

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August 23, 2001

The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable William R. Ratliff
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the 77th Legislature
Commissioner James E. Nelson

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Runge Independent School District (RISD).

This review is intended to help RISD hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that more of every education dollar goes directly into the classroom, with the teacher and children, where it belongs. To aid in this task, I contracted with IBM Corporation.

I have made a number of recommendations to improve RISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations-model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers, and staff. This report outlines 31 detailed recommendations that could save RISD more than \$170,000 over the next five years, while reinvesting more than \$13,000 to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach \$156,846 that the district can redirect to the classroom.

I am grateful for the cooperation of RISD's board, staff, parents, and community members. I commend them for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities for our most precious resource in RISD-our children.

I also am pleased to announce that the report is available on my Window on State Government Web site at www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/runge/.

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2001, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander began a review of the Runge Independent School District (RISD) as part of a four-district Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) project that also included reviews of the neighboring Kenedy, Karnes City and Falls City school districts. These four districts are located near one another in Karnes County. Based upon almost six months of work, this report identifies RISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 31 recommendations could result in net savings of \$156,846 over the next five years.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Soon after taking office in January 1999, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander consulted school district officials, parents and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports to make the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) more valuable to the state's school districts. With the perspective of a former teacher and school board president, the Comptroller has vowed to use TSPR to increase local school districts' accountability to the communities they serve.

Recognizing that only 51 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to drive more of every education dollar directly into the classroom. Comptroller Rylander also has ordered TSPR staff to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically with all the state's school districts and with anyone else who requests such information. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as a clearinghouse of the best ideas in Texas public education.

Under Comptroller Rylander's approach, consultants and the TSPR team will work with districts to:

- Ensure students and teachers receive the support and resources necessary to succeed;
- Identify innovative ways to address the district's core management challenges;
- Ensure administrative duties are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a way that fosters education;
- Develop strategies to ensure the district's processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;

- Challenge any process, procedure, program or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and
- Put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages Test": government should do no job if a business in the Yellow Pages can do that job better and at a lower cost.

Finally, Comptroller Rylander has opened her door to Texans who share her optimism about the potential for public education. Suggestions to improve Texas schools or the school reviews are welcome at any time. The Comptroller believes public schools deserve all the attention and assistance they can get.

For more information, contact TSPR by calling toll-free 1-800-531-5441, extension 5-3676, or see the Comptroller's Website at www.window.state.tx.us .

TSPR in Runge ISD

TSPR contracted with IBM Corporation to assist with this review. The team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held a public forum on Wednesday, March 21, 2001 at the Runge school cafeteria from 5 pm to 7 pm. To obtain additional comments, the review team also conducted small focus-group sessions with teachers, principals, employees, students, parents and community members.

TSPR also mailed surveys to students, parents, teachers and campus administrators. Because no parent surveys were returned, TSPR conducted a telephone survey and obtained responses from 10 randomly selected families. In all, 74 respondents answered these written and phone surveys, including 18 campus and central administrators and support workers, 27 teachers, 10 parents and 19 students. Details from the surveys and focus groups appear in **Appendices A** through **E**.

The review team also consulted two databases of comparative educational information maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

RISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes, based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The districts chosen were Balmorhea, Hart, Loraine, Lorenzo and New Summerfield.

During its almost six-month review, TSPR developed recommendations to improve RISD's operations and save its taxpayers \$170,346 by 2005-06. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach \$156,846 by 2005-06. Many other TSPR recommendations would not have a direct financial impact but would improve the district's overall operations.

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**.

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller's office and IBM wish to express their appreciation to the RISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent Harold King, district employees, students, parents and community residents who helped during the review.

Runge ISD

RISD is located in Karnes County, about 20 miles east of the city of Kenedy. Ranching and farming are key components of the county economy, and many residents commute to work in San Antonio or Victoria. The district is nestled in a small and quiet community.

RISD's high school, elementary and administrative offices are located in the same building. Enrollment for 2000-01 totaled 330 students, representing an increase of 5.1 percent over the last five years. The other districts in the county under review by TSPR have had declining student enrollments over the last five years, except for Falls City, which had less than 1 percent growth. More than 71 percent of RISD's student body is considered to be economically disadvantaged.

RISD is a "majority-minority" district. In 2000-01, the district served a population that is 19.7 percent Anglo, 2.1 percent African-American, 77.6 percent Hispanic and 0.6 percent Other. **Exhibit 1** compares RISD's demographic characteristics with those of its peer school districts, TEA's Region 3 (to which RISD belongs) and the state.

Exhibit 1
Demographics of RISD, Peer Districts,
Region 3 and State Student Populations
2000-01

	Enrollment	African American	Anglo	Hispanic	Other	Economically Disadvantaged
Runge	330	2.1%	19.7%	77.6%	0.6%	71.5%
Balmorhea	229	0.0%	15.3%	84.7%	0.0%	62.0%
Hart	376	4.5%	14.6%	80.9%	0.0%	78.7%
Lorraine	173	4.0%	28.3%	67.6%	0.0%	74.6%
Lorenzo	402	6.5%	27.6%	65.9%	0.0%	74.6%
New Summerfield	363	8.5%	28.1%	63.1%	0.3%	81.0%
Region 3	55,852	11.0%	45.1%	42.5%	1.4%	50.0%
State	4,071,433	14.4%	42.1%	40.5%	3.0%	49.2%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

The district's annual budget is more than \$2.5 million for 2000-01. For 2000-01, RISD had the third-highest property tax rate and fourth-highest taxable property value per pupil among the peers (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2
RISD Adopted Tax Rate and Taxable Property Value
Compared to Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Adopted Tax Rate	Taxable Property Value/Pupil
Runge	\$1.427	\$106,127
Balmorhea	1.500	80,943
Hart	1.261	134,560
Lorraine	1.383	138,599
Lorenzo	1.387	158,465
New Summerfield	1.450	61,244

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

RISD's percent of students passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) was highest among all the peer districts in all areas except writing, but below the regional and state averages in all areas except math (**Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3
Percent of RISD, Region 3 and State
Students Passing TAAS, All Levels
1999-2000

Entity	Reading	Writing	Math	All Tests
Balморhea	73.0%	82.2%	67.0%	60.7%
Hart	77.8%	88.2%	83.5%	72.9%
Lorraine	75.0%	72.7%	84.2%	62.3%
Lorenzo	78.6%	72.7%	87.6%	64.7%
New Summerfield	74.7%	75.0%	71.6%	62.2%
Runge	82.7%	86.7%	94.9%	77.7%
Region 3	90.3%	90.5%	91.2%	84.1%
State	87.4%	88.2%	87.4%	79.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

On August 16, 2001, the Texas Education Agency released the TAAS results for the 2000-01 school year. RISD received an overall Academically Acceptable rating, the same rating as the last five years. According to these latest reports, the district now has one Recognized school, Runge High School and one Academically Acceptable school, Runge Elementary. This represents a change for the high school from last year's Academically Acceptable rating. Runge High School last received a Recognized rating in 1998-99. Because this information came late in the review process, and because information regarding the cumulative test results will not be available until November 2001, the data presented throughout the rest of this report reflects 1999-2000 information.

While RISD is a stable district that enjoys solid community support, it faces number of challenges, including:

- Ensuring that board members are adequately trained in ever-changing laws, rules and regulations.

- Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers.
- Improving students' academic performance.
- Effectively managing financial operations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Ensure that board members are adequately trained.

Encourage the Board of Trustees to attend state-required training. RISD board members are not completing Texas Education Code training requirements. Training opportunities that are convenient and pertinent to the district would allow its board to remain current on all laws, rules and regulations that affect its role.

Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

Develop a plan to reduce teacher turnover. RISD's teacher turnover rates have risen by 60 percent since 1996 and are presently second-highest among the peers. A group of principals, teachers and community members should be formed to develop strategies to make the district more attractive to new teachers.

Improve the skills of substitute teachers. Administrators and teachers told TSPR that many of the substitutes available to RISD are ill-equipped for classroom instruction. Summer training sessions could help substitutes carry out daily lesson plans and manage classrooms effectively.

Train teachers in the special requirements of dyslexic students. RISD provides only limited services for dyslexic students. Teachers and administrators said the district could offer greater support for such students by providing teacher training through Region 3 in the early identification and support of dyslexic students.

Improve student's academic performance.

Improve TAAS scores by setting goals for increased participation of all groups and using the test results to modify teaching strategies. Not all students are participating in the state's testing program. Among the peer districts, RISD ranked fifth in TAAS participation by Hispanic students and exempts the second-highest number of special education students. The district cannot craft effective strategies to improve its test performance until it has test results for all student groups.

Consider expanding Advanced Placement course offerings through distance learning. RISD has received grants for the equipment needed to offer distance education—that is, classes delivered through closed-circuit

television from other educational institutions. RISD offers only two Advanced Placement (AP) classes for gifted and talented students. Distance learning could allow the district to take advantage of other course offerings from other districts and higher education institutions.

Contract for a part-time grant writer to identify additional funding from federal, state, foundation, business and private sources. RISD's grant funding has declined over the last few years due to the fact that principals and technology instructors are too busy with other tasks to research grants opportunities for the district. A part-time individual to research and apply for grants should be able to generate a net of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year in additional grants to enhance RISD's academic programs.

Manage financial operations effectively.

Achieve market rate investment earnings through investment pools or overnight repurchase agreements. The largest portion of the district's investment portfolio is invested in a single bank certificate of deposit. Remaining funds are invested in a money market account paying 2.53 percent. By investing these funds in an investment pool or overnight repurchase agreement, the district could earn an additional \$10,000 annually in interest.

Establish a committee of staff administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action. The Texas Legislature established a statewide school employee health insurance plan for teachers and other employees of school districts to take effect in Fall 2002. Since the district's current coverage expired in July 2001 and the statewide program does not become effective until 2002, the district will need to secure coverage for the 2001-02 school year. It is critically important for the district to monitor the new law and plan its response.

Develop a year-round budget calendar. RISD does not document its budget process or have a timetable for the budget review and adoption process. By developing a budget calendar with deliverable dates for data needs, including dates for all workshops, public meetings or hearings and board meetings, and establishing specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines for all committees and campus-level staff members, the district will be better able to plan for the coming year.

Consider taking advantage of shared financial services. Each of the four districts in Karnes County find it challenging to provide the wide array of business services required of Texas school districts. In RISD, the superintendent is ultimately responsible for many district financial operations. A shared services arrangement could provide the district with

greater expertise that could help ensure that the district's resources are used efficiently.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" in RISD. Through commendations in each chapter, this report highlights model programs, operations and services provided by RISD administrators, teachers and staff members. Other school districts throughout Texas are encouraged to examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they can be adapted to meet their local needs. TSPR's commendations include the following:

- ***RISD has taken positive steps to promote good working relationships that inspire public confidence and support.*** RISD's administration successfully establishes an adequate infrastructure for site-based decision-making and avoids unnecessary layers of management. Managers at various levels display a strong sense of commitment and association with the district. This relatively flat and effective management structure fosters a team environment among its staff.
- ***RISD's gifted and talented students have used their research skills to benefit their community.*** The Runge Elementary G/T class created the Lake Paul Project, which studied water and wildlife samples from a local lake. The students identified the need for substantial cleanup of the area, but recognizing the job was beyond their means, they developed a plan of action and made a formal presentation the Runge City Council. The result has been recognition of the students' efforts by Texas Parks and Wildlife, the San Antonio River Authority and the Lower Colorado River Authority.
- ***RISD has lowered its energy costs by using grants to purchase energy-efficient lighting.*** The district modernized its lighting equipment with a 1996 grant from the State Energy Conservation Office. New equipment costs can be recovered in a few years through energy savings.
- ***RISD's technology plan provides a sound foundation and framework for the effective use and evaluation of technology in support of the district's educational goals.*** The district's technology plan contains goals and strategies designed to move the district forward technologically.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many TSPR recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that could be used to improve classroom instruction. The savings identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums. Proposed investments of additional funds usually are related to increased efficiencies or savings or improved productivity and effectiveness.

TSPR recommended 31 ways to save RISD a total of \$170,346 over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities would cost the district \$13,500 during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of \$156,846 by 2005-06 (**Exhibit 4**).

Exhibit 4 Summary of Net Savings TSPR Review of Runge Independent School District

Year	Total
2001-02 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$17,994
2002-03 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$34,588
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$34,588
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$34,588
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$34,588
One Time Net (Costs)/Savings	\$500
TOTAL NET SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2001-2006	\$156,846

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

TSPR recommends that the RISD board ask district administrators to review these recommendations, develop an implementation plan and monitor its progress. As always, TSPR staff is available to help implement its proposals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exhibit 5 Summary of Cost/Savings

Recommendation	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1 - District Organization and Management							
1. Encourage the Board of Trustees to attend required training. p. 16	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Perform a complete review of board policy every five years. p. 17	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Seek periodic proposals for legal services and consult with district's law firm on how to lower overall legal fees. p. 19	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$6,000	\$0
4. Develop written administrative procedures to document and implement board policy. p. 23	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Develop a strategic plan for RISD. p. 26	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Develop a plan to reduce teacher turnover. p. 33	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Provide written job descriptions and develop performance measures to evaluate non-instructional employees. p. 34	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

8.	Develop a strategy to improve the skill level of substitute teachers. p. 35	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Chapter 1 Totals		\$0	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$6,000	\$0

Chapter 3 - Financial Management								
14.	Achieve market rate investment earnings by using investment pools or overnight repurchase agreements. p. 68	\$5,094	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$45,846	\$0
15.	Establish a committee of staff and administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action. p. 72	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
16.	Form a committee of superintendents, Region 3 representatives and representatives from the Texas Education Agency to explore the opportunities for shared financial services. p. 81	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
17.	Develop a strategy to meet the GASB Statement No. 34 financial reporting guidelines and TEA's regulatory reporting requirements. p. 82	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
18.	Develop and implement a year-round budget calendar. p. 84	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
19.	Create a policy on the use of the imprest fund and document appropriate purchasing procedures. p. 86	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Chapter 3 Totals	\$5,094	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$45,846	\$0

Chapter 4 - Support Services

20.	Develop a long-range facilities master plan. p. 92	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
21.	Reinforce energy conservation by publicizing energy awareness and involve students and the community in the program. p. 94	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
22.	Establish HVAC service and replacement schedules. p. 95	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
23.	Sell three school buses through a competitive bid process. p. 100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
24.	Establish strategies for increasing participation in breakfast and lunch on campus. p. 104	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
25.	Review food service budget revenue annually to determine if the estimates are reasonable. p. 106	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26.	Annually review meal prices to ensure that prices paid for meals cover costs. p. 108	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

27.	Establish meals per labor hour standard and staff accordingly. p. 109	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$27,000	\$0
28.	Contract for a part-time grant writer to identify additional funding from federal, state, foundation, business and private sources. p. 115	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$90,000	\$0
29.	Establish a shared services agreement for technical support. p. 116	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$12,500)	\$0
30.	Implement a system to collect and analyze work order information. p. 117	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31.	Reconvene the technology planning committee to develop a disaster recovery plan and test it on a scheduled basis. p. 122	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Chapter 4 Totals	\$12,900	\$22,900	\$22,900	\$22,900	\$22,900	\$104,500	\$1,500
	Savings	\$20,494	\$37,088	\$37,088	\$37,088	\$37,088	\$168,846	\$1,500
	Costs	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$12,500	\$1,000
	Total	\$17,994	\$34,588	\$34,588	\$34,588	\$34,588	\$156,346	\$500

Total Savings	\$170,346
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Total Costs	(\$13,500)
Net	\$156,846

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Runge Independent School District's (RISD) organization, management and community involvement in four sections:

- A. Board and Governance
- B. District Management and Community Involvement
- C. Planning and Evaluation
- D. Personnel

It is necessary to evaluate several critical factors to determine the effectiveness of a district's organization and management. School boards are responsible for setting policies that are carried out by the administration. An efficient and functional organization structure supports effective planning, budgeting and improvement processes that ensure district resources are used efficiently and support district goals.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Board and Governance

An elected Board of Trustees governs each Texas school district, which sets policy for the schools and derives its authority from the Texas Constitution and the Legislature. Each board is a corporate body and has the exclusive power to manage and govern public schools in its district. School board members are elected by district residents either at-large, districtwide or from single-member districts. In keeping with the Texas Education Code (TEC), board members are not financially compensated for their board service. Under TEC Chapter 11, Subsection D, each board has specific statutory powers and duties, including:

- Govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district;
- Adopt such rules, regulations and bylaws as the board may deem proper;
- Approve a district-developed plan for site-based decision-making and provide for its implementation;
- Levy and collect taxes and issue bonds;
- Select tax officials, as appropriate to the district's need;
- Prepare, adopt and file a budget for the next succeeding fiscal year, and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- Have district fiscal accounts audited at the district's expense by a Texas certified public accountant holding a permit from the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy following the close of each fiscal year;
- Publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including campus performance objectives and the progress of each campus toward these objectives;
- Receive bequests and donations or other money coming legally into its hands in the name of the district;
- Select a depository for district funds;
- Order elections, canvass the returns, declare results and issue certificates of election as required by law;
- Dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the school district;
- Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district; and
- Hold all powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to the Texas Education Agency or the State Board of Education.

RISD board meetings are held on the second floor of the high school on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The RISD board consists of seven members, elected at large for three-year staggered terms (**Exhibit 1-1**).

**Exhibit 1-1
RISD Board of Trustees
January 2001**

Board Member	Board Position	Term Expires	Occupation
Harvey Menn	President	May 2002	Insurance Agent
Zachary Yanta	Vice President	May 2003	Rancher
Cynthia Yanta	Secretary	May 2004	Nurse's Aid
Eloy Nunez*	Member	May 2004	Salesman
Larry Dement	Member	May 2002	Retired Military/Pilot
Shirley Janssen	Member	May 2003	Bank Cashier
Tony Hynes*	Member	May 2004	Corporate Management

*Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.
Elected May 2001.

During the May 2001 elections, Tony Hynes was elected to the vacant position on the board, which resulted when a board member moved out of the district. Eloy Nunez ran unopposed for the position previously held by his brother, Pablo Nunez.

FINDING

Communication between the superintendent and board members is good. Generally, board members appear to understand their roles and responsibilities. A majority of board members said that the board, as a whole, understands its role as a policy-making body. The superintendent reports that the board is supportive and effective. A review of the public forum comments, interviews with key staff and focus groups about the district administration reveals a positive attitude about the district's administrators and their work. Some of the comments include:

- "I feel all administrators are doing a great job."
- "Satisfied with organization and management of school."
- "Organization and Management - strong suit for this small school."
- "Satisfied with organization and management of school."

A positive working relationship between the board and district staff fosters trust and confidence in the community.

COMMENDATION

RISD's board works cooperatively with administration and understands its role as a policy-making body.

FINDING

RISD board members have not completed training requirements. According to TEC 11.159, each board member must attend yearly training in school district governance. The in-service requirements apply to all board members and include orientation sessions, an annual team building session with the local board and the superintendent and specified hours of continuing education based on identified needs. Additionally, new board members must receive an orientation to TEC, and at the end of a legislative session, all board members are required to receive an update to the basic orientation provided by the regional service center. The local district is the official record keeper. Texas Education Agency (TEA) may request evidence at any time of board member compliance with the continuing education rule. Failure of one or more board members to comply with the rule can affect the district's accreditation status. Section 61.1(b)(2) additionally requires the board and superintendent to participate in a team-building session facilitated by Region 3 or another registered provider.

Exhibit 1-2 presents an overview of the minimum annual continuing education requirements prescribed by TEC for new and experienced board members.

**Exhibit 1-2
Overview of Continuing Education Requirements
for School Board Members**

Type of Continuing Education	Tier	First Year Board Member	Experienced Board Member	Provider
Local District Orientation	1	Required within 60 days of election or appointment	Not required	Local District
Orientation to the Texas Education Code	1	3 hours	Not required	Education Service Center

Update to the Texas Education Code	1	Incorporated into Orientation to the Texas Education Code	After legislative session: of sufficient length to address major changes	Education Service Center
Team-building Session/Assessment of Continuing Education Needs of the Board-Superintendent Team	2	At least 3 hours	At least 3 hours	TEA-registered provider
Additional Continuing Education, based on assessed need and Framework for School Board Development	3	At least 10 hours	At least 5 hours	TEA-registered provider
Total Minimum Number of Hours		16 hours, plus local district orientation	8 hours, plus update	

Source: Texas Administrative Code, Title 9, Part 2, Chapter 61, Rule 61.1.

Exhibit 1-3 lists the number of hours of training each board member received at events sponsored by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). From the period of May 2000 to April 2001, board members did not acquire the suggested number of hours, and most attended fewer TASB sponsored workshops than they did for 1999-2000.

**Exhibit 1-3
RISD Trustee Training Attended
TASB Hours Earned**

Board Member	May 1998 to April 1999	May 1999 to April 2000	May 2000 to April 2001
Harvey Menn	8.50	4.75	8.5
Zachary Yanta	0	2.50	0
Cynthia Yanta	10.00	4.75	7.5
Shirley Janssen	8.00	11.75	0
Larry Dement	5.50	5.75	7.5

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

Note: Excludes former members and those elected May 2001.

The regional service centers and TASB offer multiple opportunities for board in-service training, including annual conferences, on line course credits and videotape. TEC requires the district to maintain in-service training documentation, but TASB offers this service to districts along with training.

While training is a requirement, boards must remain current on all laws, rules and regulations that pertain to the governance of school districts. With the conclusion of the 77th Session of the Texas Legislature, many changes will affect school district operations, including the new school health insurance program and funding flows for Compensatory Education and the like. Understanding these changes will be critical if the board is to react appropriately and protect the interests of the district.

Recommendation 1:

Encourage the Board of Trustees to attend required training.

The superintendent should assist the board to locate training that is pertinent to the district and is offered in locations that will make it easy for members to attend, given their private work schedules and other commitments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 3 and TASB for a list of training opportunities and a schedule of upcoming workshops.	September 2001
2.	Board members review summary of training opportunities available to meet TEC requirements.	September 2001
3.	Each board member establishes a plan for meeting the legal and recommended levels of in-service training by selecting and scheduling Region 3 and TASB workshops and events.	September 2001 and Annually Thereafter
4.	Each quarter, the board president sends quarterly memoranda to each board member listing training opportunities.	Quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented within existing funds budgeted for training.

FINDING

The district does not systematically review local district policy to ensure that all policy remains up to date and accurately reflects the current desires of the board. While some sections of the policy manual have been updated, the superintendent reports that the district has not comprehensively reviewed and updated its entire policy manual in the last 11 years. RISD subscribes to the TASB Policy Manual Service for policy updates and revisions. While TASB regularly updates state-mandated policies, RISD does not have a schedule to review local policies on a regular basis. TASB recommends that its members review their entire policy books at least every five years to purge policies no longer needed and identify policies that need to be developed.

Some districts have adopted formal procedures for drafting, discussing, and approving local policies that assist the board in ensuring that all policies are regularly reviewed and updated and that district staff and the public have an adequate opportunity to participate in the policy development process. In some smaller districts, a committee of staff and board members may be used to systematically review a given number of policies each year so that in a five-year cycle all policies are reviewed.

Each board is a corporate body and has the exclusive power to manage and govern public schools in its district. The board accomplishes this task by making policy, which the administration then interprets into operating procedures. Without well-written and updated policies, there can be disconnects between the board's intent and the actual administration of the district.

Recommendation 2:

Perform a complete review of board policy every five years.

Using a committee system will allow board members to concentrate on key issues and a review of policies will provide the board with sufficient information to make informed decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The board organizes a committee to coordinate state policy updates and the development and revisions to local policy.	October 2001
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2.	The committee develops a timeline and procedure to complete state and local policy development and revisions that include the process of board review and adoption.	November 2001
3.	The committee reviews and drafts proposed updates to complete policy book.	November 2001
4.	The board reviews and approves updates.	January 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD uses the services of an Austin law firm as a resource to help them make decisions but has not regularly sought periodic proposals to compare costs and services offered by other firms. It is normal for school districts to incur legal costs for ordinary litigation, guidance on district policy, grievances, special education accommodations and advice on routine matters. RISD subscribes to a program offered by the firm called an Independent Retainer Program. For \$500 per year, the superintendent can call the firm about general operations of the district, and the firm provides a bimonthly general school law publication. The district's contract for legal services extends through the end of the 2002 fiscal year. According to invoices, additional costs have resulted from research and professional services provided by the firm regarding redistricting, changes in "contracted" work days, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) information and employee relations.

Exhibit 1-4 compares legal fees of peer districts with those of RISD. RISD was compared to the peer districts that responded to the data request, and the information indicates that RISD rank considerably higher in legal expenditures for 1999-2000 and second-highest for 2000-01. The superintendent reports that legal expenses result from legal advice the district needs on discipline and personnel-related issues.

Exhibit 1-4
RISD and Peer District Legal Expenses
2000 through 2001

District	1999-2000	2000-01*
Runge	\$4,322	\$3,561
Balmorhea ISD	\$822	\$1,398

Lorenzo ISD	\$1,959	\$1,550
Hart ISD	\$2,200	\$3,937
New Summerfield ISD	Not Available	Not Available
Lorraine ISD	\$1,429	\$1,384
Peer Average	\$1,600	\$2,000

Source: Business Offices (Balmorhea ISD, Lorenzo ISD, Hart ISD, New Summerfield and Lorraine ISD).

*Through April 2001.

Some districts reviewed by TSPR gather fee estimates from multiple legal firms to obtain a clear and comprehensive description of all services to be performed; a list of services covered by the retainer; a commitment as to the class and qualifications of the individuals who will perform the services; and a clear statement of the estimated fees for those services, including *per diem* and hourly rates, by class of employee and the number of estimated days or hours, by class of employee required to perform the services. Some districts have entered into a cooperative agreement with neighboring districts to share legal services.

Recommendation 3:

Seek periodic proposals for legal services and consult with district's law firm on how to lower overall legal fees.

Because the district's current contract extends through next year, the district may want to contact the law firm to determine if there are ways that they can contain costs, without limiting services provided.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts the current law firm to determine if there are ways RISD can contain costs.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent's office contacts neighboring districts to determine if any would be interested in entering into a cooperative agreement for legal counsel.	January 2002
3.	The superintendent's office prepares a request for fee estimates.	May 2002
4.	The superintendent and board review the fee estimates and the options and select the most appropriate option.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementing this recommendation could save the district \$1,500 annually in legal fees by reducing the fees to the peer average (RISD's 2001 expense of \$3,500 less the peer average of \$2,000 = \$1,500); however the actual amount of savings will depend on the option taken by the district. Because the current contract for legal service runs through the 2001-02 school year, no savings are estimated in the first year, but partnering with the current law firm to contain costs could realize additional savings.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Seek periodic proposals for legal services and consult with firm on how to lower overall legal fees.	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500

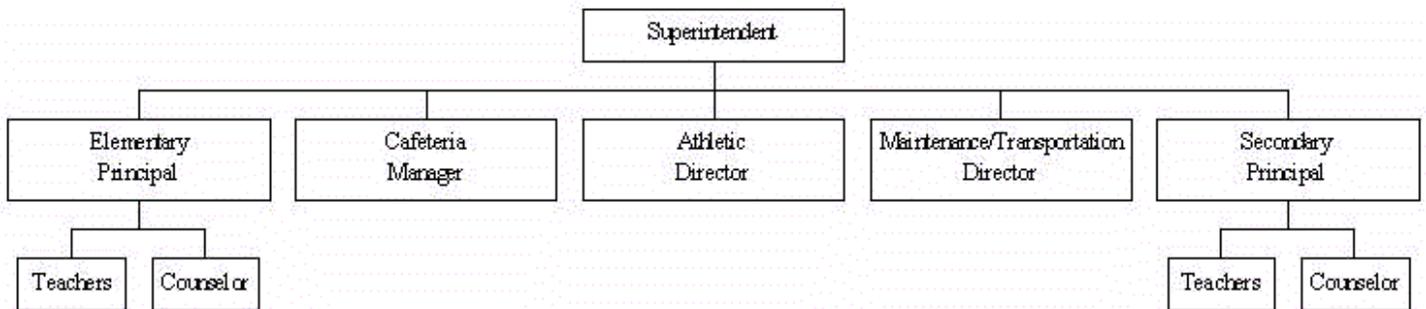
Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. District Management and Community Involvement

RISD has a student population of 321 in grades Pre-Kindergarten (PK) through 12. In 1999-2000, RISD ranked 818 out of 1,034 school districts in Texas based on the number of students. District operation responsibilities are shared between the district superintendent and the secondary and elementary principals. **Exhibit 1-5** provides an overview of the RISD organization.

Exhibit 1-5
RISD Organization
2000-01



Source: RISD Superintendent, 2000-01.

