

**Alvin  
Independent School District**

**Review of the  
CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT  
SYSTEM**

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

**March 2009**



## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

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March 19, 2009

Dr. Robby McGowen  
Superintendent  
Alvin Independent School District

Dear Dr. McGowen:

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

The report's recommendations will help Alvin 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 AISD'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", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John O'Brien  
Director  
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Pete Vincent  
Mr. Bobby Verdine  
Mr. Earl Humbird  
Dr. Cornell DeWitt  
Mr. Eddie Martinez  
Mr. J.B. Hensler, Jr.  
Mr. Charles McCauley



# ALVIN 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

Alvin Independent School District (AISD) is located approximately 30 miles south of Houston and 30 miles west of Galveston. Alvin is a community of 22,000 residents with a history related to the railroad and cattle industries. The district comprises 19 campuses, including three primary schools, eight elementary schools, three junior high schools, two high schools, and three alternative or transitional schools. Student enrollment in the district has increased by over

25 percent over the past five years, growing from 12,068 students in 2003–04 to 15,196 in 2007–08. During this five-year period, the African American student population almost tripled, and the White student population decreased by over 13 percent. **Exhibit 1** provides AISD enrollment and demographic data 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 standards, 16 campuses in AISD *Met AYP* in 2007. The remaining three campuses were *Not Rated*.

Under the Texas Accountability Rating System, AISD was rated *Academically Acceptable* for the period of 2003–04 through 2006–07. In 2006–07, of the nonalternative campuses in

**EXHIBIT 1  
AISD 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     | 15,196         | 10.9%           | 42.3% | 41.2% | 0.2% | 5.4% | 47.6% | 12.5% |
| 2006–07     | 14,201         | 9.0%            | 41.9% | 44.5% | 0.3% | 4.2% | 50.5% | 11.6% |
| 2005–06     | 13,213         | 7.3%            | 41.1% | 47.8% | 0.3% | 3.5% | 48.0% | 10.8% |
| 2004–05     | 12,528         | 5.3%            | 41.0% | 51.0% | 0.3% | 2.5% | 49.7% | 10.4% |
| 2003–04     | 12,068         | 3.9%            | 39.4% | 54.4% | 0.2% | 2.1% | 47.4% | 10.1% |

†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.

AISD, 10 campuses were rated *Recognized*, and six 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, limited English proficient (LEP) status, and at-risk status.

**Exhibits 2 through 5** provide data on state and AISD student performance on TAKS from 2004–05 through 2006–07.

District performance in mathematics increased and was above the state average from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, all groups performed consistently at or above the state average, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students in 2005–06. Additionally, while African American and Native American students showed improved performance when compared to their state peers from 2004–05 to 2005–06, their scores decreased slightly from 2005–06 to 2006–07. (See **Exhibit 2**)

In science, district performance generally improved and remained consistently above the state average from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups however, several groups performed below their state peers during the three-year period. These include White students in 2004–05 and 2006–07, Asian/Pacific Islander students in 2004–05 and 2005–06, and Native American and LEP students in 2004–05. Performance by Hispanic, White, and economically disadvantaged students was inconsistent across the three-year period, with gains and losses in achievement by all three groups across the time period. (See **Exhibit 3**)

District performance in English language arts and reading (ELA/reading) improved from 2004–05 through 2006–07 and was above the state average all three years. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, all but two student groups demonstrated improved performance across the three years and performed at or above the state average. In 2006–07, Native American students showed a decline in performance from the previous year; in 2005–06, Asian/Pacific Islander student scores declined from the previous year and also were below the average of their state peers that year. (See **Exhibit 4**)

**EXHIBIT 2  
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—MATHEMATICS  
STATE AND AISD AVERAGES  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

| SCHOOL YEAR | AVERAGES |          | STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS<br>STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------------|----------|----------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|             |          |          | AA  |     | H   |     | W   |     | NA  |     | A/PI |     | ED  |     | LEP |     |
|             | STATE    | DISTRICT | S   | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   | S    | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   |
| 2006–07     | 77%      | 84%      | 64%   | 76% | 71% | 80% | 87% | 88% | 79% | 84% | 93%  | 95% | 69% | 80% | 62% | 74% |
| 2005–06     | 75%      | 83%      | 61%   | 78% | 68% | 78% | 86% | 87% | 79% | 88% | 92%  | 91% | 66% | 79% | 58% | 70% |
| 2004–05     | 72%      | 81%      | 57%   | 76% | 64% | 76% | 84% | 86% | 76% | 81% | 90%  | 90% | 62% | 76% | 54% | 66% |

†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 AISD AVERAGES  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

| SCHOOL YEAR | AVERAGES |          | STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS<br>STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------------|----------|----------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|             |          |          | AA  |     | H   |     | W   |     | NA  |      | A/PI |     | ED  |     | LEP |     |
|             | STATE    | DISTRICT | S   | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   | S   | D    | S    | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   |
| 2006–07     | 71%      | 77%      | 56%   | 68% | 61% | 67% | 85% | 84% | 77% | >99% | 88%  | 92% | 60% | 67% | 39% | 50% |
| 2005–06     | 70%      | 78%      | 54%   | 68% | 59% | 68% | 85% | 86% | 79% | >99% | 86%  | 85% | 58% | 71% | 35% | 46% |
| 2004–05     | 66%      | 72%      | 49%   | 67% | 53% | 60% | 81% | 80% | 73% | 56%  | 83%  | 69% | 51% | 62% | 28% | 22% |

†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 AISD AVERAGES  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

| SCHOOL YEAR | AVERAGES |          | STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS<br>STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------------|----------|----------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|             |          |          | AA  |     | H   |     | W   |     | NA  |      | A/PI |     | ED  |     | LEP |     |
|             | STATE    | DISTRICT | S   | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   | S   | D    | S    | D   | S   | D   | S   | D   |
| 2006–07     | 89%      | 92%      | 84%   | 92% | 84% | 88% | 95% | 95% | 91% | 92%  | 95%  | 95% | 83% | 88% | 67% | 72% |
| 2005–06     | 87%      | 90%      | 82%   | 89% | 82% | 85% | 94% | 94% | 90% | >99% | 94%  | 92% | 81% | 85% | 63% | 66% |
| 2004–05     | 83%      | 89%      | 76%   | 87% | 77% | 84% | 91% | 93% | 87% | 96%  | 92%  | 93% | 76% | 84% | 58% | 59% |

†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.

District performance in social studies was consistently above the state average and generally stable from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, a trend emerged of decreased student performance from 2004–05 to 2005–06, then an increase in performance from 2005–06 to 2006–07 for all groups except Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander students. Of these two groups, Native American students performed consistently above their state peers during the three-year period, while Asian/Pacific Islander students performed inconsistently, with scores below those of their state peers in both 2004–05 and 2006–07. Other student groups performed at or above their

state peers during the three-year period, with the exception of LEP students, who performed below their state peers in both 2005–06 and 2006–07. (See **Exhibit 5**)

Across the four core subject areas, student groups generally improved their performance from 2004–05 through 2006–07 and most groups remained above the state average across subject areas by the 2006–07 school year. However, performance by LEP and Asian/Pacific Islander students was below that of their state peers in science and social studies at several points during the three-year period.

**EXHIBIT 5**  
**TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SOCIAL STUDIES**  
**STATE AND AISD AVERAGES**  
**2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

| SCHOOL YEAR | AVERAGES |          | STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS<br>STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------------|----------|----------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|             | 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%      | 92%      | 84%   | 87% | 84% | 87% | 95% | 95% | 93% | >99% | 96%  | 94% | 83% | 86% | 53% | 47% |
| 2005–06     | 87%      | 90%      | 81%   | 86% | 80% | 84% | 94% | 94% | 91% | >99% | 95%  | 97% | 79% | 82% | 49% | 35% |
| 2004–05     | 88%      | 92%      | 82%   | 90% | 82% | 86% | 94% | 95% | 92% | >99% | 95%  | 87% | 80% | 85% | 52% | 53% |

†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.

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 AISD, the standardized local tax base per-pupil value is \$219,454 compared to the state per-pupil value of \$305,208.

## 2. CURRICULUM HISTORY

For over a decade, AISD has relied on an internally developed curriculum in each of the four core

content areas. In approximately 1997, under the supervision of a new Curriculum Director, the district developed an internal process for creating scope and sequence documents that were vertically aligned with the Essential Elements (EEs) and Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). Specifically, at the junior high level, the Curriculum Director introduced teachers to a scope and sequence divided into three-week intervals. Teachers followed the plan and district TAAS scores increased 20 percent. Scope and sequence training was then conducted districtwide to assist teachers in providing optimum instruction for the appropriate interval and at the appropriate time.

As the state moved from TAAS to TAKS during the past decade, the AISD curriculum system became more refined. Lead Teachers were hired at central office to facilitate the process of curriculum writing, implementation, and monitoring. Teachers from across the district were employed each summer to refine and revise the scope and sequences for core areas across grade levels under the guidance of central office staff.

