&A Technology created the online elementary system for \$150,000 in 1999–2000, with refinements costing \$150,000 in 2005–06.

PISD's curriculum-related contracted services from 1995–96 through 2005–06 are summarized in **Exhibit 9**.

**EXHIBIT 8
PISD EXPENDITURES
INTERNAL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
1993-94 THROUGH 2007-08**

SCHOOL YEAR	ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM	SECONDARY CURRICULUM	ANNUAL TOTAL
1993-94	\$600,000		\$600,000
1994-95	\$600,000		\$600,000
1995-96	\$700,000		\$700,000
1996-97	\$700,000		\$700,000
1997-98	\$700,000		\$700,000
1998-99	\$105,000	\$550,000	\$655,000
1999-2000	\$105,000	\$550,000	\$655,000
2000-01	\$105,000	\$550,000	\$655,000
2001-02	\$105,000	\$550,000	\$655,000
2002-03	\$105,000	\$370,000	\$475,000
2003-04	\$105,000	\$370,000	\$475,000
2004-05	\$105,000	\$370,000	\$475,000
2005-06	\$105,000	\$370,000	\$475,000
2006-07	\$150,000	\$370,000	\$520,000
2007-08	\$300,000	\$370,000	\$670,000
Total 15-year Investment			\$9,010,000

SOURCE: PISD Curriculum and Instruction Division records, 1993-2008; interviews with division personnel, spring 2008.

**EXHIBIT 9
PISD CURRICULUM-RELATED CONTRACTED SERVICES
1995-96 THROUGH 2005-06**

VENDOR	DATES	TYPE OF SERVICE	ANNUAL TOTAL
University Research Associates, Inc.	1995-96	Curriculum Audit	\$11,871
Cognitive Systems, Inc.	1998-99	Development of Secondary Online Curriculum Tool	\$100,000
	2002-03	System Refinements	\$50,000
	2005-06	System Refinements	\$50,000
M & A Technology	1999-2000	Development of Elementary Online Curriculum Tool	\$150,000
	2005-06	System Refinements	\$150,000
Total Investment: Curriculum-Related Contracted Services			\$511,871

SOURCE: PISD Curriculum and Instruction Division records, 1993-2008; interviews with division personnel, spring 2008.

PISD began participating in the Western States Benchmarking Consortium in 1996–97. The consortium provides a setting and framework for monitoring continuous district improvement. The framework is based on four strategic areas: student learning, capacity development, community connectedness, and data-driven decision making. While some district staff indicated that participation in the consortium has been invaluable to the district in developing its curriculum content and management system and is well worth the annual dues of \$5,000, others contend that participation in the consortium is an extraneous activity and is not a central component of the district’s curricular efforts. The annual dues support a part-time administrator for the organization, and each district participating in the consortium makes substantive contributions.

The consortium holds three meetings per year that PISD staff members attend. The PISD Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Academic Officer attend all three meetings, at an average cost per attendee of approximately \$900 per meeting. Additionally, two subject area staff members attend two related meetings each year. The total annual cost of participation in the consortium is approximately \$16,700.

Exhibit 10 summarizes PISD’s curriculum-related costs from 1993–94 through 2007–08. Including internal curriculum development

efforts, contracted services, and the district’s participation in the Western States Benchmarking Consortium, total costs for the 15-year period total approximately \$9.7 million.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) does not require districts to report expenditures on curriculum separately from other instructional expenditures. Therefore, curriculum expenditures generally are coded as instruction or instruction-related. All of the costs detailed in this section are included in PISD’s instructional budget.

For 2006–07, PISD spent an average of \$4,460 per pupil, or 69.0 percent of all operating expenditures per pupil, on curriculum- and instructional-related services. These expenditures include salaries, training, materials, and activities related to curriculum and direct instruction of students in the classroom.