The RISD superintendent reports to the board, and according to TEC Section 11.201(d), the superintendent is "the educational leader and chief executive of the school district" and is primarily responsible for:

- Administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision and evaluation of the educational programs, services and facilities of the district and for annual performance appraisals of the staff;
- Administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all district personnel;
- Termination or suspension of staff members or the non-renewal of staff members' term contracts;
- Day-to-day management of district operations;
- Preparation of district budgets;
- Preparation of policy recommendations for the board and administration of the implementation of adopted policies;
- Development of appropriate administrative regulations to implement board policies;
- Leadership in attainment of student performance based on state indicators; and
- Organization of the district's central administration.

TEC Section 11.202 defines the role of a campus principal as the instructional leader of the school who shall:

- Approve teacher and staff appointments;
- Set specific education objectives for that campus;
- Develop campus budgets;
- Assume the administrative responsibility and instructional leadership and be responsible for discipline at the assigned campus;
- Assign, evaluate and promote personnel; and
- Recommend the termination or suspension of employees to the superintendent.

An effective community relations program operates through continued communication with the parents, business and community members, media, students and employees. Community involvement requires opportunities for parents, business leaders and the community to share their interests and ideas in education in their district.

FINDING

The district has taken positive steps to promote a good working relationship that inspires public confidence and support. The RISD superintendent and the principals have the prime responsibility for coordinating community involvement and are very active in the community. The district enjoys a positive relationship with various community groups through personal contacts and the media. From interviews with the superintendent and board members the steps used to accomplish this include:

- Consistent and open leadership with equity and fairness;
- Showing interest in each child in teaching and problem resolution;
- Placing instruction and student welfare as a top priority;
- Showing fiscal responsibility in establishing priorities and goals for use of district funds;
- Communicating with honesty and integrity while dealing with the public; and
- Dedication to improving student performance.

RISD administration successfully establishes an adequate infrastructure for site-based decision-making and avoids unnecessary layers of management. Managers at various levels display a strong sense of commitment and association with the district. This relatively flat and effective management structure contributes to lower overall central administration costs and fosters a team environment among its staff.

Runge elementary and high school each publish monthly newsletters to be sent home with students and distributed through the community. Both use the local newspaper *Countywide*, to provide community members and parents with information regarding district activities. For example, articles written by district students and staff and printed in newsletters and the newspaper include *Parent Tips*, *Decorate or Carve a Pumpkin* and *Just for Fun*.

A number of local business and volunteer organizations sponsor district schools, activities and programs. Examples of participating organizations include:

Parent Teacher Organization, Runge City Council, Runge Garden Club, R & R BarBQ, Felipe's Café, Leslie's Beauty Salon, Garza's Chevron, Reiman's Sporting Goods, Franke's Hardware, Wells Fargo Bank, HEB, Wal-Mart, First Nichols Bank, Yellow

Jacket Incentive Program, PTO Fall Festival, Parent Volunteer for all concession stands, Parent Volunteer for all eighth-grade promotions and Parent Volunteer for graduation.

A review of the public forum comments about the superintendent and district administration reveals a positive attitude about the district's administrators and their work. Some of the comments include:

- "The superintendent has done a great job. He is a great leader."
- "Superintendent is excellent. Staff is excellent. School is excellent."
- "Superintendent works hard to put the students' needs first for planning and management."
- "Superintendent is good financial manager. He has improved the school in many areas (structurally, financially, etc.) during his tenure here."
- "I am very pleased with the superintendent. He is a very sound financial planner who plans well for the needs of the district and the future."

Some comments from the public forum concerning the building principals are:

- "We have a wonderful high school principal!"
- "The elementary principal does a fine job!"
- "Elementary principal is terrific - open minded and fair in every respect."
- "High school principal is wonderful!"
- "He goes by the rules."

In all, the efforts of the superintendent and the principals has instilled a sense of confidence and public trust in the district, and has helped the district to achieve support from business and volunteer organizations.

COMMENDATION

RISD administration has worked to establish positive staff interactions and public trust and confidence through consistent school management and leadership, open communications and actively soliciting support through local business and volunteer organizations.

FINDING

The district does not have written administrative procedures to implement board policy. Principals regularly must make purchasing and financial decisions, but RISD has few formal written procedures to guide them and ensure that laws, rules and regulations are followed.

Effective school management is built on sound, clearly written and legally valid policies. The Texas State Board of Education mandates that each school board adopt policies governing the operation of its schools and make them accessible to all school district employees and the public.

Procedures show district employees how to carry out the policies in their various organizational units. Well-written and organized procedures: implement and assure compliance with board policies as well as documenting the intent of those policies; protect the institutional knowledge of an organization, so that as experienced employees leave, new employees have the benefit of the others' years of experience;

provide the basis for training new employees; and offer a tool for evaluating employees based on their adherence to procedures.

In almost every school district reviewed, examples were found of key personnel abruptly leaving positions as a result of sudden illness, death or other personal tragedies, and leaving the department in a state of chaos. Other problems can be encountered, particularly in smaller districts when there are no trained back-ups for critical functions like payroll.

While RISD is running effectively and most employees appear to know what they are expected to do and how to do it, there is little documentation that would protect the institutional knowledge if one of the experienced people left the district.

Recommendation 4:

Develop written administrative procedures to document and implement board policy.

Because the district is small and all employees are located in close proximity, one central manual containing all documented procedures should be kept in the main office.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the staff to begin documenting each of their day-to-day tasks.	September 2001
2.	The staff documents their basic tasks and reviews the documentation with a fellow employee to determine if the steps necessary to accomplish the task are clear and understandable in the event that they were called upon to perform the task in the primary employee's absence.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent reviews each of the procedures to determine whether they comply with board policy intent, and provides comment and feedback regarding ways to streamline processes and clarify the steps in the procedure.	October 2001
4.	The superintendent presents the procedures manual to the board for review and approval.	March 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

C. Planning and Evaluation

Planning is essential to effective district management. Proper planning establishes a mission and identifies goals and objectives, set priorities, identifies ways to complete the mission and determines performance measures and benchmarks to achieve goals and objectives. TEC Section 11.252 provides the requirements for district-level planning and decision-making. Each school district must have a District Improvement Plan (DIP) that is developed, evaluated and revised annually. The plan must include provisions for the following:

- A comprehensive needs assessment addressing student performance on the Academic Excellence Indicators (AEI);
- Measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate AEI for all student populations;
- Strategies for improvement of student performance;
- Resources to implement identified strategies;
- Staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy;
- Timelines for monitoring implementation; and
- Formative evaluation criteria for determining whether the strategies are improving student performance.

TEC Section 11.253 provides the requirement for campus-level planning and site-based decision-making (SBDM). Each school building must have a Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) that is developed, evaluated and revised annually. The plan must:

- Assess the academic achievement for each student using the academic excellence indicators;
- Set the campus performance objectives based on the academic excellence indicator system;
- Identify how the campus goals will be met for each student;
- Determine the resources needed to implement the plan;
- Identify staff need;
- Set timelines to achieve goals ;
- Periodically measure progress towards goals;
- Include goals for the prevention and intervention of violence on campus; and
- Provide programs to encourage parental involvement in school.

School districts with effective planning systems divide the process into a series of key components that provide information used to develop, update

and implement plan priorities. These key components include annual district priorities, CIPs, regular program evaluation cycles, work plans, ongoing evaluations of the personnel implementing the plan, budgeted based on district priorities in the plan and a management information system. Annual priorities adopted by the board each year outline what the district will do in a given year to achieve the district's goals and objectives. The plan must set priorities and clear measurable objectives, assign responsibility for implementation at each level and define how the accomplishments of the priorities will be measured.

FINDING

RISD does not have a long-range strategic plan that is tied to the budget. The district fully participates in the state-required process for a DIP and CIP, but it does not extend the planning timeline beyond the one-year mark. DIPs are short range in nature and often do not contain strategies, timelines and assigned responsibilities. In addition, DIPs do not typically address non-instructional areas.

A districtwide committee consisting of district staff, administrators, teachers, parents, business leaders and community members develop the district's DIP. RISD is permitted under TEC 11.252 to have a single committee for both district- and campus-level planning and a single plan representing both campus and district requirements. The DIP is developed using the individualized CIP for each campus. CIPs are developed by the Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) committee and identify what each school will do in a given year to help achieve district and school objectives.

TEC Section 21 describes certain requirements associated with implementing SBDM in Texas school districts. The major theme of SBDM is the empowerment of students, parents, teachers, principals and the school. The code describes requirements for annual District and Campus Improvement Plans, composition of district and SBDM councils, election of representatives to each council, terms of office, meetings and general responsibilities.

The DIP goal-setting process involves participants setting goals for one school year. It is good administrative practice for an organization to plan for a minimum of five years. Districts that follow a long-range or strategic plan process are better prepared to meet the future needs of their organizations.

TASB recommends the following components for an effective strategic plan (**Exhibit 1-6**).

**Exhibit 1-6
Components of a Strategic Plan**

• Shared vision and values	• Critical issues
• Purpose/Mission statement	• Threats/opportunities
• External data collection and analysis	• Student outcomes
• Internal data collection/analysis	• District goals
• External factors	• Best ideas/innovations
• Key Stakeholders	• Operational plans/objectives
• Competing factors	• Annual review and update

Source: TASB.

Many districts use a comprehensive strategic planning process to establish a clear direction for the district; build support for and concentrate resources on district priorities; assist the district in accomplishing its objectives; and provide valid information for decision-making. The plan is a result of a collaborative effort involving input from teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members.

Even in small districts, long-term planning is critical to effective management. Planning enables a district to efficiently define goals and objectives, establish priorities, select appropriate implementation strategies and determine critical measures of performance in achieving the goals and objectives and make sure the district has the needed funds to support their goals.

Recommendation 5:

Develop a strategic plan for RISD.

Setting the direction of the district for the coming years should be an activity participated in by all district stakeholders, including members of the community, parents, teachers and even students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board approves the creation of a strategic plan and instructs superintendent to form a strategic planning committee consisting of administrators, board members, principals, teachers, parents and members of the community.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent assigns an individual to a leadership position of a strategic planning committee and presents goals and objectives of the district.	January 2002
3.	The chairperson of CIP and DIP committees convenes a meeting to seek volunteers to serve on a district strategic planning committee.	February 2002
4.	The strategic planning committee begins needs assessment.	March 2002
5.	The strategic planning committee converts needs assessment to long-range goals including implementation timelines and costs.	April 2002
6.	The chairperson and strategic planning committee draft a strategic plan report to be shared with various district groups for review.	April 2002
7.	The superintendent presents the strategic plan to the board for approval.	May 2002
8.	The district implements the strategic plan and monitors progress annually.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

D. Personnel

TEC Section 11.163 outlines employment policy for Texas school districts. Under TEC Section 11.163(a), the board of each independent school district must adopt a policy providing for the employment and duties of district personnel. The employment policy must provide that:

- The superintendent has sole authority to make recommendations to the board regarding the selection of all personnel other than the superintendent, except that the board may delegate final authority for those decisions to the superintendent; and
- Each principal must approve each teacher or staff appointment to the principal's campus as provided by Section 11.202 (relating to the role of principals).

TEC Section 11.163(b) reads that the Board of Trustees may accept or reject the superintendent's recommendation on the selection of district personnel. If the board rejects the superintendent's recommendation, the superintendent shall make alternative recommendations until the board accepts a recommendation.

Based on the provisions of TEC Section 11.163, the board does participate in the hiring process through the final approval authority for all recommendations from the superintendent on the selection of district personnel. The RISD superintendent supervises all personnel functions, including overseeing the hiring process, including training, recruitment and termination. When candidates submit applications to the district, the applications are forwarded to the school principals. As required by code, principals review all applications and decide which applicants will be contacted for interviews. After the interviews, selected applications and supporting information are presented to the SBDM committee to solicit input and discuss the candidates' qualifications. According to the SBDM committee, principals conduct and make recommendations to the superintendent. The superintendent reviews the recommendations and presents the candidates to the board for approval.

RISD has the second highest percent of teachers when compared to peer district staffing. **Exhibit 1-7** compares RISD's instructional staff percentages of all employees by classification for 2000-01 with peer districts.

Exhibit 1-7
RISD Instructional Staff Percentages by Classification Compared to
Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Teachers	Professional Support	Educational Aides
Balmorhea	50.8%	5.9%	7.1%
Hart	50.3%	3.7%	18.8%
Lorraine	56.6%	0%	18.3%
Lorenzo	46.9%	2.5%	17.4%
New Summerfield	62.7%	1.7%	8.5%
Runge	58.0%	2.7%	14.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-8 shows that the average number of years of experience for RISD's teachers (FTE) stayed above that of the state average for years 1997-98 and 1998-99 and only slightly below the state average for years 1996-97, 1999-2000 and 2000-01. The state average dropped during this period, whereas RISD's average teacher experience increased.

Exhibit 1-8
RISD and State Average Years (FTE) of Teaching Experience
1996-97 through 2000-01

Entity	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
RISD	10.7	12.3	13.4	11.3	11.3
State	11.7	11.8	11.8	11.9	11.0

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-9 compares RISD's percent of employees by classification in 2000-01 with peer districts. RISD averages midrange among peers for staff percentages.

Exhibit 1-9
RISD Staff Percentages by Classification Compared to Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administrators	Central Administrators	Educational Aides	Auxiliary Staff
Balmorhea	50.8%	5.9%	4.2%	4.2%	7.1%	27.3%
Hart	50.3%	3.7%	3.2%	2.4%	18.8%	21.1%
Lorraine	56.6%	0%	0%	3.7%	18.3%	20.6%
Lorenzo	46.9%	2.5%	2.3%	1.7%	17.4%	29.2%
New Summerfield	62.7%	1.7%	3.4%	1.7%	8.5%	22.8%
Runge	58.0%	2.7%	3.6%	1.8%	14.3%	19.1%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

FINDING

RISD has kept the staffing levels low or in some cases, reduced staffing, despite a small increase in the number of students. By doing so, RISD has controlled its personnel costs, the single greatest expenditure in the district. Consequently the district has been able to maintain a solid financial condition. According to the 2000-01 payroll provided by the superintendent, RISD employs 61 staff (**Exhibit 1-10**).

Exhibit 1-10
RISD Staff
2000-01

Number	Title
1.0	Superintendent
2.0	Principals
1.5	Counselors
1.0	Nurse
5.0	Secretaries
12.5	High School Teachers
15.0	Elementary Teachers

3.0	Special Education Teachers
9.0	Teacher Aides
1.0	Band/Music
1.0	Computer Teacher
4.0	Maintenance/Custodial
1.0	Transportation
4.0	Cafeteria
61.0	Total

Source: RISD Superintendent.

These numbers do not reflect the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data that were reported in October 2000, but rather the staffing at the time of on-site work in March, 2001.

Exhibit 1-11 compares district payroll totals with other budget categories for 1999-2000 actual and 2000-01 budgeted expenditures. District expenditures have only marginally changed from 2000 to 2001, except for capital outlay that was for recent renovations on the gymnasium and restrooms.

Exhibit 1-11
RISD Expenditures by Category
Actual 1999-2000 through Budgeted 2000-01

Category	Total Expenditures	
	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Budgeted
Payroll Costs	\$1,901,947	\$1,906,388
Other operating expenses	\$526,258	\$525,458
Debt service	\$0	\$0
Capital outlay	\$670,211	\$156,571
Totals	\$3,098,416	\$2,588,417

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1999-2000 through 2000-01.

For the AEIS data, TEA categorizes school district staff into three groups: 1) professional staff, which includes teachers, professional support staff, campus administrators and central administrators; 2) educational aides;

and 3) auxiliary. **Exhibit 1-12** compares the number of students and staff FTEs employed by the district from 1998-99 through 2000-01, and the percent change from 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-12
RISD Students and Staff FTEs
1998-99 through 2000-01

Staff Category	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change
Teachers	32	32	32	0%
Professional Support	2	2	2	0%
Administrators	3	3	3	0%
Educational aides	11	10	8	-26%
Auxiliary staff	15	11	11	-27%
Total staff	63	58	56	-11%
Total Students	324	308	330	2%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1998-99 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

Particularly for smaller districts, maintaining adequate staffing levels are a challenge. Funding in Texas is based on students in average daily attendance. When enrollments rise or decline funding flows change accordingly, making it necessary for the district to make corresponding staffing adjustments. Districts that fail to do this often find themselves in serious financial difficulties.

COMMENDATION

RISD has effectively managed its staffing levels, maintaining staff at a level that reflects the district's student enrollment.

FINDING

RISD administrators provide regular opportunities for staff development as well as participate in staff development opportunities to maintain their proficiency and knowledge of changing laws and current educational trends. As part of the annual appraisal process for teachers, administrators encourage teachers to enroll in courses for professional development and growth.

Campus principals participate in four to five training sessions for professional development during the year. The Regional Education

Service Center III (Region 3) provides the district with a professional development catalogue listing all the workshops available during the school year. Teachers also have the opportunity to log onto the website (<http://www.esc3.net>) for course offerings. A few examples of courses listed in the catalogue available January 2001 through May 2001 were: "Interventions for behavioral support plans, Improve student discipline!" and "Refresher Course: Nonviolent Crisis Intervention."

According to the superintendent, he tries to at least attend two training sessions per year: TEA's Midwinter conference and Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA). The superintendent reported approximately \$23,000 in staff development expenditures for 1999-2000.

RISD also conducts a formal orientation for new and current employees. In the beginning of the school year, all staff members participate in an in-service staff development meeting where administration reviews the employee handbook page by page. All employees are encouraged to ask clarifying questions and assist new employees throughout the year. Each year RISD distributes an employee handbook to all teachers and staff. New teachers are assigned a mentor for a period of one year during their probation.

COMMENDATION

Administrators encourage training for employee development.

FINDING

RISD effectively uses site-based decision-making (SBDM) when recruiting new employees to the district. RISD principals are closely involved in hiring staff. The office of the superintendent is responsible for posting all job vacancies. Vacancies are posted in the local and regional newspapers, with placement offices and education departments of all major universities statewide, and recently on the district's website. The principals aggressively recruit staff for open positions in the district, including driving long distances to personally interview candidates.

The principals select teacher candidates to interview, conduct the interviews and make recommendations to the superintendent. The superintendent conducts the background checks and does the initial paperwork, which is then submitted to the board for final approval. The recommendations of the principal for hiring and non-renewal of contracts are reviewed by the superintendent and the board, but the principals play a strong role in the process.

COMMENDATION

RISD principals are actively involved in the recruitment and hiring processes of the district.

FINDING

Since 1996, teacher turnover rates in RISD have risen by 60 percent. **Exhibit 1-13** indicates that RISD teacher turnover rates, as compared to peer districts and the state average, significantly higher than the state average from 1995-96 through 1999-2000. In 1996, the teacher turnover rate was 12.8 percent. In 2000, the rate was 32.3 percent, which is an increase of 60 percent.

Exhibit 1-13
RISD Teacher Turnover Rates As Compared to Peer Districts
1995 through 2000

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change
Balморhea	20.0	19.6	30.5	13.8	9.1	-1.1%
Hart	15.6	19.3	16.2	21.9	28.3	45%
Lorraine	30.4	15.4	18.2	20.9	42.9	29%
Lorenzo	27.9	24.8	9.3	23.6	9.5	-1.9%
New Summerfield	14.2	19.4	15.2	15.2	14.8	4%
Runge	12.8	28.3	28.9	33.3	32.3	60%
State	12.1%	12.6%	13.3%	15.5%	15.0%	24%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 1-14 describes the average staff salaries for RISD and peer districts for 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-14
Average Staff Salaries for RISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District Name	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administration	Central Administration
Balmorhea	\$33,987	\$42,067	\$49,396	\$63,471
Hart	\$35,660	\$42,780	\$49,948	\$58,000
Lorraine	\$35,803	\$29,632	\$39,945	\$73,500
Lorenzo	\$36,307	\$39,352	\$52,942	\$68,000
New Summerfield	\$40,094	\$28,300	\$48,000	\$79,250
Runge	\$35,540	\$45,433	\$55,169	\$73,500

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

The district says the high turnover rate is because the location of RISD is not ideal for young teachers unless they are already established members of the local area.

Exhibit 1-15 shows that RISD's teacher salaries fall in the middle range among peers.

Exhibit 1-15
Average Teacher Salaries for RISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District Name	Less than 1 year	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	Over 20 Years
Balmorhea	-	\$26,770	\$32,171	\$37,562	\$42,219
Hart	\$21,243	\$25,814	\$32,355	\$39,047	\$42,370
Lorraine	\$25,490	\$28,935	\$32,620	\$41,942	\$42,051
Lorenzo	\$25,722	\$27,312	\$33,384	\$40,378	\$43,329
New Summerfield	\$24,240	\$26,850	\$32,215	\$41,783	\$75,534
Peer Average	\$24,174	\$21,782	\$26,115	\$32,630	\$40,657
Runge	\$24,974	\$28,498	\$34,052	\$41,716	\$43,436

Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2000-01.

According to the principals, candidates have also declined offers due to the lack of social activities offered in the area.

Recommendation 6:

Develop a plan to reduce teacher turnover.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and principals meet with teachers and community members to identify issues and possible solutions to increase appeal to new teachers and reduce turnover.	August - September 2001
2.	The superintendent and principals develop a plan to address each of the issues identified by the group.	September - October 2001
3.	The superintendent presents the plan to the board for review and approval.	November 2001
4.	The board approves the plan and authorizes its implementation, effective in the 2002-03 school year.	January 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD does not have written job descriptions for food service, transportation or custodial/maintenance to define their roles, responsibilities and expectations for efficient job performance. To effectively manage and develop employees, regardless of the size of the district or the number of students served, districts need to set and use performance standards and controls to monitor, mentor, develop and coach personnel.

Although custodial and transportation staff felt that they were clear about their job expectations without a formalized job description, cafeteria workers report that they have not seen a job description detailing their responsibilities or how they will be assessed. Texas State Food Services Association's (TSFSA) *Standards of Excellence Manual* states that written job expectations should be available to personnel. Expectations should include education, experience and professional development requirements, performance standards and current job duties. Each employee should be evaluated annually. Food service employees received training from the cafeteria manager when they began working for the district, but were not given instruction on how their performance would be measured.

Employees need a full understanding of the expectations by which they will be assessed. The use of performance-based job expectations helps employees know what their job responsibilities are and how their managers will evaluate them.

Recommendation 7:

Provide written job descriptions and develop performance measures to evaluate non-instructional employees.

Employees can help set their expectations and should be encouraged to give and receive feedback about their job performance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent in consultation with directors, develop job descriptions, expectations, requirements and appraisals for food service, janitorial and transportation staff based on current tasks and activities.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent presents proposed job descriptions to board for review and approval.	September 2001
3.	All supervisory level personnel implement performance measures for Fall 2002 school year.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent instructs directors to review and revise job responsibilities and evaluation measures for food service, janitorial and transportation employees.	August 2002 and annually thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Each campus has a list of substitute teachers that is approved by the board each year. Names are added or deleted from the list on a continuous basis and all substitutes need to have is a general equivalency diploma (GED) or a high school diploma to qualify. The secondary principal holds a substitute orientation at the beginning of the school year. A handbook is supplied to each potential substitute and covers topics such as emergency procedures, attendance, discipline and lesson plans. This orientation does not go into details of classroom management. Administrative and teacher interviews indicate that substitutes need more training in appropriate techniques and skills in effective management of the classroom.

Region 3 offered 13 different courses in the first five months of 2000-01. Of those 13, at least five courses could be on a recommended list for substitutes and include topics such as dealing effectively with issues arising in the classrooms. RISD does not offer summer training sessions.

Robstown ISD, for instance, organizes substitute teacher orientation. Substitute applicants are required to attend a half-day orientation before being called for an assignment. The employees get a manual with district information, substitute code of ethics, hints for classroom management, board policy addressing standards of conduct for a drug-free workplace and sexual harassment/sexual abuse. Applicants who are certified in education are not required to attend the training in order to substitute. In August 2000, about 52 people participated in the half-day training in Robstown.

When substitutes are in the classroom, they may encounter situations involving student discipline and classroom management. To have a successful learning environment, substitutes should be able to carry out daily lesson plans while effectively managing the classroom.

Recommendation 8:

Develop a strategy to improve the skill level of substitute teachers.

The strategy should concentrate on recruiting substitutes and training qualified substitutes. A committee of teachers should conduct a summer training session open to the public to develop a pool of qualified substitute teachers. The summer session can encourage parents and others to substitute. The strategy should include, but is not limited to, flyers at open house functions and PTA meetings and advertisements in local area stores.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and principals develop a plan for dealing with substitute training.	September 2001
2.	The principals distribute strategy plan to teachers for feedback.	September 2001
3.	The superintendent and principals finalize the plan and prepare for summer training.	October 2001
4.	The superintendent and principals review plan annually.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND SAFETY

This chapter examines the educational service delivery and performance measures of the Runge Independent School District (RISD) in the following areas:

- A. Curriculum and Instruction
- B. Gifted and Talented Education
- C. Special Programs
- D. Safety and Security

A school district must have a sound instructional management system in place to deliver effective instructional programs. Instructional leaders both at the district and individual school levels must be held accountable for ensuring that resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvement in student performance. Adequate planning and evaluation systems should be developed so the district can monitor instructional program success.

BACKGROUND

Since 1993, Texas has rated and accredited districts and schools based on specific performance measures including the reading, writing and mathematics portions of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), dropout rates and attendance rates. Districts are evaluated each year. TAAS has been the standard for measuring student performance over the last decade. Starting in 2003, the new Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) will replace the TAAS and will annually test students in grades 3 through 11. The exit-level TAKS exam, which students must pass in order to receive a diploma, will move from the 10th grade to the 11th grade.

A key indicator of a district's instructional program delivery is provided through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) accountability standards for schools. These standards are contained in the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). The AEIS standards established in 1997 include four ratings for both the district and individual schools: *Academically Exemplary*, *Recognized*, *Acceptable* and *Low Performing*. For a school to receive an *Exemplary* rating, at least 90 percent of all students must pass the TAAS reading, writing and mathematics sub-tests. For ratings of *Recognized*, *Acceptable* and *Low Performing*, the passing rate standard established for each of the sub-tests was 75 percent, 35 percent and less

than 35 percent, respectively. RISD was rated *Academically Acceptable* by TEA for 2000-01.

RISD delivers educational programs to 330 students districtwide. Runge Elementary School has 196 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten (PK)through six, and a secondary enrollment at the high school of 134 students in grades seven through twelve. Runge Elementary is rated as *Academically Acceptable* and Runge High School is rated *Academically Recognized* by TEA for 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-1 presents a demographic breakdown of RISD student enrollment for 2000-01.

**Exhibit 2-1
RISD Demographics by Campus
2000-01**

Campus	Grades Served	Enrollment	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Other
Runge Elementary	PK-6	196	2.6%	79.6%	16.8%	1.0%
Runge High	7-12	134	1.5%	74.6%	23.9%	0.0%
Total	PK-12	330	2.1%	77.6%	19.7%	0.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-2 presents the enrollment of each of RISD's peer districts over a five-year period, as well as the averages for the state and Regional Education Service Center III (Region 3).

**Exhibit 2-2
RISD, Peer Districts, Regional and State Student Enrollment 1997-98
through 2000-01**

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change*
Balmorhea	221	236	245	240	229	3.6%
Hart	449	449	422	423	376	(-16.3%)
Loraine	213	188	199	168	173	(-18.3%)
Lorenzo	437	456	448	386	402	(-8.0%)
New Summerfield	315	333	344	383	363	15.2%

Runge	314	318	321	308	330	5.1%
Region 3	57,684	57,730	57,361	56,590	55,852	(-3.2%)
State	3,828,975	3,891,877	3,945,367	3,991,783	4,071,433	6.3%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

* Percent change represents student growth rates from 1997-98 to 2000-01.

The percentage of RISD students passing TAAS was highest among all its peer districts in all areas except writing and below the regional and state averages in all areas except math (**Exhibit 2-3**).

Exhibit 2-3
Percent of RISD, Region 3 and State
Students Passing TAAS, All Levels
1999-2000

Entity	Reading	Writing	Math	All Tests
Balmorhea	73.0%	82.2%	67.0%	60.7%
Hart	77.8%	88.2%	83.5%	72.9%
Lorraine	75.0%	72.7%	84.2%	62.3%
Lorenzo	78.6%	72.7%	87.6%	64.7%
New Summerfield	74.7%	75.0%	71.6%	62.2%
Runge	82.7%	86.7%	94.9%	77.7%
Region 3	90.3%	90.5%	91.2%	84.1%
State	87.4%	88.2%	87.4%	79.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-4 presents the number of limited English proficient (LEP) students, economically disadvantaged (eligible for the federal free and reduced price lunch program) students (EDS) and a breakdown of the ethnic composition of student population in RISD, Region 3, the state and peer districts. Over 75 percent of RISD's student population is Hispanic (77.6 percent) compared to the regional average of 42.5 percent and state average of 40.5 percent. Additionally, almost three-quarters of RISD's students are classified as economically disadvantaged (71.5 percent)

compared to the regional average of 50 percent and the state average of 49.2 percent.