Next, district administrators collaboratively led a detailed study of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with grade-level teachers to

determine the differences in student expectations and the connections between grade levels. This process occurred during district in-service days with all teachers and was facilitated by department heads through Curriculum Councils consisting of curriculum leaders and teachers. The products of this process were TEKS-aligned scope and sequences and clearly specified student expectations with examples of outcomes, assessments, and lists of resources.

Management of changes and updates to the curriculum was a manual task that involved central office personnel, campus administrators, and teachers. This approach to curriculum revision through Curriculum Councils and the process for manually entering changes continued at the time of onsite work in April 2008. The scope and sequence documents are housed in hard copy binders in classrooms. Teachers and administrators uniformly communicated that this internally developed curriculum includes alignment between the standards and that which is taught and tested; however, staff also reported the inefficiency of using a nonautomated system.

### **3. IMPETUS FOR CHANGE/DATA-DRIVEN ADOPTION PROCESS**

Four factors prompted AISD to consider an automated approach to curriculum management: student performance as related to college readiness, district growth and the inefficiency of a nonautomated system, changes to state standards, and new district leadership.

The first factor identified by district leadership as a consideration for automating the district's curriculum was improving AISD students' college readiness. AISD consistently scores above state averages on the mathematics and science TAKS assessments. However, the district is consistently

below state averages in the percentages of students taking Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment courses and those graduating with the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP). These factors are goals for improvement in AISD.

College Readiness Indicators are an important measure of how well districts are preparing students for postsecondary learning opportunities. College Readiness Indicators were created in response to legislative action and an executive order from the governor. The performance section of AEIS reports has been restructured to group certain indicators under this heading. These indicators help provide a picture of college preparedness and can be used by educators as they work to ensure that students will be able to perform college-level course work at institutions of higher education. The first indicator presented in **Exhibit 6** is the Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion indicator. This includes completion of Dual Enrollment courses, defined as those for which a student is given both high school and college credit. AISD performance on the Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment Completion indicator suggests that district performance is below state performance for all student groups.

The second indicator of college readiness presented in **Exhibit 6** is composed of the percentage of graduates completing the RHSP or DAP. The RHSP is the required program for all freshmen entering high school in 2007 and beyond. The 26-credit plan incorporates additional required mathematics and science courses. Each student must earn credit in four mathematics and four science courses in order to graduate under this plan. This program requires participation in challenging academic courses and prepares students for success

**EXHIBIT 6  
COLLEGE READINESS INDICATORS  
ADVANCED COURSE/DUAL ENROLLMENT COMPLETION & RHSP/DAP GRADUATES  
COMPARISON OF STATE AND AISD STUDENTS  
2005-06**

|    | PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS |    | PERCENT OF STUDENT GROUPS† |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |         |    |
|----|-------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|---------|----|
|    |                         |    | AA                         |    | H  |    | W  |    | ED |    | LEP |    | AT-RISK |    |
| ** | ††S                     | D  | S                          | D  | S  | D  | S  | D  | S  | D  | S   | D  | S       | D  |
| 1  | 21                      | 9  | 14                         | *  | 17 | 5  | 26 | 12 | 15 | *  | 9   | *  | 12      | *  |
| 2  | 76                      | 57 | 68                         | 26 | 76 | 52 | 76 | 61 | 72 | 49 | 58  | 19 | 63      | 39 |

\*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.

\*\*1 = Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion; 2 = RHSP/DAP Graduates

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

†† Indicates S = State; D = District

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2006-07.

in a technical school, a two-year or four-year college, or a university program. The DAP requires students to complete the 26-credit RHSP with a third credit in a language other than English. Students may not use Integrated Physics and Chemistry or Principles of Technology as science credits if they are pursuing the DAP. In addition, students must also complete advanced measures that reflect college-level work.

These two indicators help provide a picture of college preparedness at a given high school and can be used by educators as they work to ensure that students are able to perform college-level course work at institutions of higher education. As with the Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment Completion indicator, AISD student performance on the RHSP/DAP indicator is below state performance for all groups of students.

The second factor driving a new approach to curriculum management was the rapid growth of the district. As this pattern of growth continues, consistency in the curriculum becomes more important while the curriculum writing and revision process is becoming more difficult to manage. Staff reported that the current practice

of manually managing curriculum revisions and changes takes too many resources that are needed in other areas.

The third factor that amplified the district’s need for a different curriculum management approach was the amount of resources and time required to realign the curriculum when the state moved from the EEs to the TEKS. During the 1998-99 school year, AISD utilized the K-8 grade-level content specialists and high school subject area specialists to compare the EEs to the TEKS, create new content area scope and sequences, update the district’s curriculum and assessments, and conduct school meetings throughout the year to keep teachers informed of the changes in the curriculum. The following school year, 1999-2000, the district created district training teams comprised of grade-level and content specialists who trained new teachers on the TEKS and the new AISD curriculum.

The final factor in this process was the hiring of a previous district employee into the position of Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. This person was previously employed by AISD, but left the district to take a similar

position in a neighboring district that was engaged in a process to implement an automated curriculum management system. Upon returning to AISD as the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, this person's experience and expertise were used to lead the process for automating AISD's curriculum management system.

District staff contends that automation of the curriculum process will make curriculum revision and distribution more efficient and allow teachers to use the curriculum more effectively. In fall 2006, the district began exploring products to move them in the direction of an automated curriculum management system. The Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction led the systematic effort along with other district administrators to research existing software products from a variety of vendors, including ETS, Scantron, Kaplan, Edusoft, and Eduphoria.

The evaluation team included the following AISD staffers:

- the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction;
- the Director of Curriculum;
- the Instructional Technology Coordinator;
- the District Testing Coordinator;
- a District Lead Teacher;
- a Junior High Principal;
- an Application Support Specialist; and
- a Testing Clerk.

District staff determined the necessary elements of the new curriculum management system, which included the following:

- a cycle of implementation that is research-based;
- a strong evaluation component;
- input from current classroom teachers;
- a process for writing and revising the curriculum;
- a standardized process for all content areas; and
- technology to organize and manage the curriculum.

Upon completion of their product review, the district purchased two products. In spring 2006, AISD purchased Edusoft for its electronic student assessment and data disaggregation capacities. The district began implementation of Edusoft in fall 2007. In December 2007, the district purchased a site license for Eduphoria, an online curriculum management system. AISD began limited implementation of Eduphoria in 2008–09; the first module of the program is scheduled to be fully implemented districtwide in 2009–10. These two systems were developed by different vendors and lack the capacity for integration.

## **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/CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The curriculum philosophy at AISD is centered around the concept that no school is an island. Curriculum is driven by district requirements. Teachers and administrators are familiar with the current curriculum development process and express a sophisticated understanding of student performance data used to make curriculum revisions. They describe the AISD curriculum alignment as back-loaded from the TEKS to ensure alignment with the TAKS.

The district provides new teacher training on curriculum at the beginning of each school year through the New Teacher Academy, which is targeted to new mathematics and science teachers. Ongoing training and support is provided throughout the year prior to the end of each nine-week period to provide feedback to teachers before a new nine-week period begins. The purpose of this approach is to provide new teachers a curriculum primer prior to each new grading period. Much of the new teacher training focuses on pedagogical strategies by core subject area. The district also identifies master teachers and assigns them as mentors for new and struggling teachers. Staff reported that while the training is beneficial, it needs even more focus on content and available resources to help with daily planning.

At the time of onsite work in April 2008, all teachers in AISD were preparing lessons from district-prepared curriculum binders. The materials in the binders are TEKS-aligned and contain clearly outlined student expectations along with scope and sequence documents and examples of outcomes, assessments, and lists of resources

for each content area and grade level. In addition, some curriculum material is distributed on CDs, although some teachers reported that the CDs are not user-friendly.

The scope and sequence documents span nine-week intervals, and teachers are expected to cover the specified curriculum. However, scope and sequence formats are not consistent across content areas. The scope and sequence documents allow teachers to determine their instructional approaches. Teachers have the flexibility to adjust the pacing and sequence order during any nine-week period provided they cover the curriculum in the specified time frame and have their students prepared for administration of the end of grading period nine-week assessment. In science, flexibility of pacing and sequence is necessary to coordinate laboratory access.

Between campuses, vertical teams are responsible for aligning curriculum and filling in the gaps from one grade level to the next. For example, mathematics vertical teams determined the fundamental grade 6 mathematics skills necessary for students to be successful in calculus. The teams created posters with spiraling expectations for students and transposed the concepts onto 8½ x 11 sheets by grade level and posted them in classrooms and in the hallways. Science vertical teams examined major units found on Advanced Placement tests that included biology, chemistry, and physics. From that analysis, they developed a scope and sequence of the concepts that need to be taught in earlier classes. The vertical team process for K–6 was set to begin in May 2008.