4. OTHER CURRICULAR RESOURCES USED IN DISTRICT

The district stated that they relied on Regional Education Service Center X (Region 10) more in the past than they do now. Staff reported that their current needs could not be met by the service center because the focus of the service center had to be on smaller districts without the infrastructure of large districts such as PISD. While the district does not depend on the service center for general professional development, they do utilize

EXHIBIT 10 PISD TOTAL CURRICULUM-RELATED COSTS 1993–94 THROUGH 2007–08

CURRICULUM COSTS	DATES	TOTAL
Internal Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Development	1993–94 through 2007–08	\$9,010,000
Curriculum-Related Contracted Services	1995–96 through 2005–06	\$511,871
Participation in Western States Benchmarking Consortium	1996–97 through 2007–08	\$183,700
Total 15-year Curriculum Investment		\$9,705,571

SOURCE: PISD, Curriculum and Instruction Division records, 1993–2008; interviews with division personnel, spring 2008.

Region 10 for products such as WebCCAT and online tutorials, as well as for speakers and some specialized teacher training. PISD does continue to support the service center through payment of annual fees.

C. STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes the structures to support implementation based on a review of board policy documents, district organizational charts and job descriptions, and interview and focus group data.

1. SUPPORTING DISTRICT AND BOARD POLICIES

The board was provided with regular reports on the progress and provided approval for the district's large-scale curriculum development projects in 1993 for the elementary integrated components and in 1998 for the middle school project. The board holds a work session and a business meeting each month, and in-depth updates are provided to board members at the work session. The board approved the curriculum development process, especially for significant financial commitments such as the co-teaching that occurred during the creation of the system, but they do not approve the content of each curriculum area.

The district contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for its policy development and updates. TASB categorizes all policies according to seven major areas of school operations: basic district operations, local governance, business and support services, personnel, instruction, students, and community government relations. TASB developed policies designated as (LEGAL) or (EXHIBIT) to comply with legal entities that define district governance. In addition, local policies can be created to reflect

local school board decisions. TASB designates such policies as (LOCAL) or (REGULATION).

The PISD Board of Trustees has adopted seven policies that reference curriculum for the grade levels and core areas considered in this review. All but one policy are legal.

AE (EXHIBIT) Educational Philosophy

Objective 4 of this policy states a “well balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.”

BBD (EXHIBIT) Board Members Training and Orientation

This policy describes school board development. Primary areas of responsibility are creating a shared vision, providing guidance and direction, requiring accountability for measuring progress toward the vision, and promoting the district's vision for education. Specifically, this policy states “the board adopts goals, approves student performance objectives, and establishes policies that provide a well-balanced curriculum resulting in improved student learning.”

BQ (LEGAL) Planning and Decision-Making Process

This policy addresses the need for students to make informed curriculum choices to be prepared for success beyond high school.

EHAA (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (All Levels)

This policy states the district shall provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills at appropriate grade levels in the foundation (four core areas) and enrichment curriculum according to *Education Code §28.002(c)*. It also states that all children in the district participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs through *Education Code §28.002(g)*.

EHAB (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Elementary) and *EHAC (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary)* provide similar provisions to *EHAA*.

EFA (LOCAL) Instructional Resources: Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption

This policy states that trained professional staff members are afforded the freedom to select instructional resources for their use in accordance with this policy and the state mandated curriculum.

Other board policies may reference curriculum but are not related to the grade levels or four core areas of interest to this report.

Of the seven relevant policies, one reflects local school board decisions. No policies reference or detail a specific process for curriculum adoption, implementation, and review. For example, policies are not in place that provide common standards for what is to be taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EFFECTIVENESS AS RELATED TO CURRICULUM

PISD has a well-staffed system for curriculum management. The Associate Superintendent for Academic Services heads the Curriculum and Instruction Division and oversees the Executive Director of Elementary Academic Services and Executive Director of Secondary Academic Services, each of whom have a multilevel organization within their purview.