Exhibit 2-4
Ethnicity Percentages in RISD, Peer Districts, State and Region 3
2000-01

District	LEP Students	EDS	Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Other
Balmorhea	29.7%	62.0%	15.3%	84.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Hart	16.8%	78.7%	14.6%	80.9%	4.5%	0.0%
Lorraine	4.0%	74.6%	28.3%	67.6%	4.0%	0.0%
Lorenzo	12.2%	74.6%	27.6%	65.9%	6.5%	0.0%
New Summerfield	41.0%	81.0%	28.1%	63.1%	8.5%	0.3%
Runge	1.8%	71.5%	19.7%	77.6%	2.1%	0.6%
Region 3	5.0%	50.0%	45.1%	42.5%	11.0%	1.4%
State	14.0%	49.2%	42.1%	40.5%	14.4%	3.0%

*Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01. *Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.*

Exhibit 2-5 shows the attendance and dropout rate for RISD compared to the peer districts, and averages for Region 3 and the state. RISD's 1999-2000 dropout rate ranks fifth among the district's peers and below the state and regional average.

Exhibit 2-5
Attendance and Dropout Rate of RISD Students
Compared to Peer Districts, State and Region 3
1999-2000

District	Attendance Rate				Dropout Rate			
	All Students	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged Students	All Students	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged Students
Balmorhea	94.4%	94.1%	95.4%	94.2%	0.8%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Hart	96.9%	96.7%	97.5%	96.8%	0.5%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Lorraine	96.0%	96.0%	95.7%	96.4%	1.1%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%

Lorenzo	95.8%	95.3%	97.5%	95.2%	4.0%	2.7%	5.4%	2.6%
New Summerfield	95.9%	96.4%	95.2%	96.0%	1.3%	3.1%	0.0%	2.0%
Runge	95.8%	95.6%	96.2%	95.6%	0.7%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 3	95.5%	94.5%	96.4%	95.0%	1.2%	2.1%	0.5%	1.4%
State	95.4%	95.0%	95.8%	95.1%	1.6%	2.3%	0.8%	1.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

**Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.*

Exhibit 2-6 shows the number of students per teacher and budgeted expenditures in RISD, peer districts and the regional and state averages during 2000-01. RISD has a lower student-teacher ratio than the region and state, but has the second highest student-teacher ratio compared to peer districts. RISD was the third highest percentage in total budget expenditures for classroom instruction, compared to peer districts; the district spends a greater percentage of its total budget on classroom expenditures than the state average.

Exhibit 2-6
Students Per Teacher, Budgeted Expenditures, Classroom Instruction Expenditures
and Percentage of Budget for RISD, Peer Districts and State
2000-01

District	Student Teacher Ratio	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Classroom Instruction Expenditures	Instruction Expenditures Percentage
Balmorhea	8.9:1	\$2,171,906	\$1,100,130	50.7%
Hart	10.2:1	\$3,127,244	\$1,825,374	58.4%
Loraine	12.7:1	\$1,287,981	\$806,564	62.6%
Lorenzo	9.4:1	\$3,178,273	\$1,718,081	54.1%
New Summerfield	9.0:1	\$2,924,868	\$1,549,049	53.0%
Runge	9.8:1	\$2,588,417	\$1,421,541	55.1%
State*	13.4:1	\$27,056,013,935	\$13,871,475,883	51.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

*Includes only TEA, PEIMS Function 11.

Exhibit 2-7 shows that RISD has increased its per pupil expenditure from 1996-97 through 2000-01. RISD ranks fifth and is the second lowest, when comparing the amounts of per pupil expenditure. RISD increased its spending by \$936 per pupil over the five-year period. RISD ranks third highest in per pupil expenditure for 1996-97; second highest for 1997-98; third highest for 1998-99; fourth highest for 1999-2000 and fifth highest for 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-7
RISD and Peer Districts Per Pupil Expenditures
1996-97 through 2000-01

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01*
Balmorea	\$9,156	\$8,219	\$8,509	\$9,851	\$9,484
Hart	\$6,438	\$6,519	\$7,043	\$9,308	\$8,317
Loraine	\$7,255	\$6,906	\$6,376	\$7,030	\$7,445
Lorenzo	\$5,504	\$6,502	\$6,823	\$8,213	\$7,906
New Summerfield	\$6,748	\$6,240	\$8,624	\$7,511	\$8,057
Runge	\$6,908	\$7,634	\$7,413	\$8,048	\$7,844

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

*Budgeted.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND SAFETY

A. Curriculum and Instruction

Exhibit 2-8 shows that reading, mathematics and writing scores improved for all students and in all curriculum areas and across all student populations.

Exhibit 2-8
RISD Percentage of All Students,
Hispanic, Anglo and
Economically Disadvantaged Students
Passing TAAS,
All Grade Levels
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Subject	1997-98			1998-99			1999-2000		
	Reading	Math	Writing	Reading	Math	Writing	Reading	Math	Writing
All Students	73.3%	79.6%	69.4%	75.0%	93.1%	80.0%	82.7%	94.9%	86.7%
Hispanic Students	67.0%	74.1%	55.6%	71.2%	92.1%	81.6%	77.9%	94.2%	88.9%
Anglo Students	89.2%	94.7%	96.0%	96.2%	96.3%	80.0%	96.6%	96.6%	80.0%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	67.8%	76.3%	63.6%	71.7%	91.5%	81.1%	78.1%	93.3%	87.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Note: Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.

Exhibit 2-9 shows continued improvement all groups, has shown a significant increase in Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged groups.

Exhibit 2-9
Percentage of RISD Students in Grades 3-8 and 10, Passing TAAS
Reading Test
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Category	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change
All students	77.7%	75.0%	82.7%	6.4%
Hispanic students	67.0%	71.2%	77.9%	16.3%
Anglo Students	89.2%	96.2%	96.6%	8.3%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	67.8%	71.7%	78.1%	15.2%
State All students	83.3%	86.3%	87.4%	4.9%
Region 3 All students	83.8%	88.7%	90.3%	7.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Note: Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for

privacy reasons.

Exhibit 2-10 demonstrates RISD's improvement of students passing the TAAS math test and the district's success in meeting or exceeding state and regional averages.

Exhibit 2-10
Percentage of RISD Students Grades 3-8 and 10 Passing TAAS Math
Test
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change
All students	83.7%	79.6%	93.1%	94.9%	13.9%
Hispanic Students	79.5%	74.1%	92.1%	94.2%	18.5%
Anglo Students	94.1%	94.7%	96.3%	96.6%	2.7%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	80.9%	76.3%	91.5%	93.3%	15.3%
State All Students	80.1%	80.4%	85.7%	87.4%	9.1%

Region 3 All Students	83.0%	82.2%	89.1%	91.2%	9.9%
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Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Note: Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.

Exhibit 2-11 presents the percentage of RISD students passing the TAAS writing test; they show the district has improved scores and is reducing the gap between the district's scores and state and regional averages.

Exhibit 2-11
Percentage of RISD Students Grades 3-8 and 10 Passing TAAS
Writing Test
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change
All students	61.9%	69.4%	80. %0	86.7%	40%
Hispanic Students	60.0%	55.6%	81.6%	88.9%	48%
Anglo Students	71.4%	96.0%	80.0%	80.0%	12%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	54.5%	63.6%	81.1%	87.8%	61%
State All Students	85.3%	84.2%	88.2%	88.2%	3.4%
Region 3 All Students	86.5%	84.0%	90.2%	90.5%	4.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Note: Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.

FINDING

RISD's superintendent and two principals manage the development and modification of curriculum, review the delivery of educational services and evaluate educational programs. RISD principals are responsible for leading the development of curriculum in the district. The principals review lesson plans and observe teachers using the approved curriculum. Principals also review progress reports and look at student grades for additional input when reviewing curriculum effectiveness. Teachers are

given written and oral feedback regarding instruction. Administrators and teachers in RISD review test scores to determine the course of curriculum development.

Curriculum recommendations are addressed through the campus improvement plans (CIP). The superintendent and principals report that the curriculums for the elementary, junior high and high school are aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and with TAAS. The district accesses various curriculum resources offered through Region 3. Teachers have participated in training programs offered by Region 3, and the district has consulted with Region 3 to assist in evaluating program effectiveness, provide curriculum area specialists and recommend attendance at workshop/classes as needed.

The district identified a need to focus on instruction in science and hired a science specialist to teach grades four, five and six. The district identified the need to improve student performance in mathematics, and it adopted the Saxon mathematics program. In addition, RISD has developed and implemented a strategy for replacing existing textbooks with those that include a curriculum guide closely aligned with TEKS and TAAS objectives.

COMMENDATION

The district regularly monitors student performance and has implemented strategies for curriculum alignment that have resulted in improved scores across all curricular areas and student populations.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND SAFETY

B. Gifted and Talented Education

The State Board of Education (SBOE) has developed a state plan for the education of gifted and talented (G/T) students, available in English and Spanish, that outlines *Acceptable*, *Recognized* and *Exemplary* practices in the areas of assessment, program design, curriculum and instruction, professional development and family-community involvement. In the area of assessment, the plan outlines an acceptable practice for student identification as: "data and procedures assure that all populations of the district have access to assessment and, if identified, services offered as part of the program for gifted students." This plan, available in English and Spanish on the TEA Web site, was most recently updated in May 2000.

Exhibit 2-12 shows that RISD ranks fourth among its peer districts in the number of students served in the gifted and talented program.

Exhibit 2-12
Students Served in Gifted and Talented Program
RISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Total Student Population	Number of Students Served	Percent of Total
Balморhea	229	30	13.1%
Hart	376	63	16.8%
Lorraine	173	10	5.8%
Lorenzo	402	45	11.2%
New Summerfield	363	21	5.8%
Runge	330	29	8.8%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-13 shows the number of students enrolled in the gifted and talented program, the percentage of the total student population

represented, the amount budgeted for the gifted and talented program and the percentage of the total budget for RISD between 1996-97 and 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-13
Gifted and Talented Students
1996-97 through 2000-01

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Number of Gifted and Talented Students	29	18	22	26	29
Percent of student population	9.1%	5.6%	6.8%	8.4%	8.8%
Budgeted expenditures for Gifted and Talented Program	\$3,256	\$2,887	\$7,222	\$7,935	\$3,404
Percent of total budget	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1996-97 through 2000-01.

FINDING

RISD's G/T students have contributed to the community while gaining a valuable education experience. Initiated in Fall of 1999, the Runge Elementary G/T class created the Lake Paul Project, which was focused on studying water and wildlife samples from a local lake. While studying the samples, they realized the lake required substantial restoration. The class recognized that the clean up would be significant, a project far larger than what the students could accomplish on their own. The students developed a presentation, with a proposed plan and timeline for the Runge City Council to review an offer to the community for support. The plan was presented and approved by the city council, which slated three clean-up dates. Through the students' research, they not only learned how to analyze a current situation, but to organize and plan a remedy for an environmental problem. Additionally, the G/T students were able to propose and obtain wildflower seeds to plant and stock the lake with fish.

To beautify the lake, G/T students designed and built birdhouses for the lake using recycled materials. The district initiated a schoolwide birdhouse building contest, which was judged by community and business leaders.

As a result of these efforts, the lake has become a prime location for fishing tournaments and other social gatherings and has generated interest and support from representatives from Texas Parks and Wildlife, San Antonio River Authority and the Lower Colorado River Authority.

Through research and organization, the students gained valuable skills that benefited the district and community.

COMMENDATION

RISD G/T students initiate and participate in projects that provides both instructional and community value.

FINDING

For the first time last year, RISD offered Advanced Placement (AP) classes to allow students to take college-level classes. The district offered calculus and later added chemistry. These courses are offered as part of the G/T program at the secondary level. The G/T teacher evaluates students' progress one period per day. RISD has made a concerted effort to train teachers at Region 3 so that the district can expand the program. Four teachers were trained last year; two teachers are scheduled for training this year.

Through a Rural Utilities Service grant funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, RISD purchased the equipment necessary to implement distance learning. The district is waiting for the necessary satellite infrastructure to allow RISD to communicate with universities, community colleges and organizations that provide advanced placement curriculum, such as Region 3. The communication infrastructure installation was completed in July 2001.

Currently, Falls City ISD is using distance learning technology to supplement AP course offerings. Additionally, Falls City ISD plans on using this instructional strategy to deliver training to teachers, staff and community members. Classes are currently delivered through the Palo Alto Community College, but the district is not yet working with other local universities and community colleges to expand class offerings and provide a continuing education curriculum for district staff and community members.

Recommendation 9:

Research the feasibility of expanding AP course offerings through distance learning.

By expanding the use of the new technology to include AP classes, the district could increase the number of AP courses offered.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The secondary principal contacts the Falls City ISD technology coordinator to discuss experiences specific to distance learning and AP curriculum providers.	October 2001
2.	The secondary principal administers a secondary school survey in RISD to measure interest in AP curriculum areas.	November 2001
3.	The secondary principal investigates AP course offerings and costs from providers, to include universities and community colleges.	December 2001
4.	The secondary principal reports findings to the superintendent for review and presentation to the board.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND SAFETY

C. Special Programs

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require all public school districts that receive federal funds to establish district and school processes for identifying students with learning disabilities or special learning needs so accommodations can be made to provide them with learning opportunities equal to other students. This includes students in special education and students with dyslexia, attention-deficit disorder and hyperactivity disorders. The Acts include accommodating additional instruction in a particular subject through a resource teacher, additional time to complete assignments and the provision of oral instead of written exams.

IDEA, which the U.S. Congress re-authorized in 1997, mandates a free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities. Accommodations must be made to provide equal learning opportunities to students in special education classes and those with dyslexia, attention deficit disorder and/or hyperactivity.

IDEA was passed to protect the rights of parents and children in educational decision-making. The law requires schools to develop an individual education plan (IEP) for every child who is served in a special education program. The law also requires that students are served in the least restrictive environment and their educational program is closely aligned to those of children not in special education. The law also requires the inclusion of students with disabilities in state and district assessment programs.

Admission, Review and Dismissal(ARD) committee exemptions from TAAS are granted to individual special education students in a process controlled by the ARD committee at each school. Each special education student receives an annual progress evaluation by the ARD committee, which includes, at a minimum the regular education teacher, the special education teacher, an assessment evaluator, the parent and an administrator who is empowered to commit the school district to whatever services are determined necessary by the ARD committee. Students in special education are given an annual IEP review by the special education teacher and an evaluation through the ARD committee every three years, which may include psycho-educational testing, social worker interview and/or other evaluation deemed necessary. The IEP includes instructional goals, objectives and modifications for classroom use.

Exhibit 2-14 shows that among its peer districts RISD allocates the largest percent of its total budget to special education.

Exhibit 2-14
RISD, Peer Districts, State and
Region 3 for Students in Special Education
2000-01

District	Number of Special Education Students	Percent of Total Student Enrollment	Budgeted Amount	Percent of Total Budget
Balmoreha	27	11.8%	\$104,488	4.8%
Hart	38	10.1%	\$173,039	5.5%
Loraine	33	19.1%	\$82,763	6.4%
Lorenzo	86	21.4%	\$152,562	4.8%
New Summerfield	40	11.0%	\$6,500	0.2 %
Runge	58	17.6%	\$251,904	9.7%
Region 3	7,437	13.3%	NA	NA
State	492,045	12.1%	\$1,734,634,496	6.4%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-15 profiles the district's expenditures in support of the special education program.

Exhibit 2-15
RISD Expenditures for the Special Education Program
1996-97 through 2000-01

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Special education expenditures	\$199,694	\$211,923	\$194,007	\$221,231	\$251,904
Percent of budget for special education expenditures	16.0%	16.6%	15.4%	15.5%	9.7%
Special education students served	65	61	66	65	58
Percentage of population	20.4%	19.0%	20.4%	21.1%	17.6%

Expenditures per student	\$3,072	\$3,474	\$2,939	\$3,403	\$4,343
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Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-16 shows that RISD rated fifth in TAAS participation for 1997-98; fourth in 1998-99 and fourth in 1999-2000 when compared to peer districts. RISD had a higher rate of participation than the state in two of the three years.

Exhibit 2-16
RISD, Peer Districts and State and Regional Averages for TAAS
Participation
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Entity	Percent Tested		
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Balmorhea	100.0%	97.7%	94.9%
Hart	97.3%	93.3%	91.0%
Loraine	98.1%	94.6%	91.1%
Lorenzo	96.3%	87.5%	82.7%
New Summerfield	67.6%	67.3%	89.1%
Runge	91.9%	91.4%	89.2%
Region 3	93.1%	90.3%	90.2%
State	91.1%	89.3%	90.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-17 shows RISD ranked fifth in TAAS participation by Hispanic students when compared to peer districts. RISD had a higher rate of participation than the regional average in 1999-2000, but slightly lower than the state average for only Hispanics.

Exhibit 2-17
RISD, Peer Districts, State and Region 3 for
TAAS Participation by Ethnicity and Economically Disadvantaged
Students
1999-2000

Entity	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islanders	Economically Disadvantaged Students
Balmorhea	na	93.8%	100.0%	na	na	92.6%
Hart	87.5%	89.2%	100.0%	na	na	90.0%
Lorraine	100.0%	93.2%	80.0%	na	na	88.7%
Lorenzo	66.7%	77.8%	95.3%	na	na	75.2%
New Summerfield	85.7%	89.5%	100.0%	na	na	88.0
Runge	*	87.3%	100.0%	*	*	86.7%
Region 3	83.5%	87.1%	94.4%	96.9%	94.8%	90.2%
State	86.6%	87.8%	93.4%	89.5%	92.4%	90.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

**Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.*

Exhibit 2-18 shows that RISD's percent of exempted special education students is second highest compared to the peer districts and higher than the state or regional average.

Exhibit 2-18
ARD Exemptions Rates from TAAS
For RISD, Peer Districts and State and Regional Averages
1999-2000

Entity	Special Education (ARD) Exemptions
Balmorhea	4.2%
Hart	6.5%

Loraine	6.7%
Lorenzo	14.4%
New Summerfield	8.6%
Runge	10.8%
Region 3	8.1%
State	7.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-19 compares RISD and peer district's special education and LEP student percentages. RISD is the second highest among its peer districts in the number of special education students being served.

Exhibit 2-19
RISD, Peer Districts, State and
Region 3 for Students in Special Education
2000-01

District	Number of Special Education Students	Percentage of Total Student Enrollment	Number of Special Education Teachers (FTEs)	Percent of Total Number of Teachers (FTEs)
Balморhea	27	11.8%	1.6	6.6%
Hart	38	10.1%	2.0	4.8%
Loraine	33	19.1%	0.8	5.9%
Lorenzo	86	21.4%	8.0	17.7%
New Summerfield	40	11.0%	3.0	8.1%
Runge	58	17.6%	2.6	8.0%
Region 3	7,437	13.3%	407.9	9.8%
State	492,045	12.1%	27,410	10.0%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

RISD is one of nine districts participating in the Goliad Special Education Cooperative (Cooperative). Cooperative membership requires the district to pay a monthly fee based on average daily attendance to Goliad ISD,

which serves as the fiscal agent. As part of the agreement, each district school is assigned a diagnostician who identifies and screens students for special education needs. In addition, the diagnostician assists in delivering special education services to include requirements for mental health. Assigned diagnosticians participate in ARD meetings with teachers and principals to review identified special education needs and to discuss ongoing service delivery and impact on students served.

FINDING

While RISD generally has improved student performance on the TAAS, some areas still need improvement. In 1999-2000, RISD had the second lowest TAAS participation rate for Economically Disadvantaged (88 percent) and Hispanic (87.3 percent) student groups among its peers. The district total participation in all groups is 89.2 percent. The district also has 17.6 percent of its student population classified as Special Education. Standards set through the Cooperative are used to aid ARD committee recommendations for TAAS exemptions for TAAS. In RISD, the ARD committee reviews each special education student's assessment, TAAS history, current working level and grades to decide if a special education student takes the TAAS or is exempt.

Exhibit 2-20 presents the percent of RISD students passing the TAAS at all grade levels; they are improving and are reducing the gap between the district's scores the state and the region. The exhibit, however, shows a single year drastic jump for the Hispanic group (from 55.6 percent in 1997-98 to 81.6 percent in 1998-99).

Exhibit 2-20
RISD Percent of All Students, Hispanic, Anglo and Economically Disadvantaged Students Passing TAAS, All Grade Levels 1997-98 through 1999-2000

Subject	1997-98			1998-99			1999-2000		
	Reading	Math	Writing	Reading	Math	Writing	Reading	Math	Writing
All Students	73.3%	79.6%	69.4%	75.0%	93.1%	80.0%	82.7%	94.9%	86.7%
Hispanic Students	67.0%	74.1%	55.6%	71.2%	92.1%	81.6%	77.9%	94.2%	88.9%
Anglo Students	89.2%	94.7%	96.0%	96.2%	96.3%	80.0%	96.6%	96.6%	80.0%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	67.8%	76.3%	63.6%	71.7%	91.5%	81.1%	78.1%	93.3%	87.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Note: Due to the represented number being under five, African American group not shown for privacy reasons.

Many districts acquire a meaningful analysis of its student performance data, including access to technical support and software, by tapping the knowledge of the Educational Productivity Council. The council is operated through the University of Texas' Department of Educational Administration, and about 60 Texas school districts participate in the council's efforts. The council has three major objectives: to provide research designed to foster high performance standards and professional accountability; to close the gap between low-achieving students, particularly those from poor, minority, and migratory families, and their fellow students; and to develop performance management systems. The council uses past and present test scores to assess student academic growth; classroom, campus, program, and district performance; the effectiveness of organizational and instructional strategies, curricula, and programs; and the effects of instructional change. Another group with similar goals is "Just For the Kids." Again, by using test data, "Just For the Kids" seeks to assist districts to identify strengths and target the system's weaknesses in the program. Only then will continual improvement be possible.

While providing additional help to students to prepare for TAAS is helpful, it is more important to analyze their weaknesses and identify the areas where economically disadvantaged and minority students need additional support.

Recommendation 10:

Improve TAAS student scores by setting goals for increased participation of all groups and using the test results to modify teaching strategies.

Exemptions should only be for those students who are not being prepared on grade-level objectives. District trends in TAAS performance should aid in the district plans or strategies for including more students in TAAS. If additional funds are needed, RISD should seek additional grant sources such as the state's Innovative Education Grants.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and principals identify goals for increasing students participation of all groups.	October 2001
2.	The campus improvement committee reviews the goals and begins the process of adjusting the curriculum to address the needs of all student subpopulations.	November 2001
3.	The board requires the district and campus improvement plans to include goals for increasing participation of all student subpopulations.	March 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD teachers have limited training in supporting dyslexic students. The administration and teachers said the district could offer more support for dyslexic students if more teachers had additional training in early identification and support of dyslexic students. RISD currently has one certified elementary teacher who has full-time classroom responsibilities and only works with dyslexic students during conference periods.

Due to limited resources and skills, RISD does not provide a follow-up service to dyslexic students once they have exited the formal program. Challenges facing dyslexic students are addressed using the Scottish Rite program video; however continual evaluation of the student's progress is limited. Classroom teachers, supported by the principals, have stressed the importance of this evaluation and have indicated a willingness to be trained to serve these students.

Regional Education Service Center X (Region 10) in Richardson offers the Dyslexia Information Network program that assists districts, service centers, universities, parents and others with questions concerning dyslexia and dyslexia education programs. Region 10 also has a video entitled *Dyslexia: Recognizing Characteristics* that is an introduction to the observable characteristics that are typical of the student with dyslexia. This video is designed to provide instruction for school personnel and parents in recognizing areas of weakness associated with dyslexia based on the individual's age, educational level and cognitive abilities. The video may be ordered through Region 10's Web site.

Administrators from RISD's local service center, Region 3, said they can assist local districts in developing the skills for identifying dyslexic

students through an awareness seminar, either at the district with unlimited attendance or at Region 3 with a shared cost agreement with other districts.

Recommendation 11:

Offer training to teachers to increase the district's ability to identify, screen and support dyslexic students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 3 to obtain information on a dyslexia awareness seminar and costs.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent contacts other districts in the area to share seminar information and invite participation.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent offers information for teachers interested in attending a Region 3 dyslexic awareness workshop.	November 2001
4.	Teachers attend workshop scheduled on an in-service work day.	January 2002
5.	Teachers apply workshop concepts to identify students with potential dyslexic challenges as part of their normal teaching responsibilities.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for providing training to two teachers through Region 3 is estimated to be a minimum of \$1,000. Region 3 administrators stated that if the seminar was shared among several districts, dedicated training budgeted funds may be able to cover the expense. Region 3 could then fund the training instead of charging the district.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Offer training to teachers to increase the district's ability to identify, screen and support dyslexic students.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

RISD provided an ESL program for six students in 2000-01. According to home language surveys, Spanish is spoken in seven out of 127 RISD homes or 5.5 percent of respondents' homes. The home language survey

administered at the elementary level indicated that Spanish is spoken in 14.8 percent of students' homes.

The number of Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) students in Texas public schools increased from 479,576 in 1995-96 to 570,603 in 2000-01. The LEP grants individual bilingual/ESL students limited English proficiency (LEP) exemptions from TAAS. This committee includes the same type of committee as an Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee that assess special education students, except instead of a special education teacher an LPAC committee includes a bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher.

Exhibit 2-21 presents the rates of exempted RISD ESL students compared to the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-21
Limited English Proficient and ARD Exemptions Rates from TAAS
For RISD, Peer Districts, State and Region 3
1999-2000

Entity	Limited English Proficiency Exemptions
Balморhea	0.0%
Hart	0.5%
Lorraine	2.2%
Lorenzo	0.0%
New Summerfield	1.1%
Runge	0.0%
Region 3	0.5%
State	1.3%

Source: TEA, AEIS 1999-2000.

Region 3 provides staff development and assistance to the district, in areas such as instructional strategies to be used in the classroom by teachers, as well as training for the LPAC.

Exhibit 2-22 profiles the district's bilingual student population and dedicated teaching staff.

Exhibit 2-22
RISD Bilingual/ESL Students and Teachers FTEs
1996-97 through 2000-01

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Percentage of Bilingual/ESL students to total student population	6.0%	3.1%	2.8%	2.3%	1.8%
Bilingual/ESL teachers FTE	0.1	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.4
Percentage of total teachers	0.3%	3.1%	1.0%	0.4%	1.2%
Budget Expenditures for Bilingual/ESL program	\$11,744	\$15,451	\$9,690	\$600	\$800
Percent of budget	0.9%	1.2%	0.8%	0.0%	0.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1996-97 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-23 shows that RISD has the smallest percent of bilingual students when compared to peer districts.

Exhibit 2-23
RISD, Peer Districts and State and Regional Averages
for Percentage of Bilingual Students
2000-01

Entity	Percent of Student Population	Number of Bilingual Teachers (FTE)	Percent of Total Number of Teachers
Balmorhea	9.6%	0.5%	2.0%
Hart	16.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Loraine	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lorenzo	11.9%	1.2%	2.6%
New Summerfield	43.3%	2.0%	5.4%
Runge	1.8%	0.4%	1.2%
Region 3	1.4%	73.2%	1.75%
State	12.5%	20,240	7.36%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

The Program Evaluation Unit of TEA is responsible for conducting research and evaluation studies in the Office for the Education of Special Populations. In a TEA press release, dated May 2001, TEA announced the release of a study contracted to the Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin and a user's guide and training video that offers information for district officials as they develop bilingual and ESL programs or refine existing offerings for students of special populations.

According to the press release, the study called "The Texas Successful Schools Study: Quality Education for Limited English Proficient Students" and the "Educator User Guide for Administrators and Educational Personnel" as well as a 45-minute training video for principals and teachers are the resulting from a study of seven "highly effective successful schools." The seven schools had to meet established criteria that included the following characteristics:

- Schools enrolled more than 40 percent LEP students during the 1996-97 school year;
- Schools enrolled more than 50 percent economically disadvantaged students during the 1996-97 school year; and
- School had zero TAAS exemption for the 1996-97 school year.

The purpose of the Successful Schools Study was to profile the programs, policies and instructional practices of the seven study sites and report on the contributions of these schools to the academic success of LEP students. The video will be aired on T-STAR, the agency's satellite network early this fall, and the study and reference materials are available on TEA's web site at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/program.eval/index.html>

Recommendation 12:

Use materials offered through TEA to assess, evaluate and monitor the growth of LEP student populations in the district and train teachers in successful practices.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Superintendent's office downloads materials from TEA's web site and contacts TEA to participate in the airing of the training video.	September 2001
2.	Superintendent shares study materials with principals for review and planning.	September 2001
3.	Teachers participate in training video aired by TEA in early fall.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND SAFETY

D. Safety and Security

The safety of children has long been a major goal of all school districts. Carole Keeton Rylander, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, states in *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School*, "one of the most important goals of any government-perhaps the most important-is to ensure the safety and well-being of all of its citizens. It is particularly important to safeguard our most vulnerable citizens, our children."