While most campus-level staff participating in the onsite data collection were satisfied with the district-provided curriculum, some expressed frustrations. For example, middle school social

studies teachers expressed frustration at their attempts to align grade 8 curriculum and student expectations to the social studies exit-level TAKS. They reported the courses are not sequenced properly by the state to foster alignment and subject matter retention. Grade 7 teachers have drawn parallels to Texas History and U.S. Government and attempted to spiral the content. This same process was replicated for grade 9 Geography and grade 10 World History. However, teachers stated that gaps in the curriculum still exist because of the enormous amount of material to cover, the lack of specificity in the TEKS, and not knowing what will be included on the TAKS. Secondary teachers also stated it was difficult to keep pace with the scope and sequence documents given the wide variation in student ability in their classes.

Elementary teachers suggested formatting and presentation of the district's curriculum should be aligned across the topic areas to make the documents more user-friendly. Additionally, elementary teachers stated the level of thoroughness differs by subject area. For example, grade 4 mathematics curriculum was very thorough, including lesson plans throughout the year, pre-assessments, vocabulary, assessments, and extensions. However, the science curriculum was not as complete. Teachers also stated that there are few strategies for differentiation of instruction included in the curriculum guides.

AISD's current curriculum management process includes bringing in consultants to observe classroom instruction. The district's Lead Teachers review the consultants' findings and then clarify curriculum, develop model lessons, and train teachers. Teachers reported that curriculum is rewritten frequently. While this shows responsiveness to areas of weakness, the processes

for distributing and quality assuring the changes are incongruent. For example, staff reported revisions were not uniformly received and some curriculum revisions were incomplete.

Analysis of student performance data is a crucial part of the curriculum revision cycle in AISD. Many teachers stated that they compare their classroom data with other grade level teachers' data to identify gaps in the curriculum and incongruent mastery levels attributable to differences in delivery methods.

In AISD, the curriculum is a core component of district and campus planning, and the Curriculum and Instruction Department believes that everyone in the district must be actively involved in the curriculum and instruction process in order to ensure that the written curriculum is taught, revised, and aligned to state standards. Curriculum and Instruction Department staff indicate that they provide annual teacher training that informs staff of the process by which curriculum implementation decisions are made and present AISD's Curriculum Vision, which is comprised of the following components:

- **Aligned Philosophy:** The core curriculum forms the philosophical foundation for curriculum and instruction in AISD.
- **Aligned Curriculum:** The curriculum is the cornerstone of the AISD Curriculum and Instruction Department, and is based on state standards. It is tested periodically throughout the year for student mastery of skills, and is revised based on changing state standards, test data, and student needs. It is important that any district initiatives are aligned to AISD's curriculum and instructional practices.

- **Aligned Instruction:** Lead Teachers and Instructional Specialists monitor the implementation of the core curriculum and instructional initiatives to ensure that they are being taught effectively, and provide analysis of classroom instruction to campus administrators.
- **Aligned Assessments:** Tests are used by AISD to ensure that students are making progress toward mastery of the core curriculum. Assessments are created by master and Lead Teachers, aligned districtwide, and are continually evaluated for validity, reliability, and security.
- **Aligned Professional Development:** AISD views the professional development to support the core curriculum to be essential; all teachers must have high-quality training aligned to the core curriculum to ensure that they have a broad base of research-based teaching strategies from which to draw in order to effectively deliver the content.

As previously mentioned, the core of AISD curriculum is the scope and sequence documents created by district staff. Therefore, AISD's curriculum has historically consisted of a nonautomated, paper-binder system. In 2006–07 and 2007–08, the district purchased two online systems in order to transition the district to an automated assessment and curriculum management format.

Edusoft, purchased in spring 2006 and implemented in fall 2007, provides access to student assessment tracking tools for grades 3–12. This software allows the district to follow student performance across state exams, district benchmarks, and classroom tests. Edusoft supports longitudinal, cross sectional, and cohort matched analyses.

Teachers and administrators use the Edusoft software to help pinpoint curricular problem areas through analysis of specific objectives; an approach which identifies gaps in student learning and provides a guide for curricular revision. This process requires data disaggregated by teacher and student group. Districtwide implementation of Edusoft allowed for more sophisticated and expedient analysis of student assessment data.

Eduphoria, purchased in December 2007, provides access to a variety of electronic products including a curriculum warehouse, lesson planner, and Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS)-aligned administrative tools. This software system also includes an assessment tracking piece that was not purchased due to the assessment tracking capacity of Edusoft. Eduphoria is designed to assist in managing the entire curriculum continuum from development to assessment. The goal behind Eduphoria is to allow AISD's curriculum documents to be housed and revised electronically.

**Exhibit 7** summarizes the AISD curriculum components as of April 2008. 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. The district has purchased Eduphoria Forethought and is implementing it as its curriculum management tool on a limited basis in 2008–09. Full, districtwide implementation of this module is planned for 2009–10. At the time of onsite data collection in April 2008, only the social studies curriculum had been manually entered into the online system. **Exhibit 7** reflects the status of the district's curriculum, including the social studies curriculum which is online, and the scope and sequence documents for all four core content areas, which are mostly in binders. The district

**EXHIBIT 7  
STATUS OF AISD CURRICULUM COMPONENTS  
APRIL 2008**

| CURRICULUM SUPPORTS | IN PLACE                                  | TEKS ALIGNED | TAKS ALIGNED | GRADE LEVELS | SUBJECT AREA* | UPDATE       |           |
|---------------------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Curriculum System   | ✓ Yes                                     | ✓ Yes        | ✓ Yes        | ✓ 2          | M R S ✓SS     | ✓ Yes<br>No  |           |
|                     | No  | No           | No           | ✓ 4          | M R S ✓SS     |              |           |
|                     | {Eduphoria/<br>Limited<br>Implementation} |              |              |              | ✓ 7           | M E S ✓SS    | {ongoing} |
|                     |   |              |              |              | ✓ HS          | M E S ✓SS    |           |
| Scope & Sequence    | ✓ Yes                                     | ✓ Yes        | ✓ Yes        | ✓ 2          | ✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS  | ✓ Yes<br>No  |           |
|                     | No  | No           | No           | ✓ 4          | ✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS  |              |           |
|                     | {Eduphoria/<br>Binders}                   |              |              |              | ✓ 7           | ✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS | {ongoing} |
|                     |   |              |              |              | ✓ HS          | ✓M ✓E ✓S ✓SS |           |
| Lesson Plans        | Yes                                       | Yes          | Yes          | 2            | M R S SS      | Yes<br>No    |           |
|                     | ✓ No                                      | No           | No           | 4            | M R S SS      |              |           |
|                     |   |              |              | 7            | M E S SS      |              |           |
|                     |   |              |              | HS           | M E S SS      |              |           |

\*M=Mathematics, R=Reading, E=English Language Arts, S=Science, SS=Social Studies  
SOURCE: AISD district curriculum documents, March 2008.

does not yet provide centrally stored and accessible lesson plans. This curriculum component will be available with full implementation of Forethought in 2009–10.

**Exhibit 8** provides an overview of the six components of the Eduphoria online curriculum management system.

At the time of onsite data collection in April 2008, only the social studies curriculum had been uploaded into Forethought, the curriculum warehouse. Lead Teachers input the entire curriculum themselves, transferring curriculum from the currently used binders. This is the first Eduphoria component to be implemented by the district. It allows AISD to develop and house the

**EXHIBIT 8  
COMPONENTS OF EDUPHORIA**

- *Aware* — a benchmarking tool, utilizing visual browsing, student forms, and integration with the Forethought tool, to provide teachers with a single application for planning and assessment
- *Forethought* — a lesson planner and curriculum management application based on teacher needs
- *PDAS 2007* — a web-based PDAS management system providing a single tool for creating, submitting, and monitoring PDAS
- *Workshop* — a professional development management system with an educational focus that streamlines staff course registration and portfolios, and tracks NCLB and SBEC statistics
- *Help Desk* — a service management system that streamlines service departments
- *Form Space* — an electronic automation program for district forms and approval processes

SOURCE: Eduphoria, <http://www.eduphoria.net/Default.aspx>, May 2008.

district’s scope and sequence online, create and attach clarifying documents and instructional resources, align curriculum with the TEKS and TAKS, develop a district bank of exemplary activities and lessons, and collaborate with shared plans and team planning. In fall 2008, Lead Teachers piloted the software, provided feedback about the user-friendliness of system, and submitted lessons. Additionally during this time, 90 K–12 teachers were trained in use of the system, and began composing their lesson plans using Forethought. This process will continue through spring 2009. Remaining curriculum documents will be entered into the system in summer 2009, and all teachers will be trained on the system in August 2009. Forethought is scheduled to be fully implemented by all AISD staff in 2009–10.