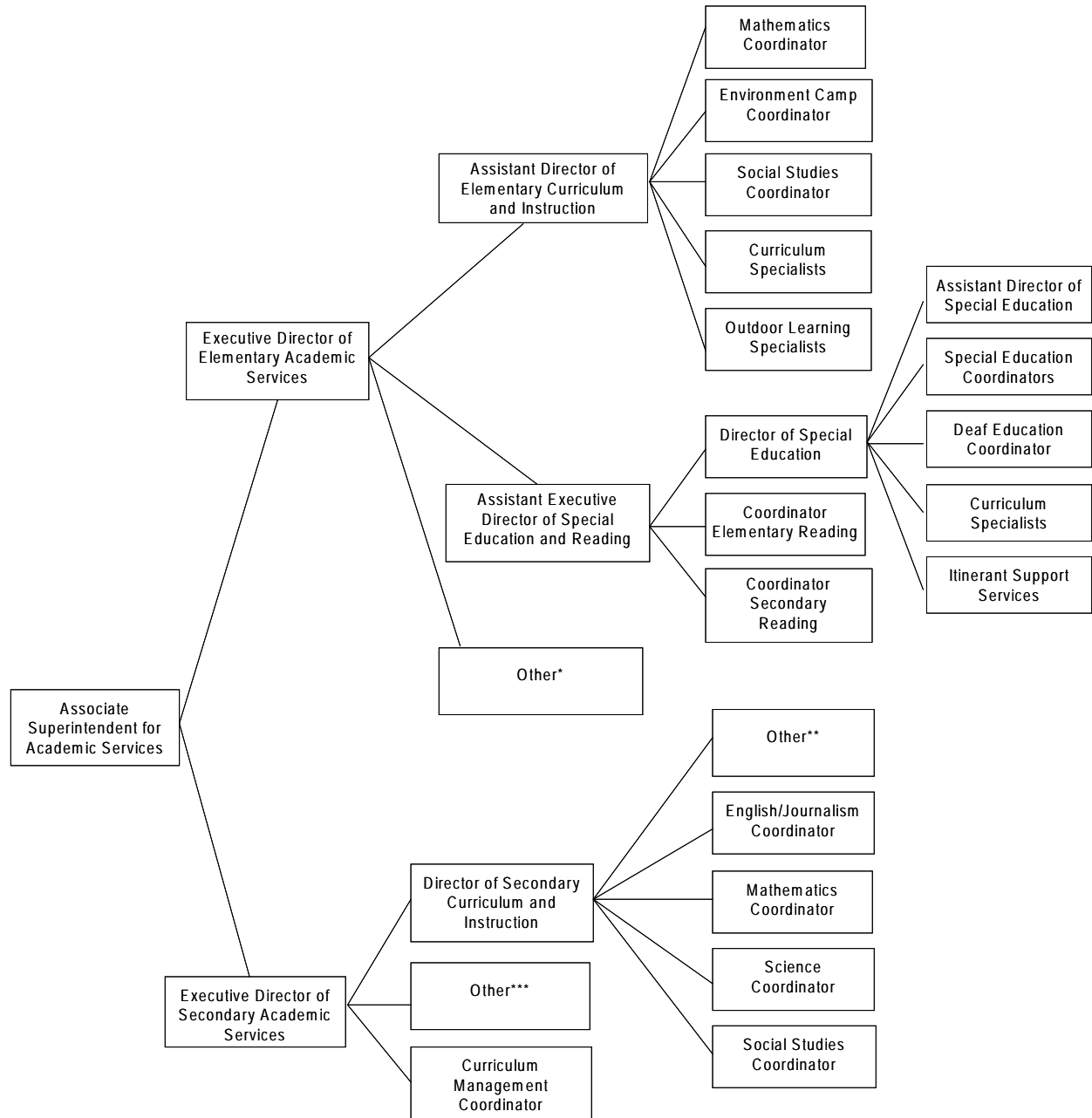
Exhibit 11 illustrates the PISD Curriculum and Instruction Division organization for 2007–08.

In the area of secondary education, the Executive Director of Secondary Academic Services oversees

two positions directly related to curriculum, the Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction and the Curriculum Management Coordinator, along with the supervisors over three other major areas. The Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction oversees the coordinators of the core subject areas, including English/journalism, foreign languages, mathematics, science, social students, K–12 physical education/health, and AVID.

The organization of Elementary Academic Services is also complex. The Executive Director of Elementary Academic Services oversees two positions directly related to curriculum, the Assistant Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Executive Director of Special Education and Reading, along with the coordinators/directors over four other major areas. The special education and reading area includes a Director of Special Education and Coordinators of Elementary and Secondary Reading. The Assistant Director of Elementary Curriculum is responsible for supervision of the Mathematics, Social Studies, and Environment Camp Coordinators, as well as the Curriculum and Outdoor Learning Center Specialists.