Small communities, such as Runge, and their schools often rely on the community for the safety and security of the students. The smallness creates a sense of well-being because everyone knows everyone and watches each other's children. A tight-knit community usually does not have to place an emphasis on safety and security. However, the growing number of incidents in other small communities in Texas and the nation has made even the smallest of communities change their thoughts on safety and security.

As with many small districts, RISD currently does not separately budget funds for safety and security. The superintendent reports that safety and security issues are funded under either Function 23 of the district's budget or through the maintenance budget. In the 1999-2000 budget, RISD budgeted \$1,400 for a drug detecting dog services. In 1999-2000, only two of the five peer districts (Balmorhea and Lorenzo) had budgeted for Security and Monitoring Services. Balmorhea ISD had \$450 and Lorenzo ISD had \$2,000. In the 1999-2000 school year, criminal charges were filed against one student in RISD. **Exhibit 2-24** summarizes the violence data for RISD's 1998-99 school year.

Exhibit 2-24
RISD Violence Data
1998-99

Category Description	Number of Incidents
Out-of-school suspensions	48
Other students placed in Alternative Education	5

Students referred for disciplinary action related to the possession, sale or use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs(TAOD)	1
Students placed in alternative education due to possession, sale or use of TAOD	1
Assaults against students	1

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1998-99.

FINDING

RISD has several safety and security issues that have not been assessed or addressed. During the review, TSPR noted open and unguarded doors that allow unrestricted access to district facilities. In an interview, a community member said, "I can just go directly into my daughter's room."

While Runge is a small community, restricting access to children remains a concern since districts still remain responsible for ensuring that children are released to appropriate custodial parents or authorized individuals. A creek and overgrown vegetation located behind the portable buildings, although some distance off, may also pose a threat since the area may conceal unauthorized persons or pose other safety hazards.

The Texas Education Code, section 37.105 states, "Identification may be required of any person on school property. The Board or its designee may refuse to allow persons having no legitimate business to enter school property, and may eject any undesirable person from the property upon his or her refusal to leave peaceably on request." District policy and procedures within the parent and student handbooks stipulate that all visitors are expected to enter the district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. In addition, the policy states that employees observing unauthorized individuals on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

RISD lacks communication capability between the elementary portable buildings and the main office. Lack of communications between district facilities can hamper quick and efficient notification should an emergency arise.

The Texas Legislature recently allotted permanent funding for the Texas School Safety Center at Southwest Texas State University. The Center offers among other resources, a free safety audit for school districts. The program may be reached through the web page at <http://www.TXSSC.swt.edu>. Additionally, local law enforcement agencies

will often provide walk-through reports of potential problem areas and recommend solutions.

An additional benefit can be afforded through increased positive interaction of local law enforcement officials and students. School resource officers in school districts around Texas show students how to deal with conflict, resolve problems, face peer pressure and avoid criminal activity. Having an opportunity to speak with peace officers in a non-threatening environment also helps students to become comfortable when approaching peace officers with their concerns.

Recommendation 13:

Conduct a security assessment of the RISD grounds to identify potential security risks and establish an action plan for eliminating any risks identified in the assessment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the director of Maintenance to contact the local law enforcement agency or the Texas School Safety Center at Southwest Texas State University to schedule a security assessment.	October 2001
2.	The security assessment is completed and returns documented findings.	November 2001
3.	The director of Maintenance meets with the superintendent to review the assessment findings and prioritizes identified risks.	November 2001
4.	The director of Maintenance develops a plan for addressing the high priority risks and determines the resources needed.	December 2001
5.	The director of Maintenance presents the plan to the superintendent for review and approval.	January 2002
6.	The plan is presented to the board for approval.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the business services of Runge Independent School District (RISD) in the following three subsections:

- A. Asset and Risk Management
- B. Financial Organization and Budgeting
- C. Purchasing

To perform critical daily educational and operational functions, districts must be supported by strong, cost-effective financial services, including asset and risk management and financial management.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Asset and Risk Management

Texas school districts have a fiduciary responsibility to protect publicly financed assets provided to educate children. Cash, employees, land, buildings, equipment and borrowing capacity all are school district assets. The goal of asset and risk management is to protect these assets from financial losses resulting from unforeseen events.

An effective asset and risk management program aims to control costs by ensuring that the district is adequately protected against all significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums. This includes the identification and measurement of risk and techniques to minimize the impact of risk. RISD should seek investments with maximum interest-earning potential while safeguarding funds and ensuring liquidity to meet fluctuating cash-flow demands. Effective tax management includes quick and efficient tax collections to allow the district to meet its cash-flow needs and earn the highest possible interest. Fixed-asset management should account for district property efficiently and accurately and safeguard it against theft and obsolescence. The district's insurance programs for employees' health, workers' compensation and the district's assets should be sound and cost effective to protect the district from financial losses.

RISD's superintendent has overall responsibility for major business functions. The superintendent's secretary assists the superintendent with cash management, payroll, investments, maintaining fixed assets and records administration.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) defines fixed assets as purchased or donated items that are tangible in nature, have a useful life longer than one year, have a unit value of \$5,000 or more and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* requires assets costing \$5,000 or more to be recorded in the fixed asset group of accounts. Items costing less than \$5,000 are recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund under TEA guidelines.

To improve control and accountability, these guidelines allow school districts to establish lower thresholds for equipment costing less than \$5,000. For example, computer and audiovisual equipment worth less than \$5,000 does not have to be accounted for in the fixed asset group of

accounts. Some districts, however, maintain lists of such assets to improve control and accountability.

RISD conducts a fixed-asset assessment and completes updates yearly in accordance with the district's capitalization policy. **Exhibit 3-1** shows the balances of RISD's fixed assets as reported in the 1999-2000 financial statement. As shown, 30.18 percent of RISD's fixed assets can reasonably be inventoried, including assets such as furniture, equipment and vehicles.

Exhibit 3-1
RISD Fixed Assets
August 31, 2000

Description	Balance 8/31/00	Percent
Land	\$55,312	1.25%
Buildings	\$3,017,467	68.27%
Construction in Progress	\$0	0.00%
Furniture and Equipment	\$1,347,346	30.48%
Capital Leases	\$0	0.00%
Total	\$4,420,125	100.00%

Source: RISD, 2000 Auditor's Report.

RISD's insurance program consists of property and casualty insurance (**Exhibit 3-2**), group health care, employee benefit plans and workers' compensation insurance. According to the district's administration office, RISD's contribution for unemployment compensation coverage for the period of October 1, 2000, through 2001 was \$1,851.00. The program administrator is currently the Texas Association of School Boards. The contribution was calculated using a rate of .001091 for calendar-year wages of \$1,697,315.

Exhibit 3-2
RISD Property Casualty Coverage as of August 31, 2000

Company	Type Coverage	Policy Limits	Deductible Amount	Policy Period	Premium Costs
National American Insurance Company	Building and contents	\$4,420,125	\$1,000	8-15-00 to 8-15-01	\$14,446

National American Insurance Company	General Liability	\$1,000,000	None	3-01-00 to 3-01-01	\$7,059
Hanover Insurance Company	Errors and Omissions	\$1,000,000	\$5,000	8-15-00 to 8-15-2001	\$3,971
Texas Farm Bureau	Auto Fleet	\$100,000 - \$300,000	\$25 / \$500	3-01-00 to 3-01-01	\$3,286
National American Insurance Company	Student Accident	\$5,000,000	\$25,000	09-01-00 to 08-31-01	\$5,494

Source: RISD Administration Office.

Cash and Investment Management

For a school district to achieve its instructional goals and objectives, cash and investments must be managed daily. Effective cash and investment management involves establishing and maintaining beneficial banking relationships; forecasting cash requirements timely and accurately, so that funds are available when needed; and maximizing returns on assets deposited in appropriate, approved and safe investment vehicles.

The RISD board designated the superintendent as the investment officer for the district. As the chief financial agent for the district, the superintendent also has day-to-day responsibility for managing the district's cash and investments and reports to the board.

The district has an agreement with Falls City National Bank (FCNB) to advise and process investments for the district. The district does not use an external investment advisor other than FCNB and has a history of keeping district funds in the community. The district seeks proposals annually from area banking institutions for depository services. According to the FCNB branch manager, the bank is not prepared to offer special service accounts without reducing interest rates on investments. Currently the district has requested a "NOW" checking account, which offers cash-on-demand.

The district generates cash from three general sources: local, state and federal revenues. Property taxes represent a minor source of cash for the district and are generated through tax assessments on local property

values. During 1999-2000, cash generated from property taxes was 20 percent of cash receipts; revenues from state sources were 72 percent, and 8 percent was from federal and other sources. Property tax collections peak in December, and most state revenues are received in October. Federal Title I and State Compensatory Education (SCE) funds are provided to schools based on the number of students eligible for free and reduced price lunches.

The district maintains five bank accounts for normal operations. Campus and student-activity-fund checking accounts are deposited into a separate account. These funds support campus-based activities such as booster clubs and student government and are maintained at the campus level.

Exhibit 3-3 summarizes funds held in checking accounts at FCNB as of March 31, 2001 and describes each account's purpose.

**Exhibit 3-3
RISD Checking Accounts
As of March 31, 2001**

Account Name	Balance at March 31, 2001	Purpose of Account
Operating Fund	\$9,164	Controlled disbursement account
Payroll	\$14,421	Clearing account
Special Revenue	\$123,645	Controlled disbursement account
Imprest Fund	\$0	Petty Cash Account
Lunch	\$29,975	Controlled disbursement account
Total	\$177,205	
Average Quarterly Balance	\$381,589	

Source: RISD Administration Office and TSPR calculation based on July 1999 through March 2001 balances from RISD Financial Report and bank statements.

As of January 2001, the date of the most recent quarterly investment report, the district had funds with a book value of approximately \$2 million in CDs, a money market account and in the general bank accounts. **Exhibit 3-4** provides a description of the types of investment instruments that are permitted in the district's policy.

Exhibit 3-4
Description of Investments

Type of Investment	Description
Direct Obligations of the U.S. government	Direct obligations of the U.S. government, or its agencies with no stated maximum maturity from the date of purchase. The total portfolio may contain an unlimited percentage of this type security.
Other U.S. Obligations	Other obligations, the principal and interest on which are guaranteed or insured by the full faith and credit of the United States. The total portfolio may contain an unlimited percentage of this type security.
Certificates of Deposit	Fully collateralized, non-negotiable certificates of deposit issued by a bank doing business in Texas. The total portfolio may contain an unlimited percentage of this type security.
Bankers' Acceptances	Prime domestic bankers; acceptances with a maximum maturity not to exceed 270 days. The total portfolio may contain an unlimited percentage of this type security.
Commercial Paper	Commercial paper that is rated, at time of purchase, not less than A1/P1 by at least two nationally recognized credit rating agencies, and with a maximum maturity not to exceed 270 days. The total portfolio may contain an unlimited percentage of this type security.
Repurchase Agreements (Repos)	Agreement between two parties whereby one sells the other a security at a specified price with a commitment to repurchase it at a later date for another specified price. These agreements have a defined termination date.
Constant Dollar Government Investment Pools	As described in Sec. 2256.016, through 2256.019 of the Public Funds Investment Act.
No Load Mutual Funds	As described in Sec. 2256.014, use of this instrument shall be limited to a "sweep account" in conjunction with the district's checking account(s) with its depository bank. The dollar-weighted average stated maturity must be 90 days or less.

Source: RISD Administration Office.

FINDING

The district does not have a formal investment strategy for district funds. The district has an investment policy, but does not have a written strategy for the use of investment vehicles. District investments are deposited in money market accounts and certificates of deposits through the Falls City National Bank (FCNB). Board policy on investments, CDA (Legal) section, states that the superintendent or other person designated by board resolution shall serve as investment officer of the district, shall recommend appropriate legally authorized and adequately secured investments, and shall invest district funds as directed by the board and in accordance with the district's written investment policy and generally accepted accounting principles. The policy further states, under the Safety and Investment Management section, "The main goal of the investment program is to ensure its safety, as well as maximize financial returns within current market conditions in accordance with this policy."

In January 2001, the district was paid an average interest rate of 2.53 percent on some funds deposited in the checking accounts. This rate is significantly lower than current "sweep" accounts, which are paying upwards of 6.2 percent. A sweep account is a zero-balance local funds account that authorizes the bank to make overnight investments in higher paying certificates of deposit whenever the account balance is unobligated. Although the district attempts to minimize the funds deposited in checking accounts, earning a higher rate of interest on idle funds will provide the district increased interest earnings.

In 1999-2000, RISD had a fund balance of \$1,537,412 on a budget of \$2,478,829, or 62.0 percent. This represents a significant level of funds available for diverse investments. Comal ISD reviewed and revised the investment strategy to include investments with higher yields. The investment policy authorizes nine investment instruments, including U.S. government obligations; insured certificates of deposit; fully collateralized repurchase agreements; banker's acceptances; commercial paper; no-load money market mutual funds; certain no-load mutual funds invested in U.S. government obligations; public funds investment pools; and certain collateralized mortgage obligations issued directly by a U.S. federal agency. The district also started investing some funds in commercial paper for the higher yield it offers. For safety and diversification purposes, the district invests in mutual funds, agencies, investment pools and commercial paper.

Exhibit 3-5 summarizes the district investment portfolio for the year ended 1999-2000. Because the district prefers a quick access cash-on-demand checking account, the Money Market savings account earns a lower interest rate.

Exhibit 3-5
RISD Investment Portfolio as of March 2001

Description	Amount Invested	Percent of Portfolio	Interest Rate	Quarterly 2001 Yield
CD	\$1,700,000	94%	5.41%	5.41%
Money Market Savings	\$74,793	6%	2.53%	4.82%
Total	\$1,774,793	100%		5.16%

Source: RISD Administration Office.

Exhibit 3-6 compares sample rates for various securities for March 2001.

Exhibit 3-6
Sample Investment Rates

Type of Security	March 2001 Rate
TexPool	5.55%
LoneStar Liquidity Plus	5.55%
LOGIC	5.45%
90-day Agency	5.46%
90 day Commercial Paper	5.25%

Source: Kenedy ISD Business Office.

As of March 2001, the largest portion of the district's investment portfolio was invested in a single bank CD. Determining the proper investment mix in the district's portfolio can be time consuming for a small district with limited personnel. Some districts have found that investment pools are an easy way to achieve higher yields without the need for daily monitoring and more active trading of securities. RISD is not participating in any investment pools or overnight repurchase agreements, and is consequently, losing potential revenue.

Recommendation 14:

Achieve market rate investment earnings by using investment pools or overnight repurchase agreements.

The superintendent should review the proper use of investment vehicles permitted under the Public Funds Act, U.S. Government Code Section 2256.013 with the depository bank and the board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent consults with Falls City National Bank (FCNB) and the board to determine the most appropriate investment strategy to maximize earnings.	November 2001
2.	The superintendent presents the revised investment strategy to the board of trustees for approval.	December 2001
3.	The superintendent works with FCNB on a depository agreements and implement the approved investment portfolio benchmarks.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

If the funds on deposit in checking accounts, based on the average quarterly balance, were invested at rate of 5.2 percent, instead of 2.53 percent paid as of March 2001, the district could realize an additional \$10,188 annually (**Exhibit 3-7**).

**Exhibit 3-7
Annual Funds Generated from Increased Investment Earnings
On Overnight Investment of Daily Bank Cash Balanced**

AVERAGE QUARTERLY BALANCE AVAILABLE FOR INVESTMENT	CURRENT		ESTIMATE OVERNIGHT		ESTIMATED INCREASED EARNINGS
	ACCOUNT RATE	EARNINGS ESTIMATE	INTEREST RATE	INTEREST EARNINGS	
\$381,589	2.53%	\$9,654	5.20%	\$19,842	\$10,188

Source: IBM Calculation.

The first-year savings does not reflect the investment of idle bank funds in higher-yielding investment vehicles until January 2, 2002 with the renewal the of depository agreement.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Achieve market rate investment earnings by using investment pools or overnight repurchasing agreements.	\$5,094	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$10,188	\$10,188

Employee Benefits

RISD's benefits are controlled through the superintendent's office under the supervision of the secretary who reports to the superintendent. The superintendent's secretary helps the superintendent evaluate employee benefit plans and monitor costs. The superintendent's secretary performs the day-to-day activities of the benefits administration, which are:

- Assists employees who walk in with benefit questions;
- Processes benefit enrollment, changes and cancellation forms;
- Conducts benefits orientation for new employees;
- Processes retired employee benefits such as retiree life insurance;
- Coordinates employee benefit deductions;
- Acts as liaison among employees, providers and insurance companies;
- Reviews and edits payroll reports to prepare payment to insurance companies;
- Processes special insurance benefits for employees on Family Medical Leave Act;
- Processes Teacher Retirement System of Texas forms;
- Meets with insurance companies to review open enrollment materials; and
- Provides Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) administration.

RISD is not self-funded for insurance programs. The district pays the provider \$172 per employee each month for health insurance and pays each employee an additional \$3.75 per month toward the purchase of life insurance. The employee is responsible for any additional insurance coverage, including additional family members. Employees who want to purchase additional insurance with their own resources may do so through an Employee Benefits Specialist from San Antonio. **Exhibit 3-8** summarizes the features of RISD's current group health plan.

**Exhibit 3-8
RISD Summary of Health Benefits**

	In-Network	Out-of-Network
Calendar Year Deductible		
• Individual	\$500	\$500
• Family	\$1,500	\$1,500
Annual Out-of-Pocket Maximum		
• Individual	\$1,000	\$2,000 per person
• Family	\$3,000	
Coinsurance	Yes	No
Precertification	Yes	Yes
Lifetime Maximum	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Pre-existing Condition Limitation	Yes, 12 months	Yes, 12 months
Physician Services	\$15 copay	70% after calendar year deductible.
Office Visits	\$15 copay	70% after calendar year deductible.
Primary Care	\$15 copay	70% after calendar year deductible.
Specialist	100% after \$15 copay	70% after calendar year deductible.
Preventative Care	\$15 copay	70% after calendar year deductible.
Maternity	80% after calendar year deductible	70% after calendar year deductible.
	100% after \$15 copay	
Mental Health		70% after calendar year deductible.
	80% after \$15 copay	
Specialists and Consultants		70% after calendar year deductible.

	In-Network	Out-of-Network
Hospital Services	80% after deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Inpatient	80% after deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Outpatient	80% after deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Emergency Room	80% after \$50 copay	60% after calendar year deductible
Mental Health	80% after calendar year deductible	60% after calendar year deductible
Substance Abuse	Same as mental health care	Same as mental health care
Diagnostic X-Ray and Lab	100% after \$15 copay	70% after calendar year deductible
Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy	100%	70%
TMJ Services Office Visits	Not covered	Not covered
Home Health Care	\$10,000 per year	\$10,000 per year
Family Planning	Not covered	Not covered
Infertility Services	Not covered	Not covered
Prescription Drugs	\$30 copay for non-preferred drugs; \$15 for preferred brand named drugs; \$10 generic drugs	80% of negotiated rate.

Source: RISD Administration Office.

Exhibit 3-9 summarizes the RISD dental insurance program. The RISD dental program is administered by Central United Life Insurance Company.

Exhibit 3-9
Summary of RISD Dental Insurance Coverage

Category	Payroll Deduction Per Month
Employee Only	\$21.60
Employee and Spouse	\$43.20
Employee and Children	\$47.40
Employee and Family	\$61.80

Source: RISD Administration Office.

FINDING

The 77th Texas Legislative, meeting during Spring 2001, established a statewide school employee health insurance plan for teachers and other employees of school districts. Coverages for smaller district employees will begin in Fall 2002. Coverage would be expanded to larger districts as early as 2003. The Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) will be administering the plan, and as written, districts with 500 employees or less, or more than 80 percent of the school districts in Texas, are required to participate in the plan. Districts with between 501-1,000 employees may join the plan within three years or continue in the local insurance plan. These districts must inform TRS of their desire to participate by September 1, 2001. Districts with more than 1,000 employees may join within three years or no later than 2005, as determined by TRS.

There are some special provisions to the plan that deal with risk pools and self-insurance programs.

Risk pools: If a risk pool was in existence on January 1, 2001, the districts with under 501 employees within the pool may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Self-Insured: Districts with under 501 employees that were individually self-insured on or before January 1, 2001, and have continued a self-insured program since, may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Furthermore the bill provides that districts that are parties to a health insurance contract in effect on September 1, 2002 are not required to participate until the expiration of the contract period.

All full-time employees and those part-time employees who are members of TRS are automatically covered by the basic state plan, which is

considered catastrophic coverage. Receiving higher levels of coverage will require additional district and employee contributions. To assist with these costs, the state will send each district \$75 per month, per covered employee and will give each employee an additional \$1,000 annually (\$83 a month) to pay for additional employee coverage, dependent coverage, compensation or any combination of the above. Part-time employees who are not TRS members may participate if they or the district pays the full cost.

Districts are required to make a minimum contribution of \$150 per employee per month. If they are not currently making that effort, over the next six years the state will help them pay that local district share. The state will phase out this hold harmless aid over the next six years. Districts reaching the Maintenance and Operations tax cap of \$1.50 will also be held harmless for any tax effort over \$1.50 required to reach their minimum district effort of \$1.50 a month.

All of the details of the plan have not been thoroughly defined in legislation and will be subject to contract negotiations with health insurance providers as well as rules and guidelines set by TRS. TRS expects to have more details during Summer 2001, so that districts with between 501-1,000 employees can make a decision regarding participation before the September 1, 2001 deadline for declaring their intent to participate. Consequently, within the next year more than 80 percent of the districts in the state will be examining the options and making plans to transition to the new plan.

Because the Legislature was concerned about the affect that the termination or bidding of insurance contracts during this final year of coverage would have on a district's ability to obtain competitive bids for health insurance, the state has exempted these smaller school districts from the competitive bid requirements for health insurance coverages for the coming year. This provision does not impact districts with more than 1,000 employees.

RISD has not reviewed the third-party administrator (TPA) contract since 1998 and has experienced difficulties in obtaining cost-effective health care coverage for its employees. In July 2000, RISD signed a contract with BlueCross BlueShield of Texas for healthcare coverage. Benefits are basic, with few doctors in the participating plan. The district has contracted with an Employee Benefits Specialist from San Antonio to provide employee options for dental, life, disability and cancer insurance and 403(b) plans in which employees may participate.

The district monthly contributes \$172 toward each employee for the purchase of health insurance, and \$3.75 towards life insurance.

Employees, if they choose to purchase a policy, must contribute the balance of the monthly fee. The additional cost for basic life insurance is \$0.14 per \$1,000 for the monthly premium of \$4.40. The current cost for family health coverage is \$351, with the employee share being \$183 per month. If an employee does not choose the health care coverage, the employee is given \$30 by the district to purchase other plan benefits.

During employee focus groups and interviews, employees expressed their concern over rising costs, tight coverage limits and limited choices in the health plan. Based on the number of employees, RISD falls in the category of school districts that will be required to participate in the statewide school employee health plan beginning in Fall 2002. Since the district's current coverage provided by Humana Health Insurance Company expired in July 2001 and the statewide program does not become effective until 2002, it will be necessary for the district to secure coverage for the district for the 2001-02 school year.

Recommendation 15:

Establish a committee of staff and administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes a committee of representative teachers and other employees to research the options and develop a bid specification package for third party benefit-administration services.	September 2001
2.	The committee and begins to gather information from TRS, Region 20 and the state on the program.	October 2001
3.	The committee examines the information and prepares a plan of action to be presented to the board.	November - January 2002
4.	The superintendent and committee present the plan to the board for review and approval.	February 2002
5.	Upon approval, the committee communicates the plan to all members of the staff.	March 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. Financial Organization and Budgeting

Financial management in school districts involves effective planning, budgeting, managing and maximizing resources. A district's ability to perform these tasks affects its relationships with its employees, vendors, funding agencies and the local community. Financial management is most effective when a district allocates and spends its resources using a system of established priorities; when internal controls are in place and operate as intended; when financial information is provided in a timely way and in useful formats; and when staff resources and technology are leveraged to achieve the best results.

School districts must maintain and operate effective financial-management systems in a highly regulated environment. They must meet financial-management requirements established by federal and state laws, rules and regulations. The TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) outlines accounting and reporting requirements for Texas school districts. Internally developed policies and procedures, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and Governmental Accounting Standards Board guidelines also affect school districts' financial management activities.

RISD's expenditure budget for 2000-01 is \$2,588,417, while budgeted revenues were \$2,588,421 and are generated from local, state, federal and other sources such as investment income. **Exhibit 3-10** presents a summary of RISD's 2000-01 total expenditures by function.

Exhibit 3-10
Runge ISD and State Budgeted Expenditures by Function
as a Percent of Total Expenditures
2000-01

Function (Code)	RISD 2000-01	Percent of Total	State 2000-01	Percent of Total
Instruction (11,95)	\$1,425,541	55.1%	\$13,871,475,883	51.3%
Instruction related services (12,13)	\$24,929	1.0%	\$711,993,126	2.6%
Instructional leadership (21)	\$0	0.0%	\$327,217,968	1.2%
School leadership (23)	\$171,716	6.6%	\$1,413,048,962	5.2%
Support services-student (31,32,33)	\$115,499	4.5%	\$1,080,558,025	4.0%
Student transportation (34)	\$24,803	1.0%	\$676,770,906	2.5%
Food services (35)	\$125,248	4.8%	\$1,315,831,789	4.9%
Co-curricular/extracurricular Activities (36)	\$112,001	4.3%	\$601,620,200	2.2%
Central administration (41,92)	\$198,413	7.7%	\$946,025,510	3.5%

Plant maintenance and operations (51)	\$233,696	9.0%	\$2,598,036,618	9.6%
Security and monitoring services (52)	\$0	0.0%	\$153,117,054	0.6%
Data processing services (53)	\$0	0.0%	\$298,526,325	1.1%
Other*	\$156,571	6.0%	\$3,061,791,569	11.3%
Total Budgeted Expenditures	\$2,588,417	100%	\$27,056,013,935	100%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-2001.

Exhibit 3-11 shows how RISD's budgeted funds were distributed in 2000-01 compared to peer districts and the state average for the instruction category. The chart ranks the districts and state average based on the percent of expenditures on instruction. RISD ranks in the upper half for spending on instruction among peers and is above the state average.

Exhibit 3-11
RISD, Peer Group and State Budgeted Expenditures for Instruction Function
as a Percent of Total Expenditures
2000-01

Entity	Total Instruction Expenditures	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Percent Spent on Instruction
Loraine	\$806,564	\$1,287,981	62.6%
Hart	\$1,825,374	\$3,127,244	58.4%
Runge	\$1,425,541	\$2,588,417	55.1%
Lorenzo	\$1,718,081	\$3,178,273	54.1%
New Summerfield	\$1,549,049	\$2,924,868	53.0%
Balmorhea	\$1,100,130	\$2,171,906	50.7%
State	\$13,871,475,883	\$27,056,013,935	51.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-01.

District expenditures per student increased 1.6 percent from 1997-98 to 2000-01 (**Exhibit 3-12**).

Instruction and instructional leadership spending increased 6.4 percent and school leadership increased 18.7 percent.

Exhibit 3-12
RISD Expenditures Per Student
1997-99 through 2000-01

Expenditure Category	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 through 2000-01
Instruction and Instructional leadership	\$3,975	\$3,879	\$4,645	\$4,230	6.4%
School leadership	\$438	\$461	\$504	\$520	18.7%
Central administration	\$519	\$544	\$570	\$1,112	114.3%
Other operating	\$1,729	\$1,841	\$1,801	\$601	(65.2%)
Total operations	\$6,661	\$6,725	\$7,520	\$6,463	(2.8%)
Total non-operations	\$973	\$688	\$528	\$1,291	32.7%
Total per student	\$7,634	\$7,413	\$8,048	\$7,544	1.6%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1997-98 through 2000-01.

Nearly 15.6 percent of RISD's property value is for business, compared to 59.3 percent average for other districts in Region 3 and 40.6 percent for the state. RISD also has less residential property value than the state and regional averages. **Exhibit 3-13** presents a summary of property values by category.

Exhibit 3-13
RISD and Peer Group and Regional and State Average Property Values
by Category as a Percent of Total Property Value
1999-2000

Entity	Business	Residential	Land	Oil and Gas	Other
Balmorhea	40.8%	10.5%	24.2%	23.3%	1.2%
Hart	20.2%	15.6%	63.8%	0.0%	0.4%
Loraine	29.4%	14.5%	53.5%	1.5%	1.1%
Lorenzo	17.2%	21.5%	49.0%	12.0%	0.3%
New Summerfield	30.9%	20.2%	48.1%	0.0%	0.8%
Runge	15.6%	18.0%	27.6%	37.3%	1.5%
Region 3	59.3%	21.7%	12.0%	6.5%	0.5%
State	40.6%	48.7%	7.3%	2.8%	0.6%

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1999-2000.