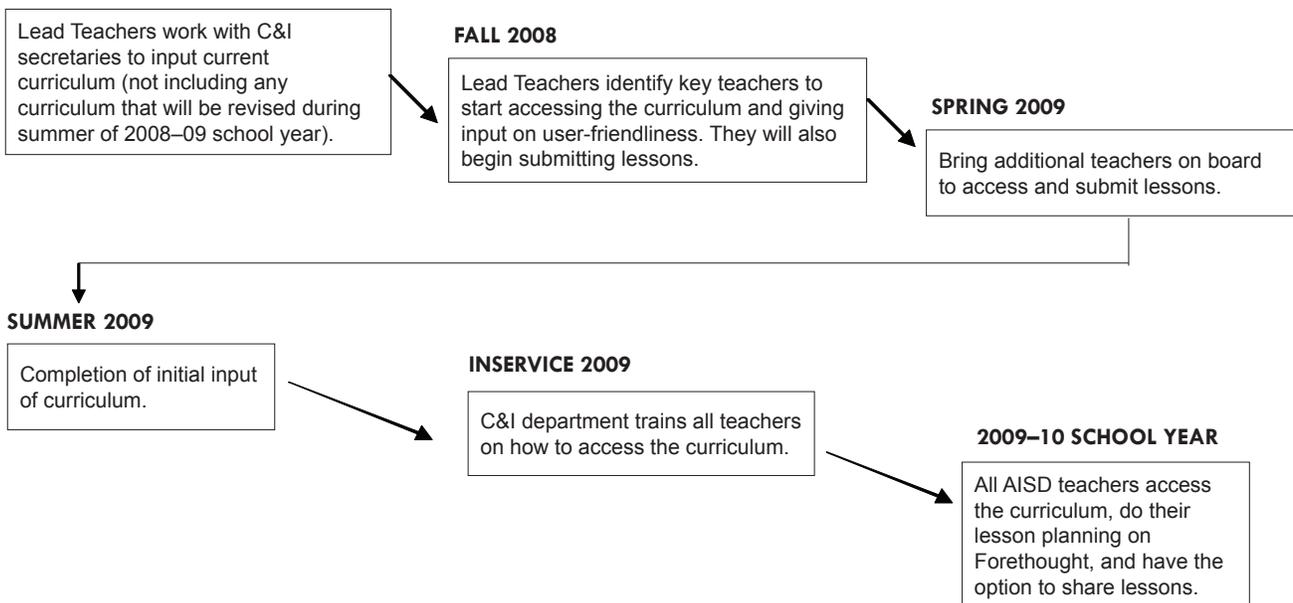
district has implemented the system’s Aware component, and AISD staff have been monitoring the results of their piloting initiative to inform their own implementation plans.

The Curriculum Council for each subject area comprises the Lead Teacher and department chairs from each PreK–12 campus, who meet monthly to examine data, resources, and curriculum. In addition to analyzing district and campus data, the Council recommends curriculum revisions and instructional changes. For example, new initiatives may be brought to the Curriculum Council for possible incorporation into AISD’s Core Initiatives. AISD uses the Core Initiatives model to prioritize district focus. Core Initiatives are tracked using two concentric circles. The inner circle contains initiatives which are integral to the instructional program and are designed to support effective implementation of the core curriculum.

**Exhibit 9** shows AISD’s timeline for Eduphoria/Forethought implementation. A neighboring

**EXHIBIT 9  
AISD EDUPHORIA/FORETHOUGHT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE  
SPRING 2008 THROUGH 2009–10**

**SPRING AND SUMMER 2008**

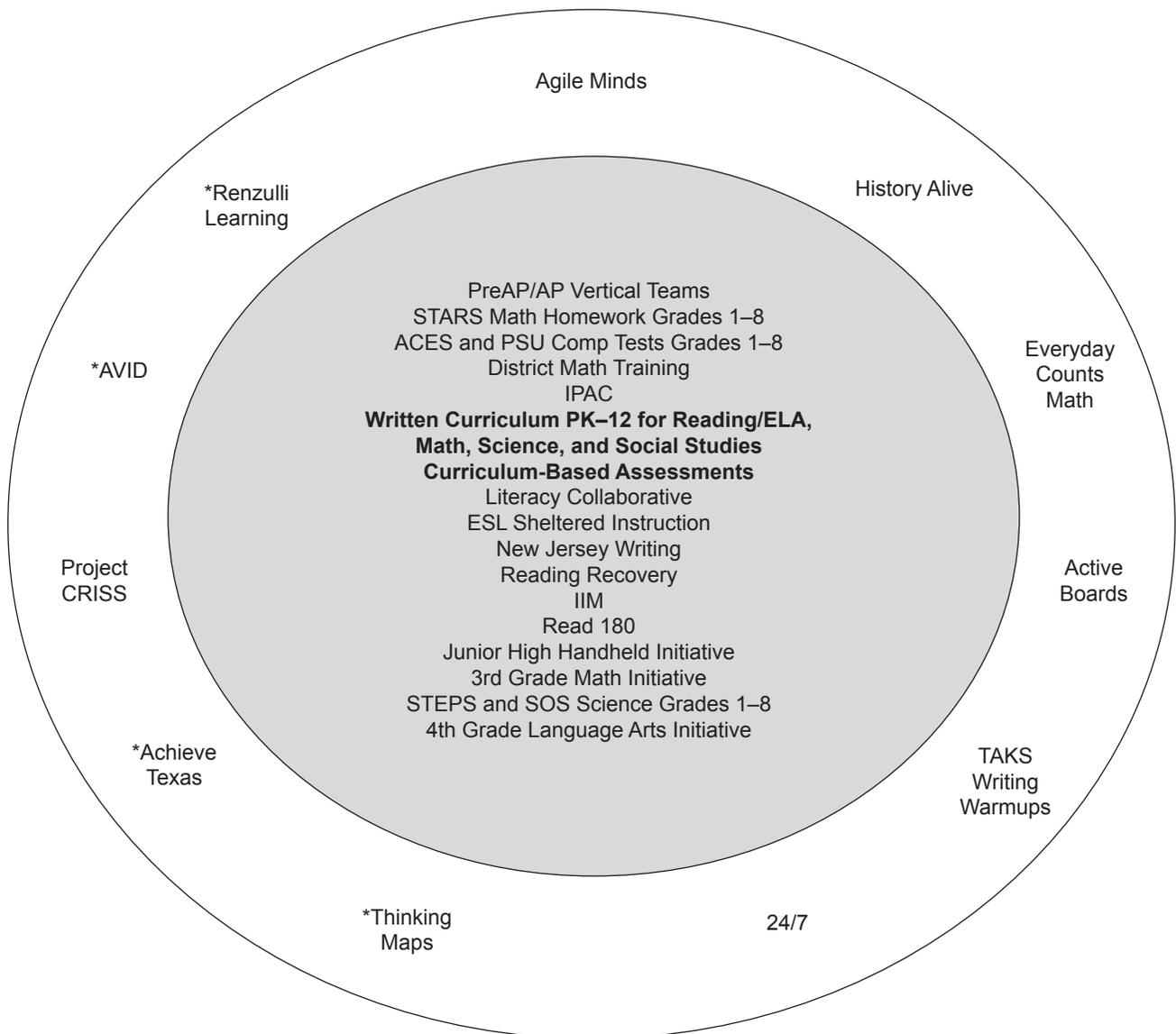


SOURCE: AISD Eduphoria/Forethought Implementation timeline, spring 2008 through 2009–10.

The outer circle contains new initiatives that are being piloted within a school or grade level. As an initiative gains acceptance through either improving student or teacher performance, a majority vote of the Curriculum Council can move the initiative to the inner circle, which will

initiate campus or districtwide implementation. Each year, initiatives in the inner and outer circles may be voted in, out, or remain while the district gathers more data. AISD's Core Initiatives model for 2007–08 is detailed in **Exhibit 10**.

**EXHIBIT 10**  
**AISD CORE INITIATIVES**  
**2007–08**



\*Indicates that 2007–08 was the first year for the initiative.

SOURCE: AISD Core Initiative Diagram, 2007–08.

**2. CONTRACTED SERVICES FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/DELIVERY**

AISD staff receives training services from Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4) in the areas of building inclusive schools and literacy for English Language Learners and Spanish. For 2007–08, the cost for these services totaled \$25,608. AISD’s distance from Region 4 was cited as a major disincentive for utilizing the service center’s services; however, district administrators stated that their experiences with Region 4 have been positive.

In June 2007, AISD contracted with the Teachers Curriculum Institute for a History Alive! workshop, which trained junior high and high school teachers in effective strategies for teachers to use in their classrooms in conjunction with the History Alive! curriculum. The total cost for the five-day workshop was \$9,900.

**3. COSTS INCURRED IN OBTAINING CURRICULUM GUIDES/SERVICES**

In recent years AISD has purchased and is in the process of implementing two software systems to automate its tracking of student performance data and provide electronic access to its curriculum. The two systems are Edusoft, an assessment tracking

system, and Eduphoria, an online curriculum management system.