**EXHIBIT 11
PISD CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION DIVISION
2007-08**



*Early Childhood Coordinator, Head Start Director, Federal Programs Coordinator, Director of Multilingual Services

**AVID Coordinator, Foreign Language Coordinator, K-12 P.E./Health Coordinator

***Director of Professional Learning & Advanced Academics, Director of Fine Arts & Special Programs, Special Assignments Coordinator

SOURCE: PISD Curriculum and Instruction Division Organizational Chart, 2007-08.

Major curriculum-related duties for the Executive Directors/Directors/Assistant Directors of Elementary and Secondary Curriculum and Instruction include the following responsibilities:

- ensure that TEKS are effectively implemented in all curricular areas;
- monitor instructional and managerial processes systematically and continuously to ensure that program activities are keyed to producing desired program outcomes;
- monitor that all schools are providing for all students equitably;
- use evidence of program outcomes for corrective action and improvement, as well as for recognition of success;
- work collaboratively with the Director for Professional Learning and campus principals to deliver identified professional learning activities at the campus level;
- plan, develop, and implement improvement in the purposes, design, and materials of the instructional and other support programs;
- facilitate the planning and application of technologies within the curriculum;
- work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and review curriculum documents based on systematic review and analyses;
- work with appropriate staff to maintain and revise the online Curriculum Planner based on systemic review and analysis;
- involve instructional staff in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs;

- ensure that district goals and objectives are developed with the involvement of specialists, teachers, principals, parents and/or students, when appropriate;
- provide effective professional learning activities and/or improvement plans to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum; and
- communicate the school's mission to the community in the area of curriculum and solicit its support in making that mission become a reality.

The Curriculum Management Coordinator for Secondary Curriculum oversees and manages the posting and maintenance of all curriculum content on the district's server for all subjects and courses. Over 40,000 documents are linked and broadcast in the secondary system alone. This position also assists in curriculum development, teacher training, and editing of curriculum documents. The Elementary Curriculum Coordinators are responsible for managing and maintaining their individual curriculum areas.

The Elementary and Secondary Reading Coordinators both report to the Assistant Executive Director of Special Education and Reading. The major curriculum-related duties of these coordinators include the following responsibilities:

- develop, promote, and support a curriculum that helps each child develop a sense of self-worth and critical thinking skills according to the strategic plan of the district;
- cooperate with principals, teachers, and parents to coordinate a strong academic program;

- coordinate the activities of the textbook adoption process in specific subject areas;
- monitor instructional processes systematically and continuously to verify that program activities are keyed to producing desired program outcomes and recognition of program success;
- evaluate and recommend improvement in the purposes, design, materials, and implementation of the instructional and other support programs; and
- communicate district curriculum, instructional practices, accomplishments, goals, and new directions both to parents and the community at large to solicit their support.

The third district-level position heavily involved in curriculum management is the Curriculum Coordinator for each subject area. Major curriculum-related duties for the Curriculum Coordinators include the following responsibilities:

- encourage and support development and implementation of innovative instructional programs relating to the strategic plan of the district;
- facilitate the implementation of new materials, methodologies, philosophies, and innovations using those which meet the needs of students served;
- model demonstration lessons and initiate conferences with teachers acquainting them with successful and innovative strategies for classroom instruction;
- adhere and promote the district's philosophy of instruction;

- facilitate the planning and application of technologies within the curriculum;
- demonstrate techniques for using technology in teaching and learning;
- conduct training sessions for teachers that relate to effective teaching strategies and the use of technology in instructional settings;
- facilitate with teachers in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs; and
- collaborate with appropriate district staff to develop, maintain, and review curriculum documents based on systematic review and analysis.

3. SCHOOL AND DISTRICTWIDE MONITORING TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION

PISD does not have a consistent process for monitoring implementation of curriculum districtwide. Major responsibility for implementation resides with campus administrators. Submission of lesson plans depends on the team (grade level or subject) and school. Principals stated during interviews that at times they require teachers to submit lesson plans, while at other times they just ask that the plans be put on the shared server drive. If a team leader or department head approaches a principal with concerns about a teacher, the principal will look at lesson plans and observe the classroom.