*Numbers may not total 100 due to rounding.

In 2000-01, RISD, 18.9 percent of district revenue came from property tax, and 72 percent came from the state. **Exhibit 3-14** compares the sources of budgeted revenue with peer districts.

**Exhibit 3-14
RISD and Peer Group
Sources of Budgeted Revenue
2000-01**

Entity	Local Property Tax	Other Local And Intermediate	State	Federal	Total
Balmorhea	\$269,548	\$55,700	\$1,686,583	\$65,000	\$2,076,831
Hart	\$743,782	\$152,450	\$1,885,948	\$149,477	\$2,931,657
Loraine	\$316,890	\$47,200	\$897,449	\$58,040	\$1,319,579
Lorenzo	\$918,838	\$112,290	\$2,160,001	\$138,000	\$3,329,129
New Summerfield	\$361,393	\$92,150	\$2,330,362	\$166,000	\$2,949,905
Runge	\$483,000	\$111,100	\$1,888,917	\$65,404	\$2,548,421

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2000-2001.

The local property tax rate has not changed from 1997-98 to 2000-01, while enrollment has increased 2.8 percent. Local property values decreased 18.21 percent over the same period and the district reports that the majority of community members are single parent homes with many on fixed incomes.

Exhibit 3-15 outlines the maintenance and operations tax rates, interest and sinking fund tax rates, total tax rates, total property values, total students and the dollar value per student.

**Exhibit 3-15
RISD Tax Rates
1997-98 through 2000-01**

Description	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Maintenance and operations tax rate	\$1.427	\$1.427	\$1.450	\$1.427	0
Interest and Sinking fund tax rate	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000	0

Total tax rate	\$1.427	\$1.427	\$1.450	\$1.427	0
Total Property Value (000's)	\$42,042,646	\$33,857,130	\$32,687,028	\$34,388,409	(18.21%)
Total Students	321	324	308	330	2.8%
Value per student	\$130,974	\$104,497	\$106,127	\$104,207	(20.44%)

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1997-98 through 2000-01.

For 1999-2000, RISD had a \$106,127 property value per student while having a tax rate higher than regional averages but lower than the state average (**Exhibit 3-16**).

Exhibit 3-16
RISD Tax Rate and Property Value per Student
Compared to Peer Group and Regional and State Averages
1999-2000

Entity	Tax Rate	Value per Student
Balmorhea	\$1.500	\$80,943
Hart	\$1.261	\$134,560
Lorraine	\$1.383	\$138,599
Lorenzo	\$1.387	\$158,465
New Summerfield	\$1.450	\$61,224
Runge	\$1.427	\$106,127
Region 3	\$1.370	\$254,323
State	\$1.490	\$182,154

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-17 presents a four-year summary of district revenues. As illustrated, total revenues for the district decreased from \$2,526,808 to \$2,493,557 or 1.7 percent between 1997-98 and 2000-01. During this same period, local revenues decreased from \$608,000 to \$483,000, or 19.3 percent, federal revenues decreased from \$98,126 to \$ 10,540, or 89.3 percent. At the same time, state revenues increased from \$1,730,132 to \$1,888,917 or nearly an increase of 9.2 percent.

Exhibit 3-17
RISD Budgeted Revenues by Source
1997-98 through 2000-01

Revenue Source	1997-98 Revenues	Percent of all Revenues	1998-99 Revenues	Percent of all Revenues	1999-2000 Revenues	Percent of all Revenues	2000-01 Revenues	Percent of all Revenues	Percent Change 1997-98 through 2000-01
Local	\$608,000	24.0%	\$505,200	25.2%	\$487,200	19.6%	\$483,000	19.3%	(20.6%)
State	\$1,730,132	68.5%	\$1,276,530	63.6%	\$1,788,531	72.0%	\$1,888,917	75.8%	9.2%
Federal	\$98,126	3.9%	\$104,315	5.2%	\$99,200	4.0%	\$10,540	0.4%	(89.3%)
Other local and Intermediate	\$90,550	3.6%	\$119,600	6.0%	\$107,900	4.4%	\$111,100	4.5%	22.7%
Total	\$2,526,808	100.0%	\$2,005,645	100.0%	\$2,482,831	100.0%	\$2,493,557	100%	(1.3%)

Source: TEA, (AEIS); RISD 2000-2001 Budget document.

Exhibit 3-18 outlines budgeted revenues generated per student during 2000-01 for RISD and peer districts.

Exhibit 3-18
RISD and Peer Districts Budgeted 2000-01 Revenues per Student

District	2000-01 Revenues per Student
Balmorhea	\$9,069
Hart	\$7,797
Loraine	\$7,628
Lorenzo	\$8,281
New Summerfield	\$8,126
Runge	\$7,844
Peer Average	\$8,124

Source: AEIS, TEA, PEIMS 2000-2001.

Organization and Management

The position of the school district business manager has evolved into a profession that is separate and distinct from that of the superintendent or principal. As a result, superintendents and principals in small school districts, who have been involved in school district operations, are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the rapidly changing requirements.

In addition, small school districts are unable to match the salaries of large school districts for highly trained and experienced business office personnel. Thus, these districts have more problems adjusting to changes in school finance and budgeting laws and in maintaining efficient business operations.

There are increasing reports of mistakes made by small district personnel that cause the district extreme hardships. A simple PEIMS reporting mistake can impact a district's funding for a number of years.

All school districts are required to perform an array of business services. In some manner the business services listed in **Exhibit 3-19** must be performed by all school districts.

**Exhibit 3-19
Business Services Performed in Most School Districts**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation of Financial Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investment of School District Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invoice Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash Flow Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bank Reconciliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food Service Accounting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fixed Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PEIMS Reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Payroll Processing and Benefits Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sate Aid Calculations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Enrollment Projections
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Activity Fund Accounting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personnel Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long Rang Budgeting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and Supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Assessing/Collecting
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Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

How well districts are able to accomplish these complicated tasks depends on the knowledge and expertise of the personnel that districts are having increasing difficulty hiring. RISD contracts with Region 3 on an annual basis to provide basic bookkeeping services and to manage the accounting software that produces the district's financial reports. The accounting and purchasing responsibilities are outlined in the Letter of Agreement between the district and Region 3 for the period of August 2000 through July 2001. RISD will pay Region 3 a total of \$14,195 during 2000-01 for the service agreement. A summary of the responsibilities of each party are listed below (**Exhibit 3-20**).

Exhibit 3-20
Letter of Agreement Components
RISD and Region 3
August 2000 through July 2001

REGION 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review accounts payable and payroll documentation for obvious coding errors. • Prepare accounts payable and payroll checks. • Post financial information to districts general ledger budgeted funds. • Prepare Internal Revenue Service form 1099 for unincorporated businesses as required. • Provide district with various monthly financial status reports.
RUNGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accounts payable information in Region 3 approved format and in accordance with the Administrative Services Procedures Manual. • Deliver accounts payable information to Region 3 a minimum of five full business days prior to the date to be returned to the district. • Accurately reflect expenditure codes and vendor numbers on input documentation. • Provide written documentation to support district's requests for payment. • Provide check stock in Region 3 approved format.

Source: Region 3 Letter of Agreement.

FINDING

Each of the four districts in Karnes County are uniquely challenged to provide the wide array of business services required of school districts in Texas.

In RISD, the superintendent has ultimate responsibility for many of the financial aspects of the districts operations. RISD is a small district with limited staff. The superintendent has a full-time secretary and a part-time assistant who helps handle all business-related functions. The superintendent is designated the chief financial officer of the district. Although they contract out for the accounting services, the superintendent is still responsible for overseeing the operation as it relates to fiscal matters. The superintendent prepares budget documents, reviews financial reports, approves purchases, and manages the district finances. The secretary prepares all accounting codes and payroll codes.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-21**, RISD is using a number of approaches to accomplish the financial and business related tasks of the district.

**Exhibit 3-21
Business and Financial Tasks in RISD**

Task	Performed by Region 3	Performed In-House by the Position Shown	Contracted Service with Entity Shown	Not Performed in RISD
Accounting	X			
Purchasing		Superintendent		
Invoice Processing	X			
Bank Reconciliations	X			
Fixed Asset Management				
Purchasing	X			
Payroll Processing and Benefits Reporting	X			
Grant Reporting				
Budgeting				
Personnel Reporting				
Managing and Supervision		Superintendent		
Preparation of Financial Reports	X			
Investment of School District Funds			Falls City National Bank	
Cash Flow Analysis				X
Food Service Accounting		Food Service Director		
PEIMS Reporting		PEIMS Clerk (Elementary Secretary)		

Board Reporting				
Sate Aid Calculations	X			
Student Enrollment Projections				
Student Activity Fund Accounting		Campus Staff		
Long Range Budgeting				
Tax Assessing/Collecting			Karnes County Tax Assessor Collector	

Source: RISDSuperintendent.

In June 1999, Regional Education Service Center XI (Region 11) in Fort Worth submitted a proposal to TEA for "Improving Texas School District Financial Management." One component of the proposal was the development of a model business support services cooperative to help smaller school districts and charter school to perform any and all business functions. As part of this effort, Region 10 researched the use of cooperative financial services in and outside of Texas.

After reviewing and analyzing the various models from various states, Region 10 found six workable models for providing business services in small school districts and charter schools in Texas, which are summarized below:

Model I - Business Services Provided by School Districts or Charter Schools

- School districts or charters maintain their own business services departments.
- The Regional Education Service Center (RESC) in the area perform business services as needed using RESC staff, retirees or other contracted groups or individuals.

Model II - Business Services Provided by Each RESC

- School Districts or Charter Schools contract with the RESC to perform all business services.
- Business services provided by the RESC are full time, part time, interim, or "as needed."
- RESC staff, qualified retirees, or the use of an incubator to directly train school district employees performs business services.

Model III-Business Services Provided on a Multi-Regional Basis

- School Districts or Charter Schools contract with the RESC to perform business services.
- This model assumes that four "Mega-RESC's" will be appropriately staffed to fully perform all business services.
- Each multi-regional RESC will provide services to four other RESCs. These smaller RESCs may also provide some business services or may provide interface services for school districts or charter schools in their regions.

- Business services provided by the RESC are full time, part time, interim or "as needed."
- The RESC staff, qualified retirees, or the use of an incubator to directly train school district employees performs business services.
- This model tracks the original Multi-Regional Processing Centers that provided data processing services in the early 70s.

Model IV-Business Services Provided by Shared Personnel

- School districts or charter schools co-op business services between and/or among each other.
- These districts or school approve an inter-local governmental agreement, which specifies the responsibilities of the cooperative and the responsibilities of each of the school districts with the cooperative.
- The RESC can provide technical assistance to the cooperative including development of the agreement, housing and incubator and hosting and assisting with the cooperative board meeting.
- A fiscal agent would be appointed (this could be one of the member school districts or the RESC), and the cooperatives employees would become employees of the fiscal agent.
- The incubator could be provided by the RESC or by the cooperative.

Model V-Business Services Provided by Shared Personnel (Minimum Enrollment Required by the State)

- School Districts or Charter Schools co-op business services between and/or among each other in order to reach the minimum enrollment required by the state.
- The RESC could provide technical assistance, incubator training, or perform fiscal agent duties.
- This model is the same as Model IV; however, it requires a certain minimum aggregate enrollment for the participating school districts or charter schools.

Model VI-Privatized Business Services

- School districts or charter schools purchase business services from a private company.
- The RESC could provide technical assistance and/or incubator services in order to train school district employees.

Clearly the scenarios can be "mixed and matched" in any combination or format desirable to school districts, charter schools and services centers. The use of these models, in conjunction with business services provided by RESCs throughout the state, could be a viable and option for school districts and charter schools to procure professional business services in a cost-efficient manner.

Recommendation 16:

Form a committee of superintendents, Region 3 representatives and representatives from the Texas Education Agency to explore the opportunities for shared financial services.

While this recommendation is directed toward districts in Karnes County, other neighboring districts that could benefit from a shared services arrangement should also be invited to participate. Further, districts may find that they will benefit from some combination of scenarios and may wish to break off

to work in smaller groups of two or three districts, rather than in a larger cooperative. All of these options should be thoroughly explored to ensure that the best interests of the districts are fully understood and protected.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 3 to set up a superintendent meeting with any interested districts in the Region, RESC staff and staff from TEA.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent attends the meeting and discusses a plan to fully explore the various options for cooperative financial services within the Region.	October 2001
3.	The committee researches all of the options, with each superintendent regularly providing information and input about their respective district's operations, needs and board concerns.	November 2001 - March 2002
4.	The superintendent shares the various options with the board for final consideration and review.	April 2002
5.	The board reviews the options and determines the best course of action for the district in the coming year, approving any needed budget or staffing adjustments for the coming year.	May - June 2002
6.	The superintendent works with fellow superintendents and regional staff to implement the plan.	Summer 2002
7.	The district implements the new approach and closely monitors the districts participation to ensure the success of the plan.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district has not established a plan to deal with the new financial reporting requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). In June 1999, GASB issued the most comprehensive governmental accounting rule ever developed. GASB Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 34 will significantly change the way Texas school districts and other state and local governments report their finances to the public.

All school districts are required to implement the new requirements of GASB 34 effective the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2001. Uniform implementation is necessary to collect consistent data from all districts and essential for continued support of mission critical functions of the TEA that depend upon data collected through PEIMS and annual financial reports from all schools. Under the new rule, anyone with an interest in school finance - citizens, the media, bond raters, creditors, legislators and others - will have more and easier-to-understand information about the school in question. For the first time, school financial reports will have information about the full cost of providing services to students and the

public. An additional feature of financial reports presented under the new standard is management's narrative analysis of the school's financial performance.

The new financial reporting system will give citizens a clearer picture of what a school district is doing with the taxes it collects. This includes whether current revenues are paying for current services, or if the services are the responsibility of the next generation of taxpayers. Other significant features of the new standard include calculating and recording depreciation for school facilities and equipment and disclosing the extent of net costs for all school programs that tax revenues and basic state revenues actually fund.

Assistance is available from Region 3, RISD's accounting software contractor, in dealing with the GASB 34 financial reporting change. Practice guidelines from TEA during the implementation period and assistance from industry associations, such as the Texas Association of School Business Officials, are also available to help Runge implement the new standard. Runge also contracts with RCI Technologies, Inc. for records management service and may need to expand their scope on fixed asset inventory.

Recommendation 17:

Develop a strategy to meet the GASB Statement No. 34 financial reporting guidelines and TEA's regulatory reporting requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent develops a plan with Region 3 representatives and their financial auditor for implementing the new financial reporting standard.	September 2001
2.	The external auditor presents the new standard and explains significant implementation issues.	September 2001
3.	The superintendent ensures implementation of the necessary procedures to satisfy new reporting and data maintenance requirements.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Budgeting

Texas school districts must comply with financial reporting guidelines in the TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG). The guide includes the accounting and reporting requirements of generally accepted accounting principles, federally mandated auditing and financial reporting requirements and specific TEA accounting and financial reporting requirements. A district's annual audited financial statements must include all necessary financial information and related disclosures as prescribed by FASRG.

The link between planning and budget preparation makes school district budgets unique. School district budgets are often considered the ultimate policy document since they are the financial plan a school district uses to achieve its goals and objectives. School district budgets reflect:

- Public choices about what goods and services the district will produce;
- District's priorities;
- Relative weight given to the influence of various participants and interest groups in the budget development process; and
- Methods a district used to acquire and use its resources.

The budget itself is the method for ensuring that school district administrators are accountable to the taxpayers.

The state, TEA and local school districts formulate legal requirements for school district budgets. State and federal grants also may impose additional legal requirements. District administrators and the superintendent are responsible for preparing district budget guidelines and the budget calendar. Because the guidelines and calendar create a framework for the entire budget development process, their careful design is critical to an efficient and effective process.

FINDING

The district does not document its budget process in a year-round budget calendar to identify the timetable for the budget review and adoption process. In March of each year, the superintendent works with principals to begin planning the next year's budget. The principals are responsible for obtaining input from the teachers and reviewing this information with the superintendent. In May, the superintendent and staff analyze the budget and categorize budget requests into three categories: normal, special and large capital. Throughout the summer, discussions occur with the board, and in August the preliminary budget is prepared and approved.

A budget calendar is useful to board members, administrators and teachers. Many districts establish a formal budget calendar to identify key points in the process and an overall timetable through board approval of the budget. Such a calendar is an important planning tool because it establishes specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines for all committees and campus-level staff. It shows the steps needed to develop and adopt the budget within the time established by law. Important dates can be missed without a budget calendar and tasks can be overlooked or performed out of sequence.

A good budget calendar includes dates of workshops, public meetings or hearings, and board meetings. It also identifies positions responsible for ensuring that each step takes place in accordance with the timetable. Ricardo ISD was commended for their budget process in a Texas School Performance Review report by involving all levels of administration and the board in budget development. Their budget planning begins each fall and proceeds with them establishing goals and objectives and a budget calendar.

Recommendation 18:

Develop and implement a year-round budget calendar.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent develops a budget calendar with the deliverable dates for data needed to develop the budget and including dates of all workshops, public meetings or hearings, and board meetings.	December 2000
2.	The superintendent provides the Board of Trustees with a budget calendar.	January 2001
3.	The superintendent publishes the budget calendar in the newspaper and posts it on the campus bulletin boards.	January 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

C. Purchasing

The goal of a small school district's purchasing system is to purchase the best products, materials and services at the lowest practical prices within relevant statutes and policies.

An effective purchasing system requires several essential components. One of the most important is a good organization that is staffed with well-trained people. Roles and related responsibilities must be clearly defined and be adapted to meet the unique operating environment of the organization. Although purchasing organization structures may vary, most provide similar functions. An administrative role in purchasing typically:

- approves purchase orders and service contracts, including competitive procurement specifications and tabulations;
- assists in the development and modification of purchasing policies and procedures and is responsible for the implementation of such policies and procedures;
- resolves problems encountered with purchasing;
- establishes and monitors good working relationships with vendors;
- provides for communication with vendors (for example, pre-competitive procurement conferences and competitive procurement openings) and approves vendor communication with schools and departments;
- ensures that district staff is aware of relevant purchasing statutes, regulations and board policies through either formal or informal training programs; and
- stays current on purchasing statutes, regulations and practices by attending various purchasing-related courses, seminars or workshops, and by reading current purchasing periodicals and books.

Since RISD is a small school district with limited staff, the superintendent assumes the role of purchasing agent. There is no business office; the superintendent and a secretary handle all business-related functions. The district does have a part-time clerk who handles miscellaneous office responsibilities. The superintendent is then responsible for preparing competitive procurement specifications, evaluating competitive procurement tabulations, maintaining a vendor list, and supervising the processing of purchase orders and evaluating the performance of vendors.

FINDING

RISD does not have documented purchasing policies or procedures. All purchases are run through either a purchase order system or through an imprest fund. The imprest fund, similar to a petty cash account, is a separate bank account established approximately seven years ago when the district needed to find a way to process checks for emergency situations. In school districts, situations often arise where someone has forgotten to submit a check request for a disbursement that is happening that day. For example, a teacher may forget to submit a request for a vendor who will perform for an assembly and wants to be paid before they perform. It is not uncommon for districts to establish an imprest fund for convenience. This way the district can produce a check for the employee without canceling an event or show. When the secretary receives a request, she codes the request and gives it to the superintendent for approval. The superintendent approves and writes out a check. The board eventually reviews these expenditures when the fund is replenished.

The superintendent's secretary handles purchase orders, and the superintendent handles payments made through the imprest system. The district does have a small room in the bus barn where supplies are stored; however, no inventory is maintained as all purchases are recorded as expenditures on the accounting records.

Exhibit 3-22 highlights the district's purchasing activity for the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 3-22 RISD Purchases 1999-2000

Description	Expenditures
Supplies and Materials	\$55,219
Contracted Services	\$22,984
Furniture	\$10,987
Equipment	\$19,103
Total	\$108,293

Source: RISD accounting report - BUD050PO - August 29, 2000 (actual year-to-date).

District officials complained that employees are increasing their reliance on the imprest fund because they know they can get a last minute check instead of using the normal purchase order process. Although the requests may vary from month to month and the amounts vary, the transactions in the imprest account have escalated.

Recommendation 19:

Create a policy on the use of the imprest fund and document appropriate purchasing procedures.

Every employee needs to have access to appropriate procedures and be held accountable for compliance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent drafts a policy for the imprest fund and prepares written purchasing procedures.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent presents the proposed policy to the board for approval.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent drafts a directive to staff informing them of the new policy and procedures and monitors compliance.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

SUPPORT SERVICES

This chapter of the report reviews the business services of Runge Independent School District (RISD) in the following five subsections:

- A. Facilities Use and Management
- B. Energy Management
- C. Transportation
- D. Food Service
- E. Computers and Technology

These functions are central to the district's daily operations, and must be managed efficiently and cost-effectively for the district to successfully achieve its educational objectives. The ongoing challenge for small school districts is to meet these challenges with limited resources.

Chapter 4

SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Facilities Use and Management

Facilities use and management functions are intended to ensure that district facilities are properly designed and built to enhance the educational process and meet support needs that equipment is maintained in peak operating condition; that schools provide a clean and safe working environment; that facilities comply with applicable local, state and federal building regulations; and that utility costs are minimized.

A complete facilities study includes a review of maintenance and custodial staff and services, energy conservation and planning for the needs of the future. A review should also be made of the policies and procedures of the district as they relate to school plants. District facilities are an integral part of the academic program and should be designed and maintained to enhance the educational program.

RISD staff includes one maintenance/transportation director, an elementary and high school custodian, a dishwasher/custodian in the cafeteria and one bus driver.

Facilities Planning

RISD owns and operates one educational campus serving grades Pre-Kindergarten (PK) through 12. District facilities include 28 designated classrooms, a library building, gymnasium, an agriculture shop and four portable units. Since 1997-98, the district's enrollment has increased by 16 students.

Exhibit 4-1 shows the age of facilities, square feet, student capacity of district facilities and the number of permanent and portable classrooms.

Exhibit 4-1
RISD Facilities
2000-01

Facility	Year Built	Square Footage	Number of Students	Permanent Classrooms	Portable Classrooms
High School/Middle School	1930	34,320	134	13	NA

High School Portable	1980	756	NA	NA	2
Elementary School	1965	10,764	196	15	NA
Elementary Portables (3)	1985	2,268	NA	NA	6
Library	1988	3,120			
Gym	1960	13,986			
Band Hall	1960	2,016			
Cafeteria	1960	4,437			
Shop	1998	33,510			
Bus Barn	1986	9,216			
Concession Stand	1986	864			
Total		115,257	330	28	8

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

Exhibit 4-2 shows district facilities renovations since 1995. All renovations were completed with reserve funds and the Facilities Assistance Program.

**Exhibit 4-2
RISD Facilities Renovations
1995 through 2000**

Facility	Year Built	Cost	Source
Elementary School Classroom and office addition	1995	\$ 343,000	Reserve fund balance
New Cafeteria *	1998	\$ 498,000	Facilities Assistance Program (\$425,000) and Lunchroom and district reserve funds (\$73,000)
Gymnasium dressing/restrooms	2000	\$ 584,000	District reserve funds
Total		\$1,425,000	

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

* Does not include approximately \$125,000 in furniture and equipment.

Exhibit 4-3 provides a breakdown of staff assigned to the district's facility management function.

**Exhibit 4-3
RISD Maintenance Staff
2000-01**

Position/Function	Number of Staff
Supervisor/Maintenance and Groundskeeper	1
Janitor/Groundskeeper	1
General Maintenance	1
Janitors	2
Total	5

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

FINDING

RISD lacks a planning process that examines annual facilities usage and prioritizes long-range changes needed to operate facilities efficiently. Between 1995 and 2000, the district completed major renovations and furniture and equipment purchases of \$73,000 from their fund balance, and \$425,000 from the Facilities Assistance Program. Facility repairs and upgrades are performed during the summer. The superintendent reviews submitted repair requests from teachers and principals, and conducts a facilities walkthrough with the maintenance director to prioritize repairs and required equipment.

Exhibit 4-4 is a TEA suggested facility planning process.

**Exhibit 4-4
TEA Recommended Facilities Planning Process**

Program Element	Mission	Responsibilities	Deliverables
Planning	Needs Assessment	Identify current and future needs	Demographics, enrollment projections, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis
	Scope	Outline required building areas, develop schedules and costs	Programming, cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis
	Strategy	Identify structures	Facilities project list, master schedule budget plan, organization plan, marketing plan
	Public Approval	Implement public relations campaign	Public and media relations
Approach	Management Plan	Detail roles, responsibilities, and procedures	Program management plan and systems
	Program Strategy	Review and refine details	Detailed delivery strategy
	Program Guidelines		Educational specifications, design guidelines, CAD standards

Source: TEA.

Even though using a "pay as you go" financing strategy to avoid the excessive use of bond issues and other debt that would result in tax increases, the district has no long-range facilities plan that sets priorities for capital improvement projects. A facilities master plan should be prepared to document how the district will maintain the significant investment in facilities beyond general maintenance and operations spending that enhance the value, function and safety of buildings; what upkeep and preventive maintenance will be performed and what RISD goals for future expansion if enrollment changes.

Recommendation 20:

Develop a long -range facilities master plan.

The district should establish a facilities committee, similar to the citizens committee created for a bond election, to work with the superintendent, review demographic projections and review time schedules and priorities associated with the planning for new facilities. The committee could be composed of no more than 30 members, including district administration, teachers, non-certified staff, and members of the community. This process could be led by the superintendent.

Each year the master plan should be reviewed and revised as the district priorities and needs change.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board establishes a committee and nominates citizens to participate.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent identifies RISD staff to participate on the committee.	September 2001
3.	The superintendent prepares a meeting schedule, reviews the needs assessment and demographic study with the committee and conducts a building tour.	October 2001
4.	The superintendent and the committee prepare a priority list of facilities needs and holds meetings at the school to gather feedback from parents and citizens.	November 2001
5.	The committee includes community input on recommendations and combines the priorities into a recommended five-year plan.	January 2002
6.	The superintendent provides a cost analysis of each proposal and a fiscal plan for the five years.	February 2002
7.	The superintendent reviews the plan and makes recommendations to the board for approval.	March 2002
8.	The board reviews the plan and makes recommendations before approval.	April 2002
9.	The superintendent reviews the plan annually, updates plan and cost analysis and presents recommendations to the board and superintendent.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

SUPPORT SERVICES

B. Energy Management

The goal of energy management is to keep operating costs down by reducing energy waste while providing a safe, comfortable environment for learning. Unintended outside air contributes to higher energy consumption, shorter equipment life, and occupant discomfort. Maintenance schedules need to include periodic inspections of old or broken caulking and weather-stripping, outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioner filters. Additionally, doors and windows should be checked during operation of HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems.

Reaching the goal of reducing energy waste is complicated. Districts are required to meet federal, state and local rules and regulations regarding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) facility modifications, indoor air quality, student-teacher ratios and a laundry list of local priorities that can impact a district's operating budget.

FINDING

RISD is spending 50 cents per square foot per year for utilities, a total of \$52,281. The range for school districts in their region is from 70 cents to 94 cents per square foot per year. In the American School and University Magazine's *30th Annual School Maintenance and Operations Cost Study: Dwindling Support*, the national cost for electricity, gas and other fuels ranged from 90 cents to \$1.16 per square foot of facilities, or an average of approximately \$1 per square foot.

RISD is able to operate efficiently due to converting their lighting system to an energy efficient system and using window units to cool the buildings. The district accomplished the lighting conversion from a 1996 grant from the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO). In addition, they are doing an effective job of controlling lights and air conditioning units when they are not being used.

The amount and quality of light in buildings affects student and staff health, safety, productivity and comfort. Lighting accounts for approximately 30 percent of school energy bills. By replacing the old equipment with energy-efficient equipment, new equipment costs are recovered in a few years through energy savings.

COMMENDATION

RISD has achieved lower energy costs by using grants to purchase energy efficient lighting.

FINDING

RISD has improved energy management through modernizing equipment, but the district can accomplish more involving students and the community. To have an efficient energy management program requires involving every member of the district. By keeping the program visible, a district can continue to increase savings. An effective energy management system is designed to strike a balance between comfort and energy conservation.

SECO administers a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs that can significantly reduce energy consumption in school districts. One program, the "Watt Watchers," involves starting an Energy Patrol at individual schools. The Energy Patrol consists of teachers, students, parents, and community volunteers that work together to implement energy management conservation practices such as:

- Planting trees around the building to provide shade and improve the environment;
- Checking door and window weather stripping to stop energy dollars from leaking through cracks;
- Checking outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioning filters;
- Replacing old or broken caulking and weather stripping; and
- Developing maintenance schedules for monitoring energy conservation.