AISD purchased the benchmarking and analysis components of Edusoft in spring 2006, and implementation of the system began in fall 2007. The Edusoft contract currently runs through the 2008–09 school year. This program is used only in grades 3–11, the grades for which there are state assessments.

Eduphoria, the curriculum content program currently in limited implementation, was purchased in December 2007. Pricing for Eduphoria includes an initial investment of \$2,495 for each campus and an annual renewal fee of 20 percent, or \$499, per campus. When a new campus is brought online, the district again pays the initial \$2,495 fee.

**Exhibit 11** summarizes district expenditures for Edusoft and Eduphoria from 2006–07 through 2008–09.

AISD employs 14 full-time staff in the area of curriculum. The Curriculum and Instruction Department is led by the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Reporting directly to the deputy superintendent are the Executive

**EXHIBIT 11  
AISD EXPENDITURES FOR EDUSOFT AND EDUPHORIA  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

| YEAR                    | EDUSOFT                                | COST     | EDUPHORIA                              | COST     | ANNUAL TOTAL     |
|-------------------------|--|----------|--|----------|------------------|
| 2006–07                 | Licenses, Software, and Implementation | \$57,940 |  |          | <b>\$66,940</b>  |
|                         | Consulting and Training                | \$9,000  |  |          |                  |
| 2007–08                 | License Renewal                        | \$55,546 | Licenses, Software, and Implementation | \$38,174 | <b>\$96,720</b>  |
|                         |  |          | On-Site Training                       | \$3,000  |                  |
| 2008–09                 | License Renewal                        | \$53,746 | License Renewal                        | \$20,416 | <b>\$74,162</b>  |
| <b>Three-year Total</b> |  |          |  |          | <b>\$237,822</b> |

SOURCE: AISD Edusoft and Eduphoria Contract Documents, January 2006–June 2008.

Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Director of Curriculum. Currently eight Lead Teachers and two Instructional Specialists report to the Director of Curriculum. The estimated average base salaries for the 14 Curriculum and Instruction Department positions are provided in **Exhibit 12**. These estimates are based on pay grade data provided by the district; the midpoint rate was used for each position.

Overall, Alvin has made a significant investment in curriculum development and management. **Exhibit 13** details additional AISD expenditures for curriculum support, not previously discussed, during the 2007–08 school year.

In 2007–08, AISD expended \$132,918 related to professional development in the four core subject areas, and \$32,045 for curriculum revisions

including substitute pay. Additionally, media expenditures related to producing paper copies of the curriculum total approximately \$4,454 annually.

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 for the district's curriculum management and development systems are included in AISD's instructional budget.

For the 2006–07 school year, AISD spent an average of \$3,755 per pupil, representing 61.9 percent of all operating expenditures per pupil, on curriculum- and instruction-related services. These expenditures include salaries, training, materials,

**EXHIBIT 12**  
**AISD CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT STAFF POSITIONS**  
**ESTIMATED AVERAGE BASE SALARIES**  
**2007–08**

| POSITION TITLE  | NUMBER OF POSITIONS | BASE SALARY        |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  | 1                   | \$106,254          |
| Executive Director of Secondary Education             | 1                   | \$98,381           |
| Executive Director of Elementary Education            | 1                   | \$98,381           |
| Director of Curriculum                                | 1                   | \$91,096           |
| Lead Teacher  | 8                   | \$69,101           |
| Instructional Specialist                              | 2                   | \$69,101           |
| <b>Total Estimated Average Base Salaries, 2007–08</b> |                     | <b>\$1,085,122</b> |

SOURCE: AISD interviews and salary schedules, spring and fall 2008.

**EXHIBIT 13**  
**ADDITIONAL AISD CURRICULUM EXPENDITURES**  
**2007–08**

| TYPE OF SUPPORT     | INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY | CURRICULUM SUPPORT | FEDERAL FUNDS    | TOTAL              |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Training            | \$50,490                 | \$30,842           | \$124,933        | <b>\$206,265</b>   |
| Materials/Equipment | \$1,594,572              | \$49,707           | \$62,832         | <b>\$1,707,111</b> |
| Software            | \$114,202                | \$34,295           | \$36,310         | <b>\$184,807</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>\$1,759,264</b>       | <b>\$114,844</b>   | <b>\$224,075</b> | <b>\$2,098,183</b> |

SOURCE: AISD Documentation, June 2008.

and activities related to curriculum and direct instruction of students in the classroom.

**4. OTHER CURRICULAR RESOURCES USED IN DISTRICT**

Two other district-adopted curricular resources are the New Jersey Writing Project and the Lesley University Literacy Collaborative. AISD uses federal funds to pay for initial training costs, salaries for supplemental employees, and start-up materials, including consumable products, for these two supplemental curricular resources. Local funds are used to pay for staff recertification fees and additional books and materials for campuses using these resources.

AISD participates in the New Jersey Writing Project in Texas (NJWPT), now Abydos Learning International, which is a staff development program focusing on three instructional goals: improving student achievement, curriculum, and teacher effectiveness. The model is essentially a trainer-of-trainers with the trainers attending the Writing Institute, a three-week research-based professional development workshop geared toward literacy and writing. Trained teachers, after receiving two years of ongoing professional development, share information and begin to implement skills from the NJWPT within their district.

Expenditures related to AISD’s participation in the NJWPT from 2001–02 through 2007–08 are reflected in **Exhibit 14**. The district’s total seven-year investment in this curricular resource is \$29,500.

AISD also participates in Lesley University’s Literacy Collaborative. The Literacy Collaborative uses an instructional framework with three instructional blocks: reading workshop, writing workshop, and language/phonics/word study. Designed for grades K–8, the model uses Literacy Coordinators to provide in-depth professional development through training and coaching. The Literacy Coordinators are teachers chosen from within the school. All elementary teachers have been trained in Lesley strategies; the district planned to implement the training and strategies into the junior high schools in 2008–09.

**Exhibit 15** provides a summary of key goals and strategies of Lesley University’s Literacy Collaborative.

Expenditures related to AISD’s participation in the Lesley University Literacy Collaborative are reflected in **Exhibit 16**. The district’s total seven-year investment in this curricular resource is \$2,976,000.

AISD is also focusing on science instruction and has rewritten the grade 8 science curriculum

**EXHIBIT 14  
AISD EXPENDITURES  
NEW JERSEY WRITING PROJECT IN TEXAS (ABYDOS LEARNING)  
2001–02 THROUGH 2007–08**

| TYPES OF SUPPORT | YEAR 1<br>2001–02 | YEAR 2<br>2002–03 | YEAR 3<br>2003–04 | YEAR 4<br>2004–05 | YEAR 5<br>2005–06 | YEAR 6<br>2006–07 | YEAR 7<br>2007–08 |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Training Fees    | \$10,000*         | \$10,000*         | \$1,000**         | \$1,000**         | \$1,000**         | \$1,000**         | \$1,000**         |
| Materials        | \$1,000           | \$1,000           | \$500             | \$500             | \$500             | \$500             | \$500             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>\$11,000</b>   | <b>\$11,000</b>   | <b>\$1,500</b>    | <b>\$1,500</b>    | <b>\$1,500</b>    | <b>\$1,500</b>    | <b>\$1,500</b>    |

\*Initial training fees.

\*\*Annual staff development fees.

SOURCE: AISD Documentation, December 2008.

**EXHIBIT 15  
LESLEY UNIVERSITY LITERACY COLLABORATIVE  
GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

| <b>GOALS &amp; STRATEGIES</b> | <b>READING</b>   | <b>WRITING</b>  | <b>LANGUAGE/WORD STUDY</b>   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Goal                          | Students read a variety of self-selected and teacher-selected texts for extended periods. They construct meaning, and make personal and textual connections. Students learn effective reading strategies for fiction and nonfiction. | Students develop writing strategies and skills, learn about the writer's craft, and use writing as a tool for learning and communication. They explore different genres and formats for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences. | Students explore intricacies of language across multiple genres. They investigate the meaning and structure of words, and conventions and forms of written language. |
| Strategies                    | Guided Reading<br>Independent Literacy Work  | Independent Writing<br>Guided Writing<br>Interactive Writing  | Interactive Read Aloud<br>Language/Word Play<br>Modeled/Shared Reading<br>Phonics/Word Study<br>Handwriting  |

SOURCE: Lesley University, Literacy Collaborative: A Principal's Guide to Literacy Collaborative, 2004.