Principals rely on Curriculum Coordinators and Literacy Specialists for information as well. The teaching teams review data in addition to individual teacher review, so that struggling students can be provided appropriate interventions. The district also has an online process through which staff can review student data. The program allows

for disaggregation by type of score and student demographics. For 2008–09, the district is piloting a new walkthrough process at 15 schools in order to begin institutionalization of the monitoring process.

Additionally, PISD hired University Research Associates to put together a team of educators to conduct a curriculum audit during the 1995–96 school year. The audit, which was presented to the superintendent in the summer of 1996, provided ten recommendations:

1. Design and implement sound and effective long-range planning for continual improvement and organizational focus including needs diagnosis, facilities, finance, technology, assessment of performance, and curriculum.
2. Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system.
3. Restructure roles and responsibilities of administrative personnel to ensure sound and effective organizational practices.
4. Establish and implement a comprehensive, multidimensional district assessment program to provide for decision-making in student learning, program evaluation, and the improvement of teaching.
5. Organize and staff a division for organizational assessment to provide sound and useful data for decision-making.
6. Redesign and implement an approach to review and develop curriculum guides to insure quality and internal consistency and devise the “process-centered” integrated curriculum to establish connections with content area learner objectives.
7. Develop and implement a plan to overcome inequities in student learning among diverse groups over a five-year period, beginning with the next first grade class.
8. Focus organizational activities on strengthening policy requirements to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.
9. Design and implement a sound and focused staff development plan to maximize human resources and effective curriculum delivery.
10. Adopt a four-year plan for implementation of a program-based budget and allocation system to improve cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

The district created seven teams organized in the following areas to respond to audit recommendations: long-range planning and mission, curriculum, staff development, ensuring equity, assessment, organization, and curriculum-based budgeting. These audit response teams met during the 1996–97 school year and fall 1997, and provided action plans for the recommendations in spring 1998. The action plans were phased in through 2001–02 and have resulted in the current organization and delivery of curriculum services within PISD.

D. DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a summary and description of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations based on document review, site visit data, and cost analysis. District practices are compared to professional standards.

The standards guiding the identification of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations provided in this review come from the combined efforts of the North Central Association

Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). These standards, the AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems, are tightly aligned

with the research on factors that impact student performance and were developed with broad input from practitioners and education experts. (See **Exhibit 12**)

EXHIBIT 12

AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<p>Standard 1: Vision and Purpose The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.</p>	Vision and Purpose	
	1.1	Establishes a vision for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders
	1.2	Communicates the system’s vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support
	1.3	Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision
	1.4	Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community
	1.5	Ensures that the system’s vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services
	1.6	Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate
<p>Standard 2: Governance and Leadership The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.</p>	Governance	
	2.1	Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system
	2.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system
	2.3	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations
	2.4	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board
	2.5	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system’s resources
	2.6	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations
	2.7	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations
	Leadership	
	2.8	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness
	2.9	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs
	2.10	Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals
	2.11	Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership
2.12	Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction	
2.13	Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel	

EXHIBIT 12 (CONTINUED)**Advanced ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

Standard 3: Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.	3.1	Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills
	3.2	Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills to investigate new approaches to applying their learning
	3.3	Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels
	3.4	Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice
	3.5	Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity
	3.6	Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning
	3.7	Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment
	3.8	Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning
	3.9	Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning
	3.10	Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals
	3.11	Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction
Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results	Documenting and Using Results	
The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.	4.1	Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and free of bias
	4.2	Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning
	4.3	Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance
	4.4	Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders
	4.5	Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness
	4.6	Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence
	4.7	Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations

EXHIBIT 12 (CONTINUED)
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<p>Standard 5: Resources and Support Systems The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose, and to ensure achievement for all students.</p>	Human Resources		
	5.1	Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities	
	5.2	Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)	
	5.3	Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff	
	5.4	Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable	
	Financial Resources		
	5.5	Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement	
	5.6	Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures	
	<p>Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.</p>	Stakeholder Communications and Relationships	
		6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning
6.2		Uses system-wide strategies to listen and communicate with stakeholders	
6.3		Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system	
6.4		Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders	
6.5		Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders	
<p>Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.</p>	Commitment to Continuous Improvement		
	7.1	Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)	
	7.2	Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement	
	7.3	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning	
	7.4	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels	
	7.5	Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals	
	7.6	Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders	
	7.7	Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement	
	7.8	Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide	
	7.9	Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts	

SOURCE: AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems, March 2008.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The district involves staff from all campuses in development of and revisions to the curriculum.