Some districts call a special assembly, make posters for the halls, make reminder announcements on the public address system and write articles for the school newsletter. Without reminders to save energy, a school's occupants can fall back into old energy-wasting habits. Involving the students will have an added advantage of fostering a sense of ownership of the building. Students will be less likely to vandalize facilities if they feel pride in their buildings.

Another small district has implemented a successful school energy conservation program by developing policies and programs to promote and reward student and staff participation in energy conservation. The Spring ISD developed a rebate program that rewards each school for efficient energy use by sharing savings with any school that reduces its usage below the budgeted amount. The school that reduces its usage below the budgeted amount receives a check for 50 percent of the savings amount. Principals encourage students and staff to participate in activities

such as turning off lights and closing doors when leaving a room to retain conditioned air in the classrooms. The district has saved from 7 percent to 14 percent per year for the five years of the rebate program.

A hands-on energy education program can save up to 30 percent on a school's utility costs. The money saved is money that can be returned to the school for educational programs.

Recommendation 21:

Reinforce energy conservation by publicizing energy awareness and involve students and the community in the program.

The district should promote energy awareness at regular staff meetings and establish participation in the "Watt Watchers" and/or TEED programs, which involve students and staff directly in energy conservation activities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent's office contacts SECO for assistance with developing and implementing a "Watt Watchers" and/or TEED programs.	October 2001
2.	The campus principals and staff implement the "Watt Watchers" and/or TEED programs.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent sends monthly reports to principals.	November 2001
4.	The superintendent coordinates with the principal, maintenance and parent groups to implement low-cost or no-cost strategies like caulking and weather stripping windows and doors.	Quarterly beginning in January 2002
5.	The superintendent prepares and submits annual report to the board on energy conservation measures and results.	May 2002 and annually thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD does not have service schedules documented for HVAC (heating and cooling) equipment. Regular preventative maintenance procedures can significantly improve annual utility costs, equipment life and occupant comfort. Regular preventative maintenance includes replacing filters and

cleaning condensers and evaporators. Documented schedules also include particulars like filter sizes, contractors that may be available for certain types of services or repairs, etc.

Another way that schools can also save energy is by replacing inefficient fan and pump motors with Premium Efficiency Motors (PEM). Replacements with PEM units normally take place on a routine basis as failures occur, approximately every ten years. Motors in service for more than ten years, motors in stressful service and particular motor types may be candidates for replacement.

Recommendation 22:

Establish HVAC service and replacement schedules.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The maintenance director develops preventative maintenance schedule, using frequencies such as: filters - monthly; condensers - annually and evaporators - every 5 years.	October 2001
2.	The maintenance director examines each HVAC system and identifies systems with efficient fans or pumps and develops a cycle for replacement.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent approves service schedule.	November 2001
4.	Maintenance director initiates service schedule.	January 2002
5.	The board reviews capital improvement budgets and determines ways to fund the replacement of insufficient equipment.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

SUPPORT SERVICES

C. Transportation

The primary goal of every school district's transportation department is to transport all students to and from school and approved extracurricular functions in a timely, safe and efficient manner.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) authorizes, but does not require, each Texas school district to provide transportation between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations, for co-curricular activities and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires a school district to provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for the general student population or if disabled students require transportation to receive special education services.

The state reimburses Texas school districts for transporting regular, special education and career and technology program students. The Legislature sets state funding rules, and TEA administers the program. School districts receive funding for transporting regular education students living two or more miles from the school they attend. The state does not reimburse districts for transporting students living within the two-mile radius of the school unless hazardous walking conditions exist between the student's home and the school. For example, if a student must cross a major highway without a crossing signal, the circumstances would qualify as a hazardous condition, and the cost of transporting that student would be reimbursed by the state. A school district must use local funds to cover actual costs incurred that are more than the reimbursable state allotment.

For regular education students, the state reimburses districts for qualifying transportation expenses based on "linear density," which is the ratio of the average number of regular education students transported daily to the number of miles traveled daily for those students. TEA has defined seven linear density groups and allocates per-mile reimbursements to school districts based on the district's linear density grouping.

The 76th (1999) Texas Legislature enacted the following current transportation allotment rates (Article III [Texas Education Agency] of the General Appropriations Act): Pursuant to Section 42.155 of the TEC, the legislative appropriation for *regular* program transportation for the 1999-2000 and 2000-01 school years shall be calculated on the following basis:

- The maximum mileage rate for *special* program transportation shall be \$1.08 per mile. *Private* program transportation rates shall be \$0.25 per mile *or* a maximum of \$816 per student (for *both* regular and special needs students) as provided in sub-sections 42.155(e) and (g) of the TEC.
- The career and technology program allotment rate is the respective district's "official extracurricular travel per mile rate as set by their board of trustees and approved by the agency." This rate is interpreted to be the effective cost per mile for regular program transportation (as derived from reported total cost and mileage data for the preceding fiscal year), with no prescribed maximum allotment rate or amount set by legislative appropriation.
- The regular program allotment per rate for hazardous-area route services shall be the same as for two-or-more-mile route services, but the total annual transportation allotment for hazardous-area route services shall not exceed 10 percent (.10) of the amount for two-or-more-mile route services.

Exhibit 4-5 shows the seven categories as defined by TEA.

Exhibit 4-5
Categories of State Linear Density Reimbursement for Regular Bus
Routes
1999-2000 through 2000-01

Category	Linear Density Range	Reimbursement per Mile
1	.000-.399	\$0.68
2	.400-.649	\$0.79
3	.650-.899	\$0.88
4	.900-1.149	\$0.97
5	1.150-1.649	\$1.11
6	1.650-2.399	\$1.25
7	2.400-9.999	\$1.43

Source: TEA Transportation Services.

Reimbursable miles are the miles driven on routes with students on board; miles driven to or from the bus housing point and maintenance miles are not reimbursable. TEA evaluates these group assignments every two years by recalculating linear densities.

A school district may receive state funding to transport regular and special-program students between home and school and career and technology students to and from vocational training locations. TEA sets the funding rules. The state does not fund extracurricular transportation, such as trips to after-school and weekend events. Local funds must pay for transportation costs not covered by the state.

All special education transportation trips, except for certain field trips, are eligible for state reimbursement. The Texas Legislature capped reimbursement for special program transportation at \$1.08 per mile. RISD does not transport any special education children. The few children classified as special education are transported by Kenedy ISD as part of the Karnes County consortium for special education transportation.

The state reimburses career and technology education transportation costs based on the previous year's actual cost-per-mile for that type of transportation.

RISD has two daily bus routes, each traveling in opposite directions providing transportation services for children who have no other way to get to and from school. The north route travels 61.6 miles per day, and the south route travels 51.8 miles per day.

Exhibit 4-6 details the transportation program of RISD compared to the peer districts.

Exhibit 4-6
RISD and Peer Districts, Staffing Comparisons
2000-01

District	Professional	Clerical/Technical	Auxiliary
Runge	None	None	2 bus drivers
Balmorhea	None	1 Mechanic	3 bus drivers
Lorenzo	None	1 Coordinator 1 Secretary	8 bus drivers
Hart	None	None	3 bus drivers
New Summerfield	None	None	3 bus drivers
Lorraine	None	None	1 bus driver

Source: Telephone/email survey with RISD and Peer Districts.

To receive state funding, all Texas school districts must submit two reports to TEA by July of each year. The first of those reports, the *School*

Transportation Operation Report, is designed to establish a cost-per-mile to be used for reimbursement in the fiscal year following the report.

Exhibit 4-7 shows that over the last four years, RISD's operations costs in transportation have increased 22.9 percent and total annual mileage decreased by 12.4 percent.

Exhibit 4-7
RISD Summary of School Transportation Operations Reports
1996-97 through 1999-2000

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change
Operations Cost					
Salaries & Benefits	\$12,363	\$7,597	\$8,815	\$9,885	-20.0%
Purchased & Contracted Services	3,869	4,626	1,477	2,650	-31.5%
Supplies & Materials	7,201	6,916	8,530	8,000	11.1%
Other Operating Expenses	3,820	3,088	2,904	3,400	-10.9%
Debt Service	0	0	0	0	0%
Capital Outlay	0	0	9,552	9,553	0%
Total Operations Costs	\$27,253	\$22,227	\$31,278	\$33,488	22.9%
Mileage Summary					
Route mileage	21,948	19,224	18,540	23,940	9.1%
Extra/Co-curricular Mileage	16,525	16,458	24,237	13,373	-19.1%
Non-School Organizations Mileage	0	1,265	0	0	0%
Other Mileage	4,323	7,568	222	180	-95.8%
Total Annual Mileage	42,796	44,515	42,999	37,493	-12.4%
Cost per Mile-Regular	0.637	0.499	0.727	0.893	40.2%
Cost per Mile-Special	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-8 and **Exhibit 4-9** shows how RISD's operations costs and mileage for transportation compare to peer districts. **Exhibit 4-8** compares transportation operations costs with peer districts for the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 4-8
RISD and Peer Districts, Comparison of Operations Costs
1999-2000

School District	Salaries & Benefits	Purchased & Contracted Services	Supplies & Materials	Other Operating Expenses	Debt Service	Capital Outlay	Total Operating Costs
Runge	\$9,885	\$2,650	\$8,000	\$3,400	\$0	\$9,553	\$33,488
Balmorhea	\$16,515	\$4,427	\$13,366	\$5,680	\$0	\$15,960	\$55,948
Lorenzo	\$36,920	\$9,898	\$29,879	\$12,699	\$15,325	\$20,355	\$125,075
Hart	\$23,813	\$6,384	\$19,272	\$8,191	\$0	\$23,013	\$80,673
New Summerfield	\$16,264	\$4,360	\$13,163	\$5,594	\$0	\$15,718	\$55,100
Lorraine	\$12,845	\$1,751	\$5,286	\$2,247	\$0	\$0	\$22,129

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 1999-2000.

Other information obtained from the peer districts' *School Transportation Operations Reports* shows that RISD has the second lowest level of route mileage, but the fourth highest cost per mile.

The second state report, the School Transportation Route Services Report, includes information on ridership and mileage for regular, special and career and technology programs. It also includes a calculation of linear density for the regular home-to-school program, which is the basis for transportation funding.

To establish route mileage and daily ridership figures, TEA requires districts to gather mileage and ridership data on the first Wednesday of each month. **Exhibit 4-9** compares RISD's route mileage data with peer districts for the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 4-9
RISD and Peer Comparison of Mileage Data
1999-2000

School District	Route Mileage (+empty)	Extra/ Co-Curricular Mileage	Non-School Organizations Mileage	Other Mileage	Total Annual Mileage	Cost per mile (Regular)
Balmorhea	54,270	16,552	0	1,316	72,138	\$0.785
Hart	63,732	23,940	0	3,985	91,657	\$0.880
Loraine	14,384	6,568	0	725	21,677	\$1.020
Lorenzo	100,060	16,251	0	4,865	121,176	\$1.032
New Summerfield	41,325	11,864	0	3,002	56,191	\$0.980
Runge	23,940	13,373	0	180	37,493	\$0.893

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-10 summarizes route service reports during the period 1996 through 2000.

Exhibit 4-10
RISD Summary of Route Services Reports
1996-97 through 1999-2000

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Regular Program					
Annual Standard Ridership	3,420	5,040	2,520	2,700	2,340
Annual Standard Mileage	17,850	21,948	19,224	18,540	23,940
Linear Density	.192	.230	.131	.146	.098
Allotment per Mile	\$1.08	\$0.68	\$0.68	\$0.68	\$0.68
Annual Mileage (incl. hazardous)	17,850	21,948	19,224	18,540	23,940
Total Daily Ridership	19	28	14	15	13
Hazardous Annual Mileage	17,850	21,948	19,224	18,540	23,940
Hazardous Daily Ridership	17,850	21,948	19,224	18,540	23,940

Special Program					
Total Daily Ridership	0	0	0	0	0
Total Annual Mileage	0	0	0	0	0
Career and Technology Program					
Total Daily Ridership	0	0	0	0	0
Total Annual Mileage	0	0	0	0	0
Regular Program	\$0.68	\$0.68	\$0.68	\$0.68	\$0.68
Special Program	\$1.08	\$1.08	\$1.08	\$1.08	\$1.08
Career and Technology Program	\$0.576	\$0.42	\$0.64	\$0.50	\$0.73
Private Program	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25
State Allotment (Cost Reimbursement)	\$12,138	\$14,925	\$13,072	\$12,607	\$16,279

Source: TEA School Transportation Route Service Status, 1996 through 2000.

FINDING

The districts has more buses than are needed for daily or extracurricular activities. The district owns seven vehicles including six school buses and a 15-passenger van. **Exhibit 4-11** details the transportation equipment owned by RISD.

Exhibit 4-11 2001 RISD School Bus Inventory

Passenger Capacity	VIN	Year of Manufacture	Manufacturer	Date Acquired	Mileage
15	3599	1994	GMC	1994	102,892
27	1585	1999	GMC	1999	27,186
27	7484	1993	International	1993	46,261
66	1634	1987	International	1987	100,795
72	2136	1977	International	1977	116,977

72	6796	1985	Ford	1985	145,351
72	8555	1999	Blue Bird	1999	15,224

Source: RISD superintendent.

RISD has a 1985 Ford with 145,351 miles, the 1977 International with 116,977 miles, and the 1987 International with 100,795 miles that are not regularly used. The superintendent stated in interviews that these vehicles are in excess of the district's needs.

Recommendation 23:

Sell three school buses through a competitive bid process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The maintenance director places the surplus buses for sale using a sealed bid process of sale.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent receives the bids and announces a winner.	November 2001
3.	The board approves the winning bids.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

The value for the three buses is \$500 per bus according to Southwestern Transportation Company. Therefore, the one-time estimated revenue from selling these three buses is \$1,500 (3 x \$500).

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Sell three school buses through a competitive bid process.	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 4

SUPPORT SERVICES

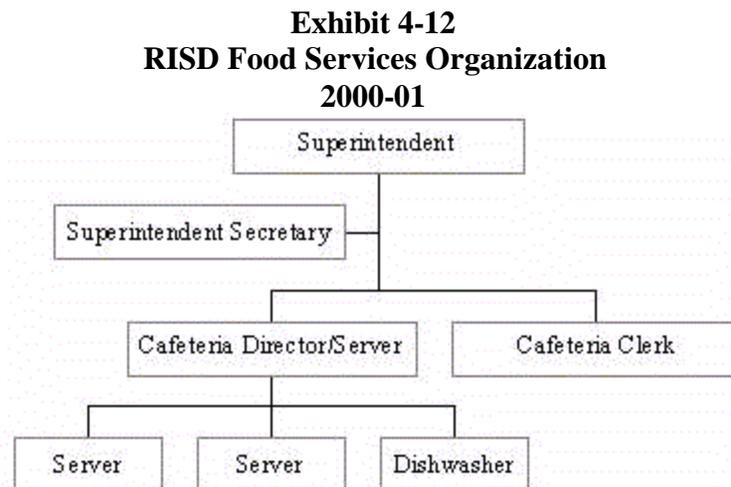
D. Food Service

Food service operations in schools are responsible for providing students and staff with a nutritious breakfast and lunch served at a reasonable cost in a safe, clean and accessible environment. Each of these responsibilities must be accomplished in compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as local board policy. The predominant goal of the school lunch program, as defined under the National School Lunch Plan is to provide proper nutrition to all students so that they can learn and succeed in the classroom.

Organization And Management

RISD serves an average of 300 meals daily. On any given day, over 80 percent of students participate in the lunch program and almost 30 percent in the breakfast. The district has one central cafeteria located adjacent to the elementary school and the high school. It houses the kitchen, the director's office and pantry space for food storage. The cafeteria, where all the students are required to eat their lunch, operates one serving line featuring the regular menu. The district has a closed campus policy; meaning students do not leave campus for lunch. RISD employs four cafeteria workers: three are full-time and one is part-time. The part-time staff person comes in for four hours to do dishes and assists with cafeteria clean up. The other three cafeteria employees work eight hours per day.

Exhibit 4-12 presents the organization chart for the food service program.



Source: RISD Superintendent's Office

FINDING

All food service employees attend summer workshops. Since 1996, the staff has successfully completed the following courses: Child Nutrition, Baked Goods & Desserts and Vegetables. During June 2000, employees attended two workshops: Sanitation and Safety. The workshops that food service employees attend teach them new ways to provide better service to the students, apply new recipes and implement sanitation and safety procedures. All workshops are attended during the summer.

COMMENDATION

RISD food service employees regularly attend training to improve job performance.

FINDING

RISD is experiencing a significant reduction in meals served. In **Exhibit 4-13**, TEA Reimbursement Claims forms are compared over three years. The exhibit indicates a 15 percent drop in lunches served and a 38 percent drop in breakfasts served.

Exhibit 4-13
Sampled Food Services Meal Sales
1999 through 2001

Source and Type	March 2001	September 2000	September 1999
Lunch Free	2,830	3,401	3,559
Lunch Reduced	477	549	584
Lunch Paid	1,099	1,179	1,065
Lunch Total	4,406	5,129	5,208
Breakfast Free	1,170	1,551	1,954
Breakfast Reduced	94	100	118
Breakfast Paid	111	108	132
Breakfast Total	1,375	1,759	2,204

Source: TEA, Reimbursement Claim for School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

RISD has a low student breakfast participation rate, an average of 27 percent. In 1999, RISD had the third highest participation rate among their peer districts for lunch, but the lowest for breakfast at 26.7 percent. Lorenzo ISD had the second highest lunch participation rate and the highest breakfast participation rate at 96.9 percent. Last year RISD had the second highest lunch participation rate compared to their peer districts at 82.6 percent. For breakfast, RISD's participation rate increased by 3.9 percent. This year RISD maintained second place for lunch and dropped to fifth place for their breakfast participation rate to 32 percent. However, student participation did increase by 2 percent. The highest breakfast participation was for New Summerfield, which reported the ir participation at 40.1 percent.

Exhibit 4-14 shows RISD's average daily participation in breakfast and lunch for the period from August 2000 through March 2001.

Exhibit 4-14
Average Daily Participation in Breakfast and Lunch
August 2000 through March 2001

Month	Average Daily Attendance	Average Daily Lunch Participation	Daily Participation Rate	Average Daily Breakfast Participation	Daily Participation Rate
August	300	249	83%	80	27%
September	300	256	85%	88	29%
October	300	267	89%	84	28%
November	300	258	86%	82	27%
December	300	242	81%	73	24%
January	300	255	85%	73	24%
February	300	253	84%	81	27%
March	300	259	86%	81	27%
Average	300	255	85%	80	27%

Source: RISD, Reimbursement Claim Worksheets for School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

Exhibit 4-15 shows the percent for average student participation of RISD and its Peer Districts.

Exhibit 4-15
Percent of Student Average Daily Participation in Food Service
Program
By Peer Districts 1998-99 through 2000-01

District	1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Lunch	Breakfast	Lunch	Breakfast	Lunch	Breakfast
Balmorhea	73.6	75.4	70.3	28.3	70.8	32.9
Hart	77.9	30.7	74.2	34.1	79.1	34.5
Loraine	88.7	34.9	85.8	35.2	89.1	39.1
Lorenzo	86.3	96.9	82.5	37.5	83.8	27.3
New Summerfield	81.2	44.3	76.5	39.1	77.5	40.1
Runge	85.3	26.7	82.6	30.6	86.6	32.0

Source: TEA, Child Nutrition Programs 1999 through 2001.

RISD does not have a plan to increase participation in the breakfast program, but they can explore options to participate. Some districts have the staff put up nutritional posters promoting menus or breakfast foods served every week and they sponsor monthly contests that award students special gifts like pencils and stickers.

Recommendation 24:

Establish strategies for increasing participation in breakfast and lunch on campus.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director organizes a working group of students, staff and parents to develop a survey and present recommendations to the superintendent.	July 2001
2.	The superintendent and the Food Service manager design a survey based on issues raised by the working group including questions regarding, food selection, food quality and recommendations for improvement to the breakfast program.	August 2001
3.	The working group present findings and recommendations to the superintendent.	September 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Financial Management

Financial management is one of the most important activities in any program because it enables the district to plan, maximize, and manage its limited resources efficiently. Effective financial management ensures that internal controls are in place and operating as intended and reports are generated that help management reach its goals.

Exhibit 4-16 details food service actual expenditures from 1997 through 2000.

Exhibit 4-16
RISD Food Service Program Actual Expenditures
1996-97 through 1999-2000

Description	1996-97 Expenditures	1997-98 Expenditures	1998-99 Expenditures	1999-2000 Expenditures
Teacher Retirement	\$298	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Food	\$3,185	\$17,401	\$2,006	\$2,979
Payroll	\$43,327	\$33,326	\$35,600	\$36,842
Social Security	\$538	\$520	\$501	\$563
Group Insurance	\$5,382	\$5,588	\$5,505	\$5,973
TRS Care-on-Behalf of Payments	\$1,997	\$2,288	\$0	\$2,147
Education Region 3 Services	\$1,201	\$906	\$0	\$0
Commodities	\$0	\$0	\$6,090	\$5,170
Depreciation Expense	\$0	\$0	\$242	\$274
Contracted Maintenance & Repair	\$432	\$0	\$534	\$301

Travel	\$0	\$318	\$227	\$118
Utilities	\$11,992	\$11,710	\$11,643	\$12,675
Food	\$48,876	\$49,287	\$52,111	\$50,474
Misc.	\$210	\$994	\$279	\$86
Workers Comp	\$3,996	\$3,985	\$3,859	\$2,291
Total Expenditures	\$147,434	\$123,632	\$118,597	\$119,893

Source: TEA, PEIMS 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

RISD has consistently spent fewer Food Services dollars per student compared to any of the other five peer districts. In 2000-01, the districts reported spending as much as \$478 per student at Hart ISD, and as little as \$379 per student at RISD.

Exhibit 4-17 shows RISD's and peer districts expenditures per student from 1997-98 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-17
RISD and Peer District Food Services Expenditures per Student
1997-98 through 2000-01

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Balmorhea	\$396	\$400	\$420	\$431
Hart	\$412	\$446	\$448	\$478
Lorraine	\$397	\$403	\$485	\$407
Lorenzo	\$451	\$476	\$472	\$469
New Summerfield	\$370	\$405	\$414	\$443
Runge	\$366	\$371	\$391	\$379

Source: TEA, AEIS 1998 through 2001.

FINDING

The district Food Service program is operating at a deficit for the period 1999-2000; however, their ending food service fund still maintained a net balance of \$310. The \$3,517 deficit significantly drained the ending fund balance of \$3,827 for 1998-99, that had resulted in an operating gain of \$2,342 for the year.

Exhibit 4-18 shows RISD's and peer districts' Food Service expenditures from 1997 through 2000. Out of the six districts, RISD ranks fourth in total food service expenditures for 1999 and 2000.

Exhibit 4-18
RISD and Peer District Total Food Service Budgeted Expenditures
1996-97 through 2000-01

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Balmorhea	\$94,131	\$97,142	\$101,636	\$100,949	\$97,967
Hart	\$193,800	\$185,400	\$188,355	\$189,649	\$179,417
Lorraine	\$88,000	\$79,100	\$81,200	\$81,500	\$70,440
Lorenzo	\$191,875	\$202,395	\$204,800	\$182,500	\$188,776
New Summerfield	\$120,550	\$127,404	\$149,075	\$158,700	\$158,700
Runge	\$106,022	\$117,622	\$120,423	\$120,619	\$125,248

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

All Texas school districts fund Food Services through a combination of federal subsidies for students from low-income families and payments from students financially able to pay. District budgets include revenue from *special revenues*, which are funds received from local, state and federal grants, the largest of which is the National Lunch Program.

Exhibit 4-19 shows the revenue section for food services from the 2000-01 district budget.

Exhibit 4-19
RISD Budget School Breakfast/Lunch Program
2000-01

Description	1999-2000 Closing	2000-01 Budgeted	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Budgeted
Local Sales	\$20,009	\$20,050	\$11,687	\$20,050
State Programs	\$189	\$2,769	\$3,038	\$4,494
Federal Programs	\$81,873	\$99,200	\$51,314	\$103,404
Total Expenditures	\$102,071	\$122,019	\$66,039	\$127,948

Source: RISD "Budget 2000-01."

The district has not reviewed allocations annually to determine reasons for the variances.

Recommendation 25:

Review food service budget revenue annually to determine if the estimates are reasonable.

RISD should review and revise its food service revenue estimates to accurately predict the funds revenues and develop a plan to monitor them on an ongoing basis.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the director of Food Services to review and revise food service revenue estimates based upon current conditions and to develop a plan to monitor these allocations periodically.	September 2001
2.	The director of director of Food Services reviews the food service revenue estimates for reasonableness in light of current conditions and compares them with those in other districts that use similar formula methods.	September - November 2001
3.	The director of Food Services reports recommended modifications to the superintendent based upon this assessment and formulates a plan to review the allocations on an ongoing basis.	November 2001
4.	The superintendent places the draft budget amendment procedures on the board agenda for review and approval.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

RISD meal prices do not cover the actual costs of meals. RISD Food Services provides offer-versus-serve meal service as approved by the TEA. "Offer versus serve" was designed to allow students some freedom of choice while still maintaining the nutritional integrity of the meals. Under the "offer-versus-serve" provision, students must be offered the minimum required five food items in the required amounts, but have the option of selecting a minimum of three items. RISD serves students the same menu regardless of grade level and modifies the portion amount

between elementary and secondary grade levels. The district does not sell a la carte, regular snacks or federally approved snacks.

Exhibit 4-20 shows RISD Food Service meal prices for the 2000-01 school year.

Exhibit 4-20
RISD Food Service Meal Prices
As of March 2001

Meal	Price
Breakfast Elementary (Regular)	\$0.50
Breakfast Elementary (Reduced Price)	\$0.30
Breakfast Secondary (Regular)	\$0.50
Breakfast Secondary (Reduced Price)	\$0.30
Lunch Elementary (Regular)	\$0.85
Lunch Elementary (Reduced Price)	\$0.40
Lunch Secondary (Regular)	\$1.00
Lunch Secondary (Reduced Price)	\$0.40
Adult Breakfast	\$0.75
Adult Lunch	\$1.50

Source: RISD Food Service Cafeteria March 2001

The *Administrator's Reference Manual for the Child Nutrition Programs* published by TEA in 1994, and revised in 1997, suggests that districts establish meal prices that equal the reimbursement amount per meal received from the NSLP program for free students. The manual further suggests that in no case should funds available to pay the cost of student meals be used to supplement the cost of adult meals.

Recommendation 26:

Annually review meal prices to ensure that prices paid for meals cover costs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director estimates food service operations costs for 2001-02 and estimates price per meal schedule that covers costs.	September 2001
2.	The Food Services director presents the recommended price schedule to the superintendent for review and presentation to the board for approval.	September 2001
3.	The board approves meal price schedule.	October 2001
4.	The new food price is enacted for the spring semester.	January 2002
5.	The Food Services director estimates food service operations costs for 2002-03, estimates price per meal to cover costs and presents to the superintendent for review.	July 2002 and annually thereafter
6.	The superintendent presents the recommended prices to the board for approval.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district needs to analyze its staffing levels for the food services program or apply productivity standards. A common method to determine productivity in school food service is to calculate the number of meals per labor hour (MPLH). MPLH is calculated by dividing the number of meals served by the total number of labor hours worked over a given time period. The recommended calculations for meal equivalents are shown in **Exhibit 4-21**.

Exhibit 4-21
Formula for Calculating Meal Equivalents

Meal	Equivalent
Breakfast Meal Equivalents	Number of Breakfast Meals divided by 2
A la Carte Meal Equivalents	A la Carte Sales divided by free lunch reimbursement plus the commodity value of the meal.
Catered/Contract Meal Equivalents	Catered Sales divided by free lunch reimbursement plus commodity value of the meal.

Source: Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Martin and Conklin, 1999.

About 300 meals are prepared per day. This translates to 12.5 meals per labor hour based on 24 work hours per day (3 workers x 8 hours and 1 worker x 4 hours). Food industry leaders quote anywhere from 16 to 20 meals per labor hour as a reasonable level of productivity given the large variations in food delivery systems and form of food purchased.

Recommendation 27:

Establish meals per labor hour standard and staff accordingly.

If the district was able to reduce staffing by five hours per day, the district would achieve 16 MPLH (300 meals/16 MPLH = 19 hours per day)

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The director of Food Services creates training sessions for cafeteria employees on increasing productivity and reducing costs.	September 2001
2.	The Food Services director generates MPLH reports each month and distributes to the superintendent.	September 2001 and ongoing
3.	The Food Services director contacts the Regional Education Service Center III and other districts that have been successful at improving productivity and reducing labor costs and determines what practices could be adopted in RISD.	October - November 2001
4.	The Food Services director and superintendent develop recommendations to increase productivity and reduce labor costs.	December 2001
5.	The Food Services director implements the recommendations for improving each school's productivity.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

By reducing staff hours to five hours per day, the district should save \$5,400 per year (5 hours x 180 days x \$6 hourly rate = \$5,400).