**EXHIBIT 16  
AISD EXPENDITURES  
LESLEY UNIVERSITY LITERACY COLLABORATIVE  
2001-02 THROUGH 2007-08**

| <b>TYPES OF SUPPORT</b>         | <b>YEAR 1<br/>2001-02</b> | <b>YEAR 2<br/>2002-03</b> | <b>YEAR 3<br/>2003-04</b> | <b>YEAR 4<br/>2004-05</b> | <b>YEAR 5<br/>2005-06</b> | <b>YEAR 6<br/>2006-07</b> | <b>YEAR 7<br/>2007-08</b> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Annual Personnel<br>Cost by FTE | \$50,000<br>(1 FTE)       | \$100,000<br>(2 FTEs)     | \$250,000<br>(5 FTEs)     | \$400,000<br>(8 FTEs)     | \$550,000<br>(11 FTEs)    | \$600,000<br>(12 FTEs)    | \$650,000<br>(13 FTEs)    |
| Training Fees                   | \$25,000                  | \$30,000                  | \$80,000                  | \$90,000                  | \$90,000                  | \$0*                      | \$0*                      |
| Supplies and<br>Materials       | \$5,000                   | \$5,000                   | \$15,000                  | \$15,000                  | \$15,000                  | \$3,000                   | \$3,000                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>\$80,000</b>           | <b>\$135,000</b>          | <b>\$345,000</b>          | <b>\$505,000</b>          | <b>\$655,000</b>          | <b>\$603,000</b>          | <b>\$653,000</b>          |

\*There are no training expenditures to the district in 2006-07 and 2007-08 because the training occurred in-district.

NOTE: Annual personnel costs are based on an average salary of \$50,000 per Full Time Employee (FTE).

SOURCE: AISD Documentation, December 2008.

in collaboration with Region 4. A science homework product titled Students Tackling Everyday Problem Solving (STEPS) has been implemented at grades 3-8. Additionally, the district utilizes the Students in Reaching Success (STARS) mathematics program which provides a homework development process for teachers.

**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 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 all 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 Alvin ISD Board of Trustees has adopted eight policies that reference curriculum for the grade levels and core areas considered in this review. Six policies are legal, and two are local.

*AE (EXHIBIT) Educational Philosophy*

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

*BBD (EXHIBIT)*

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, *BBD* 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 states that the board will clearly define the roles and duties of district and campus staff in the area of curriculum.

*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 *Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.002(c)*. It also states that all children in the district participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs through *TEC §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 (LEGAL)*.

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

This policy states that although 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, the ultimate authority for determining and approving the curriculum and instructional program of the district lies with the board.

*EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development*

This policy contains the following elements:

- **Curriculum philosophy**

The policy states that “the curriculum shall reflect current research, best practices, and technological advancements within the disciplines and shall promote congruence among written, taught, and assessed content.”

- **Curriculum responsibility**

Responsibility for curriculum development resides with “the appropriate central office department with the collaboration of instructional staff.” Teachers plan and deliver instruction. The principal ensures that the foundation and enrichment curriculum objectives are taught and assessed.

- **Curriculum adoption**

Changes to the courses of study are reviewed by the superintendent (or designee) annually and presented to the board for approval.

- **Curriculum articulation**

This portion of the policy states that curriculum shall be “vertically articulated across grade levels and coordinated across schools.” This is to ensure appropriate scope and sequence.

- **Curriculum frameworks/guidelines**

According to district policy, curriculum frameworks contain the essential knowledge and skills for the course, the instructional philosophy, an appropriate sequence, a list of resources for suggested classroom activities, and assessment procedures. Each teacher receives a framework; all curriculum frameworks are available for parent and community member review.

- **Curriculum revision**

This portion of the policy states that superintendent or designee “shall ensure that curriculum frameworks/guides are revised in a timely manner assuring that all curriculum is reviewed at least every five years. Student achievement data shall be used to determine areas where revision is needed.”

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

The two policies which reflect local school board decisions provide direction related to curriculum development and implementation, state the need for curriculum revision, and clarify that student achievement data determines curricular priorities.

Additionally, through *EG (LOCAL)*, the board articulated their expectations for alignment between the curriculum and academic performance. The board’s educational vision for all students includes having educational opportunities beyond high school.

At the time of this review, the superintendent had plans to meet with the board in May 2008 to clarify policy, examine the current mission and goals, and determine how involved they wish to be in curriculum matters. In fall 2008, the district reported that during the May 2008 school board workshop, the board and cabinet identified the need to increase focus on advanced achievement, college readiness, and career preparation in AISD. District data examined during the retreat indicated the need for improvement in the following areas: RHSP graduates, SAT scores, AP participation and scores, and increased Career and Technical programs. The school board formulated the following district goal in order to address the areas identified for improvement—*Alvin ISD will provide advanced and enriched educational programs in a PK–16 instructional model for all students.* According to the superintendent, the addition of this language to the district goals will provide a point of focus on post-secondary issues as the administration and board review district data each year.

## **2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EFFECTIVENESS AS RELATED TO CURRICULUM**

AISD’s organizational structure is tiered to provide specific oversight for the curriculum development process. The Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for curriculum development and implementation and reports directly to the superintendent. Under the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and

Instruction are two Executive Directors, one each for Elementary and Secondary Education. The Director of Curriculum also reports to the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. The district's Lead Teachers, including six housed at the administration building and two housed on elementary campuses, report to the Director of Curriculum. Two half-time Instructional Specialists, housed at the administration building, also report to the Director of Curriculum. Together these positions coordinate and implement the curriculum writing and revision process.

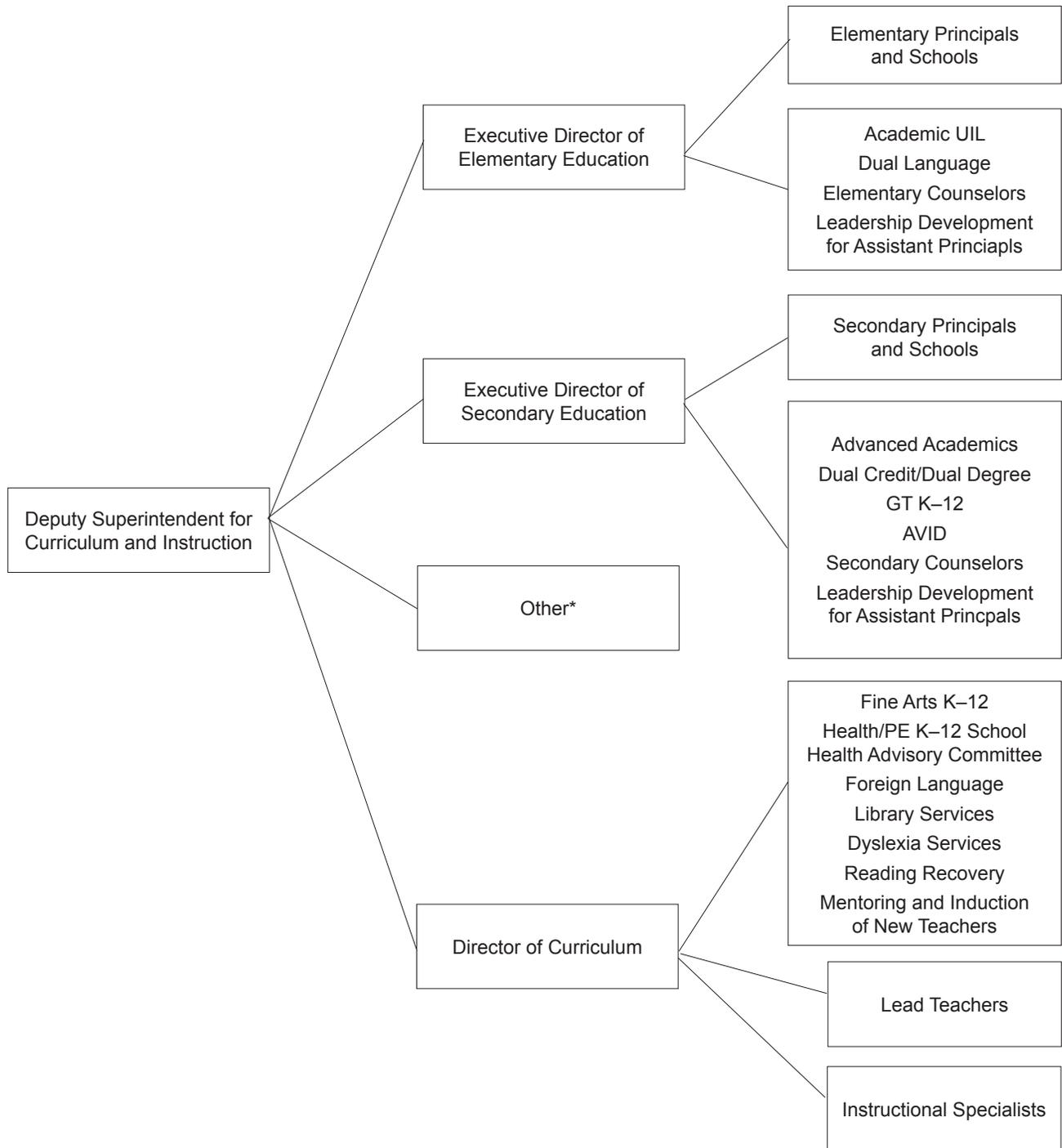
**Exhibit 17** provides an outline of AISD's Curriculum and Instruction Department organization for 2007–08.