Since PISD began internal curriculum development efforts in 1993–94, the district has involved teachers in writing curriculum. This approach ensures consistency throughout the curriculum. Additionally, teachers who are involved in writing also pilot new curriculum in classrooms. This strategy provides two advantages. One, the curriculum is grounded in daily practice and therefore has validity for other teachers. Two, scaling the curriculum districtwide results in little resistance from teachers because the lessons have been tested. This process also develops campus-based teacher experts as an informal source of information at each school. Principals are advised of the curriculum development as it proceeds, and extensive professional development is provided for all staff. This level of participation and support is possible through funding and support by the board and community.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (6.3) solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system; and (7.2) engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement.

The district's curriculum system is based on research, professional support, and district needs.

The district spent considerable time researching student learning and presented that research to curriculum developers before the writing began. Ongoing professional development spanned the

entire first year of the development of the middle school curriculum. By creating teams of teachers to write the curriculum, the district also allowed for the knowledge of those most familiar with the students and campuses to apply research results to the needs of the district's students.

Teachers were supportive of the process for curriculum development used by PISD and reported that it demonstrated the district's respect for and confidence in its teaching staff. Having local teachers involved in the process not only created teacher buy-in for the curriculum, it also ensured that the curriculum was appropriate for the district.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (3.3) ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels; (3.4) supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice; and (7.5) provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals.

The district provides staff with (a) curriculum documents that are aligned with the TEKS and TAKS; and (b) adequate support for implementing the curriculum.

PISD provides a consistently aligned and supported curriculum. The district provides campus staff with online written documents articulating the coverage of knowledge and skills by grade level and content area as well as documents defining the order and pace of content delivery. These documents guide curricular choices and reduce variation from teacher to teacher about the level of TEKS specificity to teach and the order and

amount of time spent on objectives. Teachers therefore can spend less time preparing this content for lessons and more time preparing appropriate differentiation approaches and support materials to better meet student needs. Vertically aligned, well-articulated curriculum documents minimize curricular fragmentation and gaps in student knowledge and provide for consistent delivery of the approved curriculum. PISD also provides personnel to ensure adequate training and support for curriculum implementation at the campus level.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (3.1) develops, articulates, and coordinates a curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills; (3.2) establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills to investigate new approaches to applying their learning; and (3.4) supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The district leadership and campus administrators have not communicated a clear and unified message about the expectations for a consistent level of curriculum implementation across the district.

Campus-level staff reported a lack of understanding about the district's expectations for the level of curriculum implementation. While some understood that campus administration has discretion in how much flexibility teachers are allowed concerning following lesson plans

and pacing guides, others viewed the level of implementation as rigidly defined allowing little room for differentiation based on student needs. This lack of clarity created settings where staff indicated monitoring of implementation was interpreted as punitive. While campus-level staff reported overall adherence to the district's curriculum, the lack of a clear and unified message about the level of expected implementation across the district resulted in a range of teacher perceptions of the curriculum from full support to resistance that extended beyond an isolated few, due to its perceived rigidity.

Successful and consistent curriculum implementation relies on district and campus leadership being "on message" about the expected level of curriculum implementation. Currently, PISD does not have board policies or administrative regulations which direct curriculum implementation.

The district, with board support, should clearly articulate expectations for the level of curriculum implementation across the district, including common standards for what is to be taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated. By clearly articulating implementation expectations, all district staff will be able to align their expectations with district expectations allowing for consistent implementation of the curriculum districtwide, and maximizing the district's investment in the curriculum system.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standards: (1.2) communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support; (1.5) ensures that the vision guides the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services; and (2.11) provides internal and

external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership.