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Establish meals per labor hour standard and staff accordingly.	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400

Chapter 4

SUPPORT SERVICES

E. Computers and Technology

Network infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, phone lines, hubs, switches, routers and other devices. Especially for rural districts, a sound and reliable infrastructure serves as a critical portal to a vast number of education-related resources and references not often found within the local community. It makes it possible for teachers in different locations to share instructional strategies and eliminates distance barriers that can restrict a student's exposure to experiences outside the local community.

A robust network allows users to communicate using tools such as electronic mail systems. It also makes the Internet available so that anyone connected to the network can access information and people outside the organization. Networks are usually "closed," meaning they include security measures to prevent unauthorized users from accessing information or people inside the organization.

While the infrastructure provides the connections that permit communications and includes the hardware for retrieving, processing and disseminating information, software applications make these

tools truly powerful resources. Through Rural Utilities Service (RUS) grant funding, RISD was able to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the design and installation of the district's infrastructure. The RISD network includes the following:

- Local Area Networks (LAN) supporting elementary, middle and high schools, computer labs, administrative offices, maintenance shop and band hall;
- District LAN consisting of a 100mb fiber backbone between Intermediate Distribution Frames and Main Distribution Frames and Category 5e cabling providing each classroom with a range of 1 to 3 100mb network drops;
- Networked workstations with Intel-based PCs running Windows NT 4.0 operating system, virus protection software, Internet Explorer and Microsoft Office 2000;
- Elementary school computer lab using Macintosh servers and clients;
- Bay Network switches and Cisco routers;
- NT file servers to support the Skills Bank applications;
- T1 connection provided by Southwestern Bell to Region 3 and the University of Texas for Internet services using TheNet; and

- Intergate Internet Server.

RISD uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) administrative application from Region 3 to support both Student and PEIMS processing. RSCCC is a student record keeping application that performs student data-related functions, including scheduling, grade reporting, attendance, registration and health services. RISD's financial and the Region 3 performs payroll processes as a service. **Exhibit 4-22** shows the additional software used to support both administrative and instructional objectives.

Exhibit 4-22
RISD Administrative and Instructional Software

Function/Technology Area	Software
Student Management	STMRPC - Student demographic Software Process Manager - Desegregates TAAS data
PEIMS Processing	RSCCC - Business Software STMRPC - Student demographics software
Secondary Computer Labs	Typing Tutor MicroSoft Office 2000 MicroSoft Vixual C+ + Programming TAAS Math Word Perfect Suite 8.0 Games: Card games, non-violent thinking games
Elementary Computer Lab	Accelerated Reader Heart Beeps Skills Bank 3 Star Reading Star Math Hands on Math Story Book Reader - MECC Hyper Studio Power Point

Source: RISD Superintendent and Computing Instructors.

Training is one of the most critical factors in determining whether technology is used effectively. Teachers must be comfortable with instructional technology and must know not only how to operate it, but also how to integrate it effectively into their teaching. Studies indicate that it may take three to five years for a teacher to acquire the appropriate level of expertise. Planning and support for technology-related training must consider this.

Technology-related training must be ongoing. Teachers need continuous opportunities to expand their technological skills and to interact with other teachers so they can share new strategies and techniques.

RISD staff are provided opportunities for technology-related training through grant-funded initiatives and training provided by Region 3. As part of the annual summative conference and evaluation process, the principal reviews each teacher's efforts in attending staff development workshops and technology related training classes. As part of the teacher's evaluation, the principal evaluate the teacher's technology strengths and weaknesses and assists them in identifying the appropriate workshops and classes to expand their technical skills.

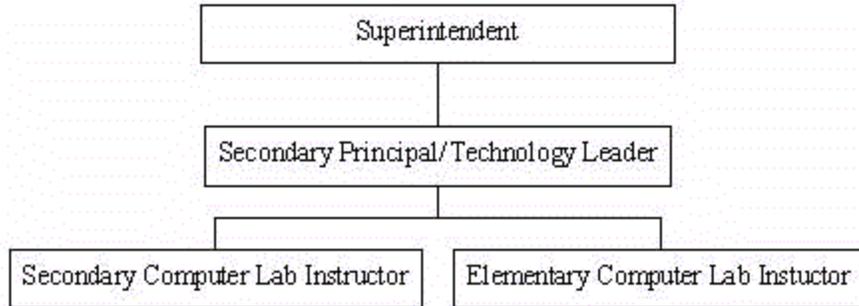
Organization And Management

RISD has an informal organization to manage and support the district's technology resources. The secondary principal is considered the district's technology leader and is responsible for technology planning, implementation and management. The district's secondary and elementary computer laboratory instructors provide additional technology leadership and support. In addition to teaching computer related classes and assisting teachers with integrating technology into the curriculum, the computer laboratory instructors provide assistance to the secondary principal in the areas of technology planning, maintenance and grant-proposal development.

The district's size and limited resources have presented challenges in delivering technical support and services to RISD users, requiring innovative solutions. Technical support significantly influences how effectively technology is used in the classroom and throughout the district. Teachers, even those who are experienced computer users, may encounter technology-related difficulties that interrupt their planning or classroom activities. Unless they receive quick responses to their questions, their effectiveness can be diminished.

Exhibit 4-23 provides an overview of the district's technology support personnel. A formal organization structure with position descriptions was not available.

**Exhibit 4-23
RISD Technology Support Personnel
April 2001**



Source: RISD Secondary Principal.

The responsibilities for each of the RISD technology personnel are presented in **Exhibit 4-24** and are based on interviews with the district's technology staff. The district does not have established position descriptions that outline the responsibilities of the RISD technology personnel; therefore, the exhibit only reflects the organization's informal understanding of technology-related responsibilities. Data specific to student accounting and finance are maintained and managed by Region 3.

**Exhibit 4-24
RISD Technology Personnel/Initiatives
March 2001**

Technology Personnel	Responsibilities
Secondary Principal/Technology Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide overall technology leadership • Maintain technology asset inventory • Review and assign technology work orders • Lead development of technology grants and initiatives • Review/approve technology purchases • Coordinate activities of technology service providers

Secondary Computer Lab Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain technology within the secondary computer lab • Resolve hardware- and software-related work-orders • Write grants • Develop/maintain technology specifications • Support technology RFPs • Support technology procurements
Elementary Computer Lab Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support grant-writing initiatives • Maintain technology within the elementary computer lab

Source: RISD Superintendent.

RISD also uses a number of technology providers to meet its technology needs. **Exhibit 4-25** provides a list of technology service providers and a description of the services provided.

Exhibit 4-25
RISD Technology Service Providers

Technology Service Provider	Service Description
Internet Inc.	Hardware contract for the Intergate Server, switches and internet filtering
University of Texas	Internet services through TheNet
Southwestern Bell	T-1 line to support internet connectivity
Mitchell Engineering	Infrastructure design, installation, and warranty
Region 3	Computer repair, general infrastructure maintenance, server repair, networking and training

Source: RISD Secondary Principal.

FINDING

RISD was one of the first districts within Region 3 awarded a Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant. The TIF grant

allowed RISD to extend their existing network infrastructure into the secondary classrooms and elementary computer laboratory.

In a joint grant proposal with the Austwell Tivoli Independent School district, RISD was awarded a Rural Utilities Service (RUS) grant to establish the basic infrastructure needed to connect the districts to a statewide network (TheNet) and provide funding for the implementation of a distance learning network. As a federal credit agency for the United States Department of Agriculture, RUS provides rural infrastructure assistance in electricity, water and telecommunications.

As a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and in particular a section of the act referred to as the Universal Service Fund (USF), non-profit K-12 schools and libraries can submit applications to receive discounts of 20 percent to 90 percent on telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections. This funding, commonly referred to as e-rate funding, is administered through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Other RISD technology initiatives are supported through a combination of various district resources including e-Rate, State Technology Allotment, special education and state compensatory funding.

Grant funding has allowed the district to install a number of technology-related resources to support instructional and administrative processing. **Exhibit 4-26** provides an overview of the technology resources obtained through the grant funding received.

Exhibit 4-26
RISD Technology Resources/Initiatives

Grant	Technology Resource(s)
Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network wiring for secondary classrooms and the elementary computer laboratory
Rural Utilities Service Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RISD's core network electronics and infrastructure including wiring for elementary classrooms and peripheral buildings • Connectivity to TheNet through University of Texas • Distance Learning Equipment (Not installed)

Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund PS9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Network electronics upgrade
---	---

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

The secondary principal, secondary computer laboratory instructor and elementary laboratory instructor share the district's grant writing responsibilities.

COMMENDATION

RISD's staff aggressively seek funding sources to expand RISD technical capabilities.

FINDING

RISD has recognized the need to develop creative approaches to providing district users with workstation repair services. Due to limited funding and resources, the secondary computer laboratory instructor has developed a curriculum specific to computer repair. Over the last ten years, computer repair has become a component of the Computer Science III class. The idea was further supported by the increasing installation of computer workstations and the instructor's attendance at a computer repair workshop. The computer repair class provides students with basic PC troubleshooting, installation, upgrade and maintenance skills. With guidance and leadership from the computer laboratory instructor, students apply their skills to user-reported problems.

COMMENDATION

RISD is creative in providing students with career-related skills and supplementing limited workstation troubleshooting and repair resources.

FINDING

RISD's principals and technology instructors dedicate time to grant writing in addition to carrying out many other assigned tasks. No single individual is responsible for researching and applying for grants to improve educational opportunities for students and staff. Funding sources include grants from the state and federal government and private foundations for new technology, maintaining and supporting technology, staff development and developing at-risk programs and community education programs.

RISD has received technology funding from three sources since 1997: the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Grant and the Texas State Technology Allotment. **Exhibit 4-27** provides an overview of RISD's funding sources supporting the district implementation and support of technology. Funding amounts are presented in the year awarded but are budgeted over multiple years from date of award.

Exhibit 4-27
RISD Technology Funding Sources
1998 through 2000

	FY 1997-98	FY 1998-99	FY1999-00
Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund	\$191,503	NA	NA
Rural Utilities Service Grant	NA	\$142,135	NA
State Technology Allotment	\$6,289	\$7,847	\$7,943
Other	NA	\$107,153	\$70,057
Total	\$197,792	\$257,135	\$78,000

Source: RISD Superintendent's Office.

As shown, the district's grant funding has declined over the last few years.

Some districts have located retired individuals with grant writing abilities who are pleased with a part-time supplemental income. A person with grant writing expertise can develop a plan to maximize the district's grant possibilities. Examples include obtaining support from federal and state programs, foundations, and the business community, and conducting research to match the district's needs with specific funding opportunities.

The Wimberley ISD contracted with a retired community member to research and write grants. The person was paid a small hourly sum, but was able to generate more than \$500,000 in grants to support district programs and enhance technology.

Recommendation 28:

Contract for a part-time grant writer to identify additional funding from federal, state, foundation, business and private sources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The authorizes the superintendent to advertise for a contract grant writer to identify programs that will benefit the district.	August 2001
2.	The superintendent advertises for a part-time outside grant writer.	September 2001
3.	The grants writer develops a list of potential grants that the district may qualify for and reports the findings to the superintendent for approval.	September - October 2001
4.	The grant writer contacts foundations and other funding sources to obtain grant information and researches the requirements.	October 2001 and Ongoing
5.	The grant writer prepares and submits the grant applications.	November 2001 and Ongoing
6.	The superintendent works with the Technology Planning committee to align the plan with resources from grant sources and presents a proposal to the board.	December 2001 and Ongoing
7.	The grant writer meets with the superintendent and Technology Planning committee to evaluate efforts and to determine new opportunities.	January 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

A part-time contract grant writer is estimated to cost approximately \$5,000 per year based on \$25 per hour x 200 hours. With this assistance, additional grants of \$25,000 to \$30,000 should be possible, or a net of \$20,000 annually. In the first year, this amount is assumed to be one-half of the total since implementation will not be complete until January 2002.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Hire a part-time grant writer to identify additional funding strategies from federal, state, foundation, business and private resources.	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000

FINDING

The district does not have the resources for effective maintenance and troubleshooting of its technology. Due to the district's size, technology

responsibilities must be shared among various district staff to include the district's principal, secondary and elementary computer lab instructors. Many of the district's staff members have little of the experience required for the effective maintenance and troubleshooting of technology. An example identified during the on-site portion of the review was the district's need to remove two servers from the RISD network once the Intergate server was installed. This action was taken to keep the overall network from crashing although neither the RISD nor Internet Inc., the district's Intergate server installation provider, could determine the problem. These servers host the district's Skills Bank application and are not available for student use until the problem is resolved.

Over the last four years, the district has received a substantial amount of technology related funding in the form of grants and state and local funding. RISD has used these resources for the procurement and implementation of technology, but as technology develops staff are challenged to keep pace with support needs.

Karnes City recently hired a highly skilled technical professional. The director has decided to return to the classroom, Karnes City ISD is selecting a replacement from qualified candidates that could provide support to neighboring districts on an as-needed basis. With primary responsibility for grant proposals and e-rate applications, the current Karnes City ISD technology director has already worked with neighboring districts and Region 3 to obtain additional funding.

Recommendation 29:

Establish a shared-services agreement for technical support.

Districts of similar size and rural location to RISD have difficulties finding and funding dedicated technical personnel with the skills necessary to support the increasing use and installation of district technologies. These shared challenges among neighboring districts place a high probability of success for a technology-support consortium. The shared-services arrangement should be reviewed every two years to assess the efficacy of this type of program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The secondary principal contacts the Karnes City ISD technology director regarding participation in a shared-services agreement for technical support.	September 2001
2.	The secondary principal meets with the Karnes City ISD technology director to discuss the shared-services agreement and the district's requirements for technology support.	September 2001
3.	The secondary principal and Karnes City ISD technology director draft the shared-services agreement.	October 2001
4.	The shared-services agreement is reviewed and approved by the Karnes City ISD and RISD superintendents.	November 2002
5.	The shared services agreement is presented to the RISD board for approval.	December 2002
6.	The shared-services agreement is implemented and technical support is delivered as stipulated by the shared-services agreement.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming that a consortia approach can be arranged, RISD could obtain additional support from neighboring districts by paying a \$2,500 per year stipend for these services.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Establish a shared services agreement for technical support.	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)	(\$2,500)

FINDING

RISD does not use the information they are collecting through their informal computer work order process. The data gathered during the reporting and resolution of user problems is a valuable source of information for measuring service performance and potential areas of training, as well as tracking preventive maintenance, materials and labor costs. Tracking labor and materials costs on a continuous basis enables the district to establish cost control strategies and determine the optimal time for equipment replacement when maintenance costs are too high.

Some of the neighboring districts have taken steps to collect service request data in a format that allows them to analyze it. The data is an early

indicator system of problems before they develop into major shutdowns. Without this data, the district cannot assess if the network is healthy or is performing well. The data collected can help the technology leader to focus staff development training.

Recommendation 30:

Implement a system to collect and analyze work order information.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The secondary principal directs the secondary computer laboratory instructor to design a work order spreadsheet.	September 2001
2.	The spreadsheet is designed by the secondary computer laboratory instructor and tested with submitted technology work orders.	November 2001
3.	The work order spreadsheet is installed in the secondary principal's office and used by the secretary for inputting technology work order requests.	January 2002
4.	The technology work order process is implemented.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Technology Planning

Effective plans contain clear goals, objectives, and action plans for technology projects, assigning individual responsibility for implementation steps and identifying milestone dates for completion. Budgets must be tied to the technology plan. The district's technical personnel develop the vision for a technology plan, but if it is not shared or understood by the board, it remains unfunded. A technology plan should be a joint effort throughout the district organization, and its priorities should

be priorities of the board and the administration, with funding committed to each goal as needed. Planning for the use of new educational technologies is particularly important due to several factors:

Equity: The level of technological resources available to each school in a district can vary. Careful planning can help ensure that all schools receive adequate support.

Change: Technological change continues to accelerate. Failure to take advantage of new technologies can leave the district with obsolete equipment. Without adequate planning of at least three to five years, the district may find itself jumping from one automated technology to another.

Funding: Planning must address how projects will be funded.

Credibility: The public is eager for its tax dollars to be spent effectively. Planning makes it possible to demonstrate that proposed strategies have been well thought out.

Training: The adoption of new technologies requires effective and sufficient training.

FINDING

The district technology plan contains goals and strategies to move the district forward technologically. Within their technology plan, RISD has mapped a number of identified strategies against the curriculum integration goals.

Exhibit 4-28 provides the mapping of established goals to strategies required for integrating information technology into the school curriculum.

Exhibit 4-28 RISD Mapping of Technology Plan Goals and Strategies 2001 - 02

Strategies	Timeline
Purchase additional computers that are network-and Internet-read for every classroom.	August 2000 - Ongoing
Make every building Internet-capable.	July 2001
Investigate getting a connection with Region 3 for access to a statewide K-12 Intranet that shares curriculum, data management and instruction throughout the state service centers.	July 2001
Implement the connection with other high school networks through direct, dial-up or video-connection.	August 2001
Purchase network software that enhances students' reading, math, science, language arts and social studies.	Ongoing
Implement the EMBARK careers/academics choices for students (subscription through Region3).	January 2001 - Ongoing

Implement new vocational careers curriculum.	August 2000
Investigate and purchase software that is directed toward possible dropout recovery.	August 2000 - Ongoing

Source: RISD Technology Plan 2001-02.

An example of the technologies and funding required to support the district's technology needs are provided in **Exhibit 4-29**.

Exhibit 4-29
RISD Technology Plan Components and Funding
2001 - 02

Material	Assessment	Cost/Funds	Timeline
T-1 Line	Engineers will make recommendation.	\$389/month - Local Funding	8/00
Region 3 services	Engineer will make recommendation.	\$350/month - Local Funding	7/01
Electronic components of system	Engineer will make recommendation.	\$20,000 - TIF Grant	7/01
Infrastructure	Engineer will make recommendation.	\$5,500 - Local Funds	7/01
LAN and Internet system	Engineer will make recommendation.	\$17,500 - TIF Grant	7/01
Software	Teachers and personnel review vendor packets and make recommendation.	\$20,000 Grant and Local Funds	Ongoing
File servers	Technology director will make recommendation.	\$8,000 TIF and Local Funds	Ongoing

Source: RISD Technology Plan 2001-02.

As part of the technology plan, RISD has established some criteria to evaluate the district's progress in implementing the technology plan. **Exhibit 4-30** provides an example of the established criteria.

Exhibit 4-30
RISD Technology Plan Evaluation Criteria
2001 - 02

Document for evaluation will include the following:

- Records of purchases
- Records of contracted services
- Records of staff training with
 - Sign-in sheets from training sessions
 - Evaluations by training session attendees
 - Surveys of teacher perceptions of the program
 - Records of out-of-district training
- Documented use in the classroom by:
 - Records of time used
 - Review of lesson plans
 - Student and teacher surveys
- Documented student improvement by:
 - Improvement in student grades
 - Attendance and discipline records
 - Comparison of SAT and ACT scores
 - Comparison in TAAS scores
- Yearly follow up to include:
 - Percentage of students entering and remaining in college
 - Percentage of students graduating from college
 - Percentage of students gainfully employed
 - Teacher and student attitude surveys
 - Parent surveys

Source: RISD Technology Plan 2001-02.

The technology plan, developed by committee, includes all the necessary elements to include established goals, strategies, requirements, costs, source of funds, timelines, assigned responsibilities and an evaluation approach. The secondary principal and secondary computer laboratory instructor worked with district teachers and administrators to develop the technology plan. **Exhibit 4-31** provides RISD's goals for integrating information into the school curriculum.

Exhibit 4-31
RISD Technology Plan Goals 2001-02

Goals for Integrating Information Technology into the School Curriculum

- Runge ISD will integrate computers and other technology in the curriculum to improve overall student achievement in all required courses of study.
- Runge ISD will use technology as an instrument to improve student college entrance scores.
- Runge ISD will provide technology in a way to make students better prepared for current and future careers in which technology plays an important role.
- Runge ISD will use technology to motivate at-risk students to improve on achievement tests and stay in school.
- Runge ISD will provide access to information and opportunities for students, staff and community to network both statewide and worldwide.
- Runge ISD will use technology to expand and enrich the curriculum for all students.
- Runge ISD professional staff will have the opportunity to receive instruction in the use of instructional technology.

Source: RISD Technology Plan 2001-02.

COMMENDATION

RISD's technology plan provides a sound foundation and framework for the effective implementation and evaluation of technology in support of the district's educational goals.

FINDING

RISD does not have a disaster recovery plan. Region 3 provides daily backup of the district's critical financial and student management data and has oversight and management responsibilities for supporting systems and infrastructure.

Exhibit 4-32 summarizes the key elements of a disaster recovery plan that should be considered in formulating a plan commensurate with the district's size and technical environment.

Exhibit 4-32
Key Elements of a Disaster Recovery Plan

Step	Details
Build the disaster recovery team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a disaster recovery team that includes key policymakers, building management, end users, key outside contractors and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the district. • Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inventory of all computer technology assets, including data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. • Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organization to share equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the district to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. • Make plans to procure hardware, software and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations are resumed as soon as possible. • Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. • Locate support resources that might be needed, such as equipment repair, trucking and cleaning companies. • Arrange for vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders. • Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details within the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so that everyone knows exactly what needs to be done. • Define actions to be taken in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. • Define actions to be taken at the onset of an

	<p>undesirable event to limit damage, loss and compromised data integrity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define actions to be taken to restore critical functions. • Define actions to be taken to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the plan frequently and completely. • Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Deal with damage appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a disaster actually occurs, document all costs and videotape the damage. • Be prepared to overcome downtime on your own; insurance settlements can take time to resolve.
Consider other significant issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make a plan unnecessarily complicated. • Designate one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but structure the plan so that others are authorized and prepared to implement if it is needed. • Update the plan regularly and whenever changes are made to the organization or technology infrastructure.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology." (Modified by TSPR)

Regardless of size, an organization should have an established plan for dealing with unanticipated disruptions of service, loss of data and off-site storage of data and not all needs for the recovery of data and resumption of services are strictly technology related.

Recommendation 31:

Reconvene the Technology Planning Committee to develop a disaster recovery plan and test it on a scheduled basis.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to reconvene the Technology Planning Committee to develop an outline for incorporating the disaster recovery plan into the district's technology plan.	September 2001
2.	The Technology Planning Committee reviews and finalizes the disaster recovery plan.	October 2001
3.	The Technology Committee presents the plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	November 2001
4.	The Technology Committee communicates the plan to the appropriate personnel.	November 2001
5.	The district's technology coordinator tests the plan.	December 2001
6.	The district's technology coordinator reports the results to the superintendent and board.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Appendix A ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

Demographic Data

TOTAL RESPONSES AS OF May 4, 2001: 16

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female				
		13%	87%				
2.	Ethnicity Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	
		37%	0%	63%	0%	0%	
3.	How long have you been employed by Runge ISD?		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
			31%	41%	0%	12%	16%
4.	Are you a(n):						
	a. administrator	5%	b. clerical staffer	37%	c. support staffer	58%	
5.	How long have you been employed in this capacity by Runge ISD?						
	1-5 years	31%	6-10 years	26%	11-15 years	0%	
	16-20 years	6%	20+ years	37%	No Answer	0%	

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	46%	24%	11%	12%	7%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	18%	41%	10%	18%	13%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	20%	53%	7%	17%	3%

4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	25%	52%	7%	11%	5%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	31%	45%	8%	12%	4%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	33%	27%	9%	21%	10%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	15%	60%	15%	6%	4%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	12%	35%	11%	27%	15%
9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	15%	42%	8%	25%	10%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	28%	46%	7%	11%	8%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	41%	27%	16%	12%	4%
12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	9%	61%	8%	12%	0%
	b) Writing	12%	58%	12%	5%	13%
	c) Mathematics	17%	44%	12%	6%	21%
	d) Science	7%	42%	14%	25%	12%

	e) English or Language Arts	7%	55%	11%	16%	11%
	f) Computer Instruction	11%	43%	15%	15%	15%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	8%	49%	15%	19%	9%
	h) Fine Arts	4%	36%	22%	15%	23%
	i) Physical Education	14%	57%	12%	8%	9%
	j) Business Education	11%	37%	13%	20%	19%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	31%	30%	8%	26%	5%
	l) Foreign Language	4%	33%	20%	32%	11%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	6%	35%	11%	21%	4%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	7%	59%	10%	16%	0%
	c) Special Education	9%	53%	11%	22%	5%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	12%	41%	9%	27%	11%
	e) Dyslexia program	9%	24%	10%	48%	9%
	f) Student mentoring program	10%	32%	29%	17%	12%
	g) Advanced placement program	12%	27%	32%	18%	11%
	h) Literacy program	16%	30%	24%	28%	8%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	18%	18%	19%	27%	18%
	j) Summer school programs	15%	40%	14%	12%	19%
	k) Alternative education programs	12%	44%	18%	20%	6%

	l) "English as a second language" program	9%	28%	18%	26%	9%
	m) Career counseling program	11%	34%	21%	24%	10%
	n) College counseling program	18%	31%	11%	20%	20%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	18%	42%	22%	2%	16%
	p) Drop out prevention program	6%	31%	21%	27%	15%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	18%	29%	19%	22%	12%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	22%	29%	17%	23%	9%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	41%	22%	13%	22%	15%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	38%	31%	12%	9%	10%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	8%	19%	22%	26%	25%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	12%	21%	29%	17%	21%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	15%	31%	33%	25%	8%
21.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	31%	32%	15%	25%	10%
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	29%	19%	12%	23%	17%

23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	41%	18%	12%	23%	6%
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C. Personnel

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	18%	42%	14%	17%	9%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	9%	37%	18%	25%	10%
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	12%	35%	15%	28%	11%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	12%	37%	17%	29%	4%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	9%	37%	17%	28%	9%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	20%	42%	20%	18%	0%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	23%	56%	10%	11%	1%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	19%	56%	14%	9%	2%

32.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	24%	42%	19%	13%	2%
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	25%	41%	19%	13%	2%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	18%	51%	15%	13%	3%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	10%	52%	17%	16%	5%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	15%	50%	14%	16%	5%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	12%	53%	20%	12%	4%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	11%	52%	24%	11%	2%

E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	16%	37%	21%	13%	13%

40.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	10%	44%	19%	16%	13%
41.	Schools are clean.	8%	37%	20%	25%	10%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	10%	38%	38%	9%	5%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	11%	28%	38%	17%	5%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	17%	31%	26%	14%	12%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	13%	43%	15%	18%	11%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	15%	33%	17%	30%	4%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	9%	25%	22%	28%	16%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	7%	37%	24%	23%	9%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	12%	37%	15%	19%	18%
50.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	5%	28%	27%	27%	14%
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	4%	26%	27%	23%	20%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	3%	38%	25%	21%	14%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	41%	30%	20%	4%	5%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	3%	39%	12%	46%	0%
55.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources for students.	11%	60%	18%	9%	3%

H. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	9%	48%	10%	29%	4%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	5%	33%	14%	44%	4%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	3%	55%	19%	23%	0%
59.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	2%	48%	18%	22%	10%

60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	9%	39%	21%	24%	7%
61.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	1%	37%	26%	33%	3%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	15%	40%	12%	29%	4%

I. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	6%	29%	42%	23%	0%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	5%	24%	33%	29%	9%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	14%	55%	21%	10%	0%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	8%	26%	41%	21%	5%
67.	The district meets students needs in computer fundamentals.	21%	52%	19%	8%	0%
68.	The district meets students needs in advanced computer skills.	1%	59%	19%	17%	4%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	22%	33%	32%	12%	1%

VERBATIM COMMENTS

- I have no children in elementary but I can see that it is run very professionally. Teachers have good rapport with principal. I have 2 children in high school and discipline is not consistent and sometimes not fair. The morale of personnel is very low. I get the feeling teachers are not appreciated for what they teach. They are never praised for a good job. Parents are being allowed to make decisions against teachers. In high school there is too much gossip, cannot get along and the bottom line is that our students are suffering because of all this. Teachers are bringing their personal problems into the classrooms as if our students don't have enough problems. I feel that my child does not need to know about a teacher's love life or why this teacher is being watched. Students come to school to learn about math, science, writing, music and history. NOT about who is dating who or who is in trouble with the principal. I could go on but I guess you get the picture.
- I believe all of the gang members were taken out already and any student that doesn't go by the rules is taken out - High School. Need a stiffer punishment for some kids. Need to take out all of the troublemakers. All in all we have a good school.
- My working in RISD experiences leave me to say that it is a good school. My only dislike is that most of the teachers are white in race and the few Hispanic are looked down at. In Runge we are not a team. The older teachers seem to think that they should run the school. New comers are always left out.