The *Alvin ISD Curriculum and Instruction Department Belief System* document outlines the broad roles and responsibilities of important parts of the district's curriculum structure. The document provides an overview for the role of Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Director of Curriculum, Lead Teachers, and campus administrators. It does not, however, include the responsibilities of the Executive Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education or the Instructional Specialists. A review of job descriptions indicates that these positions require participation in a variety of curriculum activities, including alignment and assessment.

The Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction provides vision; directs alignment of district and campus goals; coordinates and manages the implementation of the district improvement plan and campus improvement processes; and analyzes national, state, district, campus, and teacher data. Major curriculum-related duties for the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction include:

- participate in the district-level decision-making process to establish and review the district's goals and objectives and major classroom instructional programs of the district;
- articulate the district's mission, instructional philosophy, and curriculum implementation strategies to the community and solicit its support in realizing mission;
- function as a team member of the Curriculum and Instruction Department and Executive Council;
- implement the policies established by federal and state law, State Board of Education rule, and local board policy in curriculum and instruction areas;
- direct instructional and curriculum services in the core curriculum areas to meet students' needs;
- plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs in the core curriculum areas with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;
- apply research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process; and
- work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum documents in core curriculum areas based on systematic review and analysis.

**EXHIBIT 17  
AISD CURRICULUM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART  
2007-08**



\*Other positions which report to the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction include: Coordinator of Career & Technical Services, Director of Special Education, Director of Student Services, Director of Bilingual/ESL/Migrant, Director of Technology Services, District Testing Coordinator, and Coordinator of Instructional Technology.  
SOURCE: AISD Curriculum and Instruction Department Organizational Chart, 2007-08.

The Executive Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education are also important in AISD's curriculum structure. Major curriculum-related duties for the Executive Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education include:

- direct instructional and curriculum services in the core curriculum areas to meet students' needs;
- use research findings and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process;
- based on systematic review and analysis, work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum documents in the core curriculum areas that are aligned to the TEKS and TAKS objectives and include learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;
- involve instructional staff in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs; and
- obtain and use evaluative findings, including TAKS and other student achievement data, to examine curriculum and instruction program effectiveness in the core curriculum areas.

The Director of Curriculum drives the vision for the Curriculum and Instruction Department, supervises core content areas, and analyzes district and campus data to improve curriculum and instruction. Developing, maintaining, and revising curriculum documents are key responsibilities. The Director of Curriculum also ensures alignment of vision between the district, school, grade levels, and teachers. Major curriculum-related duties for the Director of Curriculum include:

- direct instructional and curriculum services in the core curriculum areas to meet students' needs;
- plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;
- apply research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process; and
- work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum documents in the core curriculum areas based on systematic review and analysis.

Lead Teachers are positions held by master teachers in specific subject areas who report to the Director of Curriculum. They provide full-time support for teachers and work with the department heads at each campus to communicate curriculum changes or discuss curriculum concerns. Curriculum concerns may be initiated by classroom teachers or any person in the curriculum chain. Major curriculum-related duties for the Lead Teachers include:

- serve as the leader of the Curriculum Council in content area of expertise (mathematics, reading, English, science, social studies);
- facilitate the development of a scope and sequence for PreK–12 in the curriculum area of expertise;
- assist the Director of Curriculum in working with teachers to align the curriculum for assigned area to include TAKS objectives, essential knowledge and skills in the appropriate grade levels, and to meet district goals;

- work with teachers and the Director of Curriculum to prepare curriculum guides, course outlines, and related tests in areas of assignment; and
- provide leadership in the selection of textbooks and instructional materials in the area of assignment.

Instructional Specialists report to the Director of Curriculum and work closely with Lead Teachers to oversee curriculum and assist teachers in grades PreK–5 with curriculum implementation and the development of teaching strategies. Major curriculum-related duties for the Instructional Specialists include:

- serve as the co-leader of the Curriculum Council in area of expertise;
- assist the Lead Teacher in the development of a scope and sequence for the curriculum area of expertise for PreK–5;
- provide curriculum support to teachers in the following areas:
  - assist teachers to understand the TEKS for grades PreK–5;
  - provide staff development on district curriculum and instructional strategies;
  - make curriculum and instructional recommendations for improvement;
  - provide direct support to classroom teachers through classroom observations, modeling of instructional strategies, and lesson planning to improve instruction;
  - assist the Director of Curriculum in working with the teachers to align the curriculum for assigned area to include TAKS objectives, essential knowledge

and skills in the appropriate grade levels, and to meet district goals; and

- work with teachers, Lead Teachers, and the Director of Curriculum to prepare curriculum guides, course outlines, and related tests.

Originally, principals were assigned different curriculum areas and assisted teachers in developing curriculum. As principals' jobs became more intensive, curriculum development was transferred to Lead Teachers. Principals continue to make suggestions and provide input through Lead Teachers and are informed as changes occur. They also provide time for teachers to plan and work on curriculum. As described in the *Alvin ISD Curriculum and Instruction Department Belief System* document, major curriculum-related duties for campus principals include:

- accept or revise recommendations from Council meetings;
- give input and approval on district initiatives;
- support district curriculum and instructional programs; and
- monitor district curriculum, instructional practices, and initiatives.

AISD's curriculum structure also includes two groups of staff with specific curricular roles and responsibilities: Curriculum Councils and Training Teams. Curriculum Councils are comprised of Lead Teachers and PreK–12 department chairs from each campus, and have the following responsibilities:

- recommend curriculum training;
- analyze district and campus data to make recommendations for improvement;

- recommend curriculum/instructional changes to district required curriculum and instructional practices; and
- provide campus leadership/communication in their curriculum area of representation.
- PreK–12 master teachers from across the district comprise AISD’s Training Teams.
- The teams provide training in the following areas:
  - district curriculum training for all new teachers each nine weeks;
  - district initiatives (e.g. New Jersey Writing Project in Texas, Literacy Collaborative);
  - Trainer-of-Trainers model;
  - Instructional strategy training; and
  - Pre-AP/AP training.

AISD’s organizational structure was reorganized at the beginning of 2007–08 when the current Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction started in the district. Prior to that time, all principals in addition to curriculum staff reported to this position. The system was reorganized so that principals report to either the Executive Director of Elementary or Secondary Education. While the deputy superintendent still has an active role, principals receive more focused attention under the revised structure. The addition of the Director of Curriculum position provides coordination and a systematic process for the district’s multiple levels of curriculum development and review.

### **3. SCHOOL AND DISTRICTWIDE MONITORING TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION**

AISD has a clearly defined two-stage curriculum monitoring approach which includes classroom observations and analysis of student data. The

first stage involves observation and feedback of curriculum implementation at several levels. The district’s Curriculum and Instruction Department central office staff conduct the first level of observations. This ensures districtwide consistency of curriculum implementation. The second level of observations occurs at the campus level and involves the principals, assistant principals, Lead Teachers, Literacy Coordinators, grade level leaders, and department heads. Short walkthrough evaluations are the primary monitoring technique. The observers are assigned a grade level or core subject area to supervise and conduct the bulk of the classroom walkthroughs. Teachers reported varying numbers of walkthrough evaluations, from three to as many as 10 per year. Teacher observation data is used to help principals determine the level of effectiveness of the curriculum and identify teachers who may have difficulty teaching particular objectives.

The second stage of monitoring relies on analysis of student performance data. At the secondary level, structured assessments are used at three- and nine-week intervals, and TAKS release tests are used for benchmark assessments. Some grade levels and subjects implement three-week tests, but this does not occur consistently on all campuses and across all grade levels. Data from benchmarks and other tests are used to identify weaknesses in the curriculum and implementation shortcomings. All student performance data is disaggregated by teacher and student. The district’s benchmark schedule is as follows:

- Grades 1 and 2 administer district-created benchmarks in the first 9 weeks for all but grade 1 reading, which begins testing the second 9 weeks;
- Grades 3 through 8 administer benchmarks for the first three 9-week periods; two TAKS release tests are administered as well, one in the fall and one in early spring; and

- Grades 9 through 11 administer benchmarks for the first three 9-week periods, and one TAKS release test in the fall.

Although the campus principals are responsible for monitoring instruction and curriculum implementation, Lead Teachers provide support to campuses as needed. At both the elementary and secondary level, district Lead Teachers implement data visits to review results of TAKS release tests in order to make instructional changes as appropriate. After the data visits, the Executive Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education contact the core content Lead Teachers to identify teachers requiring assistance in a particular area. The Lead Teachers then schedule time to work with campus teachers on an individual, group, or grade level basis.

Edusoft is used to disaggregate the data for the district from common assessments, benchmarks, and TAKS, and the results are disseminated to each campus. Central office staff indicated that they distribute disaggregated data to principals and teachers by school, by teacher, and by objective. Teacher data analysis is used to inform professional development for individual teachers or departments.

When gaps in student performance occur, the specific cause is identified, and assistance is provided at many levels. Teacher mentors, Lead Teachers, department heads, and principals may provide various forms of assistance from lesson

plan development to model teaching of concepts in question. Teachers agreed that the district and campus support is well received and targeted to achieve improvement at the student level rather than punitively directed at teachers.

#### **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 18**)

#### **EXHIBIT 18**

##### **AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

| <b>Standard 1: Vision and Purpose</b>   | <b>Vision and Purpose</b>  |
|---|--|
| The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system. | 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  |

**EXHIBIT 18 (CONTINUED)****Advanced ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Standard 2: Governance and Leadership</b><br>The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.          | <b>Governance</b>  |  |
|   | 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  |
|   | <b>Leadership</b>  |  |
|   | 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   |  |
| <b>Standard 3: Teaching and Learning</b><br>The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students. | <b>Teaching and Learning</b>   |  |
|   | 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 |  |

**EXHIBIT 18 (CONTINUED)****Advanced ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results</b><br>The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness. | <b>Documenting and Using Results</b>  |   |
|   | 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   |
| <b>Standard 5: Resources and Support Systems</b><br>The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose, and to ensure achievement for all students.  | <b>Human Resources</b>  |   |
|   | 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  |
|   | <b>Financial Resources</b>  |   |
| 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                                       |   |
| <b>Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships</b><br>The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.   | <b>Stakeholder Communications and Relationships</b>   |   |
|   | 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  |   |

**EXHIBIT 18 (CONTINUED)**

**AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

| <b>Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement</b>   | <b>Commitment to Continuous Improvement</b> |  |
|---|---|--|
| The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance. | 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**

**AISD effectively garners campus-level staff input and buy-in for implementing curriculum-related changes.**

AISD has been dedicated to developing curriculum aligned to the state standards, including the EEs and TEKS, for many years. Teachers have been integrally involved in the development process since 1997, validating the district’s confidence in and respect for its teaching staff. In addition, the district puts highly qualified instructional leaders in place at the campus and district levels to ensure that the district’s curriculum is implemented appropriately. AISD also recognizes the contributions of its master teachers in the curriculum development process. The district determined approximately a decade ago that it needed liaisons in core content areas to assist teachers at the campus level; thus it created a Lead Teacher designation by identifying

master teachers throughout the district, providing them a full-time opportunity to coach other teachers and assist in curriculum development and implementation.

Further, AISD takes a methodical approach to curricular change, which provides teachers and administrators ample time to adjust to new ways of thinking and new strategies. New programs are piloted to ensure that they support the core curriculum and can be successfully duplicated and implemented across the district, which increases teacher support. AISD’s use of the Core Initiatives model prioritizes and focuses district resources on curriculum-related initiatives and activities. Additionally, this approach incorporates a wide base of support for change through input by the Curriculum Councils.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (2.9) creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system

programs; (2.11) provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership; (6.1) fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning; (6.2) uses system-wide strategies to listen and communicate with stakeholders; and (6.3) solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system.

**AISD engages in systematic data analysis to inform instructional decisions.**

AISD is committed to the use of student performance data to inform its instructional decisions. Onsite interviews indicate that district and campus staff members are exceedingly familiar with state accountability indicators. Campus staff receives ongoing training in student data disaggregation, using the Edusoft system to assist them in assessing strengths and weaknesses in curriculum alignment, development, and implementation. In particular, teachers expressed a sophisticated understanding of the importance of student performance data analysis in improving teaching and learning.

Overall, campus administrators were praised by teachers for providing time and resources to review and use data to inform instructional and curriculum choices. Because instructional choices are data-driven and based on performance results and student needs, teachers view suggested or required modifications as constructive rather than punitive.

Data analysis of student performance occurs at multiple levels within AISD. At the campus level, administrators and Lead Teachers monitor

classroom results in conjunction with teachers. Subject-specific PreK–12 Curriculum Councils provide a districtwide venue for vertical data analysis.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (2.8) provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness; and (4.2) ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**AISD has purchased automated assessment and curriculum software systems which are incompatible.**

AISD's decision to automate the district's curriculum is commendable. Additionally, the process used to evaluate products, specifically a committee process driven by specific criteria, is also commendable. However, possibly because the district had not yet chosen a curriculum management product, in spring 2006, an assessment tracking system was selected that is incompatible with the curriculum management system selected in December 2007. Additionally, the curriculum management system includes an integrated assessment tracking module that was not purchased by the district. Use of two incompatible systems creates several inefficiencies: it requires training and support for multiple systems; it fragments assessment information that would be more appropriately stored as part of the general curriculum management system, which instead is duplicated or isolated in the assessment software; and it underutilizes the curriculum

management system that already includes a compatible assessment tracking function. Purchasing incompatible systems has resulted in inefficient use of resources both in terms of staff time and district funds.

District staff are aware of the incompatibility of their assessment and curriculum systems and have been in discussions with the company providing the curriculum management software about transitioning from the original automated assessment tracking system to the assessment tracking module that is part of the district's curriculum management system. At the time of onsite work, district staff members indicated that Edusoft aligned more closely with the district's assessment needs but recognized that there could be advantages, especially in terms of cost, in consolidating to a single vendor when their contract with the assessment system vendor expires at the end of the 2008–09 school year.

AISD should continue to conduct analysis of the incompatibility of the assessment and curriculum software systems to ensure successful integration of both systems as the district moves to an online curriculum format in 2009–10. By using the current curriculum management software system to also track student assessment data, the district could reduce licensing, training, and support costs by consolidating to a single vendor.

If, after further analysis, the district chooses to consolidate all software to one vendor, it would result in an annual savings of \$6,341 per year. This estimate is based on district-provided contracts from the assessment and curriculum software vendors. This assumes the license fees would be continued at the current level of \$53,746 for the assessment tracking system, and that the curriculum management system would be purchased for \$2,495

per campus for the district's 19 campuses for the 2009–10 school year totaling \$47,405 (\$2,495 per campus x 19 campuses). Combined, this totals \$101,151 in licenses (\$53,746 + \$47,405).

Were the district to purchase the assessment tracking module in addition to the curriculum management module from the curriculum software vendor, it would cost the district an additional \$2,495 per campus for 19 campuses for the 2009–10 school year totaling \$94,810 (\$47,405 for the curriculum component + \$47,405 for the assessment component). By consolidating to one vendor for its assessment and curriculum software systems, the district could save \$6,341 annually (\$101,151 for licenses with separate companies - \$94,810 for licenses with one company) beginning in 2009–10. This amount does not include any reductions in price due to purchasing multiple modules from the same vendor or due to the requirement for less training. The five-year fiscal impact of consolidating to one vendor would be approximately \$31,705 (\$6,341 per year x 5 years).

This recommendation reflects the following professional standard: (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.

**Benchmark testing does not occur at consistent intervals across the district and may impact instructional time.**

AISD approaches curriculum revision systematically based on analysis of student performance data from benchmark assessments. However, staff reported that while nine-week assessments are conducted consistently across the district, some

grade levels and subjects also conduct additional assessments at three-week intervals, although this is not a consistent occurrence districtwide.

While data from benchmark tests is informative it also takes a great deal of time to conduct benchmark assessments; time which could be used for instruction. Additionally, opportunities for addressing student data results through reteaching may be limited due to the requirement to keep pace with the district's scope and sequence documents, which was noted by district staff during onsite work. The consequence of frequent testing often is that instructional days are reduced, making application of testing results difficult due to even less instructional time.

The district should require consistent assessment intervals across all grade and subject levels and campuses based on the current nine-week schedule, and ensure the elimination of additional

assessments. Consistently implementing a districtwide nine-week benchmark assessment schedule and ensuring the elimination of additional benchmark assessments every three weeks would promote consistency for all students in the district in the amount of instructional time they are receiving. Additionally, the number of instructional days required for conducting additional assessments would be reduced, thereby allowing teachers more time to apply knowledge gained from the assessment results through reteaching.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standards: (3.6) allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning; and (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.

## FISCAL IMPACT

| RECOMMENDATION  | 2009–10        | 2010–11        | 2011–12        | 2012–13        | 2013–14        | TOTAL<br>5-YEAR<br>(COSTS)<br>SAVINGS | ONE-TIME<br>(COSTS)<br>SAVINGS |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Continue to conduct analysis of the incompatibility of the assessment and curriculum software systems to ensure successful integration of both systems as the district moves to an online curriculum format in 2009–10. | \$6,341        | \$6,341        | \$6,341        | \$6,341        | \$6,341        | \$31,705                              | \$0                            |
| Require consistent assessment intervals across all grade and subject levels and campuses based on the current nine-week schedule, and ensure the elimination of additional assessments.                                 | \$0            | \$0            | \$0            | \$0            | \$0            | \$0                                   | \$0                            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$6,341</b> | <b>\$6,341</b> | <b>\$6,341</b> | <b>\$6,341</b> | <b>\$6,341</b> | <b>\$31,705</b>                       | <b>\$0</b>                     |