PISD lacks a formal process for monitoring curriculum implementation.

PISD lacks a formal formative and systematic monitoring process for curriculum implementation and effectiveness, including lesson plan review and walkthroughs. An inconsistent approach to monitoring results in less accurate and inconsistent measures of curriculum implementation and effectiveness. At the time of onsite work in April 2008, the process for reviewing lesson plans and observing classrooms was left to the discretion of campuses and/or grade levels or departments. However, for 2008–09, the district is piloting a new walkthrough process at 15 schools in order to begin institutionalization of the monitoring process.

While monitoring occurs informally at the classroom level, the district should formalize the process for monitoring curriculum implementation. Specifically, the process for conducting classroom observations should be more systematic. The district is piloting a walkthrough process in 2008–09. Based on the results of this pilot process, the district should develop administrative regulations with specific guidelines to support monitoring efforts. The regulations should require a consistent number of observations be conducted across campuses at all levels. Curriculum and Instruction Division staff can collect information about the number of visits made each semester to ensure adherence to the guidelines. Those conducting monitoring activities should have guidelines to follow to ensure that they are using

a consistent approach. Additionally, these staffers should receive training that emphasizes the importance of providing formative formal and informal feedback to promote professional growth opportunities for teachers.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standards: (7.4) ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels; and (7.6) monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders.

PISD lacks a clearly articulated, long-range, detailed plan for curriculum development.

PISD lacks a clear vision for long-term curriculum development. While the district has engaged in internal, long-term curriculum development efforts since 1993–94, the district lacks a curriculum management plan that directs the design, delivery, review, and management of the district curriculum and ensures quality of each component across time. Currently, this process is guided informally by the vast knowledge of the teachers, coordinators, and specialists responsible for curriculum development, and it is not archived. PISD is fortunate to have created an environment in which employee satisfaction is high and turnover is low. In many ways, the district is thorough and forward thinking in educating stakeholders as demonstrated by the amount of resources devoted to internal curriculum development. However, this process has also created informal, undocumented institutional knowledge.

Without a long-range formal curriculum management plan, the district lacks a publicly available, systematic, and coherent approach to

curriculum development, alignment, review, and implementation. Additionally, a formal, board-approved curriculum management plan could address the issues of implementation expectations, eliminating variation across campuses and teachers, as well as define a standardized approach to monitoring. A management plan will provide the district with information now held by a few staff members. It will also prioritize curriculum goals for the coming years.

The purpose of a curriculum management plan is to ensure a high quality, systematic, ongoing cycle of curriculum development and review. The components of a sound curriculum management plan include the following:

- statement of the district’s curriculum philosophy and curriculum mission statement;
- profile of a graduate indicating board and community members’ expectations of proficiencies;
- definition of curriculum, including the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- curriculum development and review cycle, including formal vertical alignment;
- roles and responsibilities of individuals charged with the development, review, delivery, and monitoring phases of curriculum;
- identification of a staff development plan aligned with curriculum goals;
- process for monitoring curriculum implementation and success, including benchmarking;

- financial resources to support the above efforts;
- glossary of terms so all stakeholders have the same understanding of terms; and
- board policies and/or administrative regulations to support the development and implementation of the curriculum management plan.

The district should develop and adopt a board-approved comprehensive curriculum management plan. The plan should include board policies and administrative regulations to direct and quality assure curriculum development, delivery, and management. This work requires leadership from a team representing the district, principals, teachers, and the community. An appointed advocate should lead the process and schedule meetings, establish agendas, and lead efforts to implement the team’s decisions. The team should focus on developing a plan that meets all components including curriculum alignment as well as professional development, personnel, and resources to support implementation.

Providing a coherent curriculum management plan, including board policy and administrative regulations, provides district and campus staff with the authority and clear direction to implement a coherent aligned curriculum across grades. The curriculum management plan offers a planning document for the district to use in aligning professional development activities, personnel responsibilities, and resources with district curriculum goals.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standards: (1.1) establishes a vision for the system in collaboration with stakeholders; (1.2) communicates the system’s vision and purpose to

build stakeholder understanding and support; (1.5) ensures that the system’s vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services;

(2.1) establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system; and (3.10) ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Clearly articulate expectations for the level of curriculum implementation across the district.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Formalize the process for monitoring curriculum implementation.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Develop and adopt a board-approved comprehensive curriculum management plan.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

E. DISTRICT RESPONSE

Plano ISD does not accept the findings as noted in the report on curriculum management. In particular, we do not feel the comments gathered from such a small sample of staff can be generalized to represent the state of curriculum management throughout the system. As an example, three staff members from a single high school comprised 60% of the teachers attending the open focus group session and could not appropriately represent the entire group of over 2,000 high school teachers. The findings should include the number of staff members attributed to a particular comment before the comment can be taken as representative enough to support the allegation.

Additionally, representatives of the LBB did not spend adequate time fully exploring the depth of expectations and support provided by our online Curriculum Planners with regard to the noted findings on curriculum management. The overall organization of Plano ISD was not understood well enough as the findings suggest that the curriculum department has oversight authority with respect to individual campuses where our organization provides administrative and instructional oversight to our area assistant superintendents. They are very clear in their expectations of principals with regard to curriculum implementation and have that as part of the annual evaluation process. Finally, program results along with board and community satisfaction of the curriculum implementation within Plano ISD suggest that the current practices are appropriate and that additional documentation and policies may be counterproductive.

Finding 1 states, “The district leadership and campus administrators have not communicated a clear and unified message about the expectations for a consistent level of curriculum implementation across the district”. We respectfully submit that the

number of staff interviewed is sufficiently small when compared to the entire staff of over 4,000 teachers, that such independent statements, taken without adequate large-scale survey results, should not form the basis of a finding. Examples of providing “clear and unified messages about expectations” include: our superintendent’s messages at each year’s convocation regarding curriculum and instruction expectations; our monthly principal meetings focusing on curricular implementations; our summer curriculum workshops for principals; and our regular department chair and team leader meetings focusing entirely on curriculum implementation.

In addition, a more thorough review of our online curriculum planners would reveal that they do “clearly articulate expectations for the level of curriculum implementation across the district, including common standards for what is to be taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated” as noted in the recommendation. Our board has complete access to our curriculum planners and can provide support to the effort as they wish.

Finding 2 states, “The district lacks a formal process for monitoring curriculum implementation”. This monitoring task is under the authority of our cluster area assistant superintendents as the direct supervisors of the principals. Their expectations for classroom observations are consistent across the clusters. Their evaluation of principals includes the level of instructional improvement and curriculum implementation. The number of observations required is left to the discretion of these supervisors—the curriculum and instruction staff serve as support as requested. Curriculum implementation meetings are held each month with principals and during four days throughout the summer to ensure adequate understanding by the entire group.

In addition, principals provide “formative formal and informal feedback to promote professional growth opportunities for teachers” as part of their evaluation process. We believe the necessary administrative guidelines are in place.

Finding 3 states, “The district lacks a clearly articulated, long-range, detailed plan for curriculum development”. With state standards detailing very specifically the learning expected of students at each grade within each content area, the development of curriculum is much more prescribed than it was as few as ten years ago. With that in mind, our curriculum management plan is contained within the structure of our online curriculum planners. The plan and format is flexible enough to allow for quick adaptation to changing standards, expectations and resource availability. While a formal, independently documented comprehensive curriculum management plan may sound like a needed item within the Plano ISD structure, the reality of today’s quick-moving learning needs is better served by the always available and updated curriculum planning tools and process we have in place.

We respectfully submit that the consultants did not spend the time to adequately assess how our online curriculum planner provides clearly defined processes in terms of curriculum management and serves the needs of our community—students, teachers and principals—more completely than a rigidly documented process of the past. Finally, our board and the community have been satisfied with the direction and services provided by the policies currently in place and have deemed that additional policies would not provide any measurable value in student performance.

We appreciated the opportunity to be a part of this curriculum management study in the Spring of 2008 and hope you accept our exceptions regarding

the findings and recommendations provided in your report.

Person Responsible: Jim Hirsch, Associate Superintendent for Academic and Technology Services