Appendix B

PARENT SURVEY

Demographic Data

TOTAL RESPONSES AS OF May 4, 2001: 10

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female			
		40%	60%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other
		10%	0%	90%	0%	0%
3.	How long have you live in Runge ISD?		0-5 years	6-10 years	11 or more years	
			30%	10%	60%	
4.	What grades level(s) does you child(ren) attend (circle all that apply)?					
	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	
	10%	10%	0%	20%	30%	
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	
	20%	0%	0%	10%	0%	
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth		
	10%	10%	0%	20%		

A. District Organization & Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	0%	60%	20%	20%	0%

3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	10%	70%	0%	20%	0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	20%	50%	10%	20%	0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	10%	70%	0%	20%	0%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0%	70%	0%	30%	0%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0%	70%	0%	30%	0%
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
	b) Writing	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%
	c) Mathematics	10%	70%	0%	20%	0%
	d) Science	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
	e) English or Language Arts	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
	f) Computer Instruction	10%	70%	0%	20%	0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%
	h) Fine Arts	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%

	i) Physical Education	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
	j) Business Education	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	10%	60%	20%	10%	0%
	l) Foreign Language	0%	50%	30%	20%	0%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
	c) Special Education	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%
	e) Dyslexia program	10%	5%	10%	30%	0%
	f) Student mentoring program	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
	g) Advanced placement program	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
	h) Literacy program	0%	40%	50%	10%	0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	10%	40%	30%	20%	0%
	j) Summer school programs	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
	k) Alternative education programs	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%
	l) "English as a second language" program	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
	m) Career counseling program	0%	50%	20%	30%	0%
	n) College counseling program	0%	60%	20%	20%	0%

	o) Counseling the parents of students	0%	40%	30%	30%	0%
	p) Drop out prevention program	0%	40%	30%	30%	0%
11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	10%	60%	10%	20%	0%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	0%	70%	0%	30%	0%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	0%	70%	0%	30%	0%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	10%	60%	10%	20%	0%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	10%	60%	0%	30%	0%

C. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	10%	80%	0%	20%	0%

22.	District facilities are open for community use.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	0%	20%	10%	60%	0%

D. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	0%	70%	0%	30%	0%
25.	Schools are clean.	20%	70%	0%	10%	0%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	0%	70%	10%	10%	10%

E. Asset and Risk Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%

31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	0%	30%	20%	50%	0%
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F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	10%	50%	20%	20%	0%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	0%	50%	20%	30%	0%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	0%	50%	40%	10%	0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	20%	70%	0%	10%	0%
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0%	70%	0%	30%	0%
42.	Food is served warm.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	10%	60%	10%	20%	0%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%

I. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	0%	10%	40%	50%	0%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	0%	40%	50%	10%	0%

51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	0%	40%	50%	10%	0%
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	0%	40%	50%	10%	0%
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	0%	30%	60%	10%	0%
54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	0%	30%	60%	10%	0%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	0%	30%	60%	10%	0%
58.	Buses are clean.	0%	30%	50%	20%	0%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	0%	30%	50%	20%	0%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	0%	40%	50%	10%	0%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%

64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	0%	60%	10%	30%	0%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0%	50%	40%	10%	0%
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0%	50%	40%	10%	0%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	0%	60%	0%	40%	0%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%

K. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	10%	80%	0%	10%	0%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	0%	80%	10%	10%	0%

74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	0%	70%	10%	20%	0%
75.	Students have easy access to the internet.	10%	60%	10%	20%	0%

VERBATIM COMMENTS

No comments documented.

Appendix C

STUDENT SURVEY

Demographic Data

TOTAL RESPONSES AS OF May 4, 2001: 19

***Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.**

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female			
		47%	53%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other
		42%	0%	58%	0%	0%
3.	What is your classification?	Junior	Senior			
		58%	42%			

A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	26%	0%	43%	22%	9%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	16%	1%	32%	17%	35%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	21%	31%	12%	32%	4%
	b) Writing	13%	13%	16%	43%	15%
	c) Mathematics	12%	22%	17%	25%	24%
	d) Science	9%	7%	14%	42%	28%
	e) English or Language Arts	12%	28%	15%	23%	22%
	f) Computer Instruction	22%	23%	15%	25%	15%

	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	16%	28%	15%	23%	18%
	h) Fine Arts	5%	22%	14%	26%	33%
	i) Physical Education	23%	21%	16%	34%	6%
	j) Business Education	13%	18%	11%	41%	17%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	11%	34%	9%	25%	21%
	l) Foreign Language	18%	21%	12%	34%	16%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	26%	35%	11%	11%	18%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	32%	24%	12%	23%	9%
	c) Special Education	12%	33%	15%	21%	19%
	d) Student mentoring program	21%	34%	10%	16%	19%
	e) Advanced placement program	24%	31%	9%	25%	11%
	f) Career counseling program	18%	25%	12%	33%	12%
	g) College counseling program	9%	25%	11%	25%	30%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	25%	6%	38%	18%	14%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	28%	1%	35%	17%	20%
7.	The district provides a high quality education.	17%	4%	56%	13%	11%
8.	The district has high quality teachers.	19%	6%	33%	21%	21%

B. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	16%	0%	33%	19%	32%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	13%	6%	27%	29%	25%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	24%	4%	24%	18%	30%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled timely.	17%	1%	34%	17%	31%

C. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	22%	0%	23%	34%	22%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	29%	14%	33%	10%	15%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape.	10%	12%	35%	22%	22%
16.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	15%	4%	28%	22%	31%

D. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	19%	8%	30%	17%	26%

18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	12%	17%	29%	23%	20%
19.	Food is served warm.	23%	2%	34%	30%	12%
20.	Students have enough time to eat.	16%	14%	19%	16%	36%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	9%	8%	38%	32%	13%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	16%	7%	34%	15%	29%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	10%	11%	30%	28%	21%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	15%	18%	43%	9%	15%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	29%	7%	45%	11%	8%

E. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	30%	1%	42%	27%	1%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	14%	11%	31%	23%	21%
28.	The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	16%	0%	32%	20%	31%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	13%	16%	21%	19%	32%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	15%	7%	32%	12%	35%
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	21%	13%	29%	27%	10%

32.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	7%	3%	29%	26%	35%
33.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	20%	22%	20%	27%	11%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	13%	6%	22%	22%	38%
35.	Buses are clean.	9%	13%	35%	28%	15%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	11%	21%	5%	29%	34%

F. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	14%	3%	23%	25%	36%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	14%	12%	18%	20%	36%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	12%	10%	27%	29%	23%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	15%	13%	21%	33%	18%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7%	14%	24%	32%	24%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	14%	20%	22%	20%	24%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	13%	37%	9%	22%	19%
44.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	6%	49%	16%	15%	15%

45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	9%	47%	17%	14%	13%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	10%	21%	28%	19%	23%

G. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	12%	14%	25%	19%	30%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	14%	24%	28%	15%	19%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	3%	42%	12%	17%	27%
50.	The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	5%	35%	19%	22%	19%
51.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	8%	29%	18%	15%	30%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	7%	37%	17%	23%	16%

VERBATIM COMMENTS

- I feel that overall this is a very good school but I also feel that there is not a good relationship between most of the teachers. It seems that the teachers are waiting for someone to slip up - for the fun of getting someone into trouble.
- I am very pleased with all the faculty and Runge ISD.

- I think the educational performance at Runge ISD is good. Everyone tries to stay on top of tasks and doing good. The faculty here could be a bit more helpful. Most of the time they are gossiping, standing in the hall or trying to catch someone doing wrong rather than right.

Appendix D

TEACHER SURVEY

A. Demographic Data/Survey Questions

Demographic Data

TOTAL RESPONSES AS OF May 4, 2001: 27

***Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.**

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female			
		28%	72%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other
		75%	0%	11%	0%	14%
3.	How long have you been employed by Runge ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
		58%	14%	7%	7%	14%
4.	What grades do you teach this year? *					
	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	
	0%	5%	5%	4%	4%	
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	
	9%	6%	20%	11%	11%	
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth		
	12%	14%	9%	10%		

*Some teachers teach more than one grade.

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	24%	22%	12%	16%	26%

2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	17%	24%	12%	27%	20%
3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	19%	32%	9%	27%	14%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	20%	33%	11%	25%	12%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	21%	21%	9%	29%	20%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	18%	18%	14%	28%	22%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	17%	32%	9%	24%	18%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	15%	26%	13%	24%	22%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	32%	30%	6%	22%	10%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	10%	42%	15%	15%	17%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	19%	24%	12%	25%	20%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	18%	22%	13%	31%	16%

13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	15%	30%	20%	22%	13%
14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	21%	15%	15%	21%	28%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	11%	29%	11%	32%	17%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	14%	20%	14%	27%	24%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	9%	23%	16%	24%	27%
	b) Writing	18%	23%	15%	24%	21%
	c) Mathematics	14%	27%	14%	22%	22%
	d) Science	14%	29%	6%	38%	12%
	e) English or Language Arts	25%	32%	14%	21%	8%
	f) Computer Instruction	10%	20%	14%	30%	26%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	18%	30%	9%	29%	14%
	h) Fine Arts	26%	29%	8%	24%	14%
	i) Physical Education	24%	26%	9%	31%	10%
	j) Business Education	16%	26%	10%	38%	9%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	17%	25%	13%	34%	11%
	l) Foreign Language	11%	32%	9%	26%	22%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	17%	22%	8%	26%	28%

	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	12%	25%	10%	26%	28%
	c) Special Education	13%	21%	13%	25%	28%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	11%	26%	12%	27%	24%
	e) Dyslexia program	15%	29%	13%	20%	23%
	f) Student mentoring program	13%	27%	9%	27%	24%
	g) Advanced placement program	11%	22%	12%	26%	29%
	h) Literacy program	9%	26%	10%	25%	29%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	12%	21%	14%	25%	28%
	j) Summer school programs	11%	19%	10%	18%	42%
	k) Alternative education programs	12%	25%	11%	29%	23%
	l) "English as a second language" program	18%	19%	13%	29%	21%
	m) Career counseling program	20%	16%	17%	17%	30%
	n) College counseling program	20%	16%	18%	22%	25%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	10%	31%	14%	25%	20%
	p) Drop out prevention program	15%	24%	12%	32%	18%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	10%	26%	15%	26%	23%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	25%	42%	13%	8%	12%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	46%	32%	3%	17%	2%

22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	43%	37%	5%	3%	12%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	9%	25%	9%	42%	16%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	25%	25%	16%	25%	9%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	38%	26%	12%	19%	5%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	15%	17%	17%	22%	29%
27.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	19%	20%	12%	22%	28%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	23%	19%	18%	25%	15%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	14%	18%	11%	32%	25%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	9%	19%	17%	32%	23%
31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	15%	22%	10%	28%	25%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	10%	9%	25%	28%	28%

33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	11%	22%	12%	41%	14%
34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	20%	15%	13%	31%	21%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	19%	21%	14%	29%	17%
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	14%	22%	15%	22%	27%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	27%	17%	18%	16%	22%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	12%	21%	14%	30%	23%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	14%	20%	16%	24%	27%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	20%	22%	13%	25%	20%
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	19%	27%	8%	31%	15%
42.	Schools have plenty of	18%	22%	16%	22%	22%

	volunteers to help student and school programs.					
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	24%	23%	19%	19%	15%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	16%	13%	23%	18%	30%
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	38%	17%	15%	18%	12%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	9%	15%	39%	17%	20%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	19%	24%	6%	21%	30%
48.	Schools are clean.	40%	22%	22%	14%	2%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	12%	19%	17%	23%	29%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	21%	17%	11%	17%	34%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	10%	16%	10%	24%	39%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	19%	24%	13%	34%	10%
53.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	6%	18%	9%	31%	36%
54.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	16%	21%	12%	25%	27%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	15%	17%	17%	20%	31%
56.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	11%	24%	11%	29%	26%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	11%	28%	12%	10%	39%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	13%	25%	12%	27%	23%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	12%	27%	8%	39%	14%

60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	16%	23%	15%	26%	20%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape.	13%	20%	18%	21%	27%
62.	The school library meets the student needs for books and other resources.	9%	24%	12%	34%	21%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	14%	23%	15%	22%	26%
64.	Food is served warm.	24%	19%	18%	20%	18%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	27%	40%	15%	7%	11%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	17%	23%	17%	18%	25%
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	6%	52%	6%	16%	19%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	24%	23%	7%	22%	24%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	25%	33%	9%	16%	17%

I. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	26%	30%	8%	18%	18%

71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	48%	22%	6%	10%	14%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	31%	13%	6%	29%	21%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	20%	31%	7%	26%	16%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	15%	16%	52%	2%	15%
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	16%	27%	11%	29%	17%
76.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	44%	27%	4%	14%	11%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	28%	34%	8%	15%	15%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	23%	33%	9%	17%	18%

J. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	29%	25%	12%	14%	20%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	46%	5%	7%	22%	20%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	44%	23%	7%	14%	13%

83.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	33%	28%	7%	15%	17%
84.	The district meets student needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	31%	25%	11%	15%	18%
85.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	18%	22%	8%	28%	24%
86.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	22%	26%	15%	24%	13%

Appendix D

TEACHER SURVEY

B. Verbatim Comments

- There is no communication at this school. Principals hide from work and problems. Counselor is the worst in the world. Administration works harder getting out of work than it would take to just do it right. Morale is the worst I've ever seen. Some staff think browbeating the kids is a way to keep them in line. Teachers come and go around here like a barbershop - NEXT.
- I feel our reading programs are great. The students are coming to me more able to read on their level. The kids enjoy going to school here. We offer things a small district can offer. All kids are known personally.
- I feel like our school provides a very good educational experience for all students attending here. I would not wish to work anywhere else. Our working conditions are great and we have many good students.
- I think we have a great school. We have excellent teachers and our principal is AWESOME. There are a few things that need work but no school is perfect. I feel very fortunate to be a teacher here at Runge Elementary.
- Our school is small; therefore, services available to larger schools are not afforded to us. For example, full-time counseling services for the elementary campus. I feel very strongly about this point due to the school violence we (as a nation) see everyday. It's best to diffuse a problem before it becomes a large problem with tragic consequences. As for our academia, I think we do a good job with the resources we have available to us.
- We have some educational problems here and they begin with the morale and/or attitude of the administrators and teachers. There are too many teaching turnovers each year.
- As of right now, we do not have the Internet in our classrooms and it is hard to get info from Internet. My students do not use the Internet. We should be getting it soon. That's what "they" said a month ago. The cafeteria food is awesome but one person can be down right rude.
- In comparison to other schools in surrounding areas, Runge ISD is doing a good job.
- Teachers are teaching too many varied subjects to be effective. I realize Runge is a tiny district but I feel some teachers could be given a smaller span of subjects.
- This district loses one to two teachers on secondary level each year due to the fact that the teachers that have been here since the

foundation was laid do a fine job of making new teachers feel very unwelcome. The district has its hands tied because not too many people are willing to come to a 1-A school, so they cannot get rid of the disruptive teachers who don't care about the students out of fear that they would not fill all of those positions.

- The Elementary Principal is very supportive and works hard to find the money for special programs we are really interested in.

Appendix E

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- I don't think either principal is very fair in elementary or high school. I'd like to know why the school doesn't go by Stage 1-2-3 and so on to try to communicate with parents and try to help the students. Accordingly, the public school board does not get involved with what should be better for education of the students.
- We have a wonderful high school principal; no comments on elementary!
- The elementary principal does a fine job!
- Secondary principal needs to forget about friendships when having to make a discipline decision.
- Elementary principal is terrific - open minded and fair in every respect.
- I feel all administrators are doing a great job.
- High school principal is wonderful! He goes by the rules.
- The superintendent has done a great job. He is a great leader. Some board members need to find out more about our students and their education. The board needs to get more involved to learn about what's really happening in the school. I feel that some board members are afraid to rock the boat by asking questions.
- Superintendent is excellent. Staff is excellent. School is excellent.
- Superintendent works hard to put the students' needs first for planning and management.
- Superintendent is good financial manager. He has improved the school in many areas (structurally, financially, etc.) during his tenure here.
- I am very pleased with the Superintendent. He is a very sound financial planner who plans well for the needs of the district and the future.
- Satisfied with organization and management of school.
- Secondary principal needs to be consistent and fair with all students, teachers, and parents.
- I think the high school should go back to seven classes per day instead of eight. I think our students need longer class periods, especially for basic subjects. The morning classes are only 43 minutes long. That is hardly enough time to get started on a new lesson, especially 1st period when teachers have to do lunch count and some students come in tardy. Whose decision is this? Site-Based Decision Making Committee? Principal? Superintendent?
- Decisions should be based on the best for all students at all times.

- Organization and Management - strong suit for this small school.
- Not enough Hispanics in school board! School board needs improvement!

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- School needs better ways for testing students with learning disabilities.
- Students are not given enough help in the Resource Room.
- Student performance is #1 - is what teachers work hard for.
- I feel the gifted and talented program is great and continuing to grow.
- Gifted and Talented program is fantastic. The teachers here work extremely hard on student performance.
- I'd like to know how gifted and talented are chosen.
- I'd like to know how gifted and talented are chosen when counselor says he has tested your child, and your child says no she hasn't. It ain't fair to tell the child she failed.
- I myself would like to know how it is chosen.
- Kids that are A students all year round never have been selected for GT. What is this? Our schools need to be looked at by TEA!
- Teachers work hard to provide an effective learning environment. The curriculum is good and teachers strive to improve it when necessary.
- All teachers work hard on TAAS. Gifted and Talented classes are managed by trained teachers as well as Special Ed.
- I do not like all the emphasis on TAAS testing. Yes, they need to be taught the material and see the test format, but I feel the items learned should be grasped in the overall classroom teaching. Of course, I am not a teacher, but I feel students as well as adults should be able to take the information learned and apply it to whatever testing format is given. I took the CPA exam and passed - that is a test!
- I am pleased with my son's work and all the help he is getting in Special Education.
- I believe too much emphasis is put on the TAAS, not just here at Runge ISD but everywhere. I've seen some children get really "stressed out" about doing well on the TAAS. I guess I should say some teachers get stressed about the TAAS as well.
- Strong math curriculum.
- Strong phonics program.
- TAAS scores rising for all students - 90%+ in math, 80%+ in reading, 90%+ in writing.
- Junior high school teacher should be more helpful.
- Special Ed Program provides true one-on-one and small group instruction.

- GT program focuses on all subject areas and student interest, big on community involvement.

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Need more parental involvement (it has improved)!!
- PTO - very active.
- Good community relations.
- Parents do not get involved with school because too many problems in school and not managed fairly.
- This school has very good relations with the community. More parents need to be concerned with their children and what they're doing in school.
- I'd also like to know about visitors for Runge school. I'd like to know if I can come and visit during one school day.
- We really need a lot of parent involvement, but some parents don't feel that they are welcome!
- The school attempts a lot of parental involvement, but a lot of parents don't show any interest.
- The school offers parent involvement, but the parents will not show up.
- Parents do need to be more involved, but the teachers and staff need to let parents know what's going on also.
- The staff does their best at letting parents know what's going on, especially in elementary.
- I believe parental involvement could be improved here at Runge ISD, especially on the secondary end. It seems that with the secondary school, there is either no or last-minute communication.
- In the elementary, I feel communication with parents is very effective and ongoing.
- Parental involvement has been improved in recent years but needs to be ongoing for continued improvement.
- I feel our community and parents support our school very well.
- Very active PTO.
- Support received from city council and local businesses.
- Community and school working together to improve Lake Paul.
- Parents are active in the community and in the school.
- Our PTO rates tops - excellent working with community.

D. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Staff Development (A Plus)!
- I'd like to know how the hiring is done here, because we have a lot of teachers that are very young and I don't believe have the knowledge to be teachers.
- Staff development is always interesting!

- It's really hard to recruit in this area because of the lack of entertainment available especially for single teachers.
- I think all of the teachers in both schools are great.
- The teaching staff is great but let's work as one not separate. Let's not choose favorites either - elementary.
- Teachers here are very biased towards the children here at our schools. They don't need to be that way. They have their favorites.
- I believe the administration takes care of themselves when it comes to their salaries. However, teachers' and para-professionals' salaries are somewhat lacking. I believe we should reward people for a job well done.
- I think background checks need to be done on any potential employee. Drug testing isn't a bad idea either. The private sector does this. We are entrusting these people with our most precious commodity (our children) - aren't they worth it?
- I feel that such a small school should be able to work together more closely. At times it seems that elementary is pitted against secondary - let's see who can out do the other, and it shouldn't be that way. We all need to work together.
- Most staff development provided through Region 3.
- Recruitment of teachers is tough for our area.
- Region 3 staff development and continuing education workshops are generally very good training for our teachers and staff.
- Personnel management - real +. Try getting good people to come to remote area with less pay - our school administration pulls this off very well!!!
- The school has some coaches and teachers that are not certified.

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- The school is well planned out each year as far as where classes will meet. School grounds are well kept.
- School grounds are well kept, but they need to bring out new swings and merry-go-rounds that are of plastic so children won't get hurt.
- Maintenance has gotten better since Mr. King became superintendent. The buildings are cleaner and the grounds are well kept.
- Maintenance is good.
- The grounds are well kept, but could use some beautification.
- We can use some energy in the gym for the kids (called A.C.).
- The facilities are in good condition; however, the elementary bathrooms need to be kept clean by the custodian. We also need to consider adding more classrooms at the elementary level.
- Satisfied.

- I think classrooms could be cleaned more thoroughly than just a quick run through with the broom - wipe windowsills, sweep under teacher's desk, in corners, etc.
- The entire school campus is well maintained, and improvements are continuing over the years.
- This ISD facility, old as it is, rates right up there with any, i.e., computer labs, cafeteria, gym, etc.

F. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- The school always works hard to get the best health insurance possible.
- Yes, they do!
- I agree!
- The administration works hard at doing their best job managing the district's money. However, I believe more effort could be put into finding more health insurance choices. Health insurance seems to be a last-minute decision.
- I think health insurance that the state (all state employees) get should be the same for teachers, too.
- Health insurance is a primary concern for all of us. I cannot afford the school insurance for my family. I have to seek insurance through my husband's employer. I don't feel the school gives the employees that do not take the school insurance an equitable option.
- Employees who do not have the school insurance are not given an option that is equal to that of a person who opts for the school insurance. For many of us, it's cheaper to go with our spouse's insurance.
- Health insurance is going up but health providers are good.
- Insurance premium for employees should be paid by the school.
- I agree.
- I think Runge gets "pummeled" in regards to health insurance. Budget constraints and small staff makes school staff insurance difficult. The state needs to help!!
- I too agree the state makes the rules. Let's let teachers have as good insurance as other state employees!

G. Financial Management

- Budgeting is handled very efficiently. Teachers are given the opportunity to request needed items in their classroom budget and if funds are available, the items will be purchased.
- OK.
- Obviously financial management is going very well for no one has a gripe in this area.

- School taxes are kind of high, but the school has really benefited from this.
- Budget requests are pretty reasonable.
- It's a challenge to keep public informed as to financial demands of school district.
- This school has a very good financial plan and strives to use each resource to best advantage.
- The public is not aware of how the budget is at our school.

H. PURCHASING

- Any type of purchasing here is done with ease.
- I'd like to know how many box tops make up to purchase TVs and VCRs. How is the community thanked for hard work of the kids?
- Some classrooms do not have enough textbooks; students have to share books, especially in high school.
- Need more supplies to help students do their work.
- Need more books at library.
- Teachers are given opportunities to select the textbooks that they desire.
- Purchasing is done with ease.
- Purchase orders are given quick response. Supplies are received quickly and can be used for the students in a short period of time once they are requested.
- There are not enough books in classes or library!

I. FOOD SERVICE

- I think it would be nice for junior and high schools to be able to have some nutritional snacks and some drinks they can buy along with the meal, and add some cheese if they want. The cafeteria facilities are great.
- I believe the cafeteria should prepare more "homemade" meals. They seem to serve a lot of frozen foods that are just simply heated, and even then, they are not always heated thoroughly. We have a new, modern kitchen. Why can't hot foods be kept warm, and cool foods kept chilled?
- Cafeteria facilities are nice.
- Facilities are great - the times I have eaten with the children the meals have been fine.
- More variety needs to exist. Meals should be appealing. Cheese.... where's the cheese? Butter? Where's the butter? Sometimes it appears that the head lunchroom person is paying for the food out of her own pocket.
- For some children, this is the only "decent" meal that they will get. Let them get full. The government gives some things for free to be

used by the cafeteria. It is not theirs to hoard. FEED THE CHILDREN. ALL OF THEM. Not just 7-12. We have some hungry children PreK-6 too!

- The cafeteria food is so good!! Quality of food - great!! Nutrition - excellent.
- The quality is poor. Employees - poor, rude and ill mannered to students in PreK-7.
- The cafeteria food is great! There is always a wide variety of hot, home-cooked meals.
- No comment, but employees need to smile every now and then.
- The quality of food is great.
- The food is good. Nice variety.
- Food is terrific (and hot)!!
- We have a new cafeteria (great)!! The food is great also, very nutritious. Meal preparation is good.
- The food is excellent! Very well prepared!
- Have had bad reports on all food due to personnel whom prepare foods. Know of complaints which should be taken very serious.
- PTL for this fine new facility, it's due purpose/use and the fine crew of cooks and the really good food.
- Students report employees are not too nice or wearing gloves while serving food.

J. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- The school has worked very hard to see that each child has many chances to learn about and use a computer. We're very lucky to have a great computer lab and (soon) Internet.
- Our school has worked very hard to provide computers for each classroom. Our students have a lab in which to work with a knowledgeable instructor.
- The instructor is an asset in teaching students about computers as well as teachers.
- Students do not use computer in their classrooms?
- Computer teacher at high school is great!
- Students need computers in the classrooms to have individual use and hands on. This school is trying very hard to provide this to our students, but do need more qualified people to see this gets done, too.
- The school has made many improvements in technology - purchasing new equipment, software, etc. Maintenance is a problem - keeping things updated - more training needed for teachers.
- I like how all ages of children are doing learning practices on the computer!

- Computers are available in every classroom. All classrooms are getting the Internet. That's exciting. I hope it happens soon!
- Would like to have more computers in the classrooms - have 1.
- Technology lab well equipped with hardware and software used to support instruction in classroom.
- Every classroom in elementary will have Internet soon.
- I think we have some great staff in this area. Graduates have performed well technically from Runge.
- For a very small ISD, Runge has an outstanding computer learning program at every level, 1st - 12th. And excellent instructors!
- Some classes (students) do not have access to computers - are not allowed to use them. So why have them in class?

K. TRANSPORTATION

- School buses, routing and scheduling are appropriately handled. Our school buses are maintained quite nicely, and safety of students on buses is very strict.
- Transportation of students is handled well. Buses are maintained well, also.
- Transportation is great!
- Transportation is great if they would pick all children up, not only 1 child for a bus that can hold more students. There are many students that are late and tardy due to not having a ride, then teachers punish them. This is not right.
- -Good job!
- No complaints.
- Buses are in good condition.
- Bus drivers know all families on bus route; make personal contact before school begins in the fall.
- Transportation director takes good care of buses.
- Need some type of communication instrument in all buses.
- Buses are maintained properly.
- This fleet is outstanding and serves our students and faculty very well.

L. SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Discipline policies are fair and just.
- The discipline of these schools is followed in who you are, not what is fair.
- I'd also like to know why the only time the school is very strict about locking doors to classrooms is only when they have convicts breaking out of prisons. Also, how about having safety for our kids with so much shooting going on in so many schools.

- Student discipline policies are fair and are strictly followed. Students are sent to alternative education classes when appropriate.
- Student discipline is not fair, especially in the high school.
- The high school follows rules.
- I don't think discipline policies are followed fairly. I feel it's followed by your race.
- The discipline in high school is great and fair. The discipline in elementary needs to be improved! Stick to your word!
- Both our schools really do need to be improved in these areas. Discipline for some students not followed by the rules; the other students get the short end of the stick. This is not right.
- We have the discipline policies in place. They just need to be consistently enforced for all students.
- Discipline policies are not consistent. Students who have special labels are not held accountable for their actions (at the elementary level).
- Many times students are disciplined for "minor" infractions and the serious stuff is not addressed.
- Supervision is somewhat "lax" in some upper level classes (7-12).
- Discipline is consistent to a certain point. We have a discipline management plan that is in place and followed.
- Discipline is not followed with level I, II, III in both campuses.
- Follow student Code of Conduct.
- Good relations with local law enforcement.
- AEP located in Kenedy for our district. Good relations with AEP administration.
- Elementary provides guidance program for students.
- Our school is pretty safe.
- As a parent, the school provides the best measures for the safety of our children.
- Should be the same in regards to all students.
- I agree.
- Me, too